



A Guide To Building Food Security in Rural Communities

Aimée Watson

North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society

Groundswell

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With the generous support of

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FORWARD

Why a Food Security Handbook?

North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society (NKLCCS), in the remote and beautiful Village of Kaslo, British Columbia began its journey into Food Security in 2005 with a vision that all community members have a right to a stable supply of high quality nutritious food regardless of their economic reality. Kaslo and the surrounding rural area has the unique ability to come together, roll up their sleeves and work on a common goal.

With few templates to follow and no established funding sources, NKLCCS and a food security committee used a community development model to engage the citizens of Kaslo, farmers, retailers, institutions and the local government. The vision and willingness of the NKLCCS governing board to embark on an unfamiliar program was key to moving forward.

Gathering all of those together that have a vested interest in food can be challenging but it is necessary to marshal resources both locally and provincially. Always true to our mandate was the priority of improving the nutrition and food security of those in need as well as moving the community towards food self-sufficiency.

The Kaslo Food Security Project began with skeleton staff and an administrative team who patiently added the extra duties to their work-plan. The outpouring of community support, mentorship and knowledge extended beyond the local area as people became excited about the experiment. The area has an agricultural history that many feared was lost.

The project unfolded, gained momentum and it became apparent that the topic of food security has many layers; from government policy and land-use planning to supporting farmers and teaching people how to grow and preserve their own food in an environment of climate instability. Food security became a hopeful tool for economic development and community sharing.

A winter storm in 2010 blocked the highway for several days and knocked out power for 24 hours highlighting the fragility of food availability as stores began to run out of staples. This introduced a new set of objectives for the Kaslo Food Security project: emergency preparedness. At the same time the project was focusing on formalizing its operating and governance processes and procedures.

The Kaslo Food Security Project spread its wings and developed different facets to its operations and the number of public inquiries and invitations to speak about food security increased dramatically. Communities around the province are hungry for information about local food sustainability and eager to try to improve the quality of food available in the marketplace and for their food banks, soup kitchens and food cupboards. Increasingly urban areas are thinking about neighborhood associations and creating a feeling of community. Information presented in this handbook is transferable to small communities within many settings.

As the Kaslo Food Security Project journey continues, it is my hope that this handbook will inspire creativity in communities setting out on the rewarding path of taking responsibility for the food they eat. In this small way the Kaslo Food Security Project can share the generosity it has received.

Ramona Faust

Regional District of Central Kootenay Director

and former Executive Director of NKLCSS

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To truly acknowledge all that made this Guide Book possible, I need to go back about 13 years to my farming days in the Fraser Valley. My inspiration for a new way of living and being, and what has become my passion, was found on Glen Valley Organic Farm Cooperative with John, Alyson and Brenda-La, and at Fraser Common Farms with Susan Davidson, Velma, Dave McCandless, Heather Pritchard, David, Donna, Najai and sweet Kore.

I also have to give my many thanks to: my dear friend, Shannon Ross, who took me out of the vitamin world and into the real 'farmacy' of the soil and brought me to the Kootenay Valley where we met Ramona Faust; Ramona, who believed in our work and the importance of community food security in a rural setting; Abra Brynne, who continues to keep me afloat in hope, persistence and camaraderie; Kathleen Gibson with her extensive, articulate and constantly supportive insights; The Kneens for starting the conversations and having the courage to speak out while also bringing us all together; Dayna Chapman for her strength, wisdom and great hugs; Heather Hamilton for her tireless efforts to help me get to my point; Janice M Murphy for her professionalism and detailed efforts with outdated sources; my mom for so much more; and, my sweet son for making it all worthwhile.

I am also indebted to so many more lovely and challenging souls along the way who have kept me awake, thinking, seeking, and laughing. We are all in this together – and I am forever grateful for the ever evolving community that inspires me and keeps me going.

This book could not have been made without the generous financial support of the Vancouver Foundation and Columbia Basin Trust and the ongoing support of North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society for building food security in our area.

In gratitude, I thank you all,

Aimée Watson

November, 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

“The way we eat has changed more in the past 50 years than in the previous 10,000” – Michael Pollan¹

This handbook is geared for rural and remote regions interested in creating a program to enable or increase food security in their communities. Its goal is to help guide those of you wishing to do this work, whether you are in local government, social services, the health sector, farming, or an eater with concerns about what is on grocery store shelves.

The document opens with definitions and an argument for food security, followed by an outline of core ingredients for any food security program: people, mission, resources and administration. It provides examples of possible projects you may decide to explore, with resources for further guidance. It also considers the public policy context for your work (legislation and regulation).

This material is based on and contains frequent references (in sidebars) to food security work in Kaslo, British Columbia. We have had many inquiries about our achievements, and this handbook is our attempt to summarize our learning and the resources we collected over the years.

We deliberately avoid a linear step-by-step approach, for the very reason that you need to be as responsive as possible to what your community needs. To build a food secure community in your region, the possibilities are as diverse as a good farm field should be. Your local community, the needs of the food system, and available resources will guide your activities towards what will achieve your community’s goals.

Our shared purpose is to build more resiliencies into our community foodsheds. No matter what type of project you select, your community food security project is guaranteed to build community connections, spirit, and capacity. There is hope, and you are a part of it.

¹ Kenner, R. (Director), (2009), *FOOD, INC.* (Motion Picture), United States: TakePart, <http://www.takepart.com/foodinc/film>

Terminology

The recipe for rural food security must begin with defining what we mean when we speak about food security.

Community Food Security

Most commonly used is the definition provided by the 1996 World Food Summit, which defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle”.² In Canada, the scope of this definition, among practitioners and society at large, has broadened and deepened over time.

The first community response to hunger has usually been in the form of food banks and soup kitchens, almost all of them run through faith or other charity-based programs. These programs, originally intended to be a temporary response to a short-term problem, have become embedded in our communities as services required by more people than ever (almost 900,000 per month in Canada in 2012).³ These solutions are “band-aids” at best and do not address long-term problems or causes of food insecurity.

Even as emergency food services were becoming institutionalized, it became apparent to more and more people that there is a food system⁴, and that a system-wide structural analysis would be needed to identify the source of hunger. This also meant that food issues would need to be addressed collaboratively, and across communities, departments and disciplines (e.g., agriculture, health, environment, social programs and more).

Small and large communities across the globe, driven by necessity and concern, have come together to determine solutions. In Canada in the last 30 years, local, provincial, and national coalitions and organizations have formed to take action on food security matters, community by

Foodshed - “A foodshed is the geographic region that produces the food for a particular population. The term is used to describe a region of food flows, from the area where it is produced, to the place where it is consumed, including: the land it grows on, the route it travels, the markets it passes through, and the tables it ends up on.” - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foodshed>

² World Health Organization. *Food Security* Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>

³ Food Banks Canada. (2012) *Hunger Count 2012*. Retrieved from: <http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/3b946e67-fbe2-490e-90dc-4a313dfb97e5/HungerCount2012.pdf.aspx>

⁴ “A food system is a process that includes the production of agricultural goods, purchasing and processing of these goods, distribution and marketing of value-added products, end-user preparation and consumption and waste disposal (Pirog et al, 2001).” Macke, D., Dabson, B. (2011). *Social Entrepreneurship Investment in Local and Regional Food Systems*. White Paper for the Northwest Area Foundation. Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. p. 3. Retrieved from www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/elibrary/.files/NWAF/NWAF.docx

community. We have investigated the systems and parties involved in attaining or undermining food security, and new programs, supports, and ways of living have emerged.

With an increased need to focus on sustainable solutions, food security has become a hot topic. It has evolved into what is more formally known as “Community Food Security” (CFS). Dieticians of Canada define Community Food Security as existing “when all community residents obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self reliance and equal access for everyone.”⁵ CFS offers a holistic view and lens that enables systems to be examined and recreated to alleviate the long term impacts of food insecurity. This definition enables a more comprehensive approach that will not require a continual band aid approach, but will work from the root causes – the food system – to eradicate hunger, environmental degradation and overall poverty issues.

Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty was originally promoted by La Via Campesina, an international organization formed in 1993 to address the decimation of rural livelihoods resulting from ever-increasing outside influences on the local food systems. Food sovereignty asserts the right of people to define their own food systems.

We have lost control of an essential ingredient to living, our food. From the farmers who are increasingly in debt to the banks while being enslaved by modern farming practices to the eaters themselves; the ability to regain control and participate in our food systems creation and management is crucial. An ideal food system would provide adequate, just and healthy food for all. The farmers, processors and eaters must be the participants, creators and owners of this system.

Food sovereignty is based on reclaiming our food systems. It moves ownership from a global industrial model to a community-based model, back into the hands of the eaters, making the right to food inherent in the system’s function. The essential difference between food security

The Kaslo Story

In 2005, a seniors’ group approached our local social services agency, North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society (NKLCCS) with concerns about seniors’ access to affordable, healthy foods. In partnership, the two organizations acquired funds to conduct a Food Forum to assess the food system within Kaslo and Area D. This became the foundation for the Kaslo Food Security Project.

Six years later, we opened the first accredited Food Hub in Canada, a physical facility with nine programs designed to meet the immediate need of food insecurity while working on the long term needs of food security for the region.

⁵ Slater, J. (2009) *Community Food Security: Position of Dieticians of Canada*. (p.1) Retrieved from: <http://www.dietitians.ca/Downloadable-Content/Public/cfs-position-paper.aspx>

Food Systems – *“The general definition of food systems indicates they are comprised of the production of agricultural goods, purchasing and processing of those goods, distribution and marketing of value added products, end-user preparation and consumption, and waste disposal. However, at a closer glance they also include the relationships and activities that connect people to their food. Food systems are plural due to their inherit nature of being multi-layered and interconnected. Such as a local farmer who primarily eats from his own farming food system, but then includes the coffee, sugar and oil from the global food system.”* - Abra Brynne, Food Shed Animator, personal communication, September 2013

and food sovereignty is this ability to define our own food systems, putting the people’s needs ahead of the markets.

In fact, true food security can only be achieved with this additional factor of localized control. What is quintessentially wrong with the current food system, as described in the “Why” chapter, is that market needs are placed ahead of basic human needs. To reverse this systemic error, we need to change who creates, controls, and operates our food systems. Food security, informed by food sovereignty, can reverse the decline of rural populations, stop the degradation of our environment, and heal the negative health effects of our current diet.

In Canada, the concept of food sovereignty was brought to the fore by Food Secure Canada in the People’s Food Policy Project which, after engaging 3,500 Canadians in discussions about food, published *Resetting The Table: a People’s Food Policy for Canada* in April 2011⁶.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ *La Via Campesina* – <http://viacampesina.org/en/>
- ▶ *The Six Pillars of Food Sovereignty* – A

manifesto created at Nyéléni 2007, an international forum on food sovereignty.

<http://foodsecurecanada.org/six-pillars-food-sovereignty>

- ▶ *Resetting The Table – A People’s Food Policy for Canada* – <http://foodsecurecanada.org/policy-advocacy/resetting-table>
- ▶ *The Future Control of Food (2008)* – A Guide to International Negotiations and Rules on Intellectual Property, Biodiversity and Food Security by Geoff Tansy and Tasmin Rajotte. This book clearly outlines how we have lost, and will continue to lose, control over our food systems. It provides a good foundation for adequately understanding how the current food system operates and who controls it.

<http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Pages/IDRCBookDetails.aspx?PublicationID=79>

⁶ Food Secure Canada (2011). *Resetting the Table: A People’s Food Policy for Canada*. Montreal, QC: Food Secure Canada. Retrieved from <http://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/FSC-resetting2012-8half11-lowres-EN.pdf>

2. RURAL COMMUNITIES

How you approach building community food security is greatly influenced by where you live. Understanding the needs, assets, and capacity of your community will help you determine what solutions are possible.

This guide is written specifically for rural and remote communities of British Columbia. There will be aspects that are applicable for other regions and demographics, but there are some key differences in approaches for an urban area versus a rural area.

Urban areas have more options because they have access to a larger population base with more financial and human resources. Rural counterparts have: smaller markets with greater distances between them increasing associated expenses in distribution; municipal governments with smaller budgets and resources; and a limited volunteer and donor pool. These factors affect how a community will approach food security efforts.

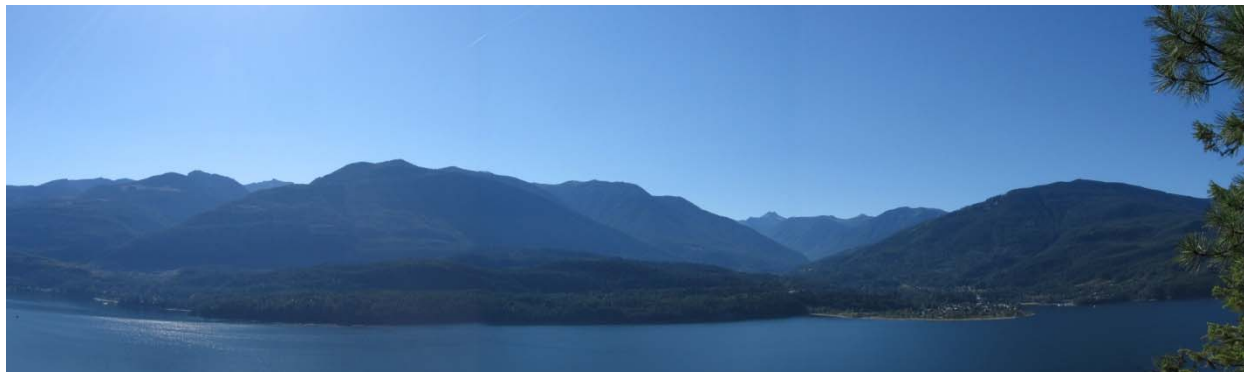
Challenges

Inspiring and beautiful community food projects thrive in the world's cities: a good example is a good food box program, which delivers healthy foods to low-income homes. We assessed creating a similar program in Kaslo and found that the volume of sales and volunteer hours required was not viable in a community of 2,400⁷ spread across a large geography.⁸

Rural and Remote – The terms rural and remote are relative. To someone from Vancouver or even Kelowna, my community of Kaslo, with a population of 2,000+ and no major highway nearby, would be considered very rural. But a remote community of 300 with only air transport would be much more rural and remote than our community. Each community will have challenges in meeting its needs. The good news is that there are advantages to being small.

⁷ Statistics Canada. (2012). *Kaslo, British Columbia. Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE*. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

One of the key areas where capacity is severely compromised in a smaller community is in the resources and budget of the local government. Many food security projects are housed within or connected to municipal government, but in a small community there are not enough staff to work on such initiatives.



Kaslo, on the right, pictured from the far side of Kootenay Lake. Photo courtesy JJ Legg

Larger municipalities often have health authorities working directly with municipal councils. Across Canada, food security is considered a key determinant of health and therefore falls under the purview of health authorities.^{9,10} In BC, this means the Ministry of Health is responsible for food security deliverables.

A compounding factor undermining the ability of municipalities and rural regions to tackle food security is the increasing responsibilities accompanied by declining support from senior levels of government. A slow degradation of rural services has been occurring as provincial and federal governments shift to business models for basic service delivery. Currently, only eight cents of every tax dollar comes back to our communities.¹¹ Local governments are becoming responsible for more services with decreasing budgets. Service cuts and budget constraints at the municipal government and health authority level can also affect volunteer capacity. This was recently the case in our community where we found many of our local volunteer hours were tied up in a fight to maintain our emergency room services.

Market size also greatly affects food security projects that are focused on products, such as farmers' markets, urban gardening or direct-marketed farm fresh vegetables. These activities can be amazing enterprises for building a sustainable local economy but rural markets have a limited customer base which hinders economic dollars; thus the ability to be financially viable greatly depends on planning and co-ordination to achieve goals. For instance, when we

⁸ Gutierrez, B., & Watson, A. (2010) *Plenty of Foods: A Social Enterprise Study for the Kaslo Food Hub*. Kaslo, BC: North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society. <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>

⁹ British Columbia. Provincial Health Officer. (2006) *Food, Health, and Well-Being in British Columbia*. Retrieved from <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/phoannual2005.pdf>

¹⁰ Mikkonen, J., & Raphael, D. (2010). *Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts*. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management.

¹¹ Personal communication June 2013: Andy Shadrack, President of Association Kootenay Boundary Local Government

encouraged Lawns-to-Gardens¹² (a program where residents were encouraged to grow their own fresh foods) the markets became flooded with casual urban entrepreneurs. This affected prices and decreased financial viability for commercial growers. If the market is large there is lots of market potential but, in an area with a small population, the dollars are limited. In rural settings, market coordination greatly assists in economic viability for all enterprises.

Actions to build community food security in a small community must account for the limited market base, infrastructure (communications, storage and distribution) and access to human resources, both paid and volunteer.

Assets

A small community has the benefit of an increased ability to engage the residents. Networking one-on-one is more effective as the connections are much closer than in an urban area. When we were working on a Food Charter for Kaslo, I was able to talk to our local Mayor over coffee on Main Street. I then spent a few hours just talking to other patrons about how they felt about food, what they envisioned for Kaslo and what a food-secure community looked like to them. Such informal community dialogues can and do engage a significant and influential portion of the local population and are a helpful foundation when more formal processes are called for. Word of mouth can be infectious, though it requires vigilance regarding the accuracy of the information. It is particularly effective if you have a local coffee shop or watering hole where locals gather. Or perhaps your town still has a town crier? We have a few unofficial ones.

It is also very likely that the people in a small community have things in common related to their choice to live rurally. Our history is speckled with the original founding folks in the resource industries, then the draft dodgers and back-to-the-landers of the sixties. Others, who have chosen to move here, or chose to remain after growing up here can attest to some

Caring Community

In 2012, one of our most remote communities, Johnsons Landing, had a devastating landslide that ripped through the community. There were four deaths when several homes were wiped out in the slide. The community was evacuated and a year later, although many have returned, many will never be able to as the evacuation zones remains in effect indefinitely.

The day and subsequent weeks of the event generated an immense outpouring of generosity. Within our community, our food bank was inundated with donations: pallets of water- trays of sandwiches- pounds of fruit. Through social media there were homes being offered, barge negotiations to move vehicles, and all household goods needed were being offered.

The generosity was so overwhelming that we had to start committees to just manage the donations. This level of care and concern can be attributed to our direct connections to the community.

¹² Lawns to Gardens is a program we created to encourage and educate about the benefits of converting lawns into gardens.

common interests in why they choose to be in a small community. Besides living amongst a naturally beautiful landscape, the ability to be working with the land and to be connected to a small town network are commonalities all of these groups share. This common interest links our community. The interest in maintaining the small town lifestyle can be a catalyst for collaboration in your community. Whether born and raised in the area or newcomers, residents of small communities inevitably know each other and it is these very relations that increase the level of cooperation and potential for collaboration.

As well, rural communities tend to have access to a larger land area and an increased agricultural skill base. In our region, we have many homesteaders who came to the Kootenay's specifically for small-scale, sustainable living which naturally involves all stages of food growing and processing. A community food culture that connects everyone is a great asset in a small community.

Although our community experiences a high rate of food insecurity, I believe, in an emergency, no one would go hungry. Because of the skill base, the level of household food storage, and the fact that we are all connected to each other, it is highly likely that neighbours would open their doors in an emergency. One of the main reasons I moved to a small community was because of this sense of security in knowing my community. Our relationships increase our ability to work together if and when needed. When you combine this with a strong skill base, you have the tools for a resilient and secure community.



Kaslo Village Hall, one of the oldest wooden municipal buildings in BC.

One of the most important assets in rural communities is the local government's proximity to the citizens they represent, which gives local governments the opportunity to be fully in touch with the grass roots. This can be very empowering if there are good, inclusive mechanisms for decision making (i.e., citizen involvement). In a time when national or provincial governments may be unaware of or denying some key

threats to food security (e.g., the cost and availability of food), local

governments can be the most effective organizers for action on food systems. The ability to entrench food sovereignty is inherently linked to this proximity asset as local governments are the direct link to the primary stakeholders – the eaters. When local government is committed to finding solutions and is based in a rural setting close to the food system itself, they have increased opportunity to have a very clear idea of the best potential solutions to the problem. The one major caveat to the achieving the full potential of this proximity asset is that, for success, it must be coupled with policies that support food sovereignty across all government

bodies, local, provincial and national. For example, national trade regulations, which can wreak havoc for local procurement policies, need to support food sovereignty.

Nevertheless, the asset of close proximity to the primary stakeholders remains a key ingredient to success in rural and remote landscapes.

And just as landscapes change, our communities have different assets, needs and issues. What is common among us all are the challenges faced by residents across our country to meet the basic needs of a healthy diet. Whether it is access, affordability, availability, skills, or education, food security is something each one of us needs. Neighbours, farmers, those with low-income, and elected officials, can all be involved in taking the first step in reclaiming our rights to a basic need in its healthiest form.

3. WHY IS FOOD SECURITY IMPORTANT?

Although lack of food is the most immediate reason to work on community food security solutions, we also must consider the impacts of our current food system on the environment, human health, and the economy and how we and our communities are affected.

Environmental Issues

Our modern food system is relatively young. Industrial agriculture began with a simple philosophy that “rivalries leading to war came from insecurity and want, so dealing with the world’s need for food was a form of waging peace.”¹³ In an effort to end World War II, President Roosevelt declared that “food will win the war and write the peace.”¹⁴ These policies, combined with new innovations from agronomist Norman Borlaug, father of the Green Revolution, spawned a whole new way of producing food.¹⁵

The chemicals used in war were found to be effective for farming. DDT, 2, 4-D¹⁶ parathion, malathion and ammonium nitrate were diverted to peace efforts as agricultural inputs in the form of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.¹⁷

The Green Revolution combined these chemical inputs with plant breeding, irrigation and economic subsidies to industrialize food production and create the current dominant food system.

¹³Roberts, W. (2008) *The No Nonsense Guide to World Food* Toronto, ON: New Internationalist Publications (p.31) <http://wayneroberts.ca/publications>

¹⁴ Ibid (p.32)

¹⁵ Jemison, J. and Beal, A. (2011) “Historical Perspectives on Resource Use in Food Systems”. *Maine Policy Review* 20.1(2011) : 163-171, Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol20/iss1/24>

¹⁶ DDT is an acronym for dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, an organochlorine insecticide, and 2, 4-D is an acronym for 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic_acid, a pesticide/herbicide).

¹⁷ Roberts, W. (2008) *The No Nonsense Guide to World Food*. Toronto, ON: New Internationalist Publications. <http://wayneroberts.ca/publications>

Gains in productivity have led to a false sense of overall success. The current food system has a heavy dependence on the oil industry, with 10 calories of fossil fuels required to produce one calorie of food.¹⁸ When producing animals, inputs required are even higher. One calorie of pork requires 68 calories of fossil fuel and one calorie of beef requires 35 calories of fossil fuel to produce it.¹⁹ The dependency on fossil fuels is not diminishing: agriculture uses seven times more oil-based synthetic fertilizer than it did a half century ago, with no corresponding increase in food production.²⁰ Initial inputs post-war provided increased productivity, but it has not been sustained while input needs keep increasing.



The bounty of one family's organic garden.

When it comes to plant breeding, technology has taken a new role in the production of food. Plant breeding – for example, selecting, breeding and hybridizing within a species – is the basis of how agriculture has evolved for the last 10,000 years.²¹ But plant breeding advances over the past 30 years have become dominated by life science technologies that experiment with evolution itself.

One such experiment is that of genetic engineering (GE)²² where the DNA of one species is inserted into the DNA of another. The ostensible intent was to give the resulting plant new genetic traits such as increased nutrients, drought tolerance, or improved shelf life. However, most

commercially available GE products have been developed to have traits such as herbicide tolerance and/or pesticide production.²³ Dr. Charles Benbrook, an agronomist, reports that GE crops have been responsible for an increase of 383 million pounds of herbicide use in the US

¹⁸ Starrs, T. (2005) *The SUV in the Pantry*. Sustainable Business. Retrieved from: <http://www.sustainablebusiness.com/index.cfm/go/news.feature/id/1275>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Cribb, J. (2010) *The Coming Famine: The global food crisis and what we can do to avoid it*. University of California Press

²¹ Diamond, J. (1987) "The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race", *Discover Magazine*. May 1987, pp. 64-66

²² GE is also known as genetic modification (GM) and the resulting plants or animals are known as genetically modified organisms (GMO).

²³ Smith, J. *State of the science on the health risks of gm foods*. Fairfield, IA: Institute for Responsible Technology (IRT). Retrieved from: www.responsibletechnology.org

over the first 13 years of commercial use of GE crops (1996–2008).²⁴ Despite reduction in insecticide use on the crops, the overall use of chemicals has increased.

The most serious impact of GE plant breeding technologies is the effect on natural evolution. “Super weeds” are evolving and becoming increasingly invasive. Unless they are certified organic, crops such as corn, soya, canola or cotton are likely to have altered genes in them, whether they were intended to or not. Dr. John Navazio, a Master Plant Breeder, claims that by focusing breeding on dollar-value traits, we are eliminating nature. Dr. Navazio argues that these efforts are changing traditional plant breeding, resulting in arrested, rather than accelerated, plant evolution.²⁵

When it comes to irrigation, we find water is severely threatened. It takes 15,500 litres of water to produce just one kilogram of beef.²⁶ If current levels of water use continue, we may lose up to 25% of food production due to water scarcity.²⁷ It is estimated that one third of water contamination in the US is due to nitrogen and phosphorus run-off from the livestock sector.²⁸

Then there is the soil itself. Modern farming practices are quickly deteriorating this precious resource. The United States Department of Agriculture reports 6 pounds of soil is needed to produce 1 pound of food.²⁹ Across the globe, it is estimated that 5 million to 6 million hectares of fertile land is lost to severe soil degradation annually.³⁰ Depending on the region, the rate of degradation is 16 to 300 times faster than nature can rebuild the soil.³¹

The environment is the “life support” system that we depend on, much as we depend on our body for good health. The environmental impacts of our modern food system are generally not included in efficiency or cost effectiveness measures. Yet productivity increases have come at the expense of aggravating climate change and harming our soil, land and water.

²⁴ Benbrook CM. (2009) *Impacts of genetically engineered crops on pesticide use in the United States: The first thirteen years*. The Organic Center. Retrieved from http://www.organic-center.org/reportfiles/13Years20091126_FullReport.pdf

²⁵ Peters, S. (2003) “A Conversation with Master Plant Breeder Dr, John Navazio”. *The Cutting Edge Newsletter* #32. Seeds of Change.

²⁶ Giovannucci, D. Scherr, S. Nierenberg, D. Hebebrand, C. Shapiro, J. Milder, J. Wheeler, K. (2012) *Food and Agriculture: the Future of Sustainability: A strategic input to the Sustainable Development in the 21st Century (SD1) project*. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development Retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_sd21st/21_pdf/agriculture_and_food_the_future_of_sustainability_web.pdf

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Jeavons, J. (2006) *How to Grow More Vegetables*, Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

³⁰ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1997, p. 236.

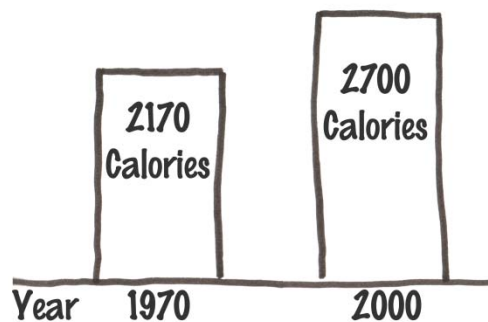
³¹ Ibid

Human Health

“For every human being on the planet, the world produces two pounds of grain per day-roughly 3,000 calories, and that’s without even counting all the beans, potatoes, nuts, fruits and vegetables we eat too.”³²

What the average North American eats has changed vastly over the last 50 years. The major change is that we no longer purchase our nutrients in the form of basic vegetables, fruit, meat, dairy and grains but rather purchase specific ingredients through a large variety of products.

We are not consuming food as much as we are consuming products.



Daily average caloric intake per person in the US

(USDA. (2001) *Factbook, Chapter 2, Profiling Food Consumption in America*. Retrieved from www.usda.gov/factbook/chapter2.pdf.)

Corn is a good example of a staple food that is now transformed into a wide variety of products. According to Michal Pollan, although we each consume an average of 1 ton a year of corn, only 1 bushel of that ton is in the form of the whole vegetable, the rest comes as products made from parts of corn.³³ Two major uses include

animal feed (50% of corn grown in the US),³⁴ and High-Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS). HFCS was introduced in the late 1960s and has now replaced most other types of sugar: by 1999 Americans were consuming 63 dry weight pounds of it per year.³⁵ This has contributed to

a health crisis in developed countries. The 800 million people in the world who face hunger every day are now outnumbered by those who are overweight: one billion suffer from obesity.³⁶

Observing how the human diet has evolved, we can understand why we are facing epidemics of overconsumption in North America. Since 1950, the average annual consumption of cheese has increased 287%.³⁷ Fifty-one per cent of calories are coming from processed foods, with 42% derived from meat, eggs and dairy, and only 7% of our diets consisting of fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds.³⁸ An average teenage boy consumes 15 teaspoons of

³² Moore-Lappe, F., Lappe, A. (n.d) *Towards a Just Food System*. Northwest Earth Institute. Session 5, p. 73

³³ Pollan, M. (2006) *The Omnivores Dilemma*. England: Penguins Press

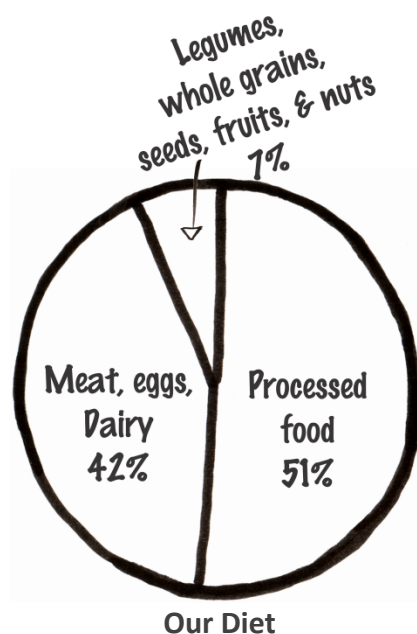
³⁴ Wolf, A. (2007) Film: *King Corn*

³⁵ Patel, R. (2007) *Stuffed and Starved*. Toronto, ON: Harper Collin Publishers

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ USDA. (2001) *Factbook, Chapter 2, Profiling Food Consumption in America*. Retrieved from: www.usda.gov/factbook/chapter2.pdf.

³⁸ Furhman, J. (2005) *Disease-Proof Your Child: Feeding Kids Right*. New York: St. Martin's Press.



(Furhman, J. (2005) *Disease-Proof Your Child: Feeding Kids Right*. New York: St. Martin's Press.)

sugar a day, mostly from carbonated beverages; girls consume an average of 10 teaspoons a day.³⁹ Most telling is that our overall caloric intake has increased 25%, an increase of 530 calories daily in just 30 years.⁴⁰ We, in developed countries, now eat on average 2700 calories a day, yet only need 2000 calories.⁴¹ In Canada, 23% of Canadians are obese, a rate that has almost doubled in just 25 years.⁴²

This shift in diet to processed, fat-and-sugar-laden foods is directly implicated in three serious health crises: cardiovascular disease, obesity, and diabetes. Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer, with 900,000 deaths a year.⁴³ Obesity is associated with a high likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.⁴⁴

US statistics show type 2 diabetes increasing threefold in just 30 years. Some recent studies propose a link between dementia and a fast food diet, suggesting that Alzheimer's might be "type 3 diabetes."⁴⁵ This has led one scientist, Dr. Trivedi, to state, "Since calorific foods are known to impair our body's response to insulin, we may be unwittingly

poisoning our brains every time we chow down on burgers and fries."⁴⁶

Health impacts of our food system are not limited to too many bad calories. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, 70% of antibiotics used in the US are given to farm animals.⁴⁷ In

³⁹ Jacobson, M. (2005) *Liquid Candy: How Soft Drinks are Harming America's Health*. Washington, DC: Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPINET) Retrieved from <http://www.cspinet.org/liquidcandy/>.

⁴⁰ USDA. (2001) *Factbook, Chapter 2, Profiling Food Consumption in America*. Retrieved from www.usda.gov/factbook/chapter2.pdf.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Dietitians of Canada (2007) *Community Food Security: Position of Dietitians of Canada*. (web document) retrieved from <http://www.dietitians.ca/Dietitians-Views/Food-Security/Community-Food-Security.aspx>

⁴³ Cardiovascular diseases include high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, and stroke, among others. See, "Cardiovascular Statistics Updated for 2005: New Data on Risk Factors in America's Youth" *American Heart Association News* December 30, 2004 www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3027696

⁴⁴ Dietitians of Canada. (2007) *Community Food Security: Position of Dietitians of Canada*. (web document) retrieved from <http://www.dietitians.ca/Dietitians-Views/Food-Security/Community-Food-Security.aspx>

⁴⁵ Monbiot, G. (2012) "Alzheimer's could be the most catastrophic impact of junk food". *The Guardian*. (Web Document) Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/sep/10/alzheimers-junk-food-catastrophic-effect>

⁴⁶ Trivedi, B. (2012). Eat your way to dementia. (cover story). *New Scientist*, 215(2880)32, p. 32.

Canada this figure is closer to 50% according to a Health Canada Advisory Committee.⁴⁸ This increasing use of antibiotics in the food system is contributing to the rise of “superbugs,” antibiotic-resistant bacteria that can have deadly effects. Antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria have infected two million people in the US, causing 90,000 deaths.⁴⁹

The safety of genetically modified foods is one of the most debated topics. Studies on the health-related impacts from Genetically Engineered (GE) foods have found:

- Rats fed GE soy and GE corn showed liver toxicity and impaired functioning⁵⁰
- Animals fed GE foods showing higher death rates and organ damage⁵¹
- Rats fed GE soy showing significant increases in infant mortality rates of up to 55%⁵²
- Rats fed GE soy showed increased infertility with fewer and smaller births⁵³

Thanks to our vast product selection based on a very small number of crops, GE products can be found in 70% of the items on our grocery shelves. Any product containing non-certified-organic corn, soy, or canola is almost certain to contain GE components.

Health concerns associated with today’s North American diet are significant. Food regulations should do more than protect us from illness resulting from improper handling of food. They should address the source and production of the foods themselves and their long-term effects on human health.

Income

In our community of Kaslo, the median income is \$10,000 less than the provincial average, which increases the incidence of food insecurity. (Census 2006)

⁴⁷ World Society for the Protections of Animals (WSPA). (2012) *What’s on Your Plate: The Hidden Costs of Industrial Agriculture in Canada*. Toronto, ON: WSPA. Retrieved from: <http://www.wspa.ca/food/default.aspx>.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Smith, J. M. (2007) “Genetically Modified Foods: Toxins and Reproductive Failures”. *Spilling the Beans Newsletter*. Retrieved from http://www.responsibletechnology.org/gmo-dangers/health-risks/articles-about-risks-by-jeffrey-smith/Genetically-Modified-Foods-Toxins-and-Reproductive-Failures-July-2007#_ednref29

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ermakova, I.V. *Experimental Evidence of GMO Hazards*, Presentation at Scientists for a GM Free Europe, EU parliament, Brussels, June 12, 2007

⁵³ Institute for Responsible Technology, IRT. (1996) *State of the Science on the Health risks of GM Foods*, Fairfield, IA: IRT V2.15.10. Retrieved from: <http://responsibletechnology.org/docs/145.pdf>

The Economy

There are several areas to observe and assess when looking at the economics of our current food system. There is the cost of food, specifically that of a nutritional food basket and who is able to afford it. Then there is the true cost of food – if all environmental and health factors were taken into account, what would be the true cost of that can of tuna? And lastly, how viable is it to farm and for whom is it financially viable?

According to the “Cost of Eating in BC”⁵⁴, the most significant barrier to food security is inadequate income. At the most basic level, barriers to food security can be purely a case of not being able to afford food.

Although Canada is a prosperous developed country, not all of our citizens share in that wealth. Almost 10% of our population lives below an annual income level of \$11,745.⁵⁵ Over 50% of Canadians who are considered to be low income are also considered to be food insecure.⁵⁶ As the level of household income decreases, a greater proportion of that income is required for shelter and food. To meet basic shelter and nutrition needs, a family of four on income assistance of \$1,871 per month would need to spend 58% of that income on shelter and 49% on food, leaving a deficit of \$127 a month, an impossible situation.⁵⁷ In rural BC, median incomes are typically lower than the provincial average.

The implications of this reality are elaborated by a study arguing that “nutrient-rich diets cost more”. The study found that “nutrients commonly associated with a lower risk of chronic disease [are] associated with higher diet costs but, by contrast, nutrients associated with higher disease risk are associated with lower diet costs.” So the cost of healthy food is higher and, consequently, the food that is more affordable is of lower quality.⁵⁸

“Cheap” food is enabled by production and processing of high volumes of similar, predictable inputs supported with government incentives and subsidies, and by externalizing (i.e., ignoring) related environmental and health costs.

Subsidies are payments made by government to manipulate (discourage or reward) specific behaviours in the food system. They may be used to stabilize prices, manage supply, or hold certain products off the market. There is always the question of who in the food chain

⁵⁴ Dietitians of Canada (2012) *Cost of Eating in BC 2011*. Dietitians of Canada, BC Region. Retrieved from http://www.dietitians.ca/Downloadable-Content/Public/CostofEatingBC2011_FINAL.aspx

⁵⁵ Pegg, S. & Baril, A. (2009) *Hunger Count 2009* Toronto, Canada: Food Banks Canada.

⁵⁶ Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, HRSDC (2001) *Food Insecurity in Canada, 1998-1999-May 2001* Retrieved from <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/cs/sp/sdc/pkrf/publications/research/2000>

⁵⁷ Dietitians of Canada (2012) *Cost of Eating in BC 2011*. Dietitians of Canada BC Region. Retrieved from http://www.dietitians.ca/Downloadable-Content/Public/CostofEatingBC2011_FINAL.aspx.

⁵⁸ Drewnowski, A. Monsivais, P. Aggarwal, A. (2012) *Nutrient Intakes Linked to Better Health Outcomes are Associated with Higher Diet Costs in the US*, PLoS ONE 7(5): e37533. Doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0037533

(producer, processor, retailer, and consumer) benefits and who pays and whether or not that distribution of benefit and payment is fair.

This balance of fairness can change if the full cost of the food (environmental and health as well as economic) is taken into account. An externality is an economic term that refers to a cost or benefit that is not transmitted through prices: externalities can be positive or negative.⁵⁹ Environmental impacts of the food system, in production, processing and transportation, are negative externalities not currently included, for instance, in the cost of the can of tuna.

Agriculture subsidies are payments made to producers for certain commodity crops or livestock. Subsidies are used to stabilize the prices, manage the supply, and supplement income for farmers. Corn, wheat, feed grains (for animal production), soy, cotton, milk, rice, sugar and tobacco are all subsidized, as well as certain livestock sectors. Current subsidies support artificially cheap food that has numerous negative health effects: a McDonald's Happy Meal is cheaper than a wholesome homemade balanced meal.

In Canada, we spend \$8 billion annually on farm subsidies.⁶⁰ According to the World Protection Society for the Protection of Animals, half of Canada's farm subsidies go to hog producers who are operating ILOs (intensive livestock operations).⁶¹ Intensive livestock operations are considered the most polluting, expensive form of farming when all factors are considered. ILOs contribute to antibiotic resistance, water contamination, soil erosion, and the destruction of lakes and whole ecosystems, such as the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

So we have agricultural subsidies fuelling the growth of a food system that costs us dearly in environmental externalities.

Another externality that needs to be considered is the increased health care costs associated with our modern food system.

Dead zone – “Dead zones are hypoxic (low-oxygen) areas in the world's oceans and large lakes, caused by “excessive nutrient pollution from human activities coupled with other factors that deplete the oxygen required to support most marine life in bottom and near-bottom water”.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Retrieved June 2012 from:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_zone_%28ecology%29.

⁵⁹ Fang, H. *Externality vs. Public Goods*, Duke University. Retrieved from:
http://public.econ.duke.edu/~hf14/teaching/econ681b_spring03/ExternalityVersusPublicGood.pdf

⁶⁰ Waldie, P. (2010) “The Growing Problem: Canada Slips from Agriculture Superpower Status”. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/time-to-lead/the-growing-problem-canada-slips-from-agricultural-superpower-status/article1316188/>

⁶¹ World Society for the Protections of Animals (WSPA). (2012) *What's on Your Plate: The Hidden Costs of Industrial Agriculture in Canada*. Toronto, ON: WSPA. Retrieved from:
<http://www.wspa.ca/food/default.aspx>. Toronto

The cost of food-borne illness, where much of our health regulations are focused, is \$12 to \$14 billion annually.⁶² The cost of antibiotic resistant infections (remember – over 50% of antibiotics purchased in Canada are for the livestock we eat) is about \$4 to \$5 billion annually.⁶³ Then there are the health epidemics – diabetes costs \$12.2 billion per year⁶⁴, obesity in the US brings with it a massive \$147 billion bill and the price for cardiovascular disease comes in at \$117 billion annually.⁶⁵

By this point, if all the costs were included, cheap food is looking very expensive.

Jules Pretty, a professor at the University of Essex, has been actively researching the true cost of our industrial food system and related policies. In a 2005 study analyzing the costs of production and food miles for a UK weekly food basket, Pretty determined that, when subsidies and externalities are accounted for, the cost of a weekly food basket rises by 11.8%. Most interesting is the cost comparison of a weekly food basket derived from conventional agriculture versus one of organic and local agriculture. For example, if conventional global agriculture was replaced with localized organic agriculture, the external costs of milk would be reduced by 42%, pork by 33%, and other meats in the 30% range as well.⁶⁶ Across the board, the external costs would drop by no less than 11%.

Interestingly, when the external costs for a local organic food basket are incorporated, the cost of a weekly food basket only rises by 3% compared to that of a conventional food basket. In essence, a local organic food basket is cheaper than its conventional counterpart, particularly

when one factors in the health benefits commonly associated with an organic diet.

Food miles – “Food miles is a term which refers to the distance food is transported from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer”. - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_miles

The last aspect to look at is the economic viability of farming. Since 1970, Canadian farmers have not increased their net farm income, but they have increased their debt load. Debt has increased as much as 700%, about \$23 on every net dollar earned on the farm.⁶⁷ According to a National Farmers Union brief to the House of Commons in April 2007, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada reports that the markets have

⁶² These figures refer to the direct cost to the Canadian Health Care system for food borne illnesses

⁶³ World Society for the Protections of Animals (WSPA). (2012) *What's on Your Plate: The Hidden Costs of Industrial Agriculture in Canada*. Toronto, ON: WSPA. Retrieved from: <http://www.wspa.ca/food/default.aspx>. Toronto

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Pattel, R (2009) *Stuffed and Starved*, Toronto, ON: Harper Collins

⁶⁶ Pretty, JN, Ball, A.S., Lang, T., Morison, J.I.L. (2005) *Farm Costs and Food Miles: An Assessment of the Full Cost of the UK Weekly Food Basket* Elsevier: University of Essex

⁶⁷ World Society for the Protections of Animals (WSPA). (2012) *What's on Your Plate: The Hidden Costs of Industrial Agriculture in Canada*. Toronto, ON: WSPA. Retrieved from: <http://www.wspa.ca/food/default.aspx>. Toronto

not rewarded farm families with a penny of net income for twenty plus years.⁶⁸ This alludes to why we have seen a decline in the number of farmers across our country, with many struggles seen firsthand in our rural communities.

The Silver Lining

The efforts to reform such an unhealthy and destructive system are often left to those facing the immediate impacts – those who cannot make a living and those who cannot afford to eat well. At the forefront of this battle are the grassroots organizations in our small and large communities. We have a big task ahead of us and, thankfully, enough passion to fuel a completely new way of eating and living.

Recognizing that our current agricultural system is a relatively new experiment can help us feel less overwhelmed with the realization that a change is drastically needed. The skills and knowledge that used to propel our rural communities needs to be re-invigorated with new innovations emerging. It is only within the last 70 years of the 10,000 plus years we have been farming, that we have been eating this way. Community-based food systems are not only a solution to the problems outlined above, but have the potential to rejuvenate our countryside with hope, possibility and healthy livelihoods.

When it comes to health, a local food system presents fresh and healthy options. The global food pantry is currently full of processed and laboratory-generated foods. A community-based system has no financial incentives or subsidies to produce highly processed, chemically laden foods or thousands of pounds of a commodity food to be shipped off for-profits. Instead the small-scale farmer grows directly for nearby markets, with diversity that fosters a healthy diet and, more so, a reconnection to the land that feeds the community in non-quantifiable ways.

When it comes to the environment, a local food system promotes small-scale operations where biodiversity is the means to a sustainable; economically viable food future. Diverse food systems maintain nutrients in the soil enhancing a local habitat while sustaining the population around them.

A local food system can assist not only with halting the path of illness and degradation of what we need to sustain us, but it can also be a whole new paradigm for wealth. Local food economies, especially in rural and remote communities, can have immense multiplier effects that revive declining regions and fuel them with new resource activities. The reclaiming of our food system presents a renewable industry that will generate lifetimes of health, wealth and the sustaining of the environments we depend on.

⁶⁸ National Farmers Union (2007) *The Farm Income Crisis, Business Risk Management, and "The Next Generation" Agricultural Policy Framework*, House of Commons Brief, Ottawa: ON.

4. INGREDIENTS

“Food is the one central thing about human experience that can open up both our senses and our conscience to our place in the world”⁶⁹

A successful community food security program has four essential ingredients:

1. People
2. Mission
3. Resources
4. Administrative structure

Community involvement is fuelled by will and capacity. The minimum requirement for any community-led initiative is enough people with the interest and capacity to participate. This ebbs and flows with each project and focus area. Be patient with it: in the beginning, your hunt is for the champions. So, start talking with your community.

⁶⁹ Waters, A. (n.d) *A Delicious Revolution*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ecoliteracy.org/essays/delicious-revolution>

INGREDIENT 1: PEOPLE

“Participation is involvement by a local population and, at times, additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives. Built on a belief that citizens can be trusted to shape their own future, participatory development uses local decision making and capacities to steer and define the nature of an intervention.”⁷⁰

Crucial to a community-based solution is ... the community!

With resource-based industries diminishing, rural economies are seeing a sharp decline in residents, income, and overall livelihood. Food could be a new economic driver and a sustainable economic solution for rural development while also enabling community food security. Food security coordinators (or ‘foodshed animators’) can become community developers connected to all facets of the community, from municipal government to the local school, consumers and farmers, low-income families and the grocery store.

A stakeholder – a person, group or organization with an interest in a project

Building community food security is an act of community development. It begins with tension – a struggle that people in the community have identified and are likely experiencing themselves. When residents are faced with struggles to meet daily needs, action becomes essential. These people are your primary stakeholders, the ones who will be directly impacted by the solutions.⁷¹

From the beginning, engaging your community’s eaters and food producers (e.g., farmers, processors, and vendors), those most affected by the discussion and proposed solutions, generates not only a community-based response that will best address the pressing issues, but harnesses the power of the community.

This participatory approach is crucial to community development for two reasons:

1. Engaging those for whom the solutions are intended is a way of generating ownership over the process and outcome, building relationships, and increasing the likelihood that community members will be involved, engaged and a part of the ongoing work.

⁷⁰ Jennings, R. (2000). *Participatory Development as New Paradigm: The Transition of Development Professionalism*. Washington, DC: Community Based Reintegration and Rehabilitation in Post-Conflict Settings Conference.

⁷¹ Kalina, L. (2001) *Building Food Security in Canada*. Kamloops FoodShare

2. The ability of those most affected to be involved and provide input increases the accuracy of understanding the problems and therefore increases the usefulness of proposed solutions.

By shifting our communities to be engaged, involved, empowered, and owners of their community programs, we build capacity and resiliency.

To engage your community start a conversation, which can be in several formats:

- Start a conversation one-on-one with various stakeholders: listen, hear and reflect back what they are aware of and concerned about, provide input that can stimulate further discussions.
- Host a potluck: have discussion points ready, and lead a discussion among the participants.
- Host a community presentation with a food movie, or invite a local food expert who can highlight many of the key issues we talked about in the 'why' section of this Guide.
- See if there are book clubs that would be willing to read a food reality book (for example *Fast Food Nation*⁷², *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*⁷³ or *In Defense of Food*⁷⁴) and then present their findings to a local group of stakeholders.
- Put random food facts on your local bulletin board with a note asking if people would like to talk further; provide your contact information.

Beginnings

In our community, seniors were facing increasing costs as well as decreasing access to healthy foods. They gathered and approached our local community services agency to inquire about what could be done. North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society acquired funds to conduct a food forum, and thus our project began.

Know your demographics and meet people in their comfort zone. Residents in a retirement home may really enjoy telling stories of how they grew and preserved food and made it through tough times, and will feel respected and honoured by the interest you are showing. A youth center will more likely respond to a dynamic game, movie or music-related information. The grocery store will need to be welcomed as part of the solution, not as an accomplice in global food system destruction.

Whatever you do to engage the community, know that meetings are old and boring. This is an opportunity to get creative: the overall goal is to inspire, invigorate and build momentum. There will be many meetings to come, so be creative with the process of community engagement.

⁷² Schlosser, E. (2001) *Fast Food Nation*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

⁷³ Kingslover, B. (2007) *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. HarperCollins

⁷⁴ Pollan, M. (2008) *In Defense of Food*. Penguin Press

In your discussions, there are a few key questions you want to ask and find answers to in order to get to your next steps.

- What is community food security?
- Why should it be important to your community?
- Are there direct accounts of those that are in immediate need of assistance or is there knowledge of immediate actions needed?
- Who are your stakeholders?

Throughout the process, look out for your champions/leaders. They will be integral to maintaining stamina and evolving your programs. Champions are those who have capacity, knowledge, understanding, passion and the ability to act.

Recognize that you are not creating a community where none previously existed. Use the community meetings and discussions to learn about how the local food system worked in earlier days – there may be a knowledge and infrastructure base that could be really important to your plans. The local solutions when the roads of old made travel difficult may work once again as fuel costs rise and travel becomes more prohibitive.



An early community event in Kaslo focused on a dinner using ingredients from local farmers and conversations about food security.

This engagement process will evolve as your community and programs do, the people in it will change, and the information, conversations and exchanges will evolve. Being able to evolve with these changes will be important. Community engagement tools can be very helpful.

Community Engagement Tools

Food should be viewed systemically, using a holistic, all-inclusive lens that addresses production, water, the environment, eaters, access, nutrition and more. This will deepen understanding and expand your ability to create solutions that will work for your community. The tools given here are just a few of those available. You will discover your own along the way.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ **Open Space Technology** – This way of convening a meeting works well for direction setting. People gather in response not to a pre-set agenda but to a question/issue that is “big, attractive and do-able”. The facilitator guides but does not direct the process; the participants build the agenda and create the proceedings. <http://www.sparc.bc.ca/open-space-technology-an-inviting-guide> or http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-space_technology
- ▶ **World Café** – World Cafe is useful for harnessing the power of conversations that come out of provocative questions. An informal, café-style setting with small groups of 3 to 4 people that provides the space for collaborative dialogue. <http://www.theworldcafe.com/pdfs/cafetogo.pdf>
- ▶ **Community Mapping** – Mapping records history and informs the future. It can be highly interactive, connecting people while capturing a rich “collective representation of geography and landscape”.⁷⁵ http://lifecyclesproject.ca/resources/mapping_common_ground.php
- ▶ **Mobilize: RESPECT Tips and Tools for Better Community Engagement** – Maureen "Mo" Douglas, a BC consultant, provides workshops and resources on community engagement, including her R-E-S-P-E-C-T (Relevant, Engaging, Sincere, Prepared, Expert, Collaborative, Trust) engagement strategy. <http://www.mobilizestrategies.com/>
- ▶ **Systems Thinking** – Systems thinking is a tool for organizing information in a format that allows for all of the variable influences and/or outcomes are included in the questioning and visioning. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systems_thinking
- ▶ **Smart Surveys** – An article full of survey tips. Surveying your community and knowing how to ask the right questions is an important tool for understanding your community needs. <https://www.acrobat.com/formscentral/en/library/smart-survey.html>

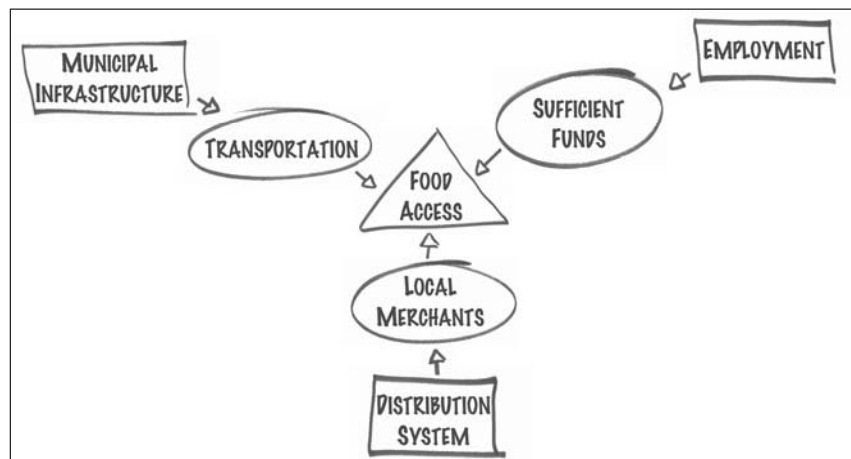
Mind Maps, Idea Diagrams, Story Walls

These tools differ from community mapping in that they are conceptual, not geographically referenced. All can be collaboratively created by participants in a workshop.

Mind maps put an issue at the centre and then brainstorm to add a web of connections.

⁷⁵ Lydon, M. (2005), *Mapping our Common Ground: A community and green mapping guide*. GroundWorks (pg. 1)

Idea diagrams also put the key issue at the centre (food access, for example) and then add, expanding outwards, first, second and third order factors (that influence or aspect that affects food access). In the example below, first order factors are circled and second order factors are in rectangles.



Idea Diagram

Story walls create the story of an issue or community project over time, using different colours or shapes for different phenomena (for example, a light bulb for a bright idea, a jagged shape for a conflict).

Such tools highlight most of the factors that influence a given issue. When a group of people work on them then share the results, an extremely articulate and accurate picture can be created. This brings holism to the treatment of complex issues.

Tools & Resources:

- http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm
- <http://www.mapyourmind.com/ebook.pdf>

Education and Awareness-Raising

Educating your community in a collaborative, engaging way provides tools for people to learn and make new choices. Just as we do not want people to feel shame for going to a food bank, we do not want to overwhelm or sound righteous when disseminating information. People must be empowered to make different choices and come to different conclusions. Provide information, engage people, listen and guide.

Tools & Resources:

- *The Food Transformation: Harnessing Consumer Power to Create a Fair Food Future* – This is a consumer advocacy tool, but all eaters are consumers, so it can be helpful to provide quick facts to capture people's attention.
<http://www.oxfam.org/en/grow/policy/food-transformation>

- **Nourish Food System Tools** – This is an online curriculum that could be used in the classroom or in a community meeting to guide learning about the food system and how to change it, from farm to fork. It’s easy to use, and you can pick areas of interest to focus on.
<http://www.nourishlife.org/teach/food-system-tools/>
- **Where in the world does our food come from?** – LifeCycles in Victoria has an extensive list of guides for understanding the food system and disseminating what one can do about it. This one is geared towards teachers, but is useful for general purposes as well.
http://lifecyclesproject.ca/resources/where_in_the_world.php
- **Host Healthy Gatherings** – This is a section of the “Local Leaders Harvesting Change Toolkit.” See pg 14
<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/healthyeating/pdf/local-government-toolkit.pdf>

Education

Once we completed our food forum, we had a clear set of actions that the community wanted to focus on. The first project was education to increase community awareness about the importance of food security and what it means. At the time, the term “food security” was understood as referring to food safety, or to those currently in need of food.

It was a year-long task educating about community food security, its broader aspects and how it affects the community. We offered a speaker series. We hosted a meal to build momentum, engage our community and gain support to move forward. We showed the film ‘The Future of Food’ to kick things off, which it did! People were shocked at some things they learned about the food system.

INGREDIENT 2: MISSION

A Vision is a statement of what you would like your community food system to be and your Mission Statement describes how you will get there. An Assessment is the process to determine what's missing and what is needed to get to your goal. Assessments, monitoring and evaluation are used to measure whether you are adhering to your mission or whether your activities or your mission should change. Your mission will likely evolve over time, according to the outcomes of your assessment process.

Developing your mission

A mission statement will identify the purpose and primary objectives that will guide your food security work. If your community already has a food charter, it could be used as your mission statement.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ ***How to Write a Mission Statement:*** – <http://www.tgci.com/magazine/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Mission%20Statement.pdf>
- ▶ ***Mission Statements for Community Work*** – Although it is an American link, the resources are plentiful. This site looks at what should be in a mission statement for a variety of community organizations. <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/governance/mission.aspx>

Setting a baseline: assessment

The primary purpose for a community food security assessment is to conduct a “participatory and collaborative learning process to analyze a community’s food system, identify goals for its improvement and agreed actions to achieve them.”⁷⁶ The assessment helps ensure that your community food security program can meet your community’s food security needs as they have been identified. The process will identify stakeholders, gaps and assets, and will help create networks.

A food security assessment will provide:

- An accurate picture of your current community food system and how it works
- Information that is likely not available from formal local statistics
- Information that will guide decision making and funding applications
- A foundation for directing your community food security program

Compiling information from a variety of sources to assess community food security will be crucial for the health, economy, and social state of your community. Depending on what food-

⁷⁶ Personal communication, May 2010 from Reg Noble, Ryerson University CFNY 405 Module 5

security-related organizations already exist in the community, much of the information you gather may never have been put together in one place before.

There are two essential qualities for your food security assessment:

1. Cross-sectoral – food security touches on so many areas that the assessment must include all demographics (agriculture, health, environment, and more). The complexity of the issue will require “many heads” to come together.⁷⁷
2. Participatory – accurate and strategic responses, and community buy-in are best achieved through participatory processes.

Before you start your assessment, you will want to ask, “what do we need to know?” The basic information needed to characterize a community food system includes:⁷⁸

- Socioeconomic profile and demography of the community
- Type, abundance and distribution of food sources
- Type, location, and amount of food production within the community (do not forget hunting, fishing, gathering, and country foods)
- Physical access to food sources of different types
- Price of foods required to meet weekly healthy eating needs for a household (Nutritional Food Basket Guide)⁷⁹
- Economic characteristics of the food system
- Prevalence of household food insecurity
- Governance and decision making structures setting policy in the community food system and matters related to it

The type and level of assessment you do will depend on who is asking, what you ask and what you need to know. Your initial community conversations should guide you.

There are two types of food system assessments. The difference is very much related to the scale of the information needed and the purpose of collecting it. The more formal approach is a Community Food System Assessment (CFSA), the less formal assessment is a Food Forum (FF).

While a CFSA can be a very precise way to identify and help create programs that meet specific targets, the required information may be more onerous than necessary. Embarking on an assessment that is overly detailed may hold your group up and burn people out before you’ve achieved some successful actions. If your community has an immediate need, or perhaps needs a ‘quick win’ to gain momentum, a comprehensive assessment may not be a first priority.

⁷⁷ Personal communication, May 2010 from Reg Noble, Ryerson University CFNY 405 Module 5

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ A guide to determining what a Nutritional Food Basket costs is available at:
<http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/healthy-communities/public-health/guidance-docs/NutritiousFoodBasket.PDF>

In smaller communities, crucial facts are more likely to be found in community conversations rather than information from Statistics Canada.

A Food Forum can be a very informal process, so there is no formal guide. The primary purpose of a food forum is to gain both primary and secondary data on your community's food system that is then presented in a public format with the goal of gaining community input and guidance on next steps to achieve your mission. Food Forums can be places for celebration of local food. Most often, they are centered on a meal, to directly link to the supply, abundance and wonderful taste of local foods. They are also used to gain momentum within the community, by first celebrating successes, then presenting information on what needs to be worked on.

To acquire primary and secondary data, look to resources such as those listed below, first assessing

Primary data is information collected by the researcher directly through instruments such as surveys, interviews, focus groups or observation.

Secondary data, on the other hand, is basically primary data that was previously collected, such as statistics from Statistics Can.

- Food distributors
- Community-based organizations involved in food activities
- Government policy makers

Institutions that buy or educate about food (hospitals, schools, daycares, seniors homes)

Farmer Statistics

Although agriculture is an active pastime in our region with many homesteaders and small scale farmers, only two appear as "bona fide" farmers in available statistics from government sources. With the reduction of data collected by Statistics Canada, we are not able to glean accurate information about our region if we rely on these types of information alone.

what primary data has already been collected and are available. Then, identify stakeholders and arrange for group meetings to determine assets, barriers, and deficits within their respective areas of interest. Your mission will guide the questions you ask. A stakeholder is someone who is directly involved, connected to, has influence on, or is subject to the local food system, for example:⁸⁰

- Farmers
- Fishers and hunters
- Food retailers
- Food producers
- Food processors

⁸⁰ Personal communication, May 2010 from Reg Noble, Ryerson University CFNY 405 Module 5

A Food Forum can be used at various stages of your food security work. Whether you use a Food Forum or a CFSA, it is crucial to begin your community food security work with an assessment. It will provide you with a foundation. At later stages, food forums can be used as monitoring and evaluating tools, and to maintain community involvement.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ **Community Food System Assessment Guide for BC –**
http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/cscd/PDFs/researchprojects_food_security_communityfoodassessmentguideforbc.pdf
- ▶ **Community Food Assessment Guide – Public Health Association of BC –** Of the two BC Guides, this is the simpler one that can be more applicable to rural and remote communities. <http://www.phsa.ca/NR/ronlyres/10ADB2B7-DD0F-49FA-AC58-E40D642E412B/0/CommunityFoodAssessmentGuide.pdf>
- ▶ **USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit -** This guide is the most comprehensive with many 'how to' sections on how to actually collect the data as well as how to use it. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan-electronic-publications-from-the-food-assistance-nutrition-research-program/efan02013.aspx>
- ▶ **National Food Insecurity Statistics –** <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/commun/insecurit/key-stats-cles-2007-2008-eng.php#a>
- ▶ **In select provinces –** <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/commun/insecurit/prov-ter-2005-eng.php>
- ▶ **How to determine your household food security status –** <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/commun/insecurit/status-situation-eng.php> or <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/commun/insecurit/hfssm-mesam-eng.php>
- ▶ **How to determine the cost of a Nutritional Food Basket –**
<http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/healthy-communities/public-health/guidance-docs/NutritiousFoodBasket.PDF>
- ▶ **Canada's Food Guide –** <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/order-commander/index-eng.php>

Qualitative research is collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data by observing the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of what people do and say.

Quantitative research refers to the counts and measures of things; the numbers.

- ▶ **Food Banks Canada annual publication; Hunger Count** – <http://foodbankscanada.ca/getmedia/3b946e67-fbe2-490e-90dc-4a313dfb97e5/HungerCount2012.pdf.aspx>
- ▶ **The Cost of Eating in BC** – <http://www.dietitians.ca/Secondary-Pages/Public/The-Cost-of-Eating-in-British-Columbia.aspx>

Monitoring and evaluating your program

At the time you design your program, you need to establish the criteria and process with which you will monitor and evaluate it. Monitoring and evaluating your work is essential to ensure that you are meeting your goals and that your programs are evolving with community needs.

It is crucial to capture not only information that is static but also information that is changing, for example, changes in livelihoods and the community's health and well-being. In gathering data, ensure the tools you use are both for quantitative and qualitative measurements.⁸¹ Moving beyond numbers into livelihood changes will ensure your evaluation captures the details that best articulate what has or still needs to change. This is why your community engagement tools will be essential; the process of engaging your community will allow those non-static changes to be identified.

Most grants will require reporting that includes some level of monitoring and evaluating. However, the levels required for grant reporting may not be detailed enough to provide the input needed to support your programs. Ensure that your monitoring and evaluating stage has adequate funding and is designed to meet your community's needs in addition to fulfilling the requirements of funders.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ **Whole Measures for Community Food Systems** – Whole Measures for Community Food Systems is a values-based, community-orientated tool for evaluation. It provides a comprehensive guide to ensuring evaluations include not only static numbers of quantitative changes, but also capture the systemic and value shifting (qualitative) measures to encompass all that community food security work touches.
<http://vibrantcanada.ca/resource-library/food-security/whole-measures-community-food-systems-values-based-planning-and-evalu>
- ▶ **Measuring Collective Impact: Evaluating the Activities of Food Security Networks** – This presentation was offered through Community Food Centers Canada to offer guidelines on best practices for evaluating program impacts.
<http://nbfsanrasanb.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/cfcc-evaluating-food-networks.pdf>

⁸¹ Anderson, J. (2006) *Qualitative and Quantitative Research*. Imperial COE. Retrieved from: http://www.icoe.org/webfm_send/1936 (p.1)

- ▶ ***Food Security and Livelihood Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines: A Practical Guide for Fieldworkers*** – This guide is very detailed and geared towards those working in developing countries, but it does provide a very clear outline for why participatory monitoring and evaluation is important.
http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/ACF_FSL_ME_Programme_Guidelines_EN_Dec_2011.pdf
- ▶ ***The Most Significant Change: A Guide to its Use*** – This is a tool that is very specific to capturing non-quantitative (measurable) impacts of social programs. The Most Significant Change technique is based on storytelling, an interesting way to engage and measure. <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

INGREDIENT 3: RESOURCES

Resources mostly refer to funding, but also include volunteers, partnerships, and other sources of support that will provide the capacity to achieve your food security program goals.

Seeking funding will be an ongoing activity. Food security does not currently fit into any core funding streams, thus there will be a need to constantly seek and source potential funds. This requirement can be a burden on your food security program and can alter your ability to stay focused on what is best for your community. Many non-profit programs aim to have a low administrative overhead so that funds can be directed to attaining goals. However, keeping overheads low is particularly difficult if there is a constant need to seek, write, and report on short-term grants. Average administration fees for social programs run around 20% of overall budgets.⁸² For programs reliant on short-term grants, this requirement is likely to be substantially higher. Some funders may set a limit of 10% or 15% for administration. This is

Grant Writing

Our program averages thirty hours of prep time per grant request, including research, budgeting, community consultation and planning. At our agency this is a team effort with four people. We prepare grant requests at least every six months, if not more often.

unrealistic for a well-managed program, however you have to work with what you can get and if the administration percentage is set too low, then it is likely that program staff will need to be more involved in grant-writing and reporting. You will likely need to write grant requests every four to six months.

As well, because food security touches so many facets of our lives, program staff will frequently be asked to participate in a variety of ad-hoc projects, such as conferences, webinars, or local government consultations (creating Official Community Plans or land use planning, for example). Although you may not receive funding for these activities, there are advantages to participating, such as building useful

relationships. However, such additional activities can divert precious time from funded activities.

The good news about funding food security programs is that, due to their cross-sectoral nature, you can look at a wide variety of funding streams.

⁸² Bedsworth, W. Goggins Gregory, A. Howard, D. (2008) *Non-profit Overhead Costs*, The Bridgespan Group, retrieved from: <http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Strategy-Development/Nonprofit-Overhead-Costs-Break-the-Vicious-Cycle.aspx#.Up00ISc7uuY>

Funding Streams

Health

Funding for food security activities via a health stream is quite common, because food security has been recognized as a key determinant of health^{83,84}. In BC, we have been fortunate to have the Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI) administered by Provincial Health Services Authority. The CFAI was created in 2005 to support healthy eating measures using a food security lens. It provides funding to a large variety of programs across the Province, such as community gardens, food forums, and multi-year implementation programs such as our Food Hub creation.

Social

Food security work is often related to issues of poverty. The basic costs of living in most regions far outrun social assistance levels, and increasing numbers of people in Canada are forced to use food banks. Social funding streams can address these issues: most often, they will apply to emergency food security in the form of food banks, food cupboards, soup kitchens and food gleaning programs such as a Fruit Tree Project. Social funding streams can also work with the cultural and celebratory aspects of food security. These funds can assist in gathering people around a meal or a variety of meals for the purpose of generating community engagement to improve the social structures that affect our local food systems.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the foundation to establishing a secure community food system. Paramount for your program is the capacity of local farmers to produce the food necessary for your goals. Increasing the productive and economic viability of local farms is an ongoing activity that will also cross into both

Our funders over the years:

- *Community Food Action Initiative (Interior Health)*
- *Union of BC Municipalities Healthy Communities Fund*
- *Kairos Anti-Poverty Fund*
- *DASH*
- *Vancouver Foundation*
- *Eco Action Canada*
- *Columbia Basin Trust*
- *Regional District Central Kootenay*
- *Village of Kaslo*
- *BC Ministry of Housing and Social Development: BC Gaming*
- *Enterprising Non Profits*
- *Community Fund of North Kootenay Lake*

⁸³ Drasic, L. (2006) *Perspectives on Community Based Food Security Projects: A Discussion Paper*. Public Health Services Authority. Retrieved from: <http://www.phsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/C72FCE36-9DCD-4A9C-B001-8635509D26C0/0/PerspectivesonCommunityBasedFoodSecurityProjectsDiscussionPaper.pdf>

⁸⁴ Mikkonen, J., & Raphael, D. (2010). *Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts*. Toronto: York University School of Health Policy and Management. <http://www.thecanadianfacts.org/>

environment and economic development. This funding stream can address many needs related to production, from simply assessing the current state of your farmers through food value chain assessments, farmland matching, and farm plans or agricultural area plans. In BC, funding streams include the Investment Agriculture Foundation in addition to periodic grants available from industry organizations which offer funding for farming or processing.

Environment

With municipalities across the nation signing up for carbon reduction strategies, there are many opportunities to tap into these initiatives through projects such as increasing local food production in order to reduce the need for shipping food from thousands of miles away. There is also great interest in shifting farms from an industrial model to a more environmentally sensitive model. In BC, we have the Environmental Farm Plan program that assists farmers to assess and plan for transitioning to a lighter footprint on their land.

Economic

Enabling local food systems to be economically viable is crucial to their sustainability. It makes sense to seek funds to explore potential economic drivers that can help increase the viability of your local food systems. Social enterprises can be effective tools for creating income streams from a product or services that can also help to achieve social goals. A community economic development approach can also enable food security work to be furthered through such mechanisms as buy local guides, farmers markets or food hubs.

As mentioned above, there is no core funding at this time for food security work. While there are organizations that have been mandated to invest in food-related work, the ability to list potential funders here is limited due to how often they change. Accordingly, we have not provided a detailed list of funders. However, we have a generic list to keep your eye on and some tips about how best to find potential funds.

Potential Funding Sources

Some tips for sourcing funders are:

- When you read a report or research other food projects, look for or ask who funded them
- Sign up for any e-newsletters that may contain funding information. These are usually available through the various streams such as BC Healthy Communities Newsletter (<http://bchealthycommunities.ca/signup>)
- Maintain a connection with your local government for any partnership opportunities
- Attend food security conferences and network with others in the field and ask how they are maintaining their activities

Tools & Resources:

Canada

Some of the organizations below have provincial counterparts, check for those first. Some, such as the United Way, rely on the existence of a local chapter, which is lacking in our community.

- ▶ **Community Foundations of Canada** – <http://www.cfc-fcc.ca/>
- ▶ **United Way** – <http://www.unitedway.ca/our-work/united-way-office-locator>
- ▶ **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada** – http://www.agr.gc.ca/index_e.php#
- ▶ **Green Funding Database** – http://www.ec.gc.ca/financement-funding/sv-gs/index_e.cfm
- ▶ **Enterprising Non-profits** – <http://www.enterprisingnonprofits.ca/>
- ▶ **Cooperative Development** – <http://cdfcanada.coop/>
- ▶ **Green Municipal Fund** – <http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/green-municipal-fund.htm>
- ▶ **Partners for Climate Protection** – <http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/partners-for-climate-protection.htm>
- ▶ **Public Health Agency of Canada** – <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fo-fc/mspphl-pppmvs-eng.php#a2>

British Columbia

- ▶ **Columbia Basin Trust** – (specific to the Columbia Basin region) <http://www.rdck.bc.ca/corporate/grants/cbt.html>
- ▶ **Islands Trust** – (specific to the islands between the BC mainland and southern Vancouver Island) <http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/>
- ▶ **BC Gaming** – <http://www.gaming.gov.bc.ca/>

Current Funding

Our program currently has six separate income streams, with grants being our primary source of funds.

1. *Grants*
2. *Income from our social enterprise- the Kaslo Bulk Buying Club (markup on goods directly supports our Food Cupboard)*
3. *Memberships for the Buying Club (these fees cover our utilities and other overhead costs)*
4. *Volunteer labour reduces staff time needed for Food Cupboard operations and promotional activities*
5. *Donations have provided a large amount of the funds we use for our Food Cupboard*
6. *Program fees from the Community Root Cellar, Tool Library and seasonal workshops*

Volunteer Contribution

Volunteers have assisted our Food Cupboard to reduce coordinator time, assisted with facility maintenance, and have attended community meetings to provide input and report back to us.

► **Local Government –**

<http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/18.asp>

► **Community Futures –**

<http://www.communityfutures.ca/index.html>

► **BC Food Security Gateway; Funding Section –**

<http://www.bcfoodsecuritygateway.ca/modules.php?name=Content&pa=viewdoc&cid=301>

Building Your Funding Strategy

Your funding strategy needs to fit with both your community needs and available funds. This requires nothing short of strategic orchestration. To build stability into your programs, it is highly recommended that you create a diversified funding stream.

A food security program is usually going to be dependent on grants for core operations. As the program builds, the goal would be to create sustainability factors, such as a social enterprise, and eventually decrease the need for outside funding while increasing local economic support. One of the reasons we need multiple income streams is due to a limited market base that cannot provide enough funds to completely sustain the project with only one social enterprise. In a more urban setting, the ability to be fully supported through a single social enterprise is enhanced.

Non-Financial Resources

Many funders recognize and are willing to take into account non-financial “in kind” resources you contribute to your project and program activities.

Volunteers are integral to long-term program success. They may be short-term volunteers helping with events, or they may sign up to be a part of the team on a steering committee or working group to help with project needs. Volunteers are a great resource in the community as they help spread information about your program. Be sure you track all those volunteer hours as this will enable you to attach a dollar value to them when you apply for a grant.

*A **stacked budget** is when you use multiple income streams and cost reducing methods to balance the overall budget. See the end of this section for a sample stacked budget*

Partnerships with local governments, businesses or other non-governmental organizations can also assist with reducing program costs. Some may be able to provide inexpensive or free meeting space or conference calling services. If you live in a municipality where the health authority is embedded within the local government, it may have staff that can assist with, or carry out, a variety of program

activities. Planners within a municipality can also provide resources, such as staff or tools for information gathering. Although the ability to work with other organizations can be useful and lucrative for food security programs, this asset is diminished in rural and remote communities and may not be possible for your program. It will be important for you to seek out any organizations that do work related to food security, create a connection, and keep them in mind when projects come up. You will never know who or what resources may be available unless you reach out!

Sample Budget

Stacked Budget

A stacked budget refers to using several income streams to meet the needs of program delivery. An example of this is when a social program uses not only grants for funding, but also finds funding from a social enterprise, program fees, memberships, volunteer labour to reduce staff time, donations, and other forms of income. This type of income comes without 'strings attached' and can assist with expenses such as administration, rent and utilities, not always covered by grants. The more a program can diversify its income stream to sustainable sources, the less the dependency can be on grants.

In a feasibility study we conducted in 2010, we found we could potentially support our program needs using such a budget. Our proposed budget included plans to: reduce staff needs through volunteer labour; increase food and money donations for the food cupboard through an annual hunger drive to thereby reducing the needs of grants to cover food purchases; and operate a social enterprise offering a variety of food items for sale with the profits contributing to our operational needs.

Long Term Goal

Our long-term goal is to close. We are working to create systemic changes and to build economic development in our region. If our governments are on board with supportive policy and legislation, we should be able to create a paradigm shift in our food systems that leads to a food secure community and removes the need for our programming.

Note: this budget represents a possible future scenario. At this time, KFSP is supported by a combination of grants, donations and social enterprise income

| Expected Annual Operational Costs (KFSP) | | |
|--|--------------|-------------------|
| Wages for coordination and operation of the Food Hub | \$ 15,475.20 | 12hrs/wk- \$20/hr |
| Phone/Internet | 600.00 | |
| Rent & Utilities | 1,980.00 | \$165/month |
| Food for Food Cupboard | 12,000.00 | \$1000/month |
| Supplies | 200.00 | |
| Administration | 5,339.15 | 15% |
| In-kind - volunteer time | 4,680.00 | 6 hours per week |
| Total Expense | \$ 35,594.35 | |

| Income Projections (KFSP) | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|
| Net Sales | \$ 19,094.35 | income from 20% markup on Bulk Buying Club sales and food products |
| Memberships | 3,500.00 | 100 members @ \$35ea |
| Root Cellar rentals | 1,000.00 | |
| Cash donations | 9,000.00 | reflects donations in 2012 |
| Food donations | 3,000.00 | |
| In Kind (volunteer labour) | 4,680.00 | 6 hours per week |
| Total Income | \$ 35,594.35 | |

INGREDIENT 4: ADMINISTRATION

Administration will be required to manage your community food security program to provide key services such as accounting, financial management, grant writing, staffing, and volunteer management. The range of services your program requires will depend on your chosen activities.

Food Security Coordinators

The leaders of community food projects are essentially community developers. Because of the diverse areas that food security work touches, those who lead the work are involved in many facets of the community. We can become central repositories or clearinghouses for a large variety of information: who is gardening where and what they are growing; who has apples, and who needs apples; resources for employment; where to get food-related social services; land use plans that may affect farming; rates of obesity and diabetes in the community; and providing recipes for low-glycemic cooking, to name just a few.

A food security coordinator in a rural community will often find he or she is wearing an increasing number of hats to carry out the activities. We usually have no access to planners; economic development officers are not always in our regions; and municipal and regional councils are operating at full capacity with little time for new initiatives that are hard to understand. In a rural community, the people doing this work are acting as planners, health advocates, agricultural extension agents, social services and resource hubs.

Key to success of the food security coordinator's work is the individual. Grassroots community work is never going to be a lucrative job and can often demand more than what is paid for. The drive to make and sustain commitments must be there with a passion. Just as farmers are real heroes in our small communities, those working in community development are a special breed of passionate, generally over-organized and extreme networkers, who can be obsessively committed. Because work in small communities is very much about relationships, continuity of personnel in the role of food security coordinator is important – ideally the same individual over multiple years, at least during the early stages of your program.

North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society

As a non-profit society, our umbrella organization, NKLCSS, is guided by the BC Societies Act. This limits its ability to advocate (take up public policy issues with government, or lobby). Working under a non-profit society, we have experienced this as a limitation: no more than 10% of our or our host's overall budget may be spent on activities deemed to be advocacy. This becomes challenging when dealing with social issues that are technically the responsibility of government.

Our Agency's Strengths

While we are limited in our advocacy activities, we have many advantages. We were lucky that the agency we operate under chose to do food security work, and we have been employed to do so for seven years now. Because it is a social service agency, we have access to grants for community development, environmental, and public health projects. With the emergence of social enterprises, we can broaden our scope to economic development. This gives us a wide range of activities to work on. Our agency is accredited with the Council on Accreditation (COA) . To gain accreditation, we have met all relevant regulations, standards and provide a high level of program delivery with regular improvement practices, which provides assurance to funders that we are credible and accountable

Champions and leaders, no matter their focus in your communities, need to be nurtured to flourish; for your communities need them. Their and your ability to be successful depends on accountability, which requires administrative mechanisms to support key functions. An active, engaged and productive community food security program will require ongoing administrative support.

In the earliest stages of your program, you may be providing administration services yourself. However, as soon as you start to raise money funders will require a legal entity, often a charity, to receive funds. At that point you will need either to find an existing organization to “adopt” your program under its own umbrella, or you will need to create your own organization.

Umbrella organization

An organization you enlist to support the activities of building community food security should increase your program’s accountability. Every agency will have guiding mandates that could support or hinder the work. Your research and assessment phase should look for the most appropriate agency and best match for the work you choose to do.

A large part of the purpose of an umbrella organization is to provide financial administration. Funding for this work is largely in the form of grants, donations and social enterprises. Accurate accounting and competent financial management is critical and takes time and effort. Having an agency that can

provide this support is invaluable.

Due to the community-based nature of food security work, it is most likely that a not-for-profit organization will be the best fit. Not-for-profit societies are incorporated in the provinces and territories. They may or may not be federally registered charities. An organization with charitable status is required if your program is to receive funds from charitable foundations (like the McConnell Foundation or the Vancouver Foundation).

Consider carefully which possible organizations in your community will be the best fit with your mission and approach. In a small community you are looking for an organization that can facilitate the management of your administrative needs while also providing credibility in your community and to funders. The main purpose of the agency is to enable governance and

management of program activities. A municipal council will be guided by different rules than a community garden society which will be guided by different rules than a school program. Most common food-security-driven efforts for small communities are led by health authorities, churches and local non-profits.

If your efforts are volunteer-led, you may look to your umbrella organization for a limited range of support services, for example, receiving funds on your behalf and reports on your work. If your funding permits for hiring of personnel, the umbrella organization may assist in hiring you and/or enabling you to hire others.

As your program matures, you will likely wish to look beyond volunteer help. If your efforts are completely dependent on volunteers, you run the risk of priorities not being met. This is not to discount the abilities of volunteers, but it is a consistent observation from working in a rural community that supports a high number of non-profit activities. Burnout, family commitments, and aging are key factors to be aware of and plan for in considering the availability and dependability of volunteers.

A food security coordinator will be the primary person to ensure your program meets funders' requirements and maintains the momentum to achieve your mission. With the assistance of volunteers and perhaps a steering committee, the food security coordinator is your lead. Should you create an agency to carry out the work, this position would be considered an Executive Director.

New organization

Any coordinated effort requires administration, and the challenge is to know how much is appropriate at different stages in the evolution of your community food security work. The creation and tending of a non-profit society takes time. A society is a legal entity that requires a constitution, bylaws, annual filings with the government, a board of directors, annual general meetings of its membership, financial statements and so on. The advantage of a dedicated non-profit entity is that it can articulate and pursue its own mission and raise its own funds. If it also incorporates as a federally registered charity, it can receive grant monies from charitable

After Seven Years

The biggest limitation we face is the need to continuously apply for grants. The time commitment, inability to plan long term, and conflicting community needs vs. available funds all increase administrative pressures. As well, we continue to be limited in our overall ability to impact the larger picture of food security. Government policies that are contrary to that of food security mean that some of our initiatives remain short-lived, grant-dependent and idealistic. One example of this our Food Charter; yes, our community has a Food Charter to guide our local community development, but the inability to interact with the larger societal forces impacting our local food system and our local Council's limited ability to act on the Charter means its goals remain elusive and Council support is only "in principle".

foundations. Incorporating as a federal charity is not an easy task and places distinct limitations on the activities of the organization.

If you need to start a new organization, be prepared for a lot of work and ensure you have a good group of committed people who have capacity, understand the duties of directing a non-profit society, and are willing to follow through in a timely manner.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ *Guide from the Law Foundation of BC* – that has a great step-by-step and overview, to help you decide whether this is the path your group wants to take:
<http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca/resource/2238>
- ▶ *Society Act* – which governs not-for-profit organizations in British Columbia
http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96433_01

5. PROGRAM AND PROJECT OPTIONS

Emergency Food and Food Recovery Programs

Some communities will initiate food security work because there is an immediate need: food insecurity exists. Access to emergency foods is almost always a program aspect of a comprehensive approach to community food security. Some communities already have emergency food programs, some need them, and some need alternative versions to better assist with moving clients out of food insecurity.

Food Banks

The most common emergency food programs are food banks. They meet an essential need, but can have limitations. There are, however, two concerns with emergency food programs that must be highlighted.

They are unsustainable and not a lasting solution to food insecurity; also known as a band-aid solution.

These programs are unsustainable in that they consume a great deal of energy while only being able to provide short-term relief. Food Banks require a great deal of management with little to no core funding to do so, which means staff and volunteers are constantly seeking donations/support while maintaining operations. These programs do not, and are not designed to, change the overall structure of the food system and can, in some ways, conflict with capacity-building strategies intended to bring about structural change. An example of this conflict would be when they mask the reality of food insecurity across our communities.

Food is a human right and ensuring that right should be a matter of policy, not voluntary charity.

With the recession of the 1980s and changes in federal and provincial policy and social programs, food banks emerged to deal with the increase in basic human needs. This system, originally intended to be temporary, has become entrenched to the extent that over 800,000 Canadians annually rely on food banks. The non-profit sector has effectively been “recruited”

Volunteer Hours

Our food cupboard requires 450 hours of volunteer labour annually to operate, plus one part time staff and administration.

Kaslo's Food Cupboard

In our community, we found there was a need for healthy food options without judgement nor criteria for service. We chose to offer a "Non-barrier Food Cupboard", which means we do not collect personal information on clients, nor do we limit visits.

The program originated as a self-service model that was rationed daily; however due to some abuses we changed to a service-based model where a volunteer provides the food. Clients are still able to make their own choices in food products, which we had learned was an important aspect for clients when we assessed the food bank. It is important to allow for choice and healthy food options.

As we have built the program, and because it is housed in the Food Hub with other food security programs, we have been able to increase opportunities for capacity building with the clients. Many volunteer with us and will go back and forth between being able to buy food (from the Bulk Buying Program) and needing assistance.

to relieve governments of responsibility for following through on the internationally recognized human right to food.⁸⁵ Olivier De Schutter, the United Nations special rapporteur on the right to food, reported in his 2012 summary of his visit to Canada that our country's protection of economic, social and right to food is "less than exemplary".⁸⁶

The good news is that many organizations across the country who have participated in the food bank system are working on new ways to address the larger systemic issues of food insecurity. For over 30 years, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) has been meeting the needs of 15,000 lower mainland residents a week. As food banks were meant to be a temporary measure, the need to address the systemic issues related to hunger were not always at the table.

Times are changing however and food insecurity is increasing. To address the increasing trends, in their five year strategic plan, the GVFB is drastically changing to incorporate capacity building, healthy food options and integration with others working on the same issues. Their previous model of distribution of set bags of food to each member will now have members making their own choices, with many more healthy options available, capacity building programs such as Fresh Choice Kitchens is now integrated so that clients are also given further supports of programs to build skills, knowledge and networks. Moving from a silo to program integration, the GVFB is embracing a more holistic and comprehensive approach and building community food security to move beyond immediate need. Combining these structural changes with efforts to work with the government on supportive policies, food banks can move from being band aids to a comprehensive solution.

⁸⁵ Kimmitt, C., (2012). "The problem with food banks." *The Tyee.ca*. Retrieved from. <http://thetyee.ca/News/2012/04/25/Problem-With-Food-Banks/>

⁸⁶ De Schutter, O. (2012) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food*. UN General Assembly retrieved from: http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/201205_canadaprelim_en.pdf

Food Banks vs. Food Cupboards

Some charitable food programs have an unfortunate history of stigmatizing those in need, which furthers clients' sense of disempowerment. Stigmatizing arises because those providing the service try to distinguish between who is and is not truly in need; so they scrutinize everybody in order to stop the few that may be abusing the generosity. These are realities that any emergency food program will deal with. Resources are limited, and ensuring resources are appropriately directed is an awkward community position to be in. Clear policies and guidelines for program delivery are essential. The term "food cupboard" emerged out of the need to evolve the traditional food bank model and distinguish the differences. However, neither term is synonymous with having or not having criteria for service. Each community program is different – some have always had fresh, healthy choices with no criteria for service where others require identification and have limits on options.

A non-barrier (no criteria) food cupboard designs the program around empowering clients to not feel shame and to gain confidence by not requiring them to prove their need or justify each visit. This can help build stronger community relationships and volunteers for your community food security program.

If your community does have an emergency food program in place, it will be important to connect with its clients. They will be crucial to your assessment, stakeholder input and long-term strategy.

If your community needs an emergency food program, it will be important for you to establish what the need is, who your demographic is, and what foods and services they need to access. Use your community engagement tools, like open space, to have potential clients guide the exploration of what would be best.

This process can also be used to capture a volunteer base, an absolute need if you are to operate an emergency food program.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ ***Serving Up Justice: How to Design an Emergency Feeding Program and Build Community Food Security*** – This is a comprehensive document outlining how to create and operate an emergency feeding program from the organization World Hunger Year. This publication is from the United States therefore some information, such as funding options, will not apply. http://www.whyhunger.org/uploads/fileAssets/4913ae_19e393.pdf
- ▶ ***Building the Bridge: Linking Food Banking and Community Food Security*** – A useful overview of food banks across the United States that have been working with community food security initiatives. It offers ideas on ways one can approach an emergency food program that includes sustainable options. <http://www.hungerfreecommunities.org/resource-library/building-the-bridge-linking-food-banking-and-community-food-security/>

- ▶ **Food Banks BC** – The first link will take you to the website for British Columbia based Food Banks. For other provincial Food Bank organizations, see the second link for Food Banks Canada. <http://www.foodbanksbc.com/> <http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/>
- ▶ **Food Donor Encouragement Act for BC** – As it states, this is a legal act to encourage food donations by protecting the donor against liabilities. http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/1D/freeside/00_97008_01

Recovered Food

From June to December, a large part of the food in our Food Cupboard is “recovered” food. This greatly diminishes our expenses, provides an immense amount of healthy food for those in need, and has actually assisted in shifting diets for some clients.

In 2012, we had over 3000lbs of fresh food donated from a variety of sources:

A local fruit distributor

The Fruit Tree Project

Local gardens and farmers

Grocery stores and restaurants

- ▶ **Food Safety Guidelines for Food Banks** – Food safety guidelines are essential to ensure that what your emergency food program distributes has been handled in the best possible manner to mitigate any possible contamination.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/0CE9889D-D92B-409C-9B70-6BEBD21C7652/0/FoodBankGuide.pdf>

- ▶ **Operations policy for the North Kootenay Lake Food Cupboard** – This was done to set clear guidelines for the operations of our Food Cupboard program. <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>

Food Recovery Programs

The amount of waste in our food system is astonishing. In Canada, \$27 billion worth of food goes straight to the landfill or compost, which suggests that 40% of food grown is not consumed. The good but shocking news is that 50% of this waste occurs in the home. This indicates we can greatly alter these figures

within our own kitchens, or if you are not going to get to it, bring it to your local emergency food program for redistribution.⁸⁷

Food recovery programs help build community capacity into your food security work.

Food can be recovered from a variety of sources; farms, restaurants, grocery stores, food distributors, backyard gleaning projects and onetime events like a wedding. Networking with all those who may regularly or occasionally have food that is still edible but not marketable can be a lucrative avenue for keeping your food cupboard shelves stocked. Donors are protected by

⁸⁷ Gooch, M. Felfel, A. Marenick, N. (2010) *Food Waste in Canada: Opportunities to increase the competitiveness of Canada's agri-food sector, while simultaneously improving the environment*, Value Chain Management Centre, retrieved from: <http://vcm-international.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Food-Waste-in-Canada-112410.pdf>

the Food Donor Encouragement Act (referenced above). Your local health authority will help you sort through what is acceptable and what is not. You can also take a look at the document “Food Safety Guidelines for Food Banks” to assess safety of donated food.

Fruit Tree Projects (FTPs) operate in many BC communities, especially those that have predator (bear) issues. FTPs can offer a variety of activities, but predominantly focus on food recovery from fruit trees. In our region, a former commercial fruit production region, we have a large amount of abandoned and uncared-for fruit trees which bring in bears and increase the risk of bear/human contact. The fruit itself, if picked in a timely fashion from both the tree and the ground fall, can reduce the bear attraction while also providing food for those in need. A general rule is to split the harvest 1/3 to the tree owners, 1/3 to the pickers and 1/3 to a local emergency food program.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ ***Creating a Food Recovery Program: A Step by Step Guide*** – This is a wonderful guide with a practical checklist for all organizational needs. Contact: Kamloops Food Policy Council, laura.kalina@interiorhealth.ca
- ▶ ***Glean Canada*** – Glean Canada is a great online tool to connect those wishing to donate fresh fruits and veggies with those looking for donations. However, in a rural community, word of mouth is the most effective mode of communication. I did not find any listing for our area; you would probably need a localized campaign to encourage the community to use an online tool for it to be effective. <http://www.gleancanada.com/index.php>
- ▶ ***Grow A Row*** – An easy “how to” guide to start Grow A Row in your community. <http://www.growarow.org/start.htm>
- ▶ ***Fruit Tree Projects*** – http://lifecyclesproject.ca/resources/harvesting_abundance.php

Grow a Row

When the Food Hub first opened, we initiated a “Grow a Row” program that had gardeners and the local community garden commit to growing a certain amount of food for the food cupboard. When harvest time came, the foods that arrived were always varying from the amount and type committed, so we adapted to taking what we could get as opposed to relying on specific items and quantities.

Grow a Row is now an “any excess produce you can’t deal with” program, which is great when you live in a gardening community. You can always tell what did well that year by the bins in the food cupboard: no zucchinis last year, but infinite salad greens!

Farmers trade vegetables for the use of our community root cellar. This becomes a reliable source of “free” food that we plan for.

Community Kitchen Study

Combined with our education and awareness activities, we conducted a feasibility study on whether a community and/or commercial kitchen would be a viable option for our community.

Our study determined that a community kitchen, while valued, would always be at the mercy of charitable support to operate and would require volunteers to run it. In a small community where market opportunities and volunteer labour are limited, a community kitchen was determined to not be a feasible option.

What we have done to meet the need is offer seasonal workshops when funding is available. In partnership with the Fruit Tree Project we offer seasonal canning workshops every year. In these workshops we have seen people move from participating to learn the skills to participating for the efficiency of batch cooking as a group. We have also offered seasonal workshops on a variety of preserving and cooking methods as well as other food-related workshops (like composting), that enhance a variety of skills.

By being able to focus on a community kitchen program seasonally, rather than year round, it has been more efficient to operate with less stress on sourcing funding and less reliance on volunteers.

Community Kitchens

Creating a community kitchen is a very common and successful model for increasing capacity, building networks, meeting an immediate and long term need for food security and, should it be combined with commercial enterprise, can offer some sustainable economic development options.

A community kitchen is a space that allows for collective group cooking in a learning environment. That can encompass everything from specific skill-building workshops to batch cooking for those on a low income. A commercial kitchen is for businesses that are producing goods for sale. The rules and regulations for a community kitchen and a commercial kitchen differ quite a bit and will be greatly influenced by what the activities in the kitchen will be. Both require the approval of the local health authority but the requirements for a community kitchen are not as rigorous as those for a commercial kitchen.

Tools and resources:

- **Community Kitchen Best Practices – A**

complete guide to starting and operating a community kitchen

http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/Publications/Community_Kitchen_Best_Practices_Toolkit.pdf

- **Fresh Choice Kitchens – Community Kitchen**

Toolkit – Fresh Choice Kitchens is a Vancouver-based organization, housed in the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society that has been offering information and evolving the community kitchen model for many years.

<http://www.communitykitchens.ca/main/?CKToolkit>

- **Host a Produce Preservation Workshop – This**

is a section in the “Local Leaders Harvesting Change Toolkit”. See page 4 for a checklist.

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/healthyeating/pdf/local-government-toolkit.pdf>

- **Food Skills for Families** – Provided by the BC Healthy Living Alliance, this program is a six-week cooking and skill-building course designed and offered to specific demographics that may be experiencing food insecurity. While it is a valuable toolkit for a six-week program and has been very useful for some, we found it challenging to offer a program with very specific criteria and not enough resources in our community. We were unable to gain the specific demographics required or provide adequate support, such as childcare, to enable participation. The program also did not provide adequate funding for advertising. Compounding these limits was the set curriculum that did not adequately harness today's emerging diet issues such as gluten and lactose intolerance.

<http://www.bchealthyliving.ca/resource/food-skills-families>

Bulding Food and Farming Capacity

Food Hubs and Community Food Centers

Food Hubs and Community Food Centres are emerging as infrastructures to support all facets of healthy, local food systems. The difference between the two are that Food Hubs tend to be focused more on market needs and Community Food Centres focus more on the social needs of a community.

One of the contributing factors to an insecure food system is a lack of appropriate infrastructure. Food Hubs and Community Food Centres are a response to the need for appropriate infrastructure that enables efficient, effective local food systems. The models for a successful Food Hub or Community Food Centre are extremely diverse. The model you choose to implement should include programs and facilities suited to your community.

Farming History

In the early 1900's, the Kootenay area was identified as an agricultural opportunity. The then Ministry of Agriculture infused the region with a variety of amenities to meet this opportunity; stocking warehouses along the lakes shorelines, supports for an efficient distribution system with rail and sternwheelers as well as a strong advertising campaign in Britain to attract immigrants to an orchard oasis. Our little town of Kaslo won the world's best cherry at the 1935 international fall fair in California. Upwards of 380,000 boxes of fruit were shipped from some of our most remote communities to Great Britain. A large contribution to the viability of our agriculture sector was due to adequate infrastructure.

When the rail system pulled out, it drastically altered the ability for distribution to be economically viable due to roads, which are not nearly as efficient, becoming the only option..

For more, see Joan Lang's "Lost Orchards: Vanishing fruit Farms of the West Kootenay" (2003)

In rural and remote communities, you may find that the ideal facility is a combination of the two, bringing both the market and social needs together. Partnering the two to take advantage of social enterprise opportunities can support the project and sustain the efforts to initiate systemic change.

From here, we will discuss community food centres with food hubs, which are further discussed in our economic development section.



Participants in a pear canning workshop got to take home the product.

A community food centre centralizes a variety of programs to provide healthy food access, food skills, engagement and education. They offer a variety of programming with the primary intention of building capacity for those who are food insecure. Earlier we highlighted the evolving need for traditional charity models of food banks to move into more capacity building; a community food center is the place where programs can work together to build the skills, knowledge, networks and empowerment for our citizens.

Some food banks, like the Greater Vancouver Food Bank with its new model of integration, are essentially community food centers. The principles behind them are that programs are integrated so that immediate needs (emergency food) as well as long term, systemic needs are being addressed (e.g., community kitchen, gardens, and other capacity building programs are combined with the emergency food programs).

Tools & Resources:

- ***In Every Community, A Place for Food: The Role of the Community Food Centre in Building a Local, Sustainable and Just Food System*** – This is a very inspiring and informative read for those interested in further exploring CFC's, but do note that this paper is based on The Stop, a CFC in Toronto, with a very large client, volunteer and market base. Upon first read, I did find that many of the principles would not be applicable at a rural level because of the difference in scale.

<http://metcalfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/in-every-community.pdf>

- ***Community Food Centers Canada*** – This organization is working to bring community food centers all across Canada. <http://www.cfccanada.ca/>

Community gardens

You most likely will have heard of or know of a community garden in your area. They are one of the most common and potentially rewarding activities for building community food security.

A community garden is generally a public space made available to residents for the purpose of gardening. They can be completely disorganized to highly organized; they may include additional support activities like weekly workshops. Community gardens require a strong team of committed citizens willing to hang in for the long haul, providing ongoing care. If the need and commitment are not there, the activities will fall short of enabling people to grow their own food.

However, if the will and capacity are present in a community, a community garden can be an effective means to achieving a more food secure community.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ **Community Garden Best Practices and Toolkit** – This toolkit provides great tips on how to initiate and manage a community garden.
http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/Publications/Community_Garden_Best_Practices_Toolkit.pdf
- ▶ **Dig It! Practical Toolkit for Community Gardens** – This guide was created for municipalities that are interested in creating and encouraging community gardens in their communities.
<https://ubcm.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentList.aspx?ID=2261>
- ▶ **Host a Gardening Workshop & Start a Community Garden** – This is a section of the “Local Leaders Harvesting Change

Community Garden

Due to low volunteer capacity and a lack of need in a rural community (people generally have land available), a community garden was not the most useful food security initiative for our community.

In the first two years of our food security project the community garden, which had already been established but was challenged to maintain its function, became one of our core deliverables. Our goal was to establish an organizational structure to see it into the future. The first year was highly active with enthusiasm and a paid coordinator to manage the garden. By the second year, we established a society to manage the garden with the intent that our project would not focus solely on gardening but be free to work on other matters. The society that was created ran the garden for another year. By the third year, with no paid coordinator in the garden, it was overrun with weeds. A few key plot owners were keen and maintained their plots but were unable to cope with weeds from other plots that were not maintained.

Interestingly, after several years of being fallow minus a few plots, the community garden is now fully productive and looking beautiful. I inquired of the new society what had changed and it appears that most of the food is being grown for our food cupboard – so the gardening enthusiasm was restored for the purpose of helping others, while the need for personal plots did not exist.

Toolkit:”see pages 8 and 10. <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/healthyeating/pdf/local-government-toolkit.pdf>

- **Community Garden of Kaslo Society** – Here are a few of our guiding documents we established for our community garden. What was most important was a guide for plot owners to know the garden rules and where shared resources are available. <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>



The transformation of one lawn to a productive garden in our Lawns to Gardens program.

Lawns to Gardens

Promoting and educating communities about converting lawns into food gardens is a great tool for building household food security while also reducing our ecological footprints. By reducing water use for lawns, chemicals used for lawn care and the need for foods to be trucked in from thousands of miles away, lawns converted to gardens can be a healthy, food secure and ecologically rewarding activity.

Tools & Resources:

- **Food Not Lawns** – This link will take you to Food Not Lawns guide to how to start your own programs that encourages and educates community members about how to convert their lawn into food producing gardens. <http://www.foodnotlawns.com/how-to.html>
- **Planting the Seeds movie** – This movie was created about our two year program converting lawns to gardens in our community. It highlights the educational programs we offered, how to clear lawns, and what growing methods we used to create ecologically sensitive and abundant food gardens. <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>

Community Farm Programs

Community farm programs refer to activities that assist with increasing the amount of land farmed. These can come in a variety of formats, but all centre on facilitating getting farmers onto land.

Several initiatives have begun by simply linking landowners and farmers through online databases. Linking Land and Farmers (see below), is a long standing program in British Columbia that provides this service as well as resources for shared land uses. It currently

partners with Ontario-based FarmLink to provide access to a pan-Canadian, searchable database of land and farmers seeking land.

Farm Folk/City Folk offers a community farms program that assists with the organizational and acquisition needs of farms, often working with a cooperative/community based model. The Community Farms Program (CFP) brings landowners, farmers, and local communities together to form community farms.

An essential aspect to shared land is comprehensive and precise agreements between the parties (land owners and farmers). Have it all in writing no matter how much the two parties agree and get along. Things change often and farming brings out some very unique situations that can leave farmers out in the cold after lots of labour and personal investment. A great document, created by the Community Farms Program, will guide anyone through the process of agreements.

As another avenue to explore viable land access options, we created a Crown Land Acquisitions program that researched and mapped Crown lands in the north Kootenay lake area and now assists farmers to acquire such lands for the purpose of farming. The program works with farmers through the intensive agriculture application process for a license on crown land. These are only licenses, not leases or ownership, nor can farmers build permanent structures on the licensed land. With these limitations plus the cost of removing timber (from which they are not permitted to derive income), we have found that although it sounds like an opportunity to access land, in our forested, mountainous community, the crown land opportunity is limited.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ **Farmers to Farms West Kootenay Farmland Databas** – <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>
- ▶ **FarmLink** – <http://www.farmlink.net/en/about-farmlink/>
- ▶ **Start a Farm to Community Program** – This is a section in the “Local Leaders Harvesting Change Toolkit”. See pg 12 for the how to.

Lawns to Gardens (L2G)

L2G was a two-year program we offered that provided skills, labour and education for the conversion of a lawn to a garden. We were funded, through Eco Action and the Union of BC Municipalities' Healthy Promotion Fund. We worked with the home owners to remove the sod and then plant, maintain and harvest the garden. We tracked a variety of environmental impacts of this conversion including: water savings by using drip irrigation; increased fertility of the soil by using organic methods; reduction of lawn chemicals; amount of food grown that did not need to be trucked in; and food wastes diverted from landfills to be composted and reincorporated into the soil. By converting 5 lawns into organic, food growing gardens, we achieved:

GHG reductions: 45 tonnes

Water saved: over 14 million litres

Organics diverted from landfill: 1180Kg

Inputs reduced (chemicals & fertilizers): 4500 Kg

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/healthyeating/pdf/local-government-toolkit.pdf>

- ▶ **Linking Land and Farmers** – This link takes you to the Linking Land and Farmers program, a great resource for farming looking to secure farmland in British Columbia. <http://llaaf.ca/>
- ▶ **Community Farm Program** – Another great resource, this links to the community farm program in British Columbia. <http://www.communityfarms.ca/program/progGoals.shtml>
- ▶ **A Guide to Land Use Agreements** – Also from the community farm program link, this document is specific to land use agreements for land owners and farmers. <http://www.communityfarms.ca/resources/accGuideIntro.shtml>
- ▶ **Crown Land Acquisitions** – Information on how to apply for crown land use. This is specific to British Columbia. Other provinces will have different programs for agriculture activities on crown land. http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/Land_Tenures/tenure_programs/programs/agriculturein/index.html
- ▶ **Crown Land Mapping Project** – A summary of the research and information we gathered and the maps we created for our region to identify what land is crown and arable. <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>

Farmers Markets

Many communities have established farmers' markets because they are an effective way to increase food access for consumers and markets for farmers. They contribute to the economic development of a region. Generally, a farmers' market is a weekly market where food and farming vendors come together to sell their goods. Essential to the success of a farmers market for the farmers is an adequate farmer to artisans/crafters ratio, clear "local" guidelines, and a cooperative atmosphere towards pricing. The farmers' market is frequently managed as a non-profit society or run by farmer organizations. A successful farmers' market can offer economic opportunities that could enable them to be self-sustaining and vendor fees can assist with covering the costs of a part time coordinator to assist with the associated logistics.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ **Farmers' Market Best Practices Toolkit** – The Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador has a stellar guide for how to start a Farmers' Market: http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/Publications/Farmers_Market_Best_Practices_Toolkit.pdf
- ▶ **BC Farmers Market Association** – This link will take you to our provincial association as well as plethora of resources about how to start and manage a farmers market. For associations in other provinces, check out the second link; Farmers Markets Canada. <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org> <http://www.farmersmarketscanada.ca/>

- **Are you ready to start a Farmers Market?** – An Ontario guide that will help assess if your community is ready for a farmers market.
<http://www.farmersmarketsontario.com/Upload/Files/Pre-Readiness.pdf>

Pocket Markets

Pocket markets are smaller, mobile versions of a farmers' market. They are geared toward a specific neighbourhood or geographical region such as areas within communities where "food deserts" may exist. Pocket Markets are created by a partnership between a society and a farmer or group of farmers in which the organization provides the space and the farmer(s) provides the goods.

Tools and resources:

- **Pocket Market Toolkit** – http://foodroots.ca/pmtoolkit_index.htm

Local Food Directories

Local food directories are a great tool for regional food connections. They can come in a variety of formats: online listings, brochures, maps, interactive tools – they can be quite creative! They can be used to provide a central location for all things local and food related: farmers, retailers, inputs, and feed. They can be as detailed as needed. Advertising can be used to support the work as well as provide direct links to a regions' farming sector.

Tools & Resources:

- **BC Farm Fresh** – This website is a provincial website for promotion of BC farmers.
<http://www.bcfarmfresh.com/>
- **Island Farm Fresh Directory** – A great sample of how interactive and helpful a regional directory can be.
<http://www.islandfarmfresh.com/>
- **West Kootenay Food Directory** – This is the regional food directory we created for the West Kootenay's. It is very simple and we hope to be

*"A **food desert** is a district with little or no access to large grocery stores that offer fresh and affordable foods needed to maintain a healthy diet. Instead of such stores, these districts often contain many fast food restaurants and convenience stores."*
from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_desert

West Kootenay Food Directory (WKFD)

We created the WKFD in 2007. It is a very simple, online listing of farmers and retailers across the West Kootenay's. The need for this activity came about after we spent the first year educating and raising awareness about local food. Our office became inundated with questions about where to find the local food? We put ads out and researched all the sub-regions of the West Kootenay's, compiled the data and posted it on our website as an annually updated directory.

improving its appearance as well as making it interactive so those listed can make changes. <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>

- **A North Okanagan Food Directory** – <http://foodaction.ca/>
- **The Bulkley Valley Local Food Directory** – Another great way to help promote local farms, a map that highlights where and who is growing regional food

<http://www.bofarmersmarket.com/localfooddirectory.html>

Bulk Buying Club

Our buying club was created to provide bulk amounts of local farm fresh goods to locals. By offering bulk we encourage consumers to preserve the local harvest; buying more in season and retaining more of our local food dollars within the community. This also increases household food security by having reserves should our roads close in the winter (our roads close almost every winter due to avalanches or slides)

The creation of our bulk buying club came out of need. One of our main farmers was driving to our nearest city centre, 140 km away, to sell large amounts of produce. Our residents were then driving to that same city centre to buy his food. The Kaslo Bulk Buying Club was created to harness this local market opportunity.

- **A Guide to Farm Direct Marketing** – This guide will provide insights for farmers who are interested in farm direct sales.

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3482](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex3482)

Buying Clubs

Buying Clubs provide an opportunity for local residents to buy in bulk. They can be community operated, fully volunteer or have a profit margin that provides capital to operate them. They come in a large variety of formats such as cooperatives, non-profit operated or simply a group of neighbors. Usually the purpose is to provide group purchasing power, but can also be for creating a local food market opportunity.

Buying Clubs can be effective social enterprises that support the work of community food security. In fact, BC's Farmers' Institutes often operated their farm support programs through the income derived from bulk input purchasing, providing a small profit that was re-invested in the local farm community.

Tools & Resources:

- **Bulk Buying Best Practices Toolkit** – This toolkit is very handy for those assessing or ready to

start a bulk buying club.

http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/Publications/Bulk_Buying_Club_Best_Practices_Toolkit.pdf

- **Buying Club How To** – A basic “how to” to create a bulk buying club.
<http://www.farmtoforkresearch.com/direct-marketing-resources/buying-club/>

Good Food Box

A Good Food Box program provides a box of vegetables and fruit at an affordable price. It usually is run out of a non-profit organization that purchases the fruit and vegetables in bulk to keep prices low while depending on a large volunteer base for packaging and delivery. They can be very effective in neighbourhoods that lack adequate access to fresh foods, whether due to lack of funds or lack of markets (food deserts).

The Good Food Box program does rely heavily on volunteer labour, a challenge in rural communities. A compounding concern is the effect it may have on the viability of the local food market. In rural and remote communities with small populations, the market base is very limited and if a not-for-profit food entity becomes available offering lower priced foods, this can immediately affect the local markets. Non-profits engaging in the marketplace have to tread lightly so as to not undercut local stores who are doing their best to offer the goods.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ *A Good Food Box Guide* – <http://www.foodshare.net/good-food-box-guide>

Tools & Infrastructure

Tool Libraries

Tool libraries can come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and offer a variety of resources. Our tool library focuses on kitchen and garden based tools for self sufficiency. There is also an agricultural association in our area that offers a regional farm tool library; therefore we did not expand our tool library to be more than home use.

The primary purpose of a tool library is to share resources to minimize the cost of equipment and increase skill sharing. It is essential that a tool library meets the needs of your community. If you want to start one for local farmers consult them to find out what is needed, what is already available and how best to share. If it is for Food Cupboard clients, do the same. Find out what they would like to have available, what is already available that could be shared and how best the library could be made accessible.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ *Kaslo Food Hub Tool Library* – This is our tool library listing; we focus mostly on kitchen based tools and connect farmers looking for tools with the tool library listed next, the Kootenay Local Agricultural Society. <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>
- ▶ *Kootenay Local Agricultural Society Tool Library* – This tool library has an extensive list of available farm tools that are geared towards mountainous, small scale farms. http://www.klasociety.org/tool_library.html

- **Santa Rosa Tool Lending Library** – Here is a comprehensive library that offers a wide range of tools, with handy online information for access and rental agreements.

<http://www.borrowtools.org/>

Community Root Cellar

Our root cellar (walk-in cooler) was built inside a basement, with lots of insulation and very strong shelves. The unit we use to cool it is called a “Coolbot”, a control device that is attached to a specific air conditioner to create the ideal climate. This combination unit keeps the space at a guaranteed 4 degrees, but does not do anything for humidity. You will need additional tools, like root crops stored in sand, or water in pots to ensure adequate humidity.

Community Root Cellars

A community root cellar is also a resource that can come in a variety of formats. Ours is actually a walk-in cooler, but we call it a root cellar to state the purpose – the ability to store food collectively.

Essential to a collective space is adequate monitoring for any spoilage and or mixing of food that should not be mixed. Our root cellar does not require a lot of maintenance, but I would not assume that a self-monitored community root cellar is the best model. A good rental agreement that outlines the do’s and don’ts while also assigning some responsibility to overall management will be essential to long term success.

Tools & Resources:

- **A Guide to Proper Food Storage** –

http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/produce_information/StorageFreshProduce/

- **Kaslo Food Hub Root Cellar** –

<http://nklcss.org/groundswell>

- **A concise How To for Root Cellars** – Basic information for root cellars, including the variety of ways you can build them and required storage information for fruits and veggies. <http://www.food.com/bb/viewtopic.zsp?t=339617>
- **CoolBot Cooling Unit** – Information on the coolbot unit, how to use it and the specification for the air conditioner unit best suited to the purpose of stabilized cooling spaces. <http://www.storeitcold.com/>
- **Build a Produce Storage Facility** – This is a section of the “Local Leaders Harvesting Change Toolkit.” See pg. 6 <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/healthyeating/pdf/local-government-toolkit.pdf>

Economic Development

The most effective way we can redesign our food systems so they can be sustainable is to make those food systems economically viable. Developing our local food systems to be economically viable can have a significant multiplier effect, meaning the return is more than what is put into it. In referencing a “multiplier effect”, I not only refer to the dollars that are multiplied when spent in a local economy, but the non-financial improvements to our ecology, health and community resiliency. For these reasons, economic development is one of the most important tools to institute and maintain sustainable changes to the food system.

“A dynamic food industry arises from the multiplier effect of primary agriculture production creating employment, value added food products and providing food security to the region.”⁸⁸

A study in Nova Scotia showed that for every \$100 spent on the farm, \$112 was generated in the agricultural sector for the region and was further multiplied to \$135 in the Canadian Agricultural sector.⁸⁹ Keeping these dollars in our own foodsheds can reverse the trends we have seen in declining farm incomes, creating more opportunities for young farmers to choose farming as a viable career choice.

Lately, most food systems work has had a strong social component that relies heavily on either volunteers, grants or the good-will of those willing and able to make ethical food choices. However, we also need to find ways to make healthy, local food not only accessible but financially viable without dependence on non-sustainable sources. Not an easy task and certainly not any easier for those living in small communities with limited markets and distribution challenges. However, let’s plough forward with a look at how we can solidify all of your work.

Plenty of Foods

We conducted a feasibility study called “Plenty of Foods” to assess what products and/or services may sustain the Kaslo Food Hub. What we found was that multiple income streams would be necessary. Because our markets are so small, one product or one service would not provide adequate funds. However, if we diversified and met several needs with a combination of a bulk buying club and skill building workshops, we could potentially harness the necessary funds to sustain our work.

To maintain our activities, we would need multiple income streams from:

Sales from the Bulk Buying Club

Memberships

Root Cellar & Tool Library fees

Volunteer labour (in kind)

Donations

Grants

⁸⁸ Metro Vancouver. (2009) *Agriculture and the Draft Regional Growth Strategy*, Retrieved from: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy/RGSBackgroundersNew/RGSBackgroundersNew/underAgriculture.pdf> (p.6)

⁸⁹ Scott, J. MacLeod, M. (2010) *Is Nova Scotia Eating Local?*. Nova Scotia: Ecology Action Centre

*"A **value chain** describes the full range of activities involved in producing goods and services and identifies areas where value is gained or lost. A value chain provides opportunities for parties involved in a supply chain to work collaboratively to add value and for each partner to capture and retain more value than they would through a regular supply chain."* - BC Ministry of Agriculture,
http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/ministry/bc_value_chain_fund/BC_food_value_chain.htm

Social Enterprise

A social enterprise is a commercial operation that applies its profits to specific social values and goals. They can come in a variety of formats from non-profits and for-profits to cooperatives or charitable organizations. Given the social values inherent in community food security work, social enterprises can be a great fit for sustaining your community food security work.

Essential to the success of a social enterprise are concise feasibility studies and business plans to assess viability. Be sure to assess if the products and/or services you are looking at offering will be adequately supported by your market to provide the profits you need to make your social work viable.

The ideas for a social enterprise in a community food security context are endless and really would depend

on your unique community.

Tools & Resources:

- *Enterprising Non-profits* – <http://www.enterprisingnonprofits.ca/>

Food Value Chains

To build economic viability within your food systems, assessing your food value chain is essential. What distinguishes a Food Value Chain Assessment from a food forum or assessment is that it is more specific to the stakeholders who are operating, managing and/or directly participating in your food systems and normally act as commercial operators.

*"**Factor of Influence**" refers to the relative influence a factor has on an event. In this circumstance, "influences" on the availability of food in our area are ranked from those with the most immediately observed impact on food availability (1st order factors, e.g. our local retail market, or our regional food production capacity) to those with the remotest influence on food availability (4th order factors, e.g. the stock market).*

The primary purpose of this work is to assess and determine where improved financial viability for stakeholders can be built into the food value chain. This could be as simple as improving the efficiency of rural distribution through cooperative efforts to reduce the costs and time for each farmer to deliver their product. It may be as complex as producer cooperatives that work together to grow, market and supply the local market.

Steps in a rural food value chain assessment include:

Identifying the key players in a regional food system and mapping them according to their “factor of influence”, which will provide the template for your food system design.

Identifying how key stakeholders are connected, linked and communicating and how to improve connections.

Researching the current food “value chain” and:

- Describing the full range of activities (and assets) involved in producing food and services
- Identifying areas where value is gained or lost
- Developing a list of infrastructure barriers, assets, needs
- Identifying communication networks needed to build capacity within the food system
- Determining how the food value chain can be adjusted to be more supportive of local food system needs.

Food Value Chains can be as diverse as our landscapes. There is no one size fits all, therefore it is important to ensure you have engaged your community to assess all of the factors of influence and design what is best for your unique community.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ ***Healthy Food Systems: A Toolkit for Building Value Chains*** – This is a comprehensive toolkit that outlines how to assess and re-design with a strong focus on healthy food systems and integrating sustainable food and farming practices.
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5091499>
- ▶ ***Moving Food Along the Value Chain: Innovations in Regional Food Distribution*** – This guide takes a look at eight different types of food value chains. It is a great overview to understand best practices. However, do note how scale plays a large role in success. Although it does have a regional overview, most of the Food Value Chains explored within this guide rely on large city centres to support them. Take note of how smaller systems were able to work.
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=stelprdc5097504>

Food Hubs

The working definition for a Food Hub is:

“A business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail and institutional demand.”⁹⁰

Food Hubs come in diverse models and must reflect the needs of the community in which they are emerging. They can be very effective facilities for creating systemic change, bridging the social, environmental and economic elements. Adequately assessing the potential market viability will be essential, such as a Food Value Chain assessment. Distance to markets, market and community size, as well as available goods from local farmers are all factors to consider in building an economically viable Food Hub. Having your food system stakeholders involved from the beginning to clearly define the needs and areas for collaboration will best determine what a Food Hub could offer in your community.

Tools & Resources:

- **Regional Food Hub Resource Guide** – A great resource for exploring best practices of other regional Food Hubs, this guide is thorough in explaining and exploring a diversity of models. However, scale needs to be factored in and many of the supports suggested are based on American institutions.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5097957>

Incubator Farms

Incubator Farms support new farmers with land, infrastructure, shared resources, and knowledge to build their own farming enterprises. Generally, they operate with a non-profit structure. Incubator farms assist in decreasing the barriers for new farmers to enter the field and help build farmers’ capacity. Incubator farms can help address the primary elements needed to build a strong community food system, namely the farmers and the farms, especially if in your area, like most areas of the developed world, the number of farmers has been declining.

Ironically, since we started the Kaslo Food Security Project, we have seen a decline in farmers. We have been able to determine that the primary barriers are secure access to land and a viable local food economy. By creating an incubator farm, a non-profit can partner with a for-profit enterprise. The non-profit organization harnesses the social support to reduce barriers (access to land and infrastructure) that then increases the farmer’s ability to create a financially viable farm enterprise.

⁹⁰ Barham, J., Tropp, D., Enterline, K., Farbman, J., Fisk, J., & Kiraly, S. (2012) *Regional Food Hub Resource Guide*. U.S Department of Agriculture Marketing Service. Washington, DC. (p.4) retrieved from: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5097957>

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ ***Incubator Farms*** – This is a very concise article that offers lots of leads on a variety of incubator farm models.
<http://www.cog.ca/uploads/TCOG%20Articles/Incubator%20farms.pdf>
- ▶ ***Intervale Farms*** – One of the oldest incubator farms, Intervale offers a plethora of inspiration for what an incubator farm can offer. <http://www.intervale.org/>

6. FOOD POLICY

“To search for solutions to hunger means to act within the principle that the status of a citizen surpasses that of a mere consumer” city of Belo Horizonte⁹¹

What is Food Policy?

Food policy is best described as “any decision, program or project that is endorsed by a government agency, business, or organization which effects how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased, protected and disposed.” ⁹² Considering we eat 3 times daily, food policy applies to many facets of our lives, from access to compost. How it may affect your local food system will depend on the policy itself, and how it is implemented. Some policies remain as visionary documents and others can be legislated and or regulated, resulting in systemic change.

The degree to which policy is able to affect systemic change is based on how fully and effectively it is implemented. As mentioned before, food was declared a human right as early as 1948 within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further advanced in 1966 with the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. These rights were embedded in our country when Canada signed on to these declarations, and furthered through the creation of Canada’s Action Plan for Food Security in 1998. These all read well and appear as though our Federal Government was on the right track. However, these declarations, as well as numerous other policy statements at the national, provincial and municipal levels, largely remain theoretical because they lack appropriate legislation and/or regulations to support them.

⁹¹ As cited in Moore Lappé, Frances (2009), *The City that Ended Hunger, Yes!*, from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/food-for-everyone/the-city-that-ended-hunger>.

⁹² Vancouver Food Policy Council. *What is food policy?*, retrieved from <http://www.vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca/what-is-food-policy/>

The ability for food policy to enable systemic change lies with this elephant in the room: policy is only words unless it is coupled with strategic plans, legislation, regulation and sufficient support that moves it from a visionary document to instituted change – all driven by political and community will.

Why policy is important

If policy is supported with tools to implement them (i.e., legislation and regulations), then it can be a very effective tool to shift our community food security efforts so that they are more attainable. On a local level, a food charter or food policy council that has a mandate to act can: mobilize communities; develop local food systems; and assess and alter land use policies (where appropriate) that can increase the use of municipal lands, or zoning, to better support an agricultural sector. Local procurement policies can provide support and financial incentives to purchase local goods, thereby increasing the economic viability of a local food system. At a national level, there are numerous ways that healthy eating, environments and social determinants can be improved with supportive food policies. Two examples are tax incentives, and subsidies shifting from industrial style farming to those that favor sustainable, local food systems. The importance of food policy lies within its ability to be a blueprint to guide planning of specific actions to attain the desired goals and outcomes⁹³. Herein lies one of the most important areas for citizen engagement – where communities can articulate what the most conducive food system could be to meet its needs. If we do not take the opportunity to voice these needs, those in far-off federal offices will continue to write policies that lack a local community context.

Policies Affecting Our Food System

International

At the international level, policies that affects our food system are largely embedded in trade agreements and international declarations like those mentioned above. This information is useful for understanding the global system that impacts and influences the majority of our food systems. However, due to its complexity, we will not delve too deeply into these policies. We will provide some resources that can help with understanding this macro-policy level, but on a community level, this is not likely the policy arena you will be working in.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ *The Universal Declaration of Rights* – <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>
- ▶ *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* – <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

⁹³ Lobe, K (2005). Food Security, Food Policy and Public Participation. *A Series of Occasional Papers Issue 1*. Winnipeg: The Food Project. <http://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/default/files/FoodPolicyPublicParticipation.pdf>

- ▶ ***The Ottawa Charter*** – The Ottawa Charter is an international Charter “for action to achieve Health for all by the year 2000 and beyond.”⁹⁴ Food was one of the many indicators for health and thus began much of the work for food security to be a determinant of health.
<http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/index2.html>
- ▶ ***National Farmers Union: Trade and the Right to Food*** – This brief from the National Farmers Union provides a thorough backgrounder on trade agreements and their effects on our food systems, with a specific emphasis on agriculture in Canada.
http://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/Canadian_trade_and_the_right_to_food_NFU_Brief.pdf

National

The legislation and policy frameworks that direct our national food system are administered by several ministries. Agri-food and Agricultural Canada, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Environment Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, as well as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada are all involved in administering various food policies across the country. The policies within these bodies will range from who is eligible for subsidies, what is a legal product to grow in Canada, the labelling information required on the food items and much more.

Canada does not currently have a national food strategy and desperately needs one. A number of industry groups and others are in the process of creating some form of national food strategy or policy, but the federal government has yet to initiate any activity in this realm, despite earlier promises. We have listed the People’s Food Policy Project, created by the people of Canada, as a reference to what could be a National Strategy that would assist in meeting the goals of food secure communities across Canada. However, do note this policy has not been formally endorsed by a government body.

In terms of influencing the policies that affect our national food system, the most effective organization to connect and engage with is Food Secure Canada. Given that Food Secure Canada is a grassroots organization with its members directing actions, it provides a template for an unbiased approach to what is a human right, more so than an economic opportunity. Other national organizations can be heavily influenced by industry, which may skew their recommendations towards economic incentives rather than the needs of community food security for citizens.

⁹⁴ World Health Organization. *The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*, Retrieved from:
<http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/index.html>

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAC)** – Most of the policies affecting our National food system will be found within Agriculture Canada’s portfolio. The AAC administers everything from farm subsidies and national standards to trade and waste management on farms. http://www.agr.gc.ca/index_e.php
- ▶ **Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada** – The Public Health Agency of Canada and/or Health Canada guides what foods are approved for consumption, safety standards, labelling requirements, as well as what is healthy to eat through mechanisms such as Canada’s Food Guide <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/index-eng.php>
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/index-eng.php>
- ▶ **Department of Fisheries and Oceans** – <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/index-eng.htm>
- ▶ **Environment Canada** – <http://www.ec.gc.ca/?lang=En>
- ▶ **Foreign Affairs, Trade & Development Canada** – <http://www.international.gc.ca/international/index.aspx>
- ▶ **Canada’s Action Plan for Food Security** – A government action plan, launched in 1997, which begins to address and acknowledge the issue of food security, it appeared to be a move in the right direction. However, it does take an economic priority for global interests and misguided assumption that production levels are the reason we have those who lack adequate nutrients. So not an ideal strategy, but it was a beginning.
http://www.agr.gc.ca/misb/fsec-seca/pdf/action_e.pdf
- ▶ **National Food Policy Framework** – This framework was developed for Federal, Provincial and Territory governments in Canada to address the emerging and complex issues of food in Canada. Initiated in 2004 through the Agriculture and Health portfolio discussing the variety of food issues being faced, the framework was to guide the creation of a National food strategy.
<http://cspinet.org/canada/pdf/nationalfoodpolicyframework.pdf>
- ▶ **Food Secure Canada** – Food Secure Canada is a grassroots organization that has a large focus on food policy activities that are based on the principles of food sovereignty.
<http://foodsecurecanada.org/>
- ▶ **The Peoples Food Policy Project** – This is a Food Policy of the people, as it states. Created through consultations across Canada with over 3500 organizations and individuals, it represents a holistic, integrated and people-first approach to a comprehensive National Food Policy. This is not official government policy, but creates a strong foundation for a National strategy. <http://foodsecurecanada.org/policy-advocacy/resetting-table>

- **National Food Strategy** – Also not official policy, but an example of an industry based effort to create a national food strategy. <http://www.nationalfoodstrategy.ca>

Provincial/Territorial

There are various policies at Provincial and Territorial levels that affect food security at the community level. They are administered primarily by the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and associated Health Authorities, Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Transportation (re: mobile abattoirs) . Several crown corporations that carry out the activities of various policies report to these Ministries, such as (in BC) the Agricultural Land Commission, Farm Industry Review Board, and the Environmental Appeal Board.

Given each province has their own Ministry websites, we will not link them here, but we do provide below a document that will provide in depth information about the various provincial policies may affect community food security.

Tools & Resources:

- **Provincial Approaches on Food Security: A Scan of Food Security Related Policies in Canada** – This is a very comprehensive document that covers each Province and Territory and includes an overview of various policies that impact some of the many facets of food security. You may note that various Health Authorities have adopted food security within their mandate as well as some very innovative provincial initiatives to build food security capacity. <http://foodsecurecanada.org/resources-news/resources-research/provincial-approaches-food-security-2011>

Regional/Local

Policies that affect community food security on a regional/municipal level are related mostly to land use and taxation. Land use policies, bylaws and zoning can be found in Official Community Plans (OCP), Agricultural Area Plans and potentially Sustainability Plans, which are becoming mandatory at the municipal level if they wish to acquire gas tax funds from the Federal Government.

In British Columbia, the Local Government Act outlines what is within the purview of your municipality or regional district – each province and territory likely has similar legislation. Knowing what your local government is legally able to work on will greatly enhance your efficacy in shaping policies that could be effective at enacting systemic change at the local level.

Knowing how to communicate with your local governing body is an essential strategy for enabling policies that will be conducive to incubating community food security initiatives. As we mentioned in our “rural” chapter, the capacity of rural governing bodies can be very limited, with minimal staff and increasing responsibilities. Having a clear understanding of any

Official Community Plans (OCP) or other plans already adopted by your region will help you to know what is already in place and what can be built upon or needs changing.

Through your community engagement process, you will have identified areas where improvement is needed, as well as who your local stakeholders are. These, coupled with understanding what is within the jurisdiction of your local governing body, will help guide policy work on a local level. Most services that are within a local region are funded through taxation. Thus, any new services you may be seeking from your local governing body could require campaigns to ensure the local constituents are on board. As a precursor to new services, you may want to start with a Food Charter or Food Policy Council to help build the case for future work. A Food Charter or Food Policy Council can be adopted “in principal” through your municipal council or regional district, with no obligation for action from the elected group. While these may appear as visionary policies without the implementation tools, what this does accomplish is to create the atmosphere for local non-profit groups to act on behalf of the community, drawing on a collective vision that will provide the rationale for the activities of a community food security program, while not holding your local government liable for actions or inactions.

Policy on the local level can be extremely diverse. A recent report published by the Canadian Agri-food Policy Institute (CAPI) reviewed 64 municipal policy initiatives across the country. The report provides an interesting context for the diversity of activities as well as inspiration for what is possible on a local level.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ ***The Local Government Act*** – http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96323_30
- ▶ ***Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs: A preliminary analysis of how Canadian cities and regional districts are involved in food system change*** – http://capi-icpa.ca/pdfs/2013/Municipal_Food_Policy_Entrepreneurs_Final_Report.pdf
- ▶ ***Communities and Local Government Working Together*** – This is a guide to understanding and knowing how to work within local governments. http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/webfm_send/185
- ▶ ***Local Governments and the Agricultural Land Commission*** – A BC-specific guide to understanding the relationship between local governments and the oversight of the Agricultural Land Reserve. http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/commission/working_ALR-locgov.htm

Policy Initiatives That Could Support Your Work:

Food policy councils

Food Policy Councils (FPCs) are groups of volunteers representing all sectors of a food system that convene to research, assess and determine programs and activities to improve a local food system. Often times they can be linked to local government and perhaps have direct ties to health authorities, planning departments and other governing bodies.

The CAPI report on Municipal Food Entrepreneurs mentioned above suggests that most municipal food policy work draws on “food systems thinking” in order to establish priorities.

Food systems thinking takes a panoramic and multi-layered approach by identifying the various actors in a local food system (both commercial and non-commercial). This approach can then be used to evaluate and determine the means to enhance the benefits to be had in the interdependence amongst the actors, as well as increase the potential for positive influence on the environment, economy, society and health.

Across the 61 initiatives covered in the CAPI report, there were 6 categories of food policy activities at a municipal level, ranging from directly connected to local government to no direct ties.⁹⁵ This report clearly articulates the possibilities a local food policy council (or other type of organization working on food policy) can work on. It also highlights diverse models, outlining the pros and cons for each.

Research (see the partial list below) has found that success is greatly influenced by funding sources and how frequently the Food Policy Council may need to focus on grant/funding proposals. Success is also greater when there are strong links to other governing bodies where the Food Policy Council can be directly influencing policy changes. An example is the Vancouver Food Policy Council that has been able to create a Food Strategy that has ongoing municipal support, including funding, to carry out the strategy’s goals and priority actions.

However, remote and rural communities, again, are less likely to find local government level capacity or funds to include food security within their mandate and activities. Most likely, in smaller remote and rural communities, a local agency with non-profit status needed to access funds would be required to administer the work of a Food Policy Council. It would be essential to have ties to local government, whether by having municipal or regional council members on the Food Policy Council or through regularly consulting and briefing the municipal/regional council.

One of the strengths of a Food Policy Council is the ability to be entirely focused on the local food system and the work needed to directly affect change. A visionary statement, like a Food Charter, can initiate and then proceed to guide a Food Policy Council’s work. Either way, Food

⁹⁵ Donahue, K and MacRae, R. (2013) *Municipal food policy entrepreneurs: a preliminary analysis of how Canadian cities and regional districts are involved in food system change*. Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute. http://capi-icpa.ca/pdfs/2013/Municipal_Food_Policy_Entrepreneurs_Final_Report.pdf

Policy Councils can be as diverse as our unique communities. Here are some resources and examples of regional Food Policy Councils that are useful for rural and remote communities. (Note that there are numerous Food Policy Councils in urban municipalities, but their scope and structure would be hard to replicate on a rural and remote scale.)

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ ***Thought About Food? A Workbook on Food Security and Influencing Policy*** – This workbook is a very easy and concise guide to creating and implementing food security activities with a specific focus on policy. <http://www.foodthoughtful.ca/>
- ▶ ***National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy: Food Policy Councils*** – This is a brief that outlines the nature and role of food policy councils, and how they relate to the development of healthy public policies. http://www.ncchpp.ca/148/publications.ccnpps?id_article=664
- ▶ ***A Seat at the Table: A Resource Guide for Local Governments to Promote Food Secure Communities*** – This guide was created to address the numerous requests and interest in working on community food security initiatives. As mentioned earlier, the task of addressing community food security is falling more and more on local governments and so this guide was created to offer guidance on how and what local governments can do. <http://www.islandtrust.bc.ca/poi/pdf/itpoirptfoodsecurity.pdf>
- ▶ ***BC Food Systems Network (BCFSN): Working Policy Group*** – The BCFSN has a strong policy focus with an even stronger connection to community led solutions. “The B.C. Food Systems Network advocates a food policy which places community food security as the highest priority.”⁹⁶ They advocate a ‘food first’ policy that places food at the core of all decisions, highlighting that access to healthy, safe and just food is a right, and further, that policies that support community food security are of immense benefit to our communities, generating healthy, sustainable environments. Most recently, the BCFSN published a brief: “Building Food Security in British Columbia in 2013” to influence the policy platforms of the political parties for the (then) upcoming 2013 provincial elections. This is a comprehensive guide to how our governing bodies can foster community food security and is also full of solutions. http://fooddemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Building_Food_Security_in_BC_in_2013.pdf

Food Charters

Food Charters are statements of values and principles intended to guide food policy. Food Charters are primarily community driven in their creation, with much public consultation and

⁹⁶ BC Food Systems Network, Policy Working Group (para. 4) Retrieved from: <http://fooddemocracy.org/policy-working-group/>

participation. They are not legally binding, unless they are linked to a bylaw or other form of enforcement. Most Food Charters have been created to collectively name the issues and priorities for the vision of a secure community food system. They are intended to guide any subsequent actions taken to achieve the vision(s).

The process for creating a food charter can be fun, community-engaging, positive exercises that build networks and motivation and can mobilize and activate the community.

In order for Food Charters to achieve their visionary goals, inputs such as funds, volunteer hours, champions, and community and political engagement, are essential for shifting Food Charters from visionary statements to creating systemic change. These ingredients, combined with the initial visionary policies, are what make food charters recipes for systemic change.

Kaslo's Food Charter

Our community was the third in the province to adopt a food charter. Buy-in was easy because of the inherent benefits of working on revitalizing a local food system and because there was no legally binding consequence to adopting the Food Charter. If the Village Council would have had to create a budget line for the subsequent work, it would have required much more consultation, with an increased tax base. We chose to not be directly tied to Village Council for this reason and our Charter has been mostly a visionary statement that we refer to in grant applications when demonstrating our municipal support.

Tools & Resources:

► ***Kaslo Food Charter*** – The link provides the summary we presented to our council for adopting, an outline of our process for creating it, as well as the Food Charter itself. <http://nklcss.org/groundswell>

► ***Vancouver Food Charter*** – Reads like a utopic, secure community food system that is resilient and empowered to generate not only the greenest city, but the healthiest. The Vancouver Food Charter contains five guiding principles that create the foundation for the Food Charter to affect systemic change.

<http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/vancouver-food-strategy.aspx>

► ***Cowichan Food Charter*** – This charter is a good example of a regional, rural community with a strong agriculture community.

<http://www.cowichangreencommunity.org/node/45>

► ***Capital Region Food Charter*** – This is the Food

Charter for BC's Capital Region on Vancouver Island. The CR Food Charter is a very concise guide that outlines clearly all of the elements and actions necessary to actualize an ideal sustainable food system.

http://www.communitycouncil.ca/sites/default/files/CR_Food_Charter_Final-2008-06-10.pdf

Food action plans

Food action plans or strategies outline definitive actions to achieve specific goals. They are usually created once a food systems assessment has been completed and stakeholders have been consulted to provide input that will then be used to create a plan or strategy. We provide a select few examples of food action plans from a rural context.

Tools & Resources:

- ▶ ***North Thompson Food Action Coalition*** – The North Thompson Food Action Network is a non-profit working group of dedicated North Thompson volunteers whose purpose is to help improve food security in the North Thompson Valley by strengthening our local food system through communication, education, and by championing local food security initiatives. This organization was created to carry out the priorities as set out in the North Thompson Food Action Plan of 2010.
<http://www.bcfoodactionnetwork.com/about-us>
- ▶ ***Williams Lake Food Policy Council*** – This organization was initiated to create a Williams Lake Food Action Plan (2007-2012) and be the body to carry out the priorities that emerged from the Plan. Their Food Action Plan was integral to the city's integrated sustainability planning process and which won a national award for their process to develop a new Official Community Plan in 2011/2012. For more information about the WLFPC, contact Tatjana Bates, Chair at 540 Borland Street, 3rd floor, Williams Lake, BC, V2G-1R8, 250-302-5000, Tatjana_bates@interiorhealth.ca; Or Project Coordinator, Cody Slinn, Food Action Coordinator at 250-392-0294, codyigk@hotmail.com

Policy is the tool in which we can change the system. If we can start in our communities, harnessing the ideas, enthusiasm, historical ways and overall goals of resilient, rural communities, we have the main ingredients. Coupling these policies with the tools to implement them is how we can change the direction we are going in; enabling a foodshed that is healthy, accessible and just for everyone involved.

Groundswell: A Guide to Building Food Security in Rural Communities is full of information and links to tools and resources. Get started with tools that will help you to reach out to your community to find out what is needed and by who. Then get inspired by the section describing programs and services that are being offered in other communities. You will find information on developing policies to support food security and find contacts at the provincial and national level.

Aimée Watson has been working in the area of Food Security for more than 15 years. She is passionate about her work and has been a guest speaker at Food Security conferences around Canada. She lives in Kaslo with her son and her dog.



North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society is a non-profit, multi-service organization. The Society's mission is to develop and provide services and programs which contribute to a thriving community and enhance the quality of life for North Kootenay Lake residents.

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