Healthy Food, Healthy Community

A Community Action Guide

The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Second Edition 2006

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Reproduction

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Research and Writing: Lorna Heidenheim and Meridith Sones
Reviewers: Tracy Allan-Koester, Theresa Schumilas, Linda Davies
Editing: Michelle Bullard
Layout: MediaDoc Inc.
Illustrations: Leslie Fraser

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Introduction

1. The Big Question

The roots of hunger and malnutrition run deep. Each and every morning, an alarming number of people wake up wondering where their next meal will come from, and how they will feed their family. This challenge is a global crisis that penetrates deeply into both poor and wealthy nations. The struggle to access adequate amounts of safe and nutritious food is an obstacle that sits on the doorstep of many communities, both in Canada and beyond. As the number of undernourished people has grown, though, so too has our global food basket. In fact, the world is now collectively producing enough food to feed all the people on the planet.[1] How is it, then, that more than 800 million human beings do not have enough to eat in a world that produces enough food to feed every man, woman and child?[2] If food supply is not the problem, why are so many people struggling to access the food they need to live a healthy life?

Stat Snack!

"It is estimated that 35,000 people around the world die each day from hunger, and a larger number of people suffer from malnutrition."[5]

This question was formally addressed in 1996 during the World Food Summit in Rome. At the summit, 187 countries joined together in a commitment to eliminate hunger and cut the number of undernourished people throughout the world in half by the year 2015.[3] Canada was included in this group of nations that publicly recognized food as a fundamental right of all people on earth.

In response to this commitment, Canada's Action Plan for Food Security was created. Since its release in 1998, Canada's Action Plan has served as a long-term strategy to improve food security both at home and abroad. It takes a wide approach to food security, and includes issues related to food access,

sustainable agriculture and rural development, trade, emergency prevention and preparedness, and promoting investment in the agri-food sector.[4] Canada's Action Plan for Food Security is used as a guide by government departments, health units, schools, community organizations and others who are working to provide an adequate, nutritious and sustainable food supply.

2. What Is This Guide About?

Through this guide we hope to raise awareness of the importance of adequate access to nutritious food as a determinant of health and of community food security initiatives as a health promotion strategy. The guide is designed to educate and inspire Ontarians about community actions that promote food security. It raises many complex issues and challenges in community food security, but also provides information about many effective projects that are currently operating within the province. We have invited some of these groups to share their stories with others through this publication, and hope they will inspire individuals to initiate or join community food security programs in their own areas. While we have not provided step-by-step instructions for project development, we have proposed first steps and have included a section on resources to help you find out more about topics that interest you.

3. Who Is This Guide For?

Healthy Food, Healthy Communities is specifically aimed at individuals and community groups in Ontario who envision a food-secure community and want to support food security at the local level. Readers may come from a variety of backgrounds, such as community action centres, nutrition programs, health units, food industries, neighbourhood associations, community health centres or other community groups; however, we hope that anyone who is concerned about people who are experiencing hunger or who is interested in finding ways to enhance the quality of our food and our food experiences will find something of value in this guide.

From the Root Up:

Community Food Security Defined

I

1. Community Food Security

For the purposes of this guide, we have adopted the following definition of community food security (CFS):

> *A situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.*[1]

Community food security is more than having an ample food supply. The following factors are also important elements of CFS:

Accessibility

Central to CFS is the ability of people to access the food required to live a healthy and productive life. Everyone deserves to be able to eat food that helps them achieve optimal health and well-being. In reality, however, people's ability to access this type of food varies based on both its affordability and availability. An unhealthy diet is less often a matter of personal choice and more often a function of social and economic inequalities. In addition, a community's food environment; i.e., the food options that exist in a given area, also determines what dietary choices are available.

Acceptability

CFS not only includes accessibility to food, but also considers whether the foods that people eat meet their individual needs. The acceptability of food can be looked at in different ways. Is the food suitable from a cultural standpoint? Is the quality of food acceptable from a health and safety perspective? Both of these questions are important when considering community food security.

Sustainability

In addition to identifying how food is accessed, CFS also looks at the sustainability of the food system; in other words, whether the current food system ensures a safe and high quality food supply for both now and the future.[2] The way in which food is produced, distributed and purchased can have a major impact on the health and well-being of producers and consumers. The food system also affects the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the biodiversity and balance in our ecosystem and the vitality of our natural environment.

Together, the degree of accessibility, acceptability and sustainability of our food supply determines the level of food security of our communities.[3] Our understanding of these factors is important to making the link between CFS and healthy communities. They help us grasp how community food security is grown from the root up, which is vital to building long-term solutions that promote a healthier future for communities across the province.

"Hunger is more than just the physical desire for food. People hunger for mental, social, emotional and spiritual food too."[4]

Food is more than a commodity that we consume at breakfast, lunch and dinner. It is symbolic and carries significant social and cultural meaning. Therefore, lack of access to culturally appropriate, nutritious and safe food can affect more than just our physical health.

The inability to access the right quality and quantity of safe and suitable food, combined with lack of control over one's food situation, is called food insecurity.[5] Although the effects of food insecurity begin at the individual level, these consequences can quickly ripple to undermine the physical, mental, emotional and environmental health of families and communities. In a recent study, food-insecure families identified feelings such as powerlessness, guilt, inequity, embarrassment, anxiety and frustration related to their failure to access the food they needed.[6] When people were unable to access a suitable food supply, because of either affordability or availability, both their physical and psychological well-being were affected, leading to a general sense of impoverishment.[7] When groups of people have access to the food they need, they are able to live happier and healthier lives.

2. Healthy Communities and Food Security

A vision of a Healthy Community always includes a multitude of ways to access healthy food, but there are many other benefits that arise from creating food security through a Healthy Communities process. These include:

- enhanced personal health
- economic development
- more meaningful jobs
- increased community spirit
- reduced overlap and duplication in services and programs
- increased viability of smaller family farms
- protection of rural culture
- improved water and air quality
- economic and environmental stability
- safe and supportive communities[8]

There are many common elements among Healthy Community and community food security initiatives, such as:

- acknowledgement of access to healthy food as a basic need and an important determinant of health
- recognition of the inter-relationship of economic, environmental and social issues
- incorporation of the principles of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, which promotes building of healthy public policy, creating supportive environments, strengthening community actions and developing personal skills
- emphasis on multi-sectoral participation; a food-secure community requires co-operation among all those involved in the food system, including growers and producers, citizen groups, community agencies, governmental organizations, businesses, academic researchers and environmental advocates
- promotion of adequate incomes for both consumers and producers
- promotion of local and diverse food production
- promotion of environmental sustainability and the protection of local agricultural lands and fish habitat
- support efforts to improve to improve water and air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- support for food-based community economic development.[9]

People who support community food security advocate for a food system where both individual and collective needs are met. Community food security approaches the issue of food access from a population health perspective, and seeks to reduce health inequalities through the pursuit of social justice.[10] Advocates for community food security come from a variety of disciplines, professions and organizations, which adds valuable diversity to our understanding of the problems and issues.[11] By working together to increase food security at the community level, we are helping to establish safe and supportive environments in which we, our children and our grandchildren can thrive.

You Are What You Eat: II

Food and Our Health

1. Food Security as a Determinant of Health

"Societies that enable all citizens to play a full and useful role in the social, economic and cultural life of their society will be healthier than those where people face insecurity, exclusion and deprivation."[1]

How is good health generated? Are people unhealthy by choice? What factors are responsible for the growing gap between those who are healthy, and those who are not? These are important questions to ask when considering the growth of healthy communities. While behavioural patterns such as diet and exercise, the genes we inherit and our access to healthcare are important determinants of health, the most powerful predictors of health are related to the social, economic, physical and political environments in which we live.[2] These factors determine our ability to make choices that support a healthy and productive life, and are often referred to as the *social determinants of health*.

The social determinants of health interact with behavioural patterns to shape our understanding of how health disparities within communities are generated.[3] The social determinants include, but are not limited to, the following: [4]

- income and income distribution
- social inclusion and exclusion
- employment and working conditions
- unemployment and job insecurity
- health services
- the social safety net
- early life and childhood care
- education
- housing
- food security

The social determinants of health do not operate in isolation of one another. Several factors may impact the same individuals or populations at the same time. For example, a recent health survey of Canadians found that the odds of reporting food insecurity increased with declining income and reliance on social assistance.[5] This "clustering of disadvantage" within populations creates a widening gap between those who are healthy, and those who are not. [6]

2. The Social Gradient

The health inequalities that are apparent between different rungs of the social ladder are collectively referred to as *the social gradient*.[7] Various patterns of health behaviours and outcomes are revealed along this grade. For example, when it comes to diet, those at the bottom of the social gradient are more likely to sacrifice quality for affordability by replacing fresh food with cheaper, processed foods. In terms of overall health, individuals who sit lower on the social gradient have a shorter life expectancy, and face a greater risk of disease and premature death than those at the top.[8] In general, people who are higher on the social ladder live longer, healthier lives than those below them. Statistics Canada's Findings from the Canadian Community Health Survey reported that "Adults in the highest income households were less likely than those in the lowest to have fewer than five daily servings of vegetables and fruit".[9]

As the gap between the rich and poor continues to grow in Canada, the overall level of food security among Canadians and their families is declining.[10] The social and economic imbalances between different groups within society affect more than individual health status; they actually bring down the general health status of the whole population.[11] By investing in the social determinants of health, we can improve the well-being of these underprivileged populations and, in turn, provide health benefits for all Canadians.[12]

3. The Link Between Food and Chronic Disease

Good nutrition is essential to good health. Malnutrition has a negative impact on the overall physical health of those who suffer from it, particularly by increasing the risk of disease. These effects are not only products of hunger; malnutrition occurs in instances of both food poverty and food plenty.[13] Hunger can lead to deficiency diseases related to poor intake of micronutrients such as vitamin A and iron.[14] On the other hand, excess food intake is a major cause of obesity and various chronic conditions.[15] Chronic diseases are long-term illnesses that are difficult and often impossible to cure and include cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease and respiratory illnesses.[16] Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, and are a growing threat to the health and well-being of Canadian communities.[17]

Stat Snack!

- Cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease and respiratory diseases are the cause of 75% of deaths within Canada.[18]
- Low-fat diets that are high in fruits and vegetables have been found to reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, certain cancers, stroke and other vascular diseases.[19]

In addition to an unhealthy diet, there are other factors that predispose individuals to chronic disease, such as:

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- obesity
- physical inactivity
- tobacco
- alcohol [20]

It is also important to recognize the importance of social risk factors. They are listed below, with an example of how each one can have a negative impact on individual health.[21]

Social and economic conditions, *such as poverty, employment, family composition*
Example: Low-income families and those who face unsteady employment often find preventative diets (such as those high in fresh fruits and vegetables) unaffordable.

Environment, *such as climate and air pollution*
Example: The high reliance on long distance food imports into cities increases greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, which contributes to asthma and other respiratory conditions.[22]

Culture, *such as practices, norms and values*
Example: Increasingly busy in their daily lives, many people have less time to prepare foods and pack lunches for their children. In fast-paced Western culture, fast-food alternatives that are marketed as convenient and affordable become more attractive for families with busy schedules. At the same time our valued rural cultures are being lost as family farming becomes less viable in a consolidated and globalized system.

Stat Snack!

- Northern Ontarians experience 51% higher rates of heart disease than the Ontario average.[25]
- Franco-Ontarians are more likely to be overweight than other Ontarians.[26]
- Over half of Waterloo Region residents consume fewer than the daily recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables. [27]

Urbanization, *such as housing, access to products and services*
Example: Low-income housing clusters poor and vulnerable groups together in areas that lack supermarkets and have a higher concentration of convenience stores.[23] Food is about 1.6 times more expensive in convenience stores than in grocery stores and healthy food options are more limited.[24]

The risk factors for chronic disease affect certain populations more than others. As a result, health differences can be seen between different regions and groups of people within Canada.

Stat Snack!

- 80% of all chronic disease is preventable through low-cost strategies.[29]

4. Prevention Makes Cents

In addition to being among the most common health problems facing Canadians, chronic diseases are also the most expensive. Each year, chronic disease costs Canadians $28 billion and is estimated to account for 55% of Ontario healthcare costs.[28] Prevention can pay off in many ways. In addition to reducing the financial burden on the healthcare system, it enables and encourages healthy lifestyle behaviours that increase individual health and support well-being. Healthier individuals make healthier communities. Disease prevention is therefore in everyone's best interests, and is crucial to the future growth and sustainability of healthy Ontario communities.

Digging Deeper: III

Community Food Security Issues

1. Poverty

"Life is short where its quality is poor."[1]

Food insecurity is a product of poverty. When families are on a limited income, they are forced to prioritize their basic needs in order to survive. Since shelter costs are fixed, these expenses often move to the front of the household budget and take precedence over all other needs, including food.[2] This is a serious concern, as the growing shortage of affordable housing in Canada is causing more and more people to spend a greater portion of their income on housing.[3] After shelter costs have been paid, often the remaining income must be thinly spread over the remaining costs of living. As a result, other determinants of health are weakened, which opens the door to food insecurity. Mothers often carry the burden of food insecurity first, as they attempt to avoid hunger for their families. To make the food budget bigger, mothers may attempt to free up income by selling their possessions or giving up services that are often taken for granted by many people, such as the telephone.[4] They may also attempt to lessen the weight of hunger by cutting portion sizes and altering recipes to "stretch" a meal.[5] Many families rely on food banks for their food, while some mothers may go hungry themselves so their children have something to eat.[6]

The Ontario Nutritious Food Basket is a food costing tool that can be used to measure the cost of healthy eating based on current nutrition recommendations. The food basket includes 66 food items from all four food groups from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. The food items were selected from among those frequently purchased by Canadians and based on nutrient value, cost and availability in supermarkets across seasons. Along with income and rent rates, the cost of a nutritious food basket is an essential tool in assessing the affordability of a healthy diet. For example - it costs about $112 per week for a family of four to eat healthy in Waterloo Region (about $485/month).

This amount only includes basic foods and assumes that people have the resources to access, store and cook the food. It also assumes no food is purchased at restaurants outside the home.[7] For other Nutritious Food Basket reports prepared by other public health units see FoodNet at www.opha.on.ca/foodnet/initiatives, the internet-based resource centre of the Food Security Workgroup at the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA).

According to data collected by Opportunities Waterloo Region, a local poverty reduction group, a family on social assistance or working at minimum wage may find it difficult to afford the quality and quantity of food necessary to meet their energy and nutrient needs.[8]

Stat Snack!

In 2000, Toronto food bank users spent an average of 63% of their monthly income on shelter costs.[9]

Children at Risk

Unfortunately, many children are not protected from poverty and the food insecurity that it can create. It is estimated that one out of every five children in Canada lives in a home that reports incomes below the poverty line,[10] which indicates that many children are likely to be food insecure. Homeless children, along with those who are part of lone-parent families, are at an even greater risk of poverty and food insecurity. Poor nutrition places children in danger of many negative outcomes, including decreased academic performance, violence, developmental challenges and limited job success in adulthood.[11] Children who suffer from poverty face an increased risk of health and learning problems through their entire lifetime, impacting their ability to live happy, healthy and productive adult lives.

Stat Snack!

Child poverty among female lone-parent families is 43%.[12]

Individuals at Risk

In addition to food insecurity, poverty is also linked to other challenges that threaten the health of individuals, including:[13]

- unstable employment and low wages
- stressful and dangerous working conditions
- less access to basic needs such as education, transport and decent housing
- less access to recreational opportunities
- increased risk of addiction, illness and premature death

The above challenges lessen an individual's ability to fully participate in social, economic, political and cultural life. This is referred to as *social exclusion*. Social exclusion is a product of inequalities that exist between individuals and groups in society. These inequalities can arise out of oppression related to race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, immigrant status and religion.[14] Social exclusion can undermine the health of both individuals and whole populations.

Populations at Risk

"It is the poorest and most vulnerable members of society – the people with no voice – who are the most likely to be food insecure and the most powerless to change their circumstances."[15]

Increased risk of food insecurity is related to differences in income that exist between various populations in Canada. Populations that are particularly vulnerable are Aboriginal people and new Canadians. Visible minorities earn 30% less than white people and are twice as likely to be poor.[16] Closing this income gap between poor and wealthy groups is important to building healthier and more inclusive communities. When resources are stretched more evenly throughout a community, self-esteem and empowerment

also spreads to a greater portion of its members.[17] When people feel a greater sense of belonging in their community, they also have a more positive perception of their physical and mental health.[18] Lessening the burden of poverty will help people feel better about themselves, and encourage equal access to the resources they need to live a healthy life.

2. Obesity

"A candy bar or an apple?
The choice is simple when you
are a seven-year-old."[19]

The majority of Canadian adults and children are overweight[20] and an alarming number of them are facing the associated health consequences. Obesity is linked to various chronic conditions, such as cancer, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, asthma and orthopaedic injuries.[21] In addition to physical consequences, the effects of obesity can also have a negative impact on self-image and mental health.[22]

Stat Snack!

In the U.S., about $1 million a year is spent to advertise the five to 10 a day campaign encouraging the consumption of fruits and veggies, while $10 billion a year is spent advertising processed and junk foods.[25]

Several factors contribute to the obesity crisis in Canadian communities. The excess consumption of energy-dense fats and sugars, typical of the North American diet, is a major cause of obesity.[23] For poor and food-insecure populations, the consumption of these foods is the cheaper, and often only, alternative to purchasing costly nutritious foods. However, there are reasons other than income constraints that encourage us to reach for unhealthy foods. For example, more money is spent on advertising for processed foods and junk foods than for nutritious foods.[24] Fast foods are marketed based on their convenience, making them more appealing for a high-paced society where "time is money."

A large portion of this advertising is targeted at children, which is contributing to the immense problem of childhood obesity in the country. In 1999, a national survey found that over one-third of children aged two to 11 were overweight.[26] This study found that children living in low-income families were more likely to be overweight and obese, while lack of physical activity was also found to be a factor in child obesity.[27] As obese and overweight children are much more likely to become obese adults, an alarming number of Canadian children are potentially at risk of health problems later in life.

Stat Snack!

About 80% of food commercials aired on Saturday morning kids' TV shows are for foods of low nutritional value, such as high-sugar cereals and candy.[28]

3. Nutrition in Schools

Canadian children are becoming increasingly overweight.[29] Sadly, many are exposed to poor nutrition each and every school day. The level of food security found within schools is questionable, as access to healthy lunches and snacks is often minimal.

A review of elementary school vending machines found that the majority of the foods and beverages offered in schools were nutrient-poor, high in fats and added sugars, and of increased portion size not necessary for young children.[30] These foods are readily available to youth who often do not understand the consequences of eating them and, in many cases, do not have access to healthier food choices.

In addition to the costs of growth and development, poor nutrition also has a negative impact on a child's ability and motivation to learn and focus at school. Those who don't get enough to eat are more tired than those who do, have a shorter attention span and don't learn to solve problems as well.[32] On the contrary, healthy children have improved literacy levels, lower incidence of violent and negative social behaviours and lower rates of suicide and depression, and are more likely to graduate from school.[33] Healthy children are more likely to grow into healthy adults.

Stat Snack!

Approximately 27% of boys and 23% of girls in Grade Six to Eight consume candy and chocolate bars daily.[31]

When schools fill their vending machines with junk food, they are missing a valuable opportunity to encourage their students to make nutritional choices and acquire healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Stat Snack!

Approximately 31% of elementary school students and 62% of secondary students do not eat a nutritious breakfast before heading to school.[34]

A recent study found that students from schools participating in a school-based nutrition program showed lower rates of obesity, had healthier diets and reported more physical activities than students from schools without nutrition programs.[35]

This issue of food security in schools is complicated by the fact that many students are showing up to school hungry. This could be a result of many factors, such as lack of food options in the home or a hectic family schedule that results in children skipping breakfast. School-based nutrition programs, which are discussed later in this guide, are addressing this issue and are showing some promising results.

4. Community Design and Food Security

Land use, community design and transportation planning have an impact on our health in relation to disease and injury as well as quality of life. For example, communities that lack sidewalks, park space, bike lanes and recreation programs are creating fewer opportunities for people to be active.[36]

Another example is the location of local markets and supermarkets in our communities, and the impact it can have on our dietary patterns. The rise of large-chain grocery stores and closure of small suppliers has created "food deserts" in many communities.[37] When grocery stores become bigger in size but fewer in number, they become more difficult to access, particularly for people who rely on public transportation. In low-income

communities, families often end up relying on the convenience store on the corner, where fresh, healthy options are few and far between.

In a recent survey of convenience stores, Region of Waterloo Public Health found that healthy food items were less available compared to grocery stores and fruits and vegetables were the least available foods. As well, food at convenience stores is about 1.6 times more expensive than grocery stores.[38]

So called "complete communities", as described in Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, integrate land use by having retail, office, residential, open space, schools and services within the same area. Mixing land uses in this way promotes greater physical activity by allowing residents to complete daily tasks by walking, cycling or using public transit. Because of their greater densities and vital retail markets, such communities can attract more small shops closer to where people live. This means food stores can be attracted into these areas so that there is greater availability of healthy food to community members.[39]

When paired with initiatives to ensure the viability of family farms, such as buy local initiatives, such compact urban development becomes a key strategy in preserving agricultural land and culture, strengthening rural economies and reducing reliance on food imports.

"The Skinny" on Supermarkets

The design and planning of our physical environment influences the foods we purchase and eat, even while grocery shopping. Many of the products sold in supermarkets are intentionally laid out to influence how we spend our money. Food companies actually buy shelf space from retailers, and pay significant amounts of money to put their products in high-traffic areas of the store where they are visible to the most shoppers.[40] Generally, healthy and nutrient-rich foods sit around the outside of the store, while unhealthy processed foods are placed conveniently in the centre. These "junk" foods may be nutritionally inadequate but they have the highest profit margins, and are wrapped in attractive packaging and placed where they can be easily seen and easily bought.[41]

5. Food Production and Safety

"Only if agriculture is practiced sustainably now will future generations have a chance to exercise their fundamental human right to food." [42]

The availability of food that has been produced in a safe, sustainable and environmentally sound manner is vital to community food security. The way in which food is grown can have a major effect on social, economic and natural environments. At one time, food was produced on farms that were mainly operated by manual labour and focused on serving the local area. However, during the past 20 years, food production in Canada has become intensely mechanical and industrial. Local agriculture has given way to big business, and food is now a major part of world trade. As a result, Canadians are losing their connection with how their food is being grown and the farmers who are growing it. Biological and technical changes to how food is produced are threatening the food security of people from all walks of life – not just the poor.

The modern method of food production raises issues of food safety and sustainability that can challenge food security on a global scale, such as:

Chemical Food Contamination
Chemical contamination during the growing process can occur unintentionally from air, water or soil pollution, or intentionally through the use of pesticides, fertilizers and other harmful chemicals.[44] Human exposure to these toxic chemicals has been linked to a variety of conditions, including cancer, heart disease, kidney and liver dysfunction, hormonal imbalance, birth defects, mental health problems and learning disabilities.[45]

Effects of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering
Modern agriculture often involves the crossing of gene material from different plants and animals. Consumers have raised concerns that genetically altered foods may potentially expose them to food allergies and other health hazards.[46] Despite the potential for this technology to impact the safety, sustainability, accessibility, affordability and democracy of our food system, there is a lack of scientific literature in this area. The broader view of health and health promotion is rarely referred to in federal government or industry material about food biotechnology.[47]

Food-Borne Disease
A considerable portion of the world's food production is now done by a select number of large-scale manufacturers. This allows for the potential spread of food-borne disease to a great number of consumers at once. Now that food is traded globally on a daily basis, it can become contaminated in one country but cause outbreaks of food-borne illness in another.[48]

Impact on the Natural Environment
Pollution from agricultural practices, such as the use of synthetic pesticides, synthetic fertilizers and soil and manure runoff associated with poor management, disrupts land and water ecosystems and changes wildlife populations. Pesticides kill more than the organisms that are targeted, especially birds and insects.[49]

The use of harmful chemicals throughout food production has an impact on the entire ecosystem. In addition, genetically modifying foods during the growing process can lead to "genetic pollution." This refers to the dangerous introduction of foreign organisms into the natural environment, which can upset the fragile balance of the ecosystem and pose a threat to biodiversity.[50]

Food production is only one part of the bigger picture of how food travels from the earth to our plates. Sustainability needs to be achieved throughout all levels of the growing process, including production, processing and distribution.

Sustainable agriculture refers to a food system that is economically viable, socially just and ecologically sound.[51] This will ensure that the present needs of society can be met without sacrificing the needs of future generations, and will help to build and maintain healthy Ontario communities for years to come.

6. Our Food System

"Less than 10% of the average Canadian's disposable income is spent in the supermarket, making it one of the lowest costing food baskets in the industrial world."[52]

Food is big business. In fact, farming is Ontario's second-largest economic sector.[53] Thirty-seven thousand Ontario farmers grow food that will be enjoyed by people around the province and around the globe.[54] The process by which food is grown in the farmer's field and transported to the tables of Ontarians has changed dramatically since the previous generation of farmers.

The food production system has become more technologically sophisticated, which allows farmers to yield high levels of crops. Yet the technology itself is very expensive, therefore making it out of reach for all but large-scale "corporate" farms. In Ontario, small-scale family farms are struggling to keep up and many are being forced out of business. The number of farms in Ontario is declining, while the size of the remaining farms is increasing.[56]

Stat Snack!

"Between 1951 and 1996 the number of farms in Huron County declined by 45%."[55]

Increased prices of equipment, fertilizer, gasoline and labour have created production costs that often surpass the income of smaller farmers.[57] Low returns on investment make it difficult for these farmers to support their families, let alone sustain their businesses. As a result, farmers are forced to consider more profitable options, such as selling valuable land to developers. Given that farms are usually located on the outskirts of urban centres, rural communities are becoming increasingly vulnerable to land development and urban sprawl. Adding to the vulnerability of small farms are other trends in the provincial farming industry, such as increased competition for available land, problems with finding and retaining quality labour, and a low level of public awareness and support for farming.[58]

Over the past several years, the effects of competition and subsidies in the global market have reduced the prices of agricultural commodities to record low levels. As a result, the market price of many locally grown food products may not reflect all of the production costs, making it difficult for farmers to earn a living and keep their farms viable. Smaller farms are disappearing and those left are finding it increasingly difficult to compete with larger farms and the subsidized commodities from other countries. Agricultural policies and regulations tend to reflect the interests of the larger, corporate farms. As a result of all these factors, farmers are facing a great deal of stress and major financial concerns and there is a great loss of young people from rural communities.[59]

Broader political and social issues are reflected in the current trends of the agricultural industry. For example, municipal bylaws often dictate where and to what scale farms can operate. From a social perspective, consumers perceive farming as undesirable and are prioritizing cheap food over the economic health of those that are growing it. Ontario is now witnessing the rise of bigger, more intensive farms that tend to be less sensitive to environmental and local community needs.

Farmers do more than just produce food for people to enjoy; they help to sustain healthy communities by creating jobs, supporting the local economy and conserving natural resources, such as water, soil and trees. However, given the current challenges facing them and their families, there is little motivation for younger generations to carry on a family tradition of farming. We are losing skills and knowledge, and the future of farming is at stake. By exercising our purchasing power and making choices that support our communities, such as buying local food, we can show that we care about the future of Ontario farming.

7. Food Transportation

"Before you've finished your breakfast this morning, you'll have relied on half the world."[60]

When you reach for your morning coffee, have you ever wondered what it took to get the coffee beans from the earth into your espresso? Canadians make food purchases on a daily basis that affect energy consumption. During the past three decades, Canadians have reached for an increasing number of food products that have been imported from great distances.[61] For example, a recent study of imports of 31 commonly-eaten foods capable of being grown or raised in Waterloo Region tracked the distances travelled. Imports of the studied foods traveled an average of over 4,500 km and generated an average of 1.8 kg of greenhouse gases for every kg of food imported. These foods generated a total of over 50,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually – equal to the average emissions of over 16,000 cars on our roads each year.[62] The importing of food over long distances raises several environmental, health and moral challenges.

Our Environment

Our dependency on fossil fuels to produce, package and distribute food is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Transportation accounts for one-quarter of Canada's energy consumption and produces one-quarter of our greenhouse gas emissions, more than any other sector of the economy.[63] Greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, trap heat in the atmosphere and cause climate change by raising global temperature.[64]

Our Health

The pollution that results from importing food over great distances decreases the quality of the air we breathe, and therefore has negative effects on our health. The burning of fossil fuels emits air pollutants and smog, while also helping to deliver aeroallergens such as pollen, mould and dust into the body.[65] Unhealthy air masses cause respiratory damage and lead to the rise and aggravation of asthma and other related diseases.

Our Food

To accommodate for the distance food must travel, producers rely heavily on chemicals and processing to reduce spoilage before the food reaches the marketplace.[66] The introduction of pesticides and food processing and other harmful chemicals into produce has negative consequences on our ecosystem and the safety of the food we eat.

Our Global Community

As local food systems decline, rich countries are becoming increasingly dependent on developing nations for their food. This relationship is often exploitive for Third World countries. For example, world trade policies allow rich countries to charge high taxes on imported goods. This controls the amount that poor countries can afford to export and limits their share of the world market to raw, less-profitable goods.[67] This is destructive for local economies of Third World nations and the small-scale farmers who work within them.

Increased trade in developing countries has also drawn millions of people into the labour force, where employees often face unsafe and exploitive working conditions. Lack of labour rights in these nations can expose workers to insecure contracts, intense production pressure, and intimidation in the workplace.[68]

Recipes for Success: IV

Strategies for Building Food Security

Throughout this guide, we have explored the roots of community food security in order to grow our understanding of its underlying meaning and importance. In addition, we have looked at how food security is linked to other social, economic and health factors. Now that we have a better appreciation of the issues, our next step is to put our knowledge into action!

1. The Healthy Communities Process

What does the path to healthier Ontario communities look like? Healthy Communities is a process by which a community determines its own issues, needs and action plans, using an approach that includes four fundamental characteristics:

Wide Community Participation: Community participation in community planning and decision-making is essential for there to be a high quality of life for all.

Broad Involvement of All Sectors of the Community: Each finding ways in their day-to-day activities to contribute towards the goal of a healthier community. For food security, this could involve partnership and co-operation with farmers, social and health organizations, environmental groups, local residents, and business and labour organizations, among others.

Local Government Commitment: The mayor and local councillors should be committed to building a healthier community. Each department (e.g., parks and recreation, public works, planning) works towards the shared vision of a healthy community.

Creation of Healthy Public Policy: Decisions or actions intended to have a positive effect of the health of people, involving community participation in planning and implementation. Governments should consider the broad range of factors that affect health and quality of life, and allocate resources and funds accordingly.

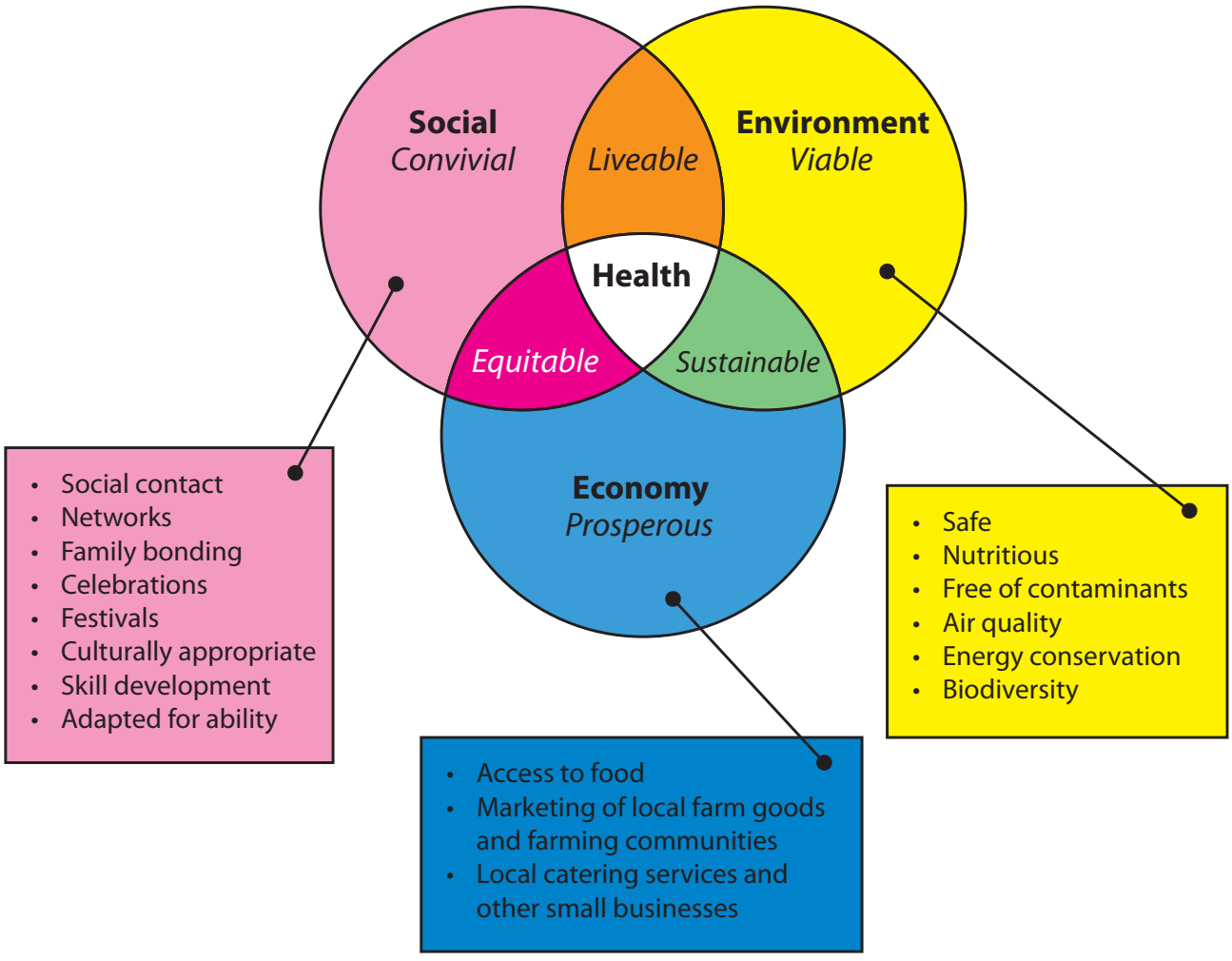
2. Community Food Security Strategies

There are several important way to create positive change towards a more food-secure future for Ontario communities. Community food security strategies fit into three broad categories: [1]

- **short-term solutions** to provide emergency relief
- **healthy public policy** to create change at the system level
- **community actions** to mobilize community members

Short-term solutions are those that follow a charitable model, such as food banks and soup kitchens. Although these strategies provide important relief to the hunger crisis, they do not deal with the root causes of food insecurity and therefore do not bring about sustainable change for our communities. Our focus will be on the remaining two categories: capacity building and system change through healthy policy development. These methods take a multi-sectoral approach and aim to create changes that are long term and population wide.

Community Food Security programs address the social, economic and environmental determinants of health.



3. Healthy Public Policy

Healthy public policy puts people first in our communities. Although the concept of public policy may seem daunting, it doesn't have to be. Growing our understanding of the basics of policy is important to grasping how it can be changed to benefit community health.

A Definition

The word policy refers to a plan of action that guides the decision-making of individuals, organizations and governments. Policies reflect our values and can take many forms, including guidelines, rules, regulations, laws or principles.[2] Specifically, healthy public policy targets the determinants of health to lay the groundwork for shrinking social inequalities and making healthier choices easier for everyone.[3] It promotes community-wide health by improving widespread access to the resources required to live healthy and productive lives.

Healthy Public Policy Is Important

The development of supportive, healthy policy is perhaps the most effective way to build long-term food security and a more sustainable food system for our communities.[4] It focuses on the underlying social causes of community food security and makes positive changes at the system level. The effects of these changes spread across all levels of the population and help to maintain community food security for the people of the present and the children of the future. However, the benefits of policy-making are not limited to the creation of a final document.

The importance of developing healthy policy is based on both the process and the final product. The process of building policies that support food security engages community members to reach a shared understanding of food security issues, while inviting them to think about how these problems can be addressed through policy-focused action.[5]

When it comes to the development of healthy public policy, both the journey and the destination are valuable to community growth.

Making Healthy Public Policy Happen

Generally, the need for new or updated public policy arises when a population's needs are not being met or the present system favours unhealthy choices. Governments are accountable for the health consequences of their policies or lack of policies.[6] The general public often feels like the development of policy is out of their hands; however, involving affected communities in the process is a vital part of healthy policy-making. In terms of building community food security, listening to the voice of food-insecure populations helps us understand what the issues are and provides direction for decision-makers. Collaboration between affected individuals, families, organizations, businesses and government is ideal for creating effective healthy policies that support the growth of food-secure communities.

Turn Up the Volume!

There are several types of initiatives that are turning up the volume on the public's voice during policy discussions, and bringing greater awareness to the importance of healthy policy that supports food-secure communities. Here are some highlights:

Food policy councils are "think tanks" for the development of programs and policies that aim to build community food security. Food policy councils are created through a diverse partnership of concerned citizens, businesses and organizations that collectively represent a community, region or province.[7] Council members join forces to discuss strategies for influencing policy, growing community awareness and promoting community action. Armed with the power of knowledge,

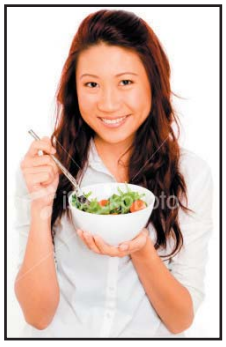
passion and ideas, food policy councils advocate for long-term solutions by striving to put food insecurity on the public policy agenda.

Taking Action

Since 1991, the Toronto Food Policy Council has partnered with business and community groups to develop policies and programs promoting food security. For more information, visit www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm.

Just Food, formerly the Ottawa Food Security Council, is aimed at creating a just and sustainable food system in Ottawa. They work with people in all parts of the food system and serve the interests of rural and urban food producers and low-income community members, and community organizations and partners. For more information, visit www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc.

School food policies are documents or plans of action that outline a school's approach to all food issues, including buying, selling and consuming food in a manner that supports healthier communities. These policies are used to guide and support the choices of educators, parents and students, and symbolize a shared goal of building healthier and happier spaces where students can thrive. School food policies may be adopted and implemented by the schools themselves, and by school boards, education ministries, public health units and other related sectors.[8] There are many goals that school food policies can set out to achieve within the school, including:[9]



- improving the nutrition, freshness, quality and appeal of food served and sold
- improving the food preparation, service and eating environments
- increase participation in school nutrition programs to ensure that no student goes hungry
- integrate food service with school educational, health and environmental missions
- purchase food in a manner that supports local farmers and the local economy
- provide opportunities for student, teacher and public input

Taking Action

Does your or your children's school have a food policy? If it doesn't, perhaps you can join forces with others who are advocating for one to be implemented. Our "Through the Grapevine" section offers several useful resources for learning more about food policies and other healthy school programs.

Food charters are statements of values, principles and priorities used to point community food policy in a positive direction. Food charters are developed by bringing a diverse group of citizens together and enabling them to share their concerns and desires around food and agricultural issues in order to reach a shared vision of food security.[10] Food charters take the voices and visions of community members and put them to paper. The end result is a community-owned and locally focused action plan to build greater food security. Both the document itself and the process used to create it are important to opening the discussion on food security issues, and mobilizing our political will to advocate for change.[11]

Taking Action

The Sudbury-Manitoulin Food Charter was developed by the Food Security Network of the Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts in June 2004, and was passed by the Sudbury & District Board of Health, the City of Greater Sudbury, the municipalities of Killarney and of St. Charles and also by the Township of Tehkummah on Manitoulin Island as of September 15, 2004. For more information, contact The Foodshed Project at www.foodshedproject.ca or the Sudbury & District Health Unit at www.sdhu.com.

Toronto City Council asked their Food and Hunger Action Committee to develop a Food Charter. The Committee brought together city councillors, city staff, non-profit agency staff, food program participants, volunteers, clergy and interested members of the public to work on the Charter, which was adopted by Council in 2001. View the Toronto Food Charter at www.toronto.ca/food_hunger/pdf/food_charter.pdf.

Putting Public Policy on the Right Path

Although the policy initiatives currently taking place to build food security for Canadians are promising, further policy changes need to be made by all levels of government in order to build community-wide food security for the long term. As part of their "Food 2002" project, FoodShare has developed a comprehensive list of 28 policy recommendations for building community food security that address the link between food and other social and economic issues. To read about these recommendations and other valuable information on food security, visit the FoodShare website at www.foodshare.net.

The City of Greater Sudbury Food Charter

...promoting community food security in the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin

Given that access to safe, affordable, nutritious food is a basic human right of individuals and communities, and connects us to our families, our cultures, and our traditions; *And that* community food security is a comprehensive approach that includes all components of the food system, from producers to consumers, and promotes regional food self-reliance; *And that* having a food-secure community is the foundation of population health, social justice, community-based economic development, and a sustainable environment; *Therefore, the Food Security Network of the Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts, including The City of Greater Sudbury, the Social Planning Council of Sudbury, and the Sudbury & District Health Unit, will work towards the development and implementation of a community food security mandate that supports research, policies, and programs that will endorse:*

1) Population Health and Wellness:

- Individual and household food security as a determinant of health;
- Adequate income, employment, housing, and transportation policies that ensure food accessibility and availability to all citizens; and
- Nutritional education and healthy food choices in schools, businesses and public places.

2) Community Development:

- An annual community food security report card;
- Food self-reliance through community-based food programs, such as community gardens, fresh food box programs and collective kitchens;
- Multi-cultural food festivals and cultural events;
- An emergency food preparedness plan; and
- The involvement of the community in developing food security solutions.

3) Investment in the Regional Food System:

- A regionally based and community-driven food system;
- The viability of agricultural and rural communities;
- The development of regional value-added agricultural production, food processing and distribution systems; and
- The promotion of regional food products at farmers' markets, farm-gate sales, and local food outlets.

4) The Development of a Sustainable Food System:

- Public and institutional education on the interdependence between the food system and a sustainable environment;
- Scientifically proven best management agricultural practices and regional crop varieties;
- The development and implementation of renewable technologies in the expansion of the regional food system;
- The reduction of persistent toxic chemicals that can accumulate within the food chain;
- Sustainable waste management practices; and
- Support for initiatives that minimize the loss of bio-diversity, resource depletion, and climate change, and that raise the awareness of global environmental issues.

4. Community Actions and Programs

Community actions are important vehicles for building food security and building regional capacity. Community food security actions and programs aim to improve people's access to nutritious food and promote sustainable and socially just food systems. Some programs also focus on bringing people together to produce and prepare their own food and work together for change.[12] Community actions mobilize both individuals and groups to address the burden of food insecurity that may be facing them personally, or perhaps facing others in their community. These programs build the capacity of individuals and populations by helping them acquire skills, strategies and resources to work through these challenges. This allows individuals to gain some control over very basic parts of their lives, such as feeding their families.

Taste the Benefits!

Although community action programs alone will not solve all food insecurity issues, they provide several powerful benefits: [13]

- preservation of individual dignity by requiring participation, time and often investment of financial resources
- offering healthier, better-quality food to low-income consumers than what is offered through a charitable model
- promoting local control over the food system and environmental sustainability
- fostering self-help, mutual support and community development
- offering nutrition education and opportunities to learn about new foods
- providing more opportunities for social contact and a chance to practice English language skills

A Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins with Just One Step

The following section profiles ten types of initiatives that aim to build more food-secure communities, and also includes stories of projects that are happening right here, right now, throughout Ontario. Let the energy and actions of fellow Ontarians motivate and inspire you. Turn your knowledge into action, and take a first step towards helping your community build a happy, healthy and food-secure future. Let the journey begin!

Buy Local

Buying from local food systems can include shopping at farmers' markets or stands where you purchase directly from the grower, and eating at locally owned establishments rather than restaurant chains.[14] It is an important step in supporting local food systems that promote food security by being environmentally and economically sustainable. Fill your food basket with local products, and taste the benefits:

- **It helps the local economy**. Buying local creates local job opportunities, pumps money back into the local economy and supports rural communities.
- **It is good for the environment**. Local food systems reduce air pollution and the release of greenhouse gases by cutting down on transport. Food that is grown locally takes less energy, preservatives and packaging to get to your plate.

- **It connects growers and consumers**. Consumers can build a greater understanding of how their food is grown and the people who are growing it, while farmers can learn about market trends and their customers' needs and interests.
- **It creates a stronger sense of community**. Communities come together to support locally produced food and build strong social networks. Sociologists have estimated that people have ten times as many conversations at farmers' markets than at supermarkets.[15]
- **It increases community access to safer, more nutritious food that tastes better**. Consumers have access to a diverse selection of fresh food that often contains less chemicals and preservatives. Food grown locally generally contains more vitamins and other nutrients than foods which have been imported.

First Steps:

Find a local market in your area by visiting www.farmersmarketsontario.com. Some communities make available local food maps or guides that show the public how and where to buy fresh local produce. For example, FoodLink Waterloo Region produces a guide to local food called "Buy Local! Buy Fresh!" for each season, available at www.foodlink-waterlooregion.ca.

Start your own "buy local" campaign. Check ecoPerth's Local Flavour campaign at www.ecoperth.on.ca to get some ideas.

The Local Flavour campaign recognizes the importance of our local economy and the people that rely on it for their livelihoods and is targeted to local businesses, farms, and individuals.

ecoPerth suggests many ways that you can keep your food dollar as close to home as possible:

- Read labels to figure out just how far the food you're thinking about buying has traveled, and buy as close to home as possible.
- Let food retailers and restaurants know you'd rather eat locally produced foods, and patronize those that do.
- Buy foods that are "in season" rather than "imported" because they are fresher and they have more nutrients than those coming from great distances.
- Purchase food from farm gate sales; i.e. products that can be purchased directly from the growers in your area.
- Shop for fresh goods at local markets. Every $1 spent on local food generates more than $2 in other local business.
- Join a food box program; i.e. a box of produce purchased from local growers and in some cases, delivered to your home.
- Start your own vegetable garden
- Buy Ontario wine – look for the VQA label.
- Experiment with new seasonal recipes that encourage the use of fresh, local products.

ecoPerth's Local Flavour logo allows consumers to quickly recognize the use of local products

Local Flavours Project
Thousand Islands/Rideau Region

Officially launched in July 2005 at the Brockville Farmers' Market, Local Flavours is an initiative of the UNESCO Frontenac Arch Biosphere, which occupies a triangular area in the Thousand Islands/Rideau region of Eastern Ontario.

The project supports local producers and builds a stronger local economy and community. Community members are encouraged to forgo buying their produce at the large chain grocery stores, and instead buy them at the farm gate or at local markets. The primary task of Local Flavours is to bring together local producers and consumers, creating an economic and social partnership that benefits the entire community

Local Flavours provides maps of producers and outlets on its website, and also produces an annual brochure listing its members. This brochure is available in many businesses, post offices, township offices, information booths and other spots throughout the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve Region.

There are many benefits to buying directly from local producers.

- Providing a reliable market for farmers increases their share of food dollars and helps them to survive in a challenging business, thus preserving agricultural land.
- When food doesn't have to travel far, it requires less packaging materials, preservatives and, often, fewer pesticides. Thus, it avoids processes that pose threats to the environment and human health and decrease the taste and quality of food.
- Reducing the need for long-distance shipping reduces the production of damaging greenhouse gases, which cause global warming, acid rain, smog, and air pollution.
- It helps to preserve rural agricultural landscape and uses local natural resources without destroying them, since local producers tend to have small, sustainable operations as opposed to large industrial farms.
- Local, naturally raised and fed animal products retain a higher proportion of their nutritional value than imported foods.
- The local economy benefits because money spent in the community stays in the community longer, benefiting local retailers and residents.
- It creates opportunities for local farmers to develop new markets, such as organic foods and foods targeted to particular health and ethnic markets. Local consumers could include purchasers who buy for hospitals or school cafeterias.
- Local food buying supports family farmers and helps to support rural communities. It also increases the connection between consumers and the production of their food and has significant social benefits. Communities come together to support locally produced food and the people who produce it.

For more information about Local Flavours, visit www.localflavours.org
or contact info@localflavours.org – (613) 659-4824.

Fair Trade

Buying local food is not always possible, as a large portion of the food available in Canada is imported from abroad. However, whether your food came from local soil or was harvested in a faraway land, it is still important to understand the system that brought the food to your plate.

When buying imported foods, it is difficult to see how our choices impact the people and communities that have grown it. Fair Trade is an international movement concerned with producing and trading goods in a way that supports local economies and human rights in poor countries. This includes getting a fair price for their goods, being offered secure jobs in environments that promote human rights and gaining the support to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to grow their business.[16] These are important factors when ensuring that our food is being produced in a sustainable and socially just way. Purchasing fair trade foods and advocating for world trade policies that benefit both small-scale producers and multinationals are important ways of exercising our power as consumers.[17]

First Steps:

Visit the website for Oxfam International's global campaign at www.maketradefair.com to read up on the issues and see how you can support fair trade.

Support businesses that are fair trade certified. Twenty countries, including Canada, have national initiatives to certify Fair Trade products. TransFair Canada, a not-for-profit certification and public education organization, provides a list of fair trade certified businesses on their website at www.transfair.ca/en/licenseelist.

Community Gardens

A community garden is an inexpensive way for people to work together to grow their own food. Community gardens are usually found in a convenient part of a neighbourhood, where people can easily drop by and participate. Some community gardens have allotments where each family grows its own food. At other community gardens, food is grown collectively, with work shared by the participants. This allows people to exchange ideas, share gardening tips and provide varying levels of expertise. Growing our own food is also a great way to help build food security in our communities, promote active living and encourage people to work outdoors. If joining or initiating a community garden project is not an option for you, consider starting a small garden in your own home. Gardens can be grown in backyards, windows, on balconies or on rooftops. You don't need to grow all your food at home, but giving it a try can be both fun and rewarding.

First Steps:

Find out if a community garden already exists in your community by contacting your local health unit, rotary and horticultural clubs, city parks and other community planning organizations. Getting involved in existing gardens will save you much time and energy and reduce duplication of efforts.

For gardening tips, Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc. is made up of local volunteers who give guidance to home gardeners. To find a Master Gardener near you, visit the Ontario Horticultural Association at www.gardenontario.org/mas.

Community Shared Agriculture

Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) is a co-operative method of direct marketing from farm to table. The primary thrust behind CSA is that consumers, usually urban, agree to buy a share of local farmers' produce at a pre-established price. Consumers are provided with a box full of fresh, quality, seasonal produce direct from a local farm every week during the growing season.[18] The prepaid share provides a guaranteed return for the CSA growers' labour and resources, regardless of drought, floods or other hazardous conditions. Many CSAs offer "work shares" where consumers can work off some or all of the share purchase price. It is also common for CSAs to involve their

Comments from Community Gardeners in London:

"The garden was particularly helpful because we were able to supplement our tiny food budget. If it hadn't been for the garden I shudder to think what our meals would have been like."

"What probably surprised me the most was how quickly any daily stress could be melted away just by watering the garden, weeding or picking the fresh produce."

"Everywhere I turned help was at hand. With seasoned gardeners on every side, advice was plentiful, and sooner than I could imagine I had a plot full of a wonderful array of produce."

"Last year my tomato crop was so bountiful that I delivered baskets each weekend to the senior shut-ins in the apartment building next to ours."

"What an enjoyable and fulfilling experience!"

London's Community Gardens

Operated by the London Community Resource Centre, the London Community Gardens Project is funded by the City of London and receives many donations and in-kind contributions from organizations, individuals, and other levels of government.

In the summer of 2005, 17 gardens were in operation. Community gardens have proven to be very popular in London for a variety of reasons. Not only do they provide increased access to fresh, nutritious, low-cost food, but they also provide opportunities for increased skill development, community building, recreation, physical activity, fresh air, social interaction and cross-cultural participation.

Participating gardeners come from diverse backgrounds and range in age from 21 to 92. Sixty-seven percent of the gardeners have household incomes of less than $24,000. Forty percent have languages other than English as their first language. Many live in apartments without access to a garden, and participate to better their health through both nutrition and exercise, and other simply enjoy gardening. Some gardeners are new Canadians who want to grow food that they are accustomed to from their countries of origin. Several agencies participate in the Community Gardens Project by organizing plots for their clients, members or constituents to use, in some cases as a form of therapy in addition to the other benefits of gardening.

The land for the gardens is provided by the City of London, churches and local businesses. In 2005 there were 432 plots and 230 registered gardeners. It was calculated that approximately 1,800 people benefited from food produced in the gardens. This number does not include those who benefited through produce donated to the London and Area Food Bank and other service agencies. The plot rental fee is based on a sliding scale from $15 to $40 per year, geared to income. Fifty-one percent of gardeners pay the lowest rate. These fees cover only the supplies required by the gardens, e.g., water, hoses, soil tests, tools, etc. The gardeners also contribute many hours of volunteer labour to assist with preparation and maintenance of the garden sites.

All the gardens are grown organically, i.e, no chemical pesticides or herbicides are used. Compost, mulching, crop rotation and companion planting are employed to obtain maximum yield.

One of the newer initiatives of the project has been to create raised garden beds at one of the garden sites to make them accessible to people with physical disabilities. Another initiative is the "Dig It" project, in which 20 youth will be hired to learn about composting, build composters, teach the community gardeners about it and facilitate composting at each of the gardens.

For more information about the London Community Gardens Project, contact:

Mary Yanful, Community Gardens Coordinator
London Community Resource Centre
652 Elizabeth St., London, Ontario N5Y 6L3
Tel: (519) 432-1801
Email: mary@lcrc.on.ca
Website: www.lcrc.on.ca

consumers with on-farm activities and special events, or to help distribute food shares to fellow members at drop-off sites.

CSA benefits consumers, farmers and the natural environment they both live in. By sharing in the success and failure of crops in any given year, the gap between consumers and growers is lessened, allowing for stronger relationships between rural and urban people. For the consumer, CSA offers a greater diversity of fresh, high-quality produce. For growers, CSA allows them the satisfaction of serving their local community while maintaining smaller eco-friendly farms, which are still profitable.[19] CSA also benefits the environment, as the majority of CSA growers practice ecologically friendly methods of food production with little or no use of chemicals. CSA consumers are tolerant of nutritious produce that may not be picture perfect, resulting in much less waste. Combining this reduction of waste produce with less packaging and less transportation costs creates a food system that is better for the environment, and also has a positive effect on the local economy.

First Steps:

Join a CSA and encourage your friends and family to follow! To find out what CSA projects are operating in your region, try contacting your local community food security organization (check FoodNet at www.opha.on.ca/foodnet/initiatives.html for listings), your local Green Communities member (see http://www.gca.ca/indexcms/index.php?organizations#ON), or check out the various Ontario chapters of Canadian Organic Growers (see the national website at www.cog.ca).

Community Kitchens

"Eliminating hunger is really the cornerstone of a better world where we could live with each other in peace and harmony. Collective Kitchens contribute to that kind of world."
Diane Norman, Dietitian

A community kitchen consists of a group of people who meet regularly to plan and cook nutritious meals together, exchange recipes and develop new food preparation skills. By sharing a collective kitchen space, participants can expand their skills while socializing, building friendships and offering mutual support to other people who face the challenges of food insecurity.

Community kitchens often involve buying foods collectively and in large quantities or bulk, therefore lowering food costs for members. In addition, community kitchens are often very convenient for participants. Cooking in larger quantities takes less time, and the food can be easily portioned and frozen for later use.

It is up to the group to decide how they want the kitchen to function, therefore providing a level of flexibility that helps to ensure that the diverse needs of the group are met. Some groups meet once a week, while others meet once a month. Some kitchens may sit down together and share their meals after each meeting, while others may cook a number of different meals to last until the next meeting.

When individuals of similar circumstance meet, community kitchens may take a particular focus. For example, they can be geared towards seniors, different minority groups, single mothers and fathers, vegetarians, students and other specific groups.

First Step:

Community kitchen programs are operating in many parts of the province. To learn more, contact the food security work groups and councils listed in our "Through the Grapevine" section. To find out if there is a community kitchen program in your area,

contact your local health unit or check the FoodNet website at www.opha.on.ca/foodnet/initiatives/program.html.

London's Collective Kitchen Network

In response to the growing demand on food programs in London, in 1991 the London Community Resource Centre invited Dianne Norman, a public health dietitian in Montreal, to provide training on the development of a Collective Kitchen program in London. Four kitchens were opened initially, one with recent Spanish immigrants, two in therapeutic environments for ex-psychiatric patients and a fourth for anyone from the community. There are now 37 kitchens operating in London and surrounding townships, sponsored by various organizations and institutions. The London Community Resource supports the London Collective Kitchen network by providing short term subsidies, training, nutritional information and referrals.

Service providers will be engaged as supporters for these high needs groups. The success of this project is due to the contributions of many volunteers, partners and funders.

North Lanark Responds to Community Needs

The North Lanark County Community Health Centre conducted a broad-based community health needs assessment which identified difficulties for many individuals and their families in accessing affordable, fresh fruits and vegetables. Because Lanark County also has a rich agricultural heritage, local individuals and organizations started working together to identify ways in which the provision of locally grown produce can be made more accessible to low income families in north Lanark. An anonymous donation from an individual with matching top-up funds from the Lawson Foundation, combined with special project funding from the United Way of Lanark County, have provided seed money for this initiative to take root. Projects being developed or explored include: supporting a community kitchen using local grown produce, creating a kitchen garden at a local youth centre and providing locally grown produce for hot lunch programs at the local primary school. The partners in this initiative include the North Lanark County Community Health Centre; ecoPerth and the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition.

Gleaning Projects

Gleaning refers to the collection of crops from farmers' fields that remain after harvesting is complete. These are crops that would otherwise be left to rot or be ploughed under, as harvesting them is not economically profitable for the grower or they are not suitable to sell on the retail market.

Gleaning is practiced as a means for low-income and hungry families to access fresh food at no cost. Projects also aim to bridge the gap between growers and consumers and encourage strong partnerships between participants and the local farming community. Gleaning provides participating families with an opportunity to promote locally grown produce, be socially and physically active and to learn more about nutrition, food preparation and food safety.[20]

First Steps:

Read about gleaning projects that are already happening around the province, share your knowledge with others and see how you can get involved. Some gleaning programs you may want to consult include:

- **Fresh Food Partners** by York Region Food Network: http://www.yrfn.ca/gleaning.htm
- **Food Action Network** gleaning program by Thunder Bay District Health unit: http://www.tbdhu.com/food/security/Gardening.htm

School-Based Nutrition Projects

Recently, there have been many discussions on the role of Ontario schools in ensuring that students obtain proper nutrition to succeed in their learning environment. Many children are arriving at school hungry, possibly due to long bus rides or a hectic family schedule that leaves little time to eat breakfast in the morning. Recognizing the importance of proper nourishment to a student's learning and behaviour, many schools are adopting nutrition programs in response to this issue. These programs often work hand in hand with school food policies that help to guide healthy choices by students and staff.

School-based nutrition projects are not designed to remove or replace the parental responsibility of nourishing children, but rather enhance student access to nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Some programs may also provide students with opportunities to grow and cook their own food on site.

These programs address the health and diet needs of all children, not only those considered to be poor or in need. School-based nutrition programs tend to move away from a charitable model. Although they often involve some level of payment or donation from participants, they may also involve funding to ensure that all kids can participate, regardless of their ability to pay. Other characteristics of successful programs include being offered regularly, involving parents, encouraging sharing, involving nutrition education and giving children healthy and safe food for energy to play, learn and grow.[21]

First Steps:

If there is not already a school-based nutrition program happening at your child's school, perhaps it is time to initiate one. See our "Through the Grapevine" section for a listing of several healthy schools resources. For general information, visit www.safehealthyschools.org. To read about healthy school success stories, including initiatives to enhance student nutrition, visit the website of the Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition at www.opha.on.ca/resources/csh-success.pdf.

Food-Buying Clubs

A food-buying club is one where a group of people get together to provide food for themselves and their families. They range in size from five to 50 families or individuals, and usually order every month or every second month from a wholesaler or retail distributor. A food-buying club collects orders from individual families, combines them and purchases the total quantity at wholesale prices. The distributor delivers the order to a house or drop-off point in the community where the order is then divided and distributed to members.

Another type of buying club is the "good food box" concept. A "good food box" is a food delivery system in which fresh produce or non-perishable food is purchased in bulk, and the food is then delivered to neighbourhoods by volunteers or consumers.

The concept of food-buying clubs is spreading and can be easily adopted by many communities, as they are fairly simple to organize and establish when kept at a small scale. Since there is little overhead in running a food-buying club, there is no need to mark up prices or pay membership dues, which keeps prices low.

First Steps:

The Ontario Natural Food Co-op is very supportive of food-buying clubs. The Co-op can provide all the necessary information on joining or starting a

Durham's Child Nutrition Project

Sponsored by the Community Development Council Durham (CDCD), the Durham Child Nutrition Project (DCNP) utilizes an inclusive approach to ensure that every child in Durham Region attends school well nourished and ready to learn. As of December 31, 2005, the DCNP provided over one million healthy breakfasts to 10,932 children in 77 nutrition programs in the Region of Durham. This nutrition program recognizes the fact that there is a strong link between nutrition and the ability to learn.

This nutrition program has increased the volunteer base immensely. The increased focus on nutritional awareness, combined with the statistics on child poverty, have motivated family members to approach their neighbourhood schools to volunteer in this program. The school teachers and principals also benefit from the dedicated volunteers in this program, as they now have a wealth of diverse cultures in the volunteer pool and collaborative planning is now occurring in areas such as meal planning, cultural awareness, cultural food items and language use. The immigrant volunteers can communicate with other parents in the school nutrition program who may not use English as their first language, and everyone benefits.

The project has wide reaching benefits. Children are better prepared to learn once they are fed, they are exposed to healthy eating habits at an early age and they develop a sense of belonging. The program has the potential for capacity building within each community and children are provided an opportunity to try new cultural foods. Schools benefit from an increase in student attendance and punctuality, the potential for higher concentration/better academic output when children are well nourished and a marked decrease in behavioural issues in the classroom. Parents are aware that children receive a nourishing breakfast/snack daily, which means their children are better prepared to learn and excel. Families on a fixed or limited budget express gratitude that their children receive a nourishing meal prior to commencing their school day. Parents who must leave the home to commute to their place of work before their children leave for school express satisfaction with a program that ensures that each child will commence their learning day well fed and eager to learn.

The most significant result of this program is that children have increased mathematics and reading ability, children display better behaviour in class, there is a reduction in absenteeism, and the children and their parents are developing healthy eating habits.

This program will have a significant long-term impact on the children's future and the further development of Durham Region and the municipalities that comprise it. This program can be adapted to fit in any city, town or community.

For more information, contact:

Aisha Malik
DCNP Coordinator
Community Development Council Durham
Tel: (905) 686-2661

FoodShare's Field to Table Schools Program

On May 5, 2005, more than 140 local parents, students, educators, farmers, Toronto Public Health staff members and "foodies" gathered for an exciting one-day participatory workshop at FoodShare's Field to Table Centre on Eastern Avenue. The keynote speaker was Marion Kalb, Program Director, National Farm to School Program in the United States. Marion has helped to build the Farm to School movement so that it is now operational in 22 states. Workshop participants heard from local key stakeholders on the benefits of adopting a farm to school program, which would enhance children's ability to eat local, healthy food during their school day. That workshop was the impetus for the establishment of both the Ontario Farm to School Network and FoodShare's Field to Table Schools program.

The goal of the Field to Table Schools initiative is to develop sustainable school programs that enhance children's health while improving the environment through school gardens, composting, salad bar lunches and links to farmers. Schools will be environmentally friendly ecological centres that will foster an integrated and holistic approach to food. Students will learn about cooking and how food quality relates to soil fertility, pest management, seasonal changes, processing for market and transportation.

The ideal Field to Table School will be one where the focus is on food literacy and agricultural awareness. For example, in the ideal Field to Table School:

- all meals and snacks include fresh fruits and vegetables
- pop machines feature water and milk
- there is a vegetable garden tended by student/teacher/parent teams
- students learn about, and participate in, simple food preparation
- recycling organic waste, paper and plastic is convenient
- composting is part of the curriculum
- classrooms have grow lights and seedling trays for herbs and greens
- resource books are up-to-date
- farm trips and farmer visits are frequent
- fund raising does not depend on chocolate bars
- special events do not serve junk food.

The Field to Table School seems to be an idea whose time has come, a practical way for parents, educators, kids and the school community to learn about healthy eating in a positive and exciting way. During the 2005–2006 school year, FoodShare staff were supported by a donation from the Laidlaw Foundation, which was used to initiate activities in three Toronto pilot schools. The results have been positive and expansion plans are underway.

For more information see www.foodshare.net/school02.htm or contact:
fttschools@foodshare.net.
Tel: (416) 393-6351

buying club. To hear about these services and more, visit their website at www.onfc.ca or call (416) 503-1144.

To find a good food box program in your area, check the listing of members of the Ontario Good Food Box Network on Foodshare's website at www.foodshare.ca/train08.htm. If you are thinking of starting a similar program, you should get in touch with one of these groups to learn from their experience.

FoodShare has produced a *Good Food Box Guide* to help groups set up their own program. It also contains case studies of some good food box programs. You may view or download it from www.foodshare.net/publications_04.htm.

Food Co-operatives

A co-operative is a business and incorporated body that has a board of directors. It is a democratic entity that is bound by the Co-operative Corporations Act. A food co-operative is a group of people who come together to provide food for themselves and their families. Co-operatives offer greater control over food quality, price and source, and range in size from small groups (five to 10 members) operating much the same as a food-buying club to large groups (100 to 500 members). Many have a retail outlet that serves members and non-members of the co-operative.

To become a member of a co-operative, you may need to make a commitment to perform tasks to help the co-op function. As well, many co-operatives require a financial commitment in the form of a refundable membership loan.

There are many exciting ways to grow and diversify food co-operatives. Some have become very successful and branched into owning restaurants, coffee shops and meeting places, while others have expanded into areas such as community gardening to supply fresh produce.

First Steps:

For all there is to know about co-op development and governance, contact:
The Ontario Co-operative Association
www.ontario.coop
(519) 763-8271

The Canadian Co-operative Association
www.coopscanada.coop
(613) 238-6711

Good Food Box Regional Network

A Good Food Box Regional Network has been formed in eastern Ontario to help support the work of community-based Good Food Box programs. This network meets quarterly to: share information, tools and resources; identify cost-sharing opportunities; support new or struggling good food box programs; and provide ideas and innovation for existing and established programs. The network currently consists of representatives from the Community Health Centres in Portland, Kingston, Merrickville, North Lanark, the LLG District Health Unit and a member of the John Howard Society.

For more information contact Kara Symbolic at:
karas@healthycommunities.on.ca
Tel: (613) 267-8426

Peer Education Programs

Many Ontarians have a wide range of food-related skills and knowledge that they have gained through cultural, religious, occupational, educational and family experiences.[22] Peer education programs tap into this valuable community resource to build capacity of other people throughout the province. The programs establish a network of trained individuals, often referred to as "advisors" or "animators," who engage their local communities in an effort to build food security and adopt safe and

healthy food practices. Community representatives, who are often volunteers, provide guidance and support to their communities in different ways.

Some programs work alongside other community organizations to develop food projects in their local area, such as community gardens, kitchens or farmers' markets. Other programs may focus more on education, by working with communities to improve and promote safe and healthy food selection, preparation and storage practices of consumers.[23]

The local focus of peer education programs is an important contributor to their success. Since the community leaders are also community members, they have a better feel for local needs and greater potential for mobilizing fellow members in an effort to build community capacity.

Why Wait?

Peer education programs are active in many areas of the province. For example, the Community Food Advisor program operates in 18 areas of Ontario. Community Food Advisors are trained volunteers, certified annually, who provide reliable information and education that promotes safe and nutritious food selection, preparation and storage practices to consumers in Ontario. For more information, contact the Nutrition Resource Centre at 1 (800) 267-6817 or visit www.nutritionrc.ca/programs/cfa-program.html.

FoodShare (www.foodshare.net) has a Community Food Animation program, in which has paid staff and volunteers work with local partners to animate communities to start food projects in their neighbourhoods, co-ordinate a network of farmers' markets, develop food policy recommendations and assist with project design, evaluation and policy development.

The Region of Waterloo also operates a large peer nutrition and health worker program, which as undergone rigorous evaluation. You can find information about the impacts of such programs at: www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph - follow the links for resources/health status and research studies/peer programs.

Through the Grapevine:

V

Learn More About Community Food Security

The Fundamentals: Understanding, Defining and Approaching CFS

Publications

Food Security: More Than a Determinant of Health. (2003). McIntyre, L.
Available on-line at: www.irpp.org/po/archive/mar03/mcintyre.pdf

For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems. (1999).
Koc M, MacRae R, Mougeot L, Welsh J (Editors). Ottawa: International Development Research Centre
Check your local library or bookstore

A Systemic Approach to Community Food Security: A Role for Public Health. (2002). Food Security Work Group, Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA).
Available online at: http://www.opha.on.ca/ppres/2002-01_pp.pdf

Discussion Paper on Household and Individual Food Insecurity. (2001). Tarasuk, V. Available online at:
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/pol/food_sec_entire-sec_aliments_entier_e.html

Towards A Healthy Community Food System for Waterloo Region (2005). Xuereb, M and Desjardins E. Available on line at: http://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca – follow the links for resources/health status and research studies/food issues.

Websites

Ryerson University Centre for Studies in Food Security
www.ryerson.ca/~foodsec/

Food for the Cities: Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations
www.fao.org/fcit/insec.asp

Food Security Bureau, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
www.agr.gc.ca/misb/fsb/fsb-bsa_e.php

Community Food Security Coalition
www.foodsecurity.org

Oxfam Canada
www.oxfam.ca

CFS and the Social Determinants of Health

Publications

The Social Determinants of Health: An Overview of the Implications for Policy and the Role of the Health Sector. (2002). Edwards, P.
Available online at:
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/overview_implications/01_overview.html

Social Determinants of Health – The Solid Facts, 2nd edition. (2003).
Wilkinson, R and Marmot, M. (Editors). World Health Organization.
Available online at: http://www.euro.who.int/document/e81384.pdf

Strengthening the Social Determinants of Health: The Toronto Charter for a Healthy Canada. (2002).
Available online at: www.socialjustice.org

Additional Websites

The Ram's Horn
http://www.ramshorn.ca

Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) Knowledge Depot
http://www.rnaoknowledgedepot.ca/promoting_health/index.asp

Centre for Social Justice
http://www.socialjustice.org/csjabout.php

Chronic Disease, Obesity and Health Promotion

Publications

The Case for Prevention: Moving upstream to Improve Health for all Ontarians. (2006). Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse. Available online at:
http://www.opc.on.ca/english/about_us/pdfs/caseforprevention.pdf

Report on the Health Status of the Residents of Ontario. (2000).
Public Health Research, Education and Development Program
Available online at:
http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/healthstatus/english/healthstatus2000.pdf

Chronic Disease in Ontario and Canada: Determinants, Risk Factors and Prevention Priorities. (2006). E. Haydon et. al. Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance & the Ontario Public Health Association.
Available online at: http://www.cdpac.ca/content/pdf/CDPsummary%20report.pdf

Preventing Chronic Diseases: A Vital Investment. (2005).
World Health Organization and The Public Health Agency of Canada
Available online at: http://www.who.int/chp/chronic_disease_report/en

If the Health Care System Believed You Are What You Eat: Strategies to Integrate our Food and Health Systems. (1997). Toronto Food Policy Council
Available online at: http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_discussion_paper.htm

Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives: 2004 Chief Medical Officer of Health Report. Dr. Sheila Basrur. Available online at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ministry_reports/cmoh04_report/cmoh_04.html

Additional Websites

World Health Organization: Department of Chronic Diseases and Health Promotion
http://www.who.int/chp/about/integrated_cd/en/

World Health Organization: Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health
http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/facts/riskfactors/en/index.html

Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control: Public Health Agency of Canada
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ccdpc-cpcmc/topics/chronic-disease_e.html

Poverty, Inclusion and Social Development

Publications

Population Health: Social Inclusion as a Determinant of Health. (2002).
Galabuzi, GE and Labonte, R. Public Health Agency of Canada
Available online at:
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/overview_implications/03_inclusion.html

Reducing Urban Hunger in Ontario: policy responses to support the transition from food charity to local food security. (1995). Toronto Food Policy Council.
Available online at: http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_discussion_paper.htm

Urban Poverty in Canada: A Statistical Profile. (2000). Lee, Kevin K.
Canadian Council on Social Development
Available online at: www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2000/up

Report Card on Child Poverty in Ontario. (2003).
Ontario Campaign 2000, Toronto
Available online at: http://www.campaign2000.ca/rc/ONrc03/ONrcO3eng.pdf

Poverty Fact Sheet. (2000).
Peterborough Social Planning Council
Available online at: http://www.pspc.on.ca/pdf/Poverty%20Fact%20Sheet.PDF

Additional Websites

The Canadian Council on Social Development
www.ccsd.ca

Make Poverty History Campaign, Oxfam International
www.makepovertyhistory.ca

United Way Canada
www.unitedway.ca

Community Foundations of Canada
http://www.cfc-fcc.ca/services/index.cfm

Inclusive Cities Canada
http://www.inclusivecities.ca/about/index.html

Child and Youth Health Network for Eastern Ontario
http://www.child-youth-health.net/home.htm

(follow the "publications" tab to get to the five Poverty Report Books for various parts of Eastern Ontario)

BC Food Systems Network Society
http://www.fooddemocracy.org

School-based Nutrition Programs and Policies

Publications

Making Ontario Schools Healthier Places to Learn. (2004).
Education Minister Gerard Kennedy. Ministry of Education, Government of Ontario.
Available online at:
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/healthyschools/report.pdf

Effectiveness of School Programs in Preventing Childhood Obesity: A Multilevel Comparison. (2005). P..J. Veugelers, PhD and A..L. Fitzgerald, MSc.
American Journal of Public Health: March 2005, Vol. 95, No.3 200595:432 435.

Healthy School Food Policies: A Checklist. (2002). M. Vallianatos M. Center for Food and Justice, Urban and Environmental Policy Institute.
Available online at:
www.departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/healthy_school_food_policies_05.pdf

Achieving the Vision of Healthy Schools across Ontario: Priority Areas for Action. (2005). Ontario Health Schools Coalition. Available online at:
http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/OHSC-Report-8Jun05.pdf

Food for Thought: Schools and Nutrition. (1997). Health Canada. Available online at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/nutrition/food_thought_schools-reflection_aliments_ecole_e.pdf

Additional Websites

Breakfast for Learning: Canadian Living Foundation
www.breakfastforlearning.ca

Communities and Schools Promoting Health
www.safehealthyschools.org

Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition, Ontario Public Health Association
http://www.opha.on.ca/ohsc/

Living School: Building Healthier Communities
Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA)
http://www.livingschool.ca/

Food in Schools Toolkit: British Nutrition Foundation. http://foodinschools.datacenta.uk.net/

Community Food Security and Urban Planning

Publications

The Way to a City's Heart is through its Stomach: Putting Food Security on the Urban Planning Menu. (2001). Roberts, W. Toronto Food Policy Council. Available online at: http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_discussion_paper.htm

Food Retail Structure and Food Security. (1996). Toronto Food Policy Council. Available online at:
http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_discussion_paper.htm

Additional Websites:

Centre for Research on Inner City Health: St. Michael's Hospital
http://www.crich.ca/

Food Production and the Future of Farming

Publications

Farming and You: Re-examining the Relationship between Farmers and Consumers. (2001). Shamley, F. and Jacobs, A. Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition Update: Spring/Summer 2001. Available online at: www.healthycommunities.on.ca/publications/newsletter/S_S01EN.PDF

Policy on Sustainable Agriculture. National Farmers Union.
www.nfu.ca/sustag.htm

Setting a New Direction: Changing the Agricultural Policy Making Process. (1995). Toronto Food Policy Council. Available online at: http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_discussion_paper.htm

Additional Websites:

Sustainable Agriculture Production and Consumption Forum.
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
www.agrifood-forum.net

Inter Pares
http://www.interpares.ca/en/what/food.php

Food Security Bureau, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
http://www.agr.gc.ca/misb/fsb/fsb-bsa_e.php?page=index

Farming Solutions: Success Stories for the Future of Farming
www.farmingsolutions.org

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
www.iisd.org/

Beyond Factory Farming Coalition
www.beyondfactoryfarming.org

World Health Organization
The Department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases
www.who.int/foodsafety

Food Safety Network: University of Guelph
http://www.foodsafetynetwork.ca/en/index.php

In Focus: Growing Better Cities – Urban Agriculture for Sustainable Development.
International Development Research Centre
www.idrc.ca/en/ev-92997-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Canadian Organic Growers
www.cog.ca

Importing and Transporting Food

Publications

Fighting Global Warming at the Farmer's Market: The Role of the Local Food Systems in Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emission, Second Edition. (2005). Bentley, S. and Barker, R. FoodShare Toronto. Available online at: http://www.foodshare.net/resource/files/ACF230.pdf

Food Miles: Environmental Implications of Food Imports to Waterloo Region. (2005)
Xuereb M. Region of Waterloo Public Health. Available online at: www.chd.region.waterloo.on.ca

Eating Oil: Food Supply in a Changing Climate. (2001). Jones, A. Elm Farm Research Centre, U.K. Available online at: www.sustainweb.org/chain_fm_eat.asp

Additional Websites

Sierra Club of Canada
www.sierraclub.ca

Lifecycles Project Society: Food Miles Initiative
www.lifecyclesproject.ca/initiatives/food_miles/

Green Ontario: Conserver Solutions for a Healthy Ontario.
The Conservation Council of Ontario.
www.greenontario.org

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Linkages: A Multimedia Resource for Environment and Development Policy Makers
www.iisd.ca

Sustainable Table: Serving Up Healthy Food Choices
www.sustainabletable.org

The FoodShed Project – Thinking Ecologically! A Sustainable Eating Initiative
www.foodshedproject.ca/food_security.htm

Oxfam International: Make Trade Fair Campaign
www.maketradefair.com

International Federation for Alternative Trade
www.ifat.org

Healthy Policy: Development and Advocacy

Publications

Thought About Food? A Workbook on Food Security and Influencing Policy. (2005). Food Security Projects of the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, Dalhousie University
Available online at: www.foodthoughtful.ca

Developing Health Promotion Policies, Version 1.0 (2004). The Health Communication Unit, Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto. Available online at www.thcu.ca/infoandresources.htm

Community Advocacy Toolkit (2003). Breakfast for Learning, Canadian Living Foundation
Available online at: www.breakfastforlearning.ca

Taking Action through Public Policy: A Focus on Health and Environment Issues. (2002). Community Animation Program, Environment Canada & Health Canada. Available online at: www.atl.ec.gc.ca/community/cap_taking_action_through_public_policy/index_e.html

School Community Cooperation for Healthy Eating – School Food Policies. Community and Schools Promoting Health. This site provides links to several web-based documents that describe effective policies and policy-making for school food policies. The issue of fundraising is covered specifically because it is often cited as the key barrier. www.safehealthyschools.org/healthyeating/school_food_policies.htm

Additional Websites:

VOICE in Health Policy
www.projectvoice.ca

Toronto Food Policy Council
http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm

FoodShare
http://www.foodshare.net/foodpolicy03.htm

Health Canada: Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/branch-dirgen/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/index_e.html

Institute on Governance: Building Policy Capacity
http://www.iog.ca/knowledge_areas.asp?pageID=4&area=3

Canadian Public Health Association: Policy and Advocacy
http://www.cpha.ca/english/policy/policy.htm

Taking Action: Food Security Workgroups and Councils

FoodShare: Field to Table
www.foodshare.net

Toronto Food and Hunger Action Committee
http://www.toronto.ca/food_hunger/

Food Security Workgroup
Ontario Public Health Association
www.opha.on.ca/foodnet/

Ottawa Food Security Council
www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc/

Toronto Food Policy Council
www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm

Food Link Waterloo Region
www.foodlink-waterlooregion.ca/

Thunder Bay Food Action Network and District Health Unit
www.tbdhu.com/food/security/default.htm

Sudbury-Manitoulin Food Security Network
http://communities.mysudbury.ca/Sites/foodsecurity/default.aspx

The Foodshed Project
http://www.foodshedproject.ca/

Food Security Resource Centres

Ryerson University Centre for Studies in Food Security
www.ryerson.ca/~foodsec/

Nutrition Resource Centre
http://www.nutritionrc.ca

Ontario Public Health Association
http://www.opha.on.ca/resources/issues.html

FoodShare Learning Centre
http://www.foodshare.net/lrcMAIN.htm

Food and Agricultural Association (FAO) of the United Nations: Publications and Documents
http://www.fao.org/publishing/

Glossary of Key Terms

VI

Access is defined as having the right, opportunity or ability to reach, enter or use a facility, program, service or materials; visit a person or people; and/or receive, understand and use information, knowledge or skills. *(adapted from The City of Toronto Task Force on Community Access & Equity: Glossary of Access and Equity Terms 1998–1999)*

Advocacy is the act of supporting or arguing in favour of a cause, policy or idea. It is undertaken to influence public opinion and societal attitudes or to bring about changes in government, community or institutional policies. *(adapted from the Kidney Foundation of Canada Advocacy Handbook)*

Biodiversity refers to the variability among living organisms, including diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. *(Environment Canada, International Relations Glossary)*

Biotechnology is any technique that uses biological systems, living organisms or parts of organisms to develop or modify products for specific uses. *(adapted from the World Foundation for Environment and Development)*

Chronic diseases are typically characterized as prolonged conditions that have an uncertain cause or origin, multiple risk factors, a non-infectious origin and are often preventable. Examples include cardiovascular diseases (heart disease and stroke), cancer, diabetes, arthritis, asthma and mental illness. *(adapted from the Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Control)*

Community usually refers a geographic location – a place where a group of individuals reside and are subject to the same laws. Community can also refer to a group of individuals with common characteristics, beliefs, values or interests (e.g., a faith-based community). As well, communities can be composed of individuals sharing a range of common needs or experiences (e.g., the need for physical accommodation, the experience of racism). What is crucial to any "community," however, is the sense of belonging or attachment that individuals have with one another and/or their environment. *(adapted from The City of Toronto Task Force on Community Access & Equity: Glossary of Access and Equity Terms 1998–1999)*

Community development is a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community's initiative. *(United Nations: 1948)*

Community food security is a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice. (Hamm and Bellows, 2003). Food security also includes being able to make a living by growing and producing food in ways that protect and support both the land, sea and the food producers, and that ensure that there will be healthy food for our children's children. *(Food Security Projects of the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, Dalhousie University)*

Culture refers to the way groups of people have learned or have had to live together by sharing certain historical experiences, including ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge and historical, geographical, linguistic, racial, religious, ethnic or social traditions. Culture is a complex and dynamic organization of meaning, knowledge, artifacts and symbols that guide human behaviour, account for shared patterns of thought and action and contribute to human, social and physical survival. Culture is transmitted, reinforced and passed on from generation to generation and is constantly changing. *(adapted from The City of Toronto Task Force on Community Access & Equity: Glossary of Access and Equity Terms 1998–1999)*

Determinants of health are the range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors that determine the health status of individuals or populations. (World Health Organization Health Promotion Glossary, 1999). Specifically, the social determinants of health arise from historical, social, cultural, economic and political circumstances that produce inequalities of health in populations. *(Dietitians of Canada)*

Ecosystem is an integrated and stable association of living resources (plant, animals and micro-organisms) and non-living resources functioning within a defined physical location. *(Environment Canada, International Relations Glossary)*

Fair trade is a trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – particularly in Third World countries. *(International Federation for Alternative Trade)*

Food bank is a broad term for an organization or entity that acquires, stores and distributes food to the needy in their community. Food banks are typically supported by community food drives and umbrella organizations, as well as grocery stores, local agriculture, food manufacturers and other distributors. There are approximately 200 food banks in Ontario today. Although a typical food bank is somewhat different from an emergency food program, it may also offer those services, alongside others such as clothing and counselling. *(Ontario Association of Food Banks)*

Food Security – *see Community Food Security*

Food insecurity is the opposite of food security. Food insecurity refers to limited or uncertain access to nutritious, safe foods necessary to lead a healthy lifestyle; households that experience food insecurity have reduced quality or variety of meals and may have irregular food intake. *(United States Department of Agriculture, Life Research Office)*

Food safety refers to the concept of food being free from all hazards, whether chronic or acute, that make food injurious to the health of the consumer. *(World Health Organization)*

Food-borne illnesses are defined as diseases, usually either infectious or toxic in nature, caused by agents that enter the body through the ingestion of food. *(World Health Organization)*

Fossil fuels are fuels containing carbon – coal, oil and gas – that were formed over millions of years through the decay, burial and compaction of rotting vegetation on land and of marine organisms on the sea floor. Burning fossil fuels is the major way in which humans add to the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, causing air pollution and contributing to climate change. *(Climate Change North, Yukon Conservation Society)*

Genetic pollution refers to the uncontrolled spread of genetic information into the genomes of organisms in which such genes are not present in nature. *(Food and Agriculture Association of the United Nations)*

Greenhouse gases are gases in the atmosphere that trap the sun's energy and thereby contribute to rising surface temperatures. The main greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change is carbon dioxide (CO2), a by-product of burning fossil fuels. Other greenhouse gases include methane (from agricultural sources) and nitrous oxide (from industrial sources). *(Environment Canada, International Relations Glossary)*

Health is a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the object of living. It is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities. *(World Health Organization)*

Health disparities/inequalities are population-specific differences in the presence of disease, health outcomes or access to healthcare. Health disparities that result from differences in socioeconomic status follow a gradient that is commonly known as the social gradient. *(adapted from the Health Resources and Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services)*

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over their health and to improve their health. This can be achieved through advocacy to create the essential conditions for health indicated above; enabling all people to achieve their full health potential; and mediating between the different interests in society in the pursuit of health. *(adapted from Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. WHO Geneva, 1986)*

Healthy public policy is characterized by an explicit concern for health and equity in all areas of policy, and by an accountability for how policy impacts health. The main aim of healthy public policy is to create a supportive environment to enable people to lead healthy lives and make healthy choices easier for citizens. *(adapted from World Health Organization Health Promotion Glossary, 1998)*

Job security refers to a worker's sense of having continuity of employment resulting from the possession of special skills, seniority or protection provided in a collective agreement against unforeseen change. *(Saskatoon and District Labour Council, glossary of terms www.sfn.saskatoon.sk.ca/business/sdlc)*

Malnutrition is a state of poor nutrition that can result from an insufficient, excessive or unbalanced diet. It can also refer to the difficulty or inability to absorb foods.

Population health is an approach that aims to improve the health of the entire population and to reduce health inequities among population groups. In order to reach these objectives, it looks at and acts upon the broad range of factors and conditions that have a strong influence on our health. *(Public Health Agency of Canada, What is Population Health?)*

Poverty is the state of being without adequate food, shelter or other basic necessities of life. In economic terms, there are two kinds of poverty: absolute and relative. Absolute poverty is a defined standard that has been agreed upon by experts and many countries. For many, absolute poverty also has two major classifications. There is extreme poverty, where an individual lives on less than one dollar a day, and there is moderate poverty, where an individual lives on between one and two dollars

a day. Relative poverty is dependent on the country or region, as well as the social context. *(Ontario Association of Food Banks)*

Prevention is a proactive process that includes measures that not only prevent the occurrence of disease, such as risk factor reduction, but also arrest its progress and reduce its consequences once established. *(adapted from the World Health Organization Health Promotion Glossary, 1998)*

Social exclusion describes the structures and processes of inequality among groups in society. In the Canadian context, social exclusion refers to the inability of certain groups or individuals to participate fully in Canadian life due to structural inequalities in access to social, economic, political and cultural resources. These inequalities arise out of oppression related to race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, immigrant status and religion. *(G.E. Galabuzi and R. Labonte in "Social Inclusion as a Determinant of Health")*

Social inclusion is the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society – the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that socially and economically vulnerable people are within reach of our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth. *(Laidlaw Foundation)*

Social justice is a concept based upon the belief that each individual and group within a given society has a right to civil liberties, equal opportunity, fairness, and participation in the educational, economic, institutional, social and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the community. *(R. Degan and Dr. M. Disman in "Cultural Competency Handbook," Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto)*

Social support is defined as the assistance available to individuals and groups from within communities that can provide a buffer against adverse life events and living conditions, and can provide a positive resource for enhancing the quality of life. *(World Health Organization Health Promotion Glossary, 1998)*

Sustainable agriculture is a method of farming that provides a secure living for farm families; maintains the natural environment and resources; supports the rural community; and offers respect and fair treatment to all involved, from farm workers to consumers to the animals raised for food. Sustainable agriculture meets the needs of the current generation while conserving resources for the use of future generations. *(Sustainable Table, www.bctheorganicway.com/glossary.htm)*

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VII

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