Thought About Food?©

A Workbook on Food Security & Influencing Policy

Developed by the

Food Security Projects of the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and
the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, Dalhousie University

June 2005

The Food Security Projects of the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre

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The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official policies of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

June 2005

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The *Thought About Food?* workbook was developed, written and pilot tested under the guidance of the Provincial Steering Committee (formerly NSNC Research Working Group) and the National Advisory Committee of the NSNC/AHPRC Food Security Projects. (See a list of committee members in *Section 7.)* I wish to express my deepest appreciation to all our partners in this National Food Security Project.

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Mount Saint Vincent University
Principal Investigator
on behalf of the NSNC/AHPRC Food Security Projects

Contents

About this Workbook

This workbook was developed as part of a series of research projects on food security. As well as using research and experiences drawn from the Nova Scotia Food Security Projects, it incorporates ideas, insights and advice from people involved in food security issues and actions across Canada.

Thought About Food? is intended to provide tools and information to inspire communities to come together and act to make food security a reality for everyone.

The next section *Research Questions Behind this Workbook* provides an overview of the background, activities and findings related to the research questions guiding this work.

The Research Questions Behind this Workbook

The food security research projects involved many different activities and studies, all aimed at answering four important questions about food security:

1. **How much does a basic nutritious diet cost in Nova Scotia?**
2. **What is life like for people who don't have enough nutritious food?**
3. **What is being done to deal with food insecurity and to build long-term solutions?**
4. **What more can we do to improve food security?**

Research Question 1:

How much does a basic nutritious diet cost in Nova Scotia?

In 1988, a study was done by the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council to answer this question. The study showed that people living on a low income could not afford to eat nutritiously. Since 1988, however, not much had been done to follow-up on this work. With the cost of living, and of food, constantly increasing and changing, partners of the food security projects recognized the need to update this information to help inform policy.

But more than just updating the figures, the partners also wanted to find a way to keep the information current by having the question answered on a regular basis and to use approaches that would result in building capacity to work together to address the root causes of food insecurity. The approach taken was to work together with the staff and participants of Family Resource Centres/Projects to do "food costing" research in each region of the province and to support their participation by providing training, honoraria and covering expenses for travel and childcare. The outcome was not only a current overview of what it costs to eat nutritiously in Nova Scotia, but also a group of trained "food costers" — with the committment and interest to continue to work together to build food security by informing how best to use this evidence to influence policy.

Detailed reports and summaries of each piece of the research described below can be found on the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council's (www.nsnc.ca) or Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre's websites (www.ahprc.dal.ca).

Research Question 2:

What is life like for people who don't have enough nutritious food?

Many of the people who worked on the food costing project know from personal experience that the cost of a nutritious diet is too high for many people to afford. The project partners, including the food costers, thought that capturing stories of people's experiences dealing with food insecurity would be important in making meaning of the food costing data. It was felt that these stories, along with the food costing data, could be a powerful tool in advocating for policy changes that would build food security. The stories would also allow all Nova Scotians to gain a better understanding of the struggles and hardships people dealing with food insecurity face in their everyday lives.

To answer the question about what life is like for people facing food insecurity, women who had participated as food costers and others from each region came together to share their stories in "story sharing workshops" that were held throughout the province. They worked together to identify the problems and what causes them, to think about what food insecurity means to them, and to decide what needs to be done.

Some of the quotes you'll see throughout the workbook come from the story sharing workshops held across the province. The quotes show how this issue affects the lives of many Nova Scotians. We thank everyone who came to the workshops for their generosity in sharing their experiences and insights with us.

Research Question 3:

What is being done to deal with food insecurity and to build long-term solutions?

Many of the food security issues that were identified in the food costing and story sharing pieces of this research point to both problems and solutions in government policy. This has highlighted the need to find ways of dealing with the immediate impact of food insecurity on people's lives as well as looking for long-term solutions. Looking at existing policy as well as potential policy changes to make sure that public policy actually improves food security, can lead the way to effective long-term solutions.

The project partners thought the best way to answer this question was to ask people working on food security across Canada to share their experiences on trying to influence policy. To do this, a national advisory committee was formed and a survey was sent out asking people about the strategies they used. More detailed information was found by talking directly to some of these people. The findings of this scan told how people have tried to influence policy, what worked, what didn't, what challenges they faced, and what they learned. As well, they shared some tips for influencing policy. Some of the findings of this research are in the *Influencing policy* section of this workbook.

Research Question 4:

What more can we do to improve food security?

The people who have been working on the food security projects in Nova Scotia want to do something with the findings. They are eager to make a difference in their communities and influence policy that will make all Nova Scotians more food secure. The National partners also want to take this information and use it to influence policy in their own areas and to try to make a difference at a National level.

The food costing data and stories collected through this research have been translated into evidence for informing policy. The participatory research process that was used to collect this evidence has also resulted in a growing commitment to address food insecurity in Nova Scotia. The Office of Health Promotion in Nova Scotia has provided funding to the project partners to develop a model for ongoing food costing and policy tools to continue to build food security in Nova Scotia.

This workbook is also part of the next step in answering the question— What more can we do to improve food security?. Partners involved in the projects from Nova Scotia and across Canada wanted a workbook to help guide them through their dialogues on food security. The workbook has been informed by input from individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds from across Canada. Two National Dialogues have been held to get input from people across the country and get new partners involved in these projects. Dialogues have also been happening in communities throughout Nova Scotia where people have started figuring out what to do about the food security issues that are most important to their communities. The workbook has also been pilot tested by eleven people working with diverse communities—youth, First Nations, public health, urban planning, and participants of the Community Action Program for Children and Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program—in eight provinces and one territory. A web accessible (www.foodthoughtful.ca) version of the workbook has also been pilot tested. As a result of attempting to answer the question "What more can we do to improve food security?" the workbook has evolved and community-based action plans to build food security through policy at the local level are in the works throughout the country.

The partners in Nova Scotia and across Canada are building on these accomplishments through the funding provided by the CAPC/CPNP National Projects Fund. *Thought About Food?* is also available in French under the title *La nourriture, vous y avez pensé?* and we will be working with CAPC/CPNP Food Security Mentors across the country to develop a video to complement the workbook.

We hope that this workbook will be used as a basis for community actions across the country. We know that these projects — and this workbook — will grow in response to local experiences.

How to Use this Workbook

The goal of this workbook is to give people in communities across Canada tools and the power to raise awareness about food security and to think about actions to influence both policies and systems to address food security issues more effectively.

The workbook can be used by anyone who is interested in learning more about food security and/or starting a discussion about food security in their community. It provides tools to help people become more aware of the issues and how to move forward on them. Our early experience with this resource has shown that it is most effective when used by a facilitator who works with community members to identify their interests. Facilitators can then select the most relevant materials in the workbook to tailor a workshop that will interest and excite the group. Facilitators will need to be familiar with the workbook's content and layout, and feel comfortable using it. We have included facilitator's notes at the beginning of this workbook and within most sections.

The facilitator's notes at the beginning of this workbook will help you plan to give a workshop in your community as well as provide you with some general facilitation information. Communities will be at different stages of learning and readiness to take action. In most communities, the discussion will probably start with talking about what food security means and making sure that people agree on what it means for their community. However, some groups may be more familiar with food security issues and could move right into the sections looking at influencing policy on food security. This means that you don't have to start at the beginning, and you don't have to work through page by page. Just use the workbook in whatever way best suits your community's needs.

The first four sections of the workbook have three distinct parts. Each of the four sections has:

- an **introduction** to the topic and background information to help you understand the topic better
- **facilitator's notes** that will give learning objectives for the section and a description of how to carry out the activities provided
- **activities** to achieve the learning objectives.

Sections 1-4 contain activities especially suited to a workshop format.

If your group has identified an issue and is ready to move forward, **Section Five** describes a process that can be taken to address the identified food security issue(s) through influencing policy. This process is not something that can be done in a workshop, and so we have not included facilitator's notes. At this point the group who is interest-

ed in working on the issue(s) is really embarking on a journey that may take quite some time to finish. This section is designed to outline the steps that can be taken and ideas on what to do within each step. The worksheets contained in this section will help your group keep on track and continue to move forward for the best chance of being successful.

The **last three sections** of the workbook provide resources and tools for workshops and for taking action on policies related to food security.

We hope this workbook will help you learn more about food security and how policy influences food security in your community.

We hope it will both inspire you and give you tools you need to take action. Let us know what you do with this workbook — from talking about food security, to meeting with your government representative, to forming a food policy organization!

Please direct your comments or questions to:

Dr. Patty Williams
(patty.williams@msvu.ca)

Remember it is not a quick or easy process. Every action, however, can help to let people know about the importance of food security and lead to healthy public policies that will build food security in our communities both now and in the future.

Throughout the workbook you will also find ideas, terms and quotes that will be helpful in promoting discussion and understanding. Each of these is identified by one of the following icons:

Facilitator's Notes

helpful hints to help you plan a workshop

gives real life examples of ideas presented in the sections

Key Term

defines and helps increase understanding of the terms used

sharing stories of people affected by the issues

Did You Know?

some interesting facts

Facilitator's Notes

Planning a Workshop

When planning a workshop there are a few key things you need to consider:

- Who do you want to come to the workshop?
- How will you get them there?
- Where and when will you hold the workshop?
- What will be discussed in the workshop?

The following are some of the things we've learned from the various dialogues and workshops that have been held through the Food Security Projects. Many of these "tips" are from participants in the National and Provincial Orientation and Training Workshops that were held in Nova Scotia in 2004 and 2005 to pilot test the workbook.

Who do you want to come?

- 10-15 people is a good size for a workshop
- Try for a diverse group of people. Consider including:
  Government representatives
  Community Health Board representatives
  Members of networks for children and youth

How will you get people to come to your workshop?

- Involve a guest speaker or "celebrity".
- Go the extra mile — include potential participants in the planning process and make personal phone calls to potential participants.
- Tie into other programs — is there another event you could piggy-back on?
- Have a hot topic — maybe something a bit shocking. Timing is very important. Is there something in the news that you could use as a "hook" to interest people?
- Let people know that they will be active participants. People like to feel they are able to contribute something to workshops as well as get something back.
- Contact inter-agencies — spread the word and reach a larger group of people.
- Send mass emails, phone calls and faxes.

- Attract media attention.
- Create buy-in or a "hook" when advertising for the event. Show how food security is everyone's issue.
- Give lots of notice before the event.

A sample workshop invitation can be found on page 91 in Section 7 of the workbook.

When will it take place?

- Pick a starting time that is convenient for your participants. For example, starting too early may make it difficult for everyone to arrive on time.
- Plan to include lunch or other refreshments in your event.
- Consider the season. Winter weather can be an issue for those who have to travel to come to the workshop. It is always good to have an alternate storm day.
- Be aware of other community activities. You may want to plan your workshop to piggy-back on similar events or to avoid conflicting with other events.

You may need to offer money to pay for transportation, childcare and any other supports participants need. Be clear about what you are able to offer.

Where will it take place?

- Have a room that is large enough to comfortably hold the maximum number of people you are expecting.
- Be sure your location is accessible to people with disabilities, close to public transportation and has adequate parking.

What will be discussed at the workshop?

Every workshop you offer will be different, because each one will need to be planned to reflect the specific needs and level of understanding of the participants involved. Start by asking yourself:

- Who are my participants and what is their level of knowledge about food security and its relationship to the determinants of health?
- What sections of the workbook can I use to best meet their needs?
- What can I offer the participants and how can I present it so it is meaningful to them?
- What is the realistic amount of information I can cover in the time allotted for my workshop? It is important to be respectful of participants' time and leave lots of time for activities and discussion.

- What tools can we provide to build on the momentum, connections and ideas shared at the workshop? Examples could be making banners describing the issues raised, writing letters to elected officials, or a public march to draw attention to the issue. Taking action is an important outcome of the workshop. Use the "Your Thoughts" on page 93 in *Section 7* of the workbook as a way for participants to think about their role after the workshop.

To help you get a sense of how well you did with the workshop, a sample evaluation form is provided on page 92 in *Section 7* of the workbook.

Other Tips for a Successful Workshop

- Have coffee, tea, water or juice available at the beginning of the workshop.
- Arrange seating to encourage discussion and group work.
- Have name tags for all participants and wear one yourself.
- Arrange for refreshments and meals that are suitable for your participants. This workshop is about food security so you could try to arrange for food that is locally grown or produced (support small independent caterers) or organic food.
- Arrive early at the workshop location to ensure that all the equipment you will be using works properly.
- Have information packages available for your participants with up-to-date contact information for you and the hosting group.
- Have a sign-up sheet for participants to provide their contact information.
- Build capacity (i.e conduct a workshop) within your own organization before going out into the broader community. This will also give you practice in facilitating the workshop.

Facilitating a Workshop

As facilitator, your role is to keep the discussion on track and to help the group make the transition from understanding and discussing the root causes of food insecurity to moving towards action. Participants must feel that they can discuss issues openly. It's an important part of the facilitator's role to create an environment where participants feel safe and comfortable.

NOTE: Depending on the group, some dialogues or workshops work best if people introduce themselves by name only. In some cases people may become intimidated or anxious if they know who the other people in the room are and/or the organizations or governments they work for. This may be the case when you have a mix of community members and politicians or other people in positions of power or influence over others. In these cases sharing a name is usually enough.

Icebreakers

Icebreakers can help to make people comfortable and get them started working as a group. Sample icebreakers can be found in the end of this workbook in *Section 7* (page 82). These icebreakers have been successfully used by the Food Security Projects. We've noted which icebreakers work especially well when used with certain sections of the workbook.

Ground Rules

Ground rules are basic agreements that participants make to help ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate and their voice is heard and respected. Rules should be established in the beginning and followed throughout the discussion. Ground rules will vary from group to group, but usually include:

- People will not interrupt other speakers.
- Everyone's contributions will be heard with respect.

In addition to the group's ground rules, facilitators need to be clear that they have some leeway to make sure the workshop proceeds smoothly. For example, the facilitator can reserve the right to:

- Interrupt a speaker who is not on topic, is dominating the discussion or is interrupting another speaker.
- Take a turn as a participant and follow the same rules for speaking about the topic/issue as everyone else.
- Speak out of turn in order to assist the meeting process.
- Make minor adjustments in the workshop process.

Using Flipcharts

Used effectively, a flipchart is a valuable tool for the facilitator.

- It is handy to have two flipcharts — one for what you are doing and a second one for the agenda, items to deal with later, etc.
- Use water-based markers to prevent headaches from toxic fumes.
- Before the workshop, check to be sure that your markers do not bleed through the paper.
- When posting flipchart pages around the room, you may want to use small push pins to hold up flipchart paper — masking tape can sometimes remove paint from the walls.
- Try to record the exact words of the person making the comment. If you feel you need to paraphrase what was said because you didn't understand the comment, ask the person to repeat what was said. If you are unclear about the thought that they were trying to express, chances are someone else in the room is too.
- Blue and black inks are easiest for people to see and read. As a general rule, use red only to highlight ideas, as it may be hard for some people to see. Orange and yellow are very difficult to see, so avoid using them to write text.
- Using different colours can help distinguish between topics. This not only helps keep everyone clear on the discussion, but can also help after the workshop when you are writing up proceedings.

If possible have someone else record thoughts and ideas on the flip chart. This allows the facilitator to focus on the discussion. This person should not be a participant, but ideally someone who has worked with the facilitator and is familiar with her/his style.

Taken from: The Facilitator's Toolbox

Tips for Keeping the Discussion Moving

- Ask open-ended questions—that is, questions that require more than a "yes" or "no" answer.
- Ask for more information when needed.
- Keep eye contact with the participants, especially with whoever is speaking.
- Call on people in the order they raise their hand.
- Know the agenda.
- Protect the process of group brainstorming by enforcing ground rules and time allotments.
- Make sure that people's comments and ideas are properly recorded.
- Pay attention to whoever is talking and show interest in what they have to say.
- Pause after you ask a question and give people time to think about what they want to say.
- Encourage people to voice their own ideas and opinions. For example, avoid "we all know" or "some people say" statements.

Section 1

What are we talking about?

Food security

means different things to different people.

It means being able to get all the healthy food you need and to enjoy it with friends and family. 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 is the goal we are working toward.

Food insecurity

is the opposite of food security.

Food insecurity means not being able to get enough food or enough healthy foods that you like and enjoy. It means wondering about where your food comes from or worrying about where your next meal will come from. It means wondering if there will be less food in the future because of the way we are growing and producing food now.

Working through the checklist on page 4 (Activity 1.1) will help you to think about what food security means to you and how it affects your community. As you go through the list of food security issues, ask yourself, "Is this important to me? Is this a challenge for me? Is this a challenge for someone I know?"

Section 1—What are we talking about?

Learning objectives:

- To get people thinking about how food security affects all aspects of their lives.
- To develop a common understanding of the issue as a basis for taking action.

The information in this section is meant to help participants develop a better understanding of what food security/insecurity is. The activities in this section engage participants in dialogue about food security. The checklist provided in Activity 1.1 will help the participants think about what food security means to them and how it affects the community they live in.

Section 8 of this Workbook includes a handout "Food Security versus Food Insecurity", which may be helpful to participants.

Activity 1.1 – Food security means…

Objective: To get people thinking about how food security affects all aspects of their lives.

This is a good activity to assess exposure of participants to the issue of food security. It also helps draw out the understanding that food security is relevant to everyone.

Process: Ask participants to do the activity individually. Once they have completed the questionnaire ask the participants to share their feelings and thoughts about some of the statements with the larger group.

Prompts to facilitate discussion:

- Was there anything that surprised you?
- Could you or someone you know connect with the statements?
- Was there anything you had not thought of before?
- How does this make you feel?

NOTE: In the provincial pilot of the workbook, many of the participants suggested that sending this activity out before the workshop might be a good way to get people thinking about food security and spark their interest in the workshop.

Activity 1.2 — What does food security mean to me?

Objective: To aid the group in collectively developing a common understanding of the issue as a basis to improve it.

This activity can be done individually or in groups. It may be beneficial for participants to reflect on the two questions alone before moving into small group discussions.

Process: Have large pieces of paper available to participants who may wish to draw their responses. Divide the participants into groups and ask each group to brainstorm or draw pictures related to "What does food insecurity mean to me?" and "What does food security mean to me?" Ask the groups to report back to the larger group on their descriptive words or pictures, explaining their choice of words or images.

The words people use to describe food insecurity are usually very negative. Participants may use words like shameful, embarrassed, no control, or helpless. Words that may be used to describe food security are more positive – fairness, justice, control, or choice. A lot of discussion may be generated from this activity.

Activity 1.1
Food security means ...

Check off the issues that affect your life, or the lives of people in your community.

... Being able to get the food I need

- ◯ Being able to get to a place where I can buy or grow food
- ◯ Not having to worry about whether I have enough to eat
- ◯ Being able to prepare and cook food
- ◯ Being able to get food in a way that doesn't embarrass me or make me feel ashamed
- ◯ Not being judged for where I get my food, or for the foods that I chose to eat

"I felt [the people at the food bank] were looking down on me... I felt inadequate and I felt ashamed and I felt all those things."

... Being able to eat safe and healthy foods

- ◯ Being able to afford healthy food
- ◯ Having access to safe food that I know is good for me
- ◯ Being able to give my children the food that I know they need to grow and be healthy
- ◯ Knowing where my food came from and what is in it
- ◯ Having access to information so that I can understand how pesticides, preservatives, additives and genetically modified foods can affect my health

"But, I do suffer nutritionally and I can see it sometimes in my eyes and my face gets sucked in cause I don't have enough fruit and stuff. Because you want to give it to your kids."

... Being able to get foods I like and want to eat

- ◯ Being able to afford the foods that I want to eat
- ◯ Enjoying my food
- ◯ Sharing my food with my family & friends
- ◯ Celebrating my culture or community with food
- ◯ Enjoying the foods of my culture

"Healthy food is more expensive. Food that is good for you is too expensive. There's a big difference between filling my kid's belly and feeding them nutritiously. Buy food to fill them, not healthy foods. Food to fill."

... Protecting the water, land and people who grow and produce food

- ◯ Being able to grow my own food
- ◯ Ensuring that food can be produced for my children's children
- ◯ Ensuring that growing, producing, processing, storing, and selling food doesn't hurt our environment or our communities
- ◯ Having space, land, water and soil for farms and gardens
- ◯ Ensuring that people can earn a living wage by growing, producing, processing, handling, selling, or serving food
- ◯ Ensuring that our water is clean enough for us to drink and for fish to survive in

"They're working, but they're poor...
They work for the [Supermarket] making minimum wage, they only get 26 hours a week."

Activity 1.2
What does food security mean to me?

Now that you have worked through the "food security means" checklist, look at the items that you've checked. These aspects of food are important to you or are a challenge to you or someone you know. Use the points that you have checked to describe — in words or pictures— what food insecurity and food security mean to you.

What does food **insecurity** mean to me?

What does food **security** mean to me?

"...people can't afford to grow [food], people can't afford to buy [food]."

"So for some of us who end up in a situation where we don't have enough to eat, we already know shame. Shame is so comfortable. It just fits like a jacket. So, you go somewhere and someone gives you a bit more, you take it. It fits. It feels normal."

Talk about food security to anyone who'll listen! Talking about food security is a good way to get others in your community thinking about these issues, too. And thinking about food security is the first step in doing something about it.

Section 2

Why care about food insecurity?

Food insecurity is caused by, and h effects on, important areas of our lives—our families, children, environment, economy, communities and health.

We care because of our FAMILIES & CHILDREN

Food insecurity can be very stressful. Parents especially can be anxious about having enough food for their children a being able to give them good food so th grow up strong and healthy. Some pare even worry that their children might be taken from them if they cannot feed them enough good food.

Some families can become preoccupied with food—worrying all day about whether there is enough food for dinner and the next day. This kind of stress can be bad for our relationships and health. Feeling stressed and insecure can lead to depression, anger, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It can also make it harder for us to fight off infections like colds and flu.

Parents are right to be concerned about whether their children have enough good food. Poor nutrition in childhood can affect the development of both the body and mind. Not having enough good food can make it harder for children to do well at school and even stay in school. Poor nutrition in childhood has effects that can last a lifetime.

Voices

"The most difficult situation I've had to face is the realization that I cannot afford to feed my family the foods that I know they need. Not just the foods they need for every day meals, but also special foods for each of their individual developmental stages. At times I have become very depressed and angry with myself for having three children and not being able to properly maintain the type of life they so deserve. I've gone through stores with $20 knowing that this is for two weeks... I would have never thought that I would be in such a predicament..."

We care because of our COMMUNITIES

Food insecurity, poverty, inequality, and unemployment can harm our communities and lead to community breakdown.

In rural areas many people have been forced to leave their communities because they can no longer make a living as a farmer or fisher. In cities, food insecurity can lead to crime when people are driven to steal or sell drugs to avoid hunger or homelessness. Food insecurity can lead to us feeling that our neighborhood is not a safe, healthy or comfortable place to live.

Equity and social justice happen when people are treated fairly, when everyone in the community has the same opportunities in life, and when the community works together so everyone is secure. Equity and social justice are part of the web supporting healthy communities.

In a healthy community, people can earn a living and can get the food they need. A healthy community is a place where people feel connected to each other and feel they are a part of the community. Healthy communities are a result of supportive public policies that consider social and health impacts. These kinds of policies can improve the health of individuals and communities. The *Food for Thought* box below provides an example of healthy public policies.

Key Term

Community Food Security

"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

At the Carlington Health and Community Centre in Ottawa/Carlton participants harvest strawberries for free or pay a reduced fee for harvesting a section of a pick-your-own strawberry farm late in the season. Participants are able to keep all they can use and share the remainder with family, friends and neighbours. Workshops on making preserves, freezing fresh produce and useful recipes were conducted at the Centre.

We care because of our ENVIRONMENT

The way we now produce and process food cannot support a sustainable food system—that is, a way of producing food that will last into the future and ensure that our children and our children's children will have the food they need.

The methods currently used for growing and gathering food can affect the environment in many ways. For example, in some areas:

- There is a loss of natural vegetation.
- Some kinds of plants are being wiped out.
- Fish stocks are running out.
- The quality and amount of land available for growing food is declining.
- Topsoil—the living fertile part of the soil—is blowing and washing away.
- Pesticides and bacteria (for example, E. Coli) are contaminating our water supplies and adding toxins to the air we breathe.
- The traditional food sources of Aboriginal and Innu communities are being contaminated and many are even being wiped out.
- The oil and gas used to transport food long distances contributes to poorer air quality.

To ensure sustainable food systems, we need planning and policies that protect our land, water and resources. We can see the results of poor planning and policy very close to home—right here in Canada, over-production and unsustainable management have led to the collapse of the cod fisheries and other types of fish stocks are threatened.

"Growing the grain in my field, on my farm... [my chickens/turkeys] are locally grown and produced and I take it to the local market or local consumers within an hour of my farm... it's way more sustainable for me and my farm and the consumer and the whole world in general, 'cause it's not diesel, diesel, diesel."

Key Term

Sustainable food system

A way of producing and distributing food that protects the environment and ensures that our land, air and water will be able to continue producing food in the future.

Major-Briere and Chaudhuri, 2002

We care because of our ECONOMY

Canada has the most concentrated food economy of any Western Country — a very small number of powerful companies control most of the food economy.

This means that local economies suffer because small, community-based businesses—especially small farmers—are squeezed out by large-scale agri-businesses. The money we spend on food does not remain in our communities—in many cases the money doesn't even stay in Canada. Jobs are lost and when people have to travel farther outside their community to work there is less money for food.

The average income for a farm in Canada has fallen to levels not seen since the 1930s.

An example of the impact of these economic policies comes from Ontario. In spite of the productivity of the fertile fruit and vegetable farmlands in Southern Ontario, in 1994 the province spent $1.9 billion dollars more on importing fruits and vegetables than it earned from exporting its own.

"They did a study in '66 in [our county] and a beef farmer could sell three beef, market-ready steers... at the auction and go buy a brand new pick-up truck... That was about 30 years ago, 40 years ago... [Today] you couldn't even get power windows for that... it wouldn't even make the down payment."

Buying from local food systems means trying to buy directly from farmers at farm stands or markets, or eating at locally owned small-business restaurants rather than restaurant chains. Money spent in a local food system stays in the community longer and provides jobs to local people. Buying directly from farmers also means that the farmer earns more money, rather than having the money go to the middleman, like food processors and retailers.

The Toronto FoodShare Kitchen Incubator Program is a fully equipped kitchen that small businesses can rent to do cooking or catering and test out recipes or restaurant ideas. The incubator has helped over 20 local businesses get started and so far 11 have become successful local enterprises working from their own space. These businesses have created local jobs.

Toronto FoodShare

We care because of our HEALTH

A healthy environment, healthy economy and healthy community all contribute to our health as individuals and as a population.

All of these factors affect our ability to get the food we need, now and in the future. If these aspects of our lives are put at risk, so is our health.

Environmental, economic and social factors are all determinants of health. For example, income and social status is the most significant determinant of health — that is, the more money you have the healthier you will be. Income plays a major role in access to food and has a significant impact on food security.

Just as having enough money is good for your health, poverty and inequality are very bad for your health. Not having enough to eat and not having good quality, nutritious food can have short- and long-term effects on mental and physical health. For example, poor nutrition leads to chronic illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes.

"Most parents [living on low income]— their main goal is for their kids not to be hungry. You know, does it mean buying a bag of apples that they eat for a couple of days or the hot-dogs they eat for a week. And you're gonna be a lot fuller eating a hotdog."

More money is spent on advertising for processed foods and junk foods than for nutritious foods or healthy choices. For example, in the US about $1 million a year is spent to advertise the "5 to 10 a day" campaign encouraging the consumption of fruits and vegetables. In comparison, $10 billion a year is spent on advertising processed and junk foods; McDonalds spends $1 billion a year alone! Children are exposed to much of this advertising. 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.

Adapted from: Media Awareness Network, www.media-awareness.ca

The Determinants of Health

are a set of factors that act together to influence the health of individuals and communities. In this workbook, we approach food security from a determinants of health perspective. This means that we recognize that food insecurity has a profound impact on health because it is so closely connected to other aspects of our lives. We also recognize that we can have an impact on food security by developing healthy public policies that affect any of these determinants.

The Public Health Agency of Canada identifies 12 determinants of health: Income and Social Status, Social Support Networks, Education, Employment/Working Conditions, Social Environments, Physical Environments, Personal Health Practices and Coping Skills, Healthy Child Development, Biology and Genetic Endowment, Health Services, Gender, and Culture.

To understand how each of these determinants can influence our health it helps to look at an example. Read through the following example about Amber. After each point the determinants of health that are at the root of each of these issues affecting her are indicated in brackets. Only when we recognize how complex and interrelated the determinants of health are can we begin to understand how to address the root causes of food insecurity.

Amber's Story

Amber's co-worker had to drive her to the hospital because she passed out at work this afternoon. But why did she pass out?
Because she has been skipping meals. (personal health practices and coping skills)

But why does she skip meals?
Because she doesn't have much food in her house. (social and physical environments)

Why doesn't she get more food to eat?
Because she only has $30 left until her next paycheck and she doesn't have a way to get to the grocery store, which is pretty far from her house. (income and social status, physical environments)

But why is the grocery store so far away?
There used to be grocery store a few minutes walk from Amber's house but it closed down a few months ago after a big all-in-one supermarket opened up a few miles away. (physical environments)

But why doesn't she have more money for food or transportation?
Because she's a single parent and she only works part-time. (employment/working conditions, gender)

But why doesn't she work more hours?
Because she can't find affordable childcare for the whole day. (social environments, employment/working conditions)

Why doesn't she have a family member or friend help her out with childcare?
Because she hasn't lived in the city for long and doesn't know many people, her family all live in a smaller rural community outside the city. (social support networks)

But why did she move to the city?
Because there are not many jobs in her home community, the fish plant closed down and many of the shops are closing too. (social environments, employment/working conditions, physical environments)

But why did the fish plant close.....?

Section 2—Why care about food insecurity?

Learning objective:

- To increase participants' understanding of the factors that can influence food security.

Section 2 is designed to increase participants' understanding of the multitude of factors that can influence food security, and its effects on all aspects of our lives. This is a good section to focus on if your group is unable to see the relevance of the issue in a broader context. It can help to build common ground among participants in a group where people's backgrounds are diverse.

Section 8 of this Workbook contains handouts with useful information relevant to this section. The handouts are titled "Food Security & Children, Families & Communities", "Food Security & the Economy", "Food Security & the Environment" and "Food Security & Health".

Understanding how complex and interrelated the determinants of health are can help your group begin to address the root causes of food insecurity. On page 12, "Amber's Story" links experience of food insecurity to the determinants of health.

Activity 2.1 – What does food insecurity affect?

Objective: To help participants think about how food insecurity affects their family, the environment, their community, their health, and themselves.

Process: This activity could build on the responses from Activity 1.1 (page 4) and draw out themes related to economy, environment, community, health, individual, and family. Guide participants through this activity using the Carousel style technique, described below.

Carousel Style Technique

Carousel style is a way to get your participants moving around the room. This style works well when you have a few themes or discussion points you would like your participants to brainstorm around. Simply post the points of discussion on large pieces of paper around the room. Divide your participants into smaller groups (the same number as discussion points). Guide the participants through all the points by instructing them on when to move to the next topic. You can have one person stay at each carousel station during the whole activity. This person can act as the recorder for that point and recap what previous groups have said.

Activity 2.1
What does food insecurity affect?

One way I see food insecurity affecting the ECONOMY is ...

One way I see food insecurity affecting MY FAMILY is ...

One way I see food insecurity affecting the ENVIRONMENT is ...

One way I see food insecurity affecting ME is ...

One way I see food insecurity affecting COMMUNITY is ...

One way I see food insecurity affecting HEALTH is ...

Section 3

What can we do about food insecurity?

The approaches people have taken to address issues of food insecurity fall into three broad categories:

1. Short-term relief—for emergency situations
2. Individual and community capacity building — to produce and prepare food and to bring people together and work for change
3. System change—influencing policy to build food security

These three different types of strategies are interrelated and often build on one another.

Short-Term Relief Strategies

Food banks, soup kitchens, and children's feeding programs are directed at those who are the most food insecure and provide short-term relief for the immediate issue of hunger.

These strategies are considered "Band-Aids". They cover up the problem for the short-term, but do little to address the underlying problems that cause food insecurity, such as inadequate income, inequity, and social exclusion.

Food Banks Aren't Always the Answer

Some of the participants who shared stories spoke about what it was like to have to go to a food bank. People who go to food banks include retired people, students, working people, and people who are on income assistance or receiving disability support. They told us that food banks are a great help, but the food is often enough for only a meal or two. It is not always nutritious. In some cases the food is not even edible because it is expired or damaged. Most people were very embarrassed about having to go to a food bank. They often tried to hide it from their children. Even though people who volunteer at the food banks mean well, sometimes they unintentionally make people feel bad about needing help from a food bank.

NSNC/AHPRC Participatory Food Security Projects, 2003

Individual and Community Capacity Building Strategies

These strategies help improve food security and the sustainability of the food system by building skills and moving people to work together for change.

Skill building is connected to capacity building. The concept of capacity building is described on the next page. Strategies focused on individual capacity building may include programs where individuals develop skills to grow, produce and prepare their own food. Examples include community gardens or community kitchens. Individuals participating in a community garden develop gardening skills and learn about food. At the same time, they are producing inexpensive food and contributing to a cleaner environment.

Strategies that build individual skills can also help build communities and build capacity to make change at the community level because these programs give people a chance to come together and develop social support networks. By coming together and talking about the issues that affect their food security, people can become excited about making big changes and may organize to work together to address issues that affect their food security. The *Food for Thought* example on the next page shows how individual skill building can lead to community skill building.

"Our farm has been involved with a program with community services to support low income individuals in our community. We deliver boxes of food to their houses and I mean not to say that that's the only model, but it's one model ..."

A group in Halifax, NS came together to learn about pricing food and comparing food costs between stores and brands. When they went out and priced food in their community they realized that the grocery store in their neighborhood charged more for the same foods as a store that was farther away in a wealthy neighborhood. They sent letters and spoke to their store manager. In the end the grocery store in their neighborhood changed its pricing practice to be more equal. The store also opened a bulk-food section that offered lower food costs too!

From: Travers, 1997

The focus of ***capacity building*** is on bringing individuals and/or communities together to identify, define, and figure out how to address their issues. As mentioned, it often grows from individual skill building strategies.

Any approach to truly address food insecurity needs to consider the 'big picture' and what can be done to benefit the whole community. Capacity building is most effective when a well-planned, long-term approach is taken. These strategies are most effective when the people in the community are included and involved in identifying solutions.

Capacity building is a process with the goal of implementing policies and systems that support community health and wellness. Capacity is built gradually and depends on:

- People who want to help and are willing to be involved
- People with skills, knowledge, and abilities related to the key issues
- Support from community institutions and businesses
- Leaders
- Economic and financial resources

One goal of capacity building is mobilizing people to organize through strategies focused on system change.

Key Term

Capacity Building

An approach to the development of skills, organizational structures, resources, and commitment to health improvement. Capacity building can take place at the individual, organizational, community, and professional levels. Capacity building offers a way to prolong and multiply health gains many times over.

Adapted from: Hawe et al, 1997

System Change Strategies

Many of the issues faced by communities or populations can be most effectively addressed through supportive, healthy public policy.

Strategies focused on system change aim to make improvements to policy that will build food security.

Examples of system change strategies include forming a food policy group (see page 64), doing participatory food costing (see page 19) and other types of participatory action research on the issue.

Developing healthy public policy requires that the communities affected by the policy be involved. This includes being involved in generating and gathering strong community-based evidence that will support the development of the policy. This is necessary to make the link between public policy and people's experience. For this reason, capacity building approaches, at many different levels, are an essential element in building food security through public policy (system change strategy).

As communities become involved in public policy and gain an understanding of the public policy process they become better equipped to influence the policies that address issues such as food insecurity. This can help to build food security as well as stronger, healthier communities, more responsive governments, and improved problem solving around various issues faced by communities.

Key Term

Participatory Action Research

The systematic collection and analysis of information in collaboration with those affected by the issues being studied. Participatory action research is done to educate, to inform political action, and /or to guide social change.

Adapted from: Macaulay et al, 1999

Key Term

Food Policy Organization: *An organization, network or council made up of individuals and representatives from different organizations who aim to build food security through actions directed toward policy change. The organization can represent one community or an entire region or province.*

A food policy group can be one of the most effective ways of moving the issue of food insecurity onto the public policy agenda and building food security through healthy public policy. By increasing the number of individuals and organizations involved, a stronger and more powerful voice can be given to the issues.

You'll find information on starting a food policy group in Section 6.

Participatory Food Costing

The Food Security Projects used participatory research to examine the affordability of nutritious food in Nova Scotia. Participatory approaches aim to support active involvement of the people most involved, affected or potentially affected by an issue.

The data from food costing research can be used to influence policy by providing evidence that many people are not able to afford a nutritious diet.

The participatory food costing conducted in Nova Scotia in 2002 by the Food Security Projects and partners revealed that it costs about $572.90/month to feed a family with two parents and two children a very basic but nutritious diet. This cost is too high for many people living on low incomes like minimum wage or income assistance. This means that they cannot afford to eat a healthy diet and may be unable to meet their basic nutritional needs. The cost is different in each region and it actually costs more in rural parts of the province than it does in urban areas like Halifax, Dartmouth, and Sydney. It also costs more to buy groceries from smaller grocery stores than it does to buy from big grocery stores.

This information can be used to make recommendations for policy change, such as:

- *Adjust income assistance personal allowances to reflect the actual cost of a nutritious food basket based on the age of children.*
- *Adjust minimum wage to reflect the cost of living.*

Governments and citizens must work together to build food security by ensuring policies are developed and implemented that address the root causes of food insecurity and hunger.

Participatory research also has other benefits. For example, as a result of this participatory process, Family Resource Centres across Nova Scotia now have the capacity to do participatory food costing in their communities if supports such as childcare and transportation costs are in place.

NSNC/AHPRC Food Security Projects, 2004

Section 3—What can we do about food insecurity?

Learning Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of different types of strategies for addressing food insecurity.
- To develop an understanding that "system change", based on healthy public policy, will most effectively address the root causes of food insecurity.

Various strategies used to address food security are discussed in Section 3. These are short-term relief, individual and community capacity building and system change. Real-life examples are provided for each of the strategies. This section emphasizes that system change, based on healthy public policy directions, will be the most effective in addressing root causes of food insecurity.

Activity 3.1 – Pros and cons of strategies

Objective: To examine the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy in terms of the participants' issues, resources and abilities.

Process: This activity can be done in two different ways. The whole group can think of an example of each of the strategies. For example, food banks are often thought of as a short-term strategy. Once the example is chosen for each of the three types of strategies then a discussion of the pros and cons of each strategy can be undertaken. Alternately, the whole group can be broken up into three smaller groups. Each group is assigned a common example of each of the strategies. An example of a short-term strategy can be a soup kitchen or a food bank, an individual or community capacity building strategy can be a community garden and a system change strategy can be a change to minimum wage or income support programs. Then each group brainstorms the pros and cons of the examples they are given and shares the highlights of their discussion with the larger group.

Activity 3.2 – Thinking about strategies

Objective: To encourage participants to reflect on their experiences with different strategies that have been used to address food security.

Using this activity, the group will be able to see what types of strategies have been used to address food security issues. This activity also helps to show the connections between the strategies and how they can build on one another.

Process: Guide participants through this activity using the Carousel style method as described for Activity 2.1 (page 13).

Participants in this activity will be thinking about strategies that they have used or strategies they know others have used. Using different coloured sticky notes to represent the three different types of strategies – short-term relief, individual or community capacity building and system change — have participants write down the strategies they are aware of. Provide the participants with a map of the area and ask them to place the sticky notes where they know one of these strategies is being used.

By putting the sticky notes on the map, participants will then be able to see where most of the efforts to address food security have been. These efforts are usually short-term relief (and therefore mostly one colour). This method provides a visual that highlights the need to put more effort on system change strategies in order to address the root causes of food insecurity.

Activity 3.1
Pros and cons of strategies

REMINDER: The 3 different types of strategies to addressing food insecurity are interrelated and often build on one another.

For example, strategies that address short-term relief can also be designed to develop individual capacity, which in turn can lead to increased community capacity. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages and each requires different capacities and resources. What will be possible and appropriate for one community or organization at any given time may not be right for another. One way to start is to look back at the definition of food security and think about how effective a short-term relief strategy such as a food bank may or may not be in addressing food insecurity. Everyone is familiar with food banks and using a familiar example can be a good way to lead into a complex discussion.

Once you or your group has identified a food security issue that you would like to address in your community, get together and brainstorm the pros and cons of each approach in terms of your own issue, resources and abilities. Think about what you would like to accomplish and what it will take for you to get there. It may be that your ultimate goal will require policy change, but in order to do this work, you will first have to build both individual and community capacity.

Think of a **short-term relief strategy** to address food insecurity.

- What are some pros of this approach?
- What are some cons of this approach?

Think of an **individual or community capacity building strategy** to address food insecurity.

- What are some pros of this approach?
- What are some cons of this approach?

Think of a **system change strategy** to address food insecurity.

- What are some pros of this approach?
- What are some cons of this approach?

Activity 3.2
Thinking about strategies

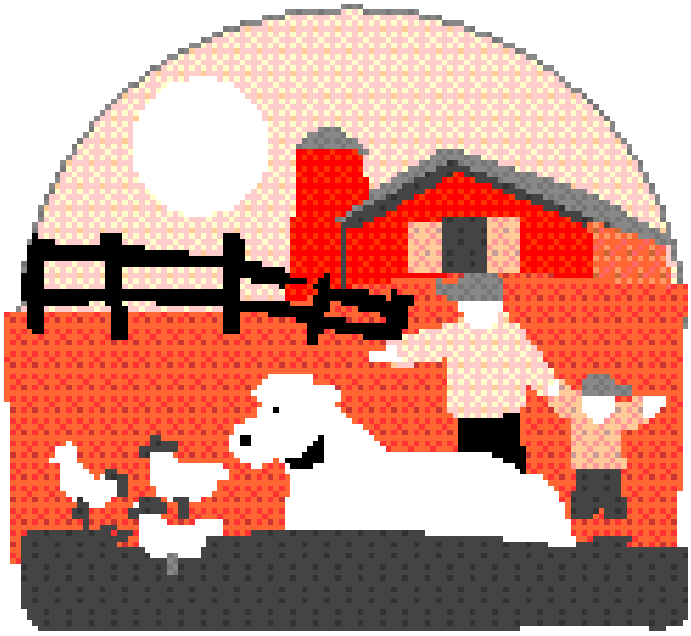
My experiences with
SHORT-TERM RELIEF
strategies are ...

My experiences with
INDIVIDUAL or COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING
strategies are ...

My experiences with
SYSTEM CHANGE
strategies are ...

What is policy?

The word policy is often frightening to people. Sometimes this is because we don't understand policy.



What does policy mean?

In short, policies simply guide our actions. Policies can be guidelines, rules, regulations, laws, principles, or directions. They say what is to be done, who is to do it, how it is to be done and for (or to) whom it is to be done. Most of us think that we have no control over policies and that they are issues our elected officials and bureaucrats deal with. Well, this is not true. The world is full of policies—for example, families make policies like "No TV until homework is done". Agencies and organizations make policies that guide the way they operate. Stores have return policies. Workplaces have policies about things like sick days. Schools have policies that describe the way they expect children to behave.

Policy occurs at various levels and points of interaction—personal, organizational, and public.

If we use the right strategies we can be successful in influencing all aspects of policy.

The following section will help to clear up some of the questions you may have about policies and will hopefully allow you to see the many different ways you can be involved with changing policies to increase food security in your community.

Key Term

Policy

"A plan of action agreed to by a group of people with the power to carry it out and enforce it."

Devon Dodd and Hébert Boyd, 2000

A Policy is... A guide for action

What policies do ...

- Outline rules
- Provide principles that guide actions
- Set roles and responsibilities
- Reflect values and beliefs
- State an intention to do something

Adapted from "Rural Communities Impacting Policy—A Workbook" , 2005

Why a policy may have to be developed or changed:

- Basic needs are not being met
- People have been treated unfairly
- Current policies or laws are not enforced or effective
- Proposed changes in policies and laws would be harmful
- Existing or emerging conditions pose a threat to public health, safety, education or well-being

Adapted from Health Communication Unit of the Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto, 2004

Personal policy

Personal policy is the set of standards you use to guide your own decisions and actions. Despite our best efforts, economic realities can sometimes make it difficult to carry out personal policies. For example, you may want to buy from local stores, but Wal-Mart® is the only store you can get to without a car.

One theme that came out of our story-sharing workshops in Nova Scotia reflects a personal policy (and economic reality) of many families—first pay the bills to ensure transportation to work, a roof over their heads, and heat in their homes, then worry about food. It has often been found that although food is necessary for survival, the money for food is the most flexible portion of a family's budget and so is the part that gets cut to meet other needs.

"We don't see how much power we have as consumers—we've [just] bought into the [Big Grocery Chain] model—Sure it takes more time, it takes more effort to get to a farmer's market or go to a small retailer, but that's the direction that we have to take in order to promote an alternative solution to [the way things are]. It's a matter of saying "hey, we want this healthy, real, wholesome, [local] food to be available to all people."

"As a personal policy I am only going to buy local produce to support local farmers and the local economy."

While some people are able to make the choice to buy local foods or organic foods, unfortunately not everyone can. It is important to recognize and be sensitive to this when talking about personal policy. Focusing on individual choice may not be the best approach to take when addressing some food security issues. Alternative strategies aimed at reducing inequities within society and systems that enable full participation are needed in order for everyone to exercise their own personal policies.

Organizational policy

Organizational policy guides how organizations and businesses operate. Unlike public policy, which often has opportunities for public input, organizational policies are often made out of public view. The internal policies of a surprising number of businesses and organizations can have an impact on food security—for example, supermarkets, food banks, food processors, trucking companies, and land developers.

The following examples show how organizational policy can affect food security.

Organizational Policy in Action (1)

Oxford Regional High School in Nova Scotia has instituted the Cumberland County School Food Project to provide healthy, fresh, local foods in the school. The program is designed to increase access to healthy foods for the students, and build and support a local food system—thus moving toward a healthier community and local economic development.

Cumberland County School Food Project, 2003

Organizational Policy in Action (2)

The Ontario Association of Food Banks developed a program to salvage potentially wasted food. The food is made into soup by "chefs in training"—19 former street youth interested in developing cooking and job skills. The soups are frozen and trucked to food banks across Ontario.

Ontario Association of Food Banks, 2003

Public policy

All levels of government—federal, provincial, and municipal—create policies to address specific issues or problems. These *public policies* are developed through a process that involves input from citizens, government staff, and elected officials.

Have Your Say

Until recently, policy has been a "top-down" process where decisions are made at the top, passed down to the organizations or groups responsible for implementing the policy, and finally reach the people who are affected by the policy. Within this traditional approach to policy development, citizens involvement has been limited to elections, referenda, speaking out at legislative hearings, surveys and polls, advocacy, and town hall meetings. Recently, however, the federal and provincial governments in Canada have signed the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA), a commitment to working more collaboratively with individuals, families, communities, voluntary organizations, business and labour to develop public policy. SUFA requires that citizens be engaged in setting priorities and directions, decision making, and reviewing and evaluating the results and impacts of policy.

SUFA gives us all the opportunity—as individuals and communities—to influence the policy development process and to take part in creating good public policy to address the issues that impact on our lives, our communities and everyone's food security.

For more information on SUFA please visit:

www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/account/sufa-ecus_e.asp

Key Term

Public Policy

The broad framework of ideas and values within which decisions are taken and action, or inaction, is pursued by governments in relation to some issue or problem

Brooks, 1989

As the examples below show, public policy can have a profound impact on people's lives. Sometimes this impact is positive, other times it may be negative. The two examples below show that public policy can have both positive and negative impacts on food security.

Public Policy in Action (1)

In Nova Scotia, parents who were on income assistance got the child tax benefit, a combination of benefits from federal and provincial programs. At the same time the provincial government eliminated the income assistance allowance (family allowance) for children. In the end, the tax benefit intended to help families with children offers very little additional help to parents on income assistance.

Public Policy in Action (2)

The provincial government in New Brunswick decided to allow parents on income assistance to receive the usual income assistance allowances for themselves and their children AND receive their child tax benefits from the federal and provincial governments.

A study that looked at food insecurity among low-income lone mothers in Atlantic Canada found that mothers in New Brunswick were the least likely to experience food insecurity. The mothers who participated in Nova Scotia were three times more likely to experience food insecurity.

McIntyre et al, 2002

"They don't give you money for your child anymore. It's all on your child tax [benefit]."

Policy tools

Once a policy has been decided upon, many different methods can be used to implement it. These are sometimes called **policy tools** and include: information, education, legislation, regulation, guidelines, standards, procedures, programs, grants, subsidies, expenditures, taxes, and/or public ownership.

The following example shows the way policy tools could be used to implement a policy on land use. **Note that this example is an illustration and not an actual policy.**

Example: Green Space for Community Gardens

An urban municipality has developed a policy to increase green space for urban food production in order to encourage community gardens that increase food self-reliance, improve fitness, contribute to a cleaner environment, and enhance community development.

Possible policy tools

Information

An information package on organizing, operating and sustaining community gardens will be developed and made available for distribution to community groups, housing associations and developments, non-profit organizations, businesses, and public sector offices throughout the city.

Education

Public health educators and city planners will be engaged to work collaboratively to design an educational program on the benefits of preserving green space for food production targeted at private landowners, including developers, business operators, and home owners.

Legislation

A minimum of 25% of current public green space will be available for urban food production within each voting district of the municipality.

Regulation

The development of unused or vacant land, or the redevelopment of land for public purposes will be required to maintain a certain percentage of that land for green space, and a minimum of 25% of the green space will be available for urban food production.

Guidelines	Guidelines will be developed for proper and sustainable urban food production practices and will be mandated for all public green space used or converted to a community garden or other urban food production purpose.
Standards	Future land development in the municipality will consider a minimal standard of designated green space. All development and redevelopment should abide by this policy.
Procedures	Standard procedures will be established for starting a community garden on public green space.
Programs	Programs will be implemented through the combined efforts of the Departments of Public Health and Urban Planning within public institutions, including schools, libraries, municipal offices, and hospitals, to start and maintain public gardens with the support of the staff and interested citizens of those institutions.
Grants	The "Community Garden Development Grant" will be established to provide one-time start-up grants to community groups committed to starting community gardens.
Subsidies	Wage subsidies will be made available for supporting a paid staff position for established (3 or more years in operation) community gardens of 100 or more plots.
Expenditures	A minimum of one new municipal position will be created for a Green Space Coordinator who will oversee the implementation of this policy.
Taxes	Property taxes will be increased where private land development or redevelopment does not comply with the regulations of this policy. (Note this does not apply to current private land unless it is being redeveloped).
Public Ownership	Public green space converted for use in urban food production by community groups will thereafter be considered under shared public ownership between the municipality and the community group; future decision-making regarding the space will be done so collaboratively.

Not all policies require this many policy tools for implementation! Depending on the kind of policy being considered and the level at which it is implemented, you may need only a few.

Section 4—What is policy?

Learning Objectives:

- To develop a better understanding of policy and how it can used to address social problems such as food insecurity.
- To identify the food security issues the community would like to address through policy.
- To identify the community's readiness to move forward to influence or change policy.

This section is an introduction to policy. It explains and provides examples of three different types of policies: personal, organizational and public. As well, this section provides information on various policy tools, and processes that communities can use to help identify issues of concern and assess a community's readiness to move forward to address them.

Icebreaker to introduce the concept of policy

What does policy mean to me?

Divide participants up into small groups. Give each group a piece of paper on which the word "policy" is written. The participants should not know that all the groups have the same word. In small groups ask participants to brainstorm for five minutes about what this word means to them and make a list of related words or phrases. When the five minutes are up ask the groups to report what was said, without revealing their word. After everyone has shared the list of related words or phrases ask the groups to guess the words being described. Through brainstorming and feedback, participants should have a better understanding of what policy means.

You could also have on a separate flipchart one of the policy definitions on page 26 to 28. This will help to show the participants that their words and phrases reflect other definitions of policy and help them to feel comfortable that they do understand the concept of policy and just how broad it can be.

Activity 4.1 – Policies reflect values

Objective: To connect policies to the values that influence people's actions.

Using the story in this activity participants can begin to see how policies are connected to values. From legislation to personal interaction, policies play a role in the decisions people make about how they will act (or not act) in relation to others.

Process: Divide into small groups. Have participants cover up the bulleted text in the bottom right hand corner of page 35. Read through "Charlene's story". Ask each group to think about and discuss what values or policies are at play in this story. Then each group reports back to the larger group. Uncover the bulleted points and compare answers. After you have identified the various policies that are relevant to this story, name them according to whether they are personal, organizational or public policies. This will help participants sort out the various forms of policy and their connection to underlying values.

Activity 4.2 – Looking at policy impacts

Objective: To look at specific policies and examine their potential for affecting food security.

Process: In this activity an individual or group can look at specific policies and examine their potential for affecting food security. This activity provides some examples of personal, organizational and public policies on page 36 and 37 but the participants may like to use their own examples.

Activity 4.3 – Using policy tools

Objective: To identify the tools that are needed to implement policy.

There are many different methods used to guide the implementation of policies. In *Section 4*, on page 30 and 31 various policy tools are discussed. Using a fictitious policy, the workbook explains some of the possible policy tools that would be needed to implement the fictitious policy.

Process: The participants will be given a case study to show the policy tools used in the HEAL School Food and Nutrition Policy Project from British Columbia. The group will be asked to cover up the bottom part of the page. The participants will then be asked to read the case study and brainstorm some of the policy tools they see used in this example.

Another way to identify policy tools is through stories in the newspaper. Divide the participants into small groups. Hand each group a daily newspaper. Ask the groups to look through the stories in the newspaper and identify some of the policy tools that go along with the stories. The example given on page 30 of this workbook may be helpful for the participants to look at. Ask the groups to report back to the larger group about the policy tools they were able to identify from the stories in the newspaper.

Activity 4.4 – Identifying problems and solutions using stories

Objective: To use story-sharing techniques to help people connect what they see happening in their communities with the larger issue of food security and to start thinking about strategies that can be used to address it.

Process: Ask people to start sharing their stories or experiences with food security. Listen to the stories carefully. Ask the group to look for recurring themes, issues and needs in the stories that are being shared. Brainstorm ways to address the issues and the causes. An example process is laid out using the story of 'Amy' in the voices box on page 40.

Activity 4.5– Identifying the "problem policy"

Objective: To identify policies that may be causing the problems and to see the connections between policies and food security.

Process: Ask your group to brainstorm problems related to food security they may have noticed in their communities. From the problems identified have groups pick one and work back to the policy (or policies) underlying it.

This activity can serve two purposes. It can be used to help participants gain further knowledge about identifying issues or to brainstorm about issues in their own community. NOTE: You may want to wait to do this activity until *Section 5* when the group is working towards developing their action plan. One of the hardest things for a group to do is to narrow down the issue they want to work on. A useful tool to help the group do this may be a SWOT analysis. **SWOT** stands for **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats. This analysis can help a group to see where they may have the most success.

Activity 4.6– Are we ready to move forward?

Objective: To do a SWOT analysis to assess the internal (group) strengths and weaknesses, and the external (environmental, societal) opportunities and challenges the group will face in order to determine if the group is ready to move forward with their work.

A SWOT analysis helps to focus activities into areas where the group may be strong and to show where the greatest opportunities lie.

Process: Lead the group through the questions outlined in Activity 4.6. The information in their SWOT analysis can help them decide on the best place to focus their efforts.

Activity 4.1
Policies reflect values

Policy can be supportive when it is made with the people whose lives are affected by it. This is because it will better reflect their values and experiences.

This is how one person put it: "They may say, 'Well, it's our policy.' Well that policy didn't come down from god almighty. Man made the policy so if man made the policy then man can break this policy..."

Policies are guides that can help you make choices. Think about your own personal policies—for example, your policy might be to eat locally produced food. If you go out to eat, your policy would be to eat at the local diner rather than at a fast food chain. If another person makes a choice that's different from yours, you might be tempted to make judgments about their policy. But each person's policies are based on their own values, experiences and life circumstances. Some people may not be able to choose the local diner because it is too far away and they have to walk—the fast food chain is closest. Others may not have the choice — they may not even have enough money to go out to eat.

Cover up the bulleted text in the bottom right hand corner of the page. While reading through Charlene's story, think about what policies and values are at play. Uncover the rest of the text and compare your analysis with the policy analysis provided (in the bulleted text).

Charlene's Story

Charlene went to her local church to ask for a food voucher and was given one worth $50. She had asked for the food voucher so she could throw her son a birthday party.

She went to her local grocery store and picked up several items, including hotdogs, chips, pop, and a cake mix. The cashier rang the items through, but when Charlene presented her food voucher to pay for the items the cashier told her that if she was desperate enough to get a food voucher then she should be using it to buy better foods like fruits and vegetables. The cashier told her to go put the junk back. Charlene was embarrassed but was used to being treated like this. She listened to the cashier and returned the food items for more nutritious ones. She left the store in shame and tried to figure out how she would go home and explain to her son that he wouldn't have a birthday party this year—she didn't have the money.

- Charlene's church had a policy to provide vouchers to individuals who ask for assistance.
- Charlene's personal policy was to celebrate her child's birthday with a party.
- Government social and economic policies did not ensure Charlene had money to buy the food needed to feed her family.
- The grocery store lacked a policy to ensure cashiers had proper sensitivity training.
- The store clerk made assumptions and had personal judgments of those who used vouchers.

This story was shared by one of the partners in the NSNC/AHPRC Participatory Food Costing Project.

Activity 4.2
Looking at policy impacts

All policy—whether personal, organizational or public—has an effect on someone.

In the exercise below, look at specific policies and examine their potential for affecting food security. Some examples of personal, organizational, and public policies are provided but you may also use your own examples.

1. Personal policies

- I try to buy only locally produced fruits and vegetables.
- I buy as much as I can from stores in my community and avoid buying food from big chains like Wal-Mart ®.

Discuss:

- What are my personal policies regarding food?
- What impact do my personal policies have on my own food security and that of others in my community?
- What are some barriers to carrying out a personal policy on food security?

2. Organizational policies

- Some major supermarket chains will not purchase a product from farmers or other food producers unless they can produce enough of the product to supply ALL of their stores.
- Schools sometimes earn money from selling exclusive rights to soft-drink manufacturers to sell their products in the school.
- Some food banks are open only during working hours which makes it difficult for people with jobs or students to get there.

Discuss:

- Who is affected by this policy?
- Why does the policy affect them?
- What is the impact—on individuals and communities?
- How does this policy affect food security?
- Can you think of other businesses or organizations with policies that affect food security?

3. Public policies

- Some municipal transportation policies result in little public transportation and more dependence on cars.
- Some provincial land use policies allow development of farmland for housing or other uses.
- Some provincial income assistance policies cut off income to women who seek higher education.
- Federal policies affecting the amount of transfer payments to provinces result in less funds for income assistance.

Discuss:

- How do these policies impact our food security—my own and my community's?
- What other public policies could impact on food security?

Activity 4.3
Using policy tools

Cover the bulleted text at the bottom of the page with a piece of paper. Read through the following case study. What are some of the policies tools that were used in this example? After you have identified some of the policy tools (see page 30) that were used uncover the bulleted text and compare answers.

In 2002, four schools in central British Columbia participated in the **Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) School Food and Nutrition Policy Project**. The goal was to improve the nutritional intake of elementary school children by creating supportive environments for healthy food choices. Students, staff, teachers, volunteers and health professionals were involved in creating school food policies to make healthy eating an easier choice.

The project was financially supported by a Health Canada program designed to help prevent Type 2 Diabetes. The Caribou Chilcotin School District was the recipient of this grant and 4 elementary schools volunteered to participate in the program.

Each of the schools approached the development of policies differently but each followed the Healthy Schools Resource Guide as the format for the development of the school food policy. General nutrition information, food policies and nutrition guidelines were provided as examples to stimulate discussion and ideas. The HEAL project also provided assistance in facilitation and development of nutrition education sessions for the classroom by involving the local Public Health Nutritionist who acted as the project manager. One policy created by a school was "To encourage healthy eating and active living in our school community through education of students, staff and parents".

Activities to support the program included awareness raising, education and hands-on student involvement. Specific activities included increased access to nutritious food, bans on selected nutrient-poor foods, guidelines for foods served at school functions, lower price incentives for nutritious foods, nutrition workshops for teachers, in-classroom contests and lesson plans around healthy eating and Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating.

POLICY TOOLS USED by the HEAL School Food and Nutrition Project:

- Information: General nutrition information, sample food policies and nutrition guidelines were provided as examples to stimulate discussion and ideas
- Grants: the project was financially supported by Health Canada's Canadian Diabetes Strategy
- Education: nutrition workshops for teachers, in-classroom contests and lesson plans around healthy eating and the food guide
- Regulation: bans on selected nutrient-poor foods, price incentives for nutritious foods
- Guidelines: Healthy Schools Resource Guide, sample food policies and nutrition guidelines
- Programs: Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) program subsidies: Public Health Nutritionist acted as the project manager/facilitator

Caribou Chilcotin School District 27, 2003

Activity 4.4
Identifying problems and solutions using stories

Telling stories about experiences with food insecurity — or the experiences of friends, neighbours or family members — is a useful way to get people thinking and talking about the issue.

Telling stories about experiences with food insecurity was the basis of the story sharing workshops used within the Nova Scotia Food Security Projects. Examining stories closely and looking for both the problems and their underlying causes can help people to connect what they see happening in their communities with the larger issue of food insecurity. It also offers a springboard for beginning to look for possible solutions.

What do you do?

Bring a small group of people together

Bring a small group of people together to talk about food insecurity and try this approach. You can ask participants to tell a story, bring a story of your own, use one of the quotes in this workbook, or pick one of the issues from Activity 1.2 (page 6) to use as a discussion starter.

What is happening?

Have someone tell a story about their own experience or that of someone they know. If you have time, you can ask several participants to share their stories and look for the themes that run through them all. Listen to the stories very carefully, with an open mind and open heart. Brainstorm with the group to identify the issues contributing to food insecurity, write them on a flipchart and post the sheet where everyone can see it.

Why is it happening?

Look for themes, issues and needs that run through the stories. Think about underlying factors such as policies, programs, and aspects of the social or community environment that are involved. Write these on another flipchart and hang it next to the list of issues.

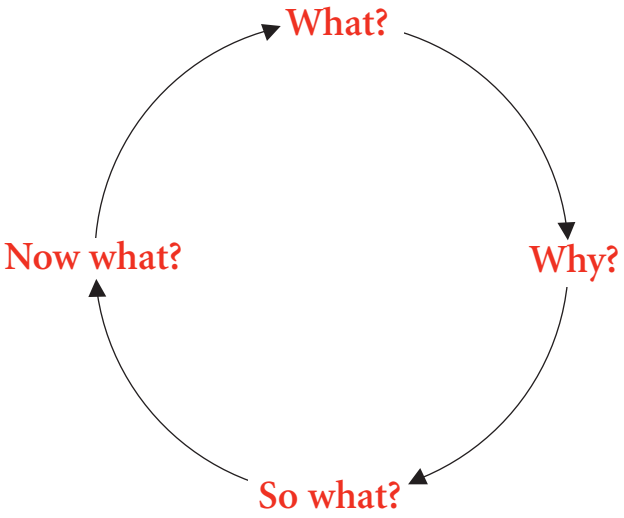
So what?

Look at the effects of the situation. What have we learned from this story? Do we need to find more information? What has changed for you after hearing this story?

Now, what can we do about it?

Look at the issues and the causes and brainstorm ways to address them. Consider practical solutions, but also try to think big—if you could do whatever you wanted, how would you fix the problem?

The *Food for Thought* on page 41 is an example of what one community did when they realized that they did not have good access to grocery stores and the food that they wanted. Not only did their idea improve access to food, it also helped develop a stronger sense of community.



Labonte & Feather, 1996

Voices

"[Amy] has no vehicle. Most of the grocery stores, or big stores are a mile away or more. So when you're walking, and you're walking with an 8-year-old... hopefully somebody's got my younger child... And you're walking way out to the Superstore. You're gonna think about what you're going to be able to carry home."

An example: Amy's story

The *Voices* box to the right contains a story shared at one of the Nova Scotia story sharing workshops. The problems and solutions below were identified from this story.

What is happening in Amy's story?

It is very difficult for Amy to get the amount and variety of food needed to support the health and well being of herself and her family.

Why is it happening?

- Lack of transportation
- Inadequate income
- Limited selection of grocery stores
- Local supermarkets are rare, now a few mega stores
- Location of grocery stores
- Lack of childcare or support for children

So what?

- There are fewer and fewer small grocery stores within communities
- Walking to and from grocery stores limits what you are able to purchase
- Grocery stores are no longer in convenient locations if you do not have access to a vehicle

Now what can we do about it?

- Improved public transportation
- Fresh fruit and vegetable stands in communities
- Living wages
- More support for childcare and/or affordable after school and recreation programs for children

One highly culturally diverse community in Toronto, Ontario recognized that there was no street level shopping amongst the 15-20 high-rise apartment buildings that they lived in. They also noted that that there was only one grocery store and it offered very little variety. The community decided to take action.

Working together, they received a grant from the City of Toronto. With this, they organized the Golden Harvest Farmers Market to sell fresh produce from Ontario farms. The Market showcases the goods and talents of people living in the community, including a 16-piece steel drum band, henna tattoo art, homemade Afghani, Indian, and Caribbean foods, and handmade clothing. The market is a great addition to the community. As one supporter says, "You don't have to feel homesick in Flemingdon Park. You have Caribbean music, Afghani food. We are a United Nations."

Activity 4.5
Identifying the "problem policy"

Sometimes it's easier to see a problem than to identify the policy that's causing it.

For example, the problem of food insecurity and hunger is obvious when someone has to use a food bank or soup kitchen. Unfortunately, we often don't think of the policies that cause people to have to rely on food banks to feed themselves. Many policies impact food security such as economic policies, social policies, agricultural policies, fisheries policies, land use policies, and transportation policies, just to name a few. Before you can change or influence the policies that affect food security, you need to know what policy (or policies) is causing the problem and to be able to make the links between the policy and the problem.

Making these links can take practice. Sometimes the links are not clear or they get tangled up in other problems. By working through the tangles, you'll be able to see the connections more clearly. And that's the first step toward being able to make the connections clear to others and to begin to change the policies that are causing the problems.

Process:

- With your group, brainstorm some of the problems related to food security that group members have noticed in their community. For example, more kids going to school hungry, the local grocery store closing, small farmers going bankrupt, local fisheries closing.
- Pick one of the issues identified and work back to the policy that triggered it. Below is an example.

An example of this process is...

It's becoming **more difficult to buy fresh vegetables** in your community.

The local grocery store closed after a big supermarket opened in the next town. Now you need a car to buy fresh food.

The lack of fresh food for sale in the community is the result of municipal and provincial **policies that give tax breaks and cheap land to large retailers** to encourage them to open more stores. This often drives smaller retailers out of business.

The lack of access to fresh food is the result of transportation policies that neglect public transportation and focus on individual cars.

Adapted from: Nova Scotia Women's FishNet, 2002.

Activity 4.6
Are we ready to move forward?

Doing a SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is one way to assess the Strengths (S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O), and Threats or Challenges (T) that your group faces in trying to move forward.

This activity will help you assess your internal (group) strengths and weaknesses, and your external (environmental, societal) opportunities and challenges. The template on the following page can be used to record your responses. An example of a completed SWOT analysis is also provided.

Internal strengths and weaknesses

This includes considering what human (people power), financial ($), and physical (space, equipment, tools) resources you have and what you need (or need to work on).

- What advantages do you have?
- What do you do well?
- What resources do you have access to?
- What do other people see as your strengths?
- What could you improve?
- What do you need?
- What do you do poorly?
- What should you avoid?

External opportunities, challenges, and threats

This includes considering what is going on outside of your group, like trends, the economy, funding sources, policy and legislation, local or provincial events, and physical environments.

- What current trends or events impact on your issue?
- What funding sources are available?
- What possibilities exist to support your group?

Adapted from The Community Toolbox

SWOT Analysis

	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
INTERNAL	Strengths	Weaknesses
EXTERNAL	Opportunities	Challenges or Threats

Now ask yourself...

What do we have?

What do we need?

Adapted from The Community Toolbox

SWOT Analysis: An Example

This example is based on SWOT analyses for some Nova Scotian communities in their efforts to move forward with their work to build food security.

	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
INTERNAL	**Strengths** • Trained food costers • Resources and tools in this workbook • Research results from participatory food costing project • Leadership • Support for community dialogues on food security • Interest and enthusiasm • Mobilization—have people sitting around the table who wouldn't normally do so	**Weaknesses** • Could use training to build Facilitation skills Media skills Writing skills • Supports for participation Child care Transportation
EXTERNAL	**Opportunities** • Partnerships between family resource centres, AHPRC,* NSNC**, public health service • Media interest and coverage on food security issues and the affordability of a nutritious diet • Food security issues gaining increasing interest among communities • Training opportunities • Mentors and community champions are emerging • Support from provincial government for recommendations of food security projects • Funding future opportunities	**Challenges or Threats** • Economy • Fiscal government • End of the Health Canada's Canadian Diabetes Strategy (potential funder)

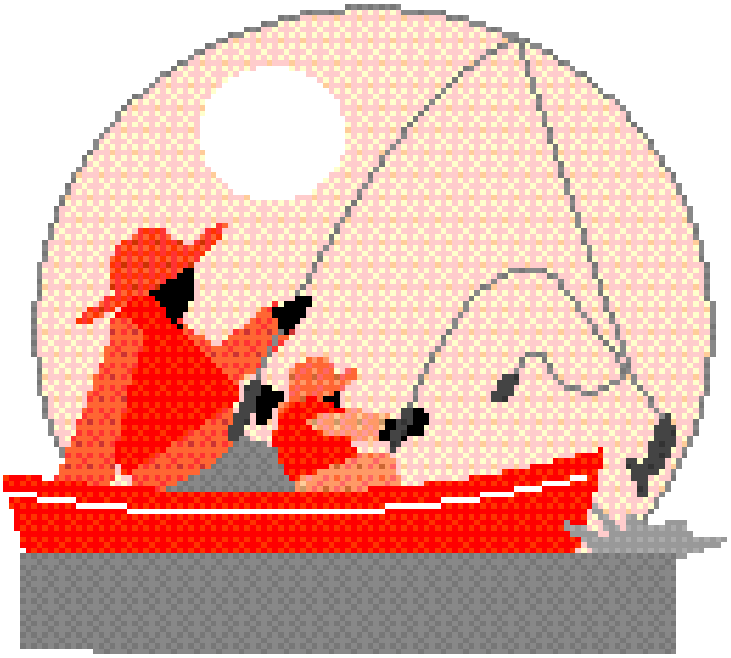
** Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre ** Nova Scotia Nutrition Council*

Adapted from The Community Toolbox

Section 5

Influencing policy

Working through the first four sections of the workbook, your group may have identified an issue they would like to work on. Once the group has an understanding of what policy is and how it affects food security, this section describes a process that can be taken to increase your ability to influence policy.



The process of influencing policy can be broken down into four broad and interrelated steps:

1. Do your homework – know your issues, goals, supporters and opposition
2. Identify and engage stakeholders and develop networks – make connections between different people and different groups
3. Know the policy process, policy tools and public policy makers
4. Take action!

Key Term

Stakeholders

People who are interested in, or affected by, an issue and who want to be involved in looking for solutions.

The worksheets provided in this section will help you with each of these steps. Use them to help you describe your issue, know the policies you need to address, and where to go, who to approach and what to do to make things happen.

You may go back and forth between the steps (and the worksheets) during this journey but completing them all will help you have the best chance at policy change.

The *Food for Thought* on page 50 gives examples of many policy change strategies that we learned about in our environmental scan of policy change activities across Canada.

Step 1.

Know your issues, goals, supporters and opposition

The more you know about your issue and the clearer you are about what you want to achieve, the more effectively you will be able to make your case. To make a strong case for doing something about your issue, you must present your issue with statistics, information and stories that show:

1. **how many** people are affected;
2. **how broad** the impact is (for example, its impact on health, economy, environment, community, etc.);
3. **how long** it has been going on and **what will happen** if it is not addressed by public policy.

The information and activities in *Sections 1* and *2* of this workbook will help you become more familiar with the broad issue of food security, pinpoint the key issues that affect you, and begin to come up with your views on what needs to be done to address your issue. For example Activity 2.1 "What does food insecurity affect", can be used to show the many impacts of food insecurity.

Where to get evidence to support your case:

- Community service directories identify other groups, agencies and organizations that are working on similar issues/problems.
- Population health status data are often available from your local government statistics agency, public health unit, district health councils or health research organizations in universities.
- Socio-demographic data provide information on key social and economic variables in your community (e.g. household income, education level, food bank use). This information can allow you to compare your community to others in your province or across the country.
- Research studies including needs assessments, research reports and journal articles can help you to get to know your issue. This type of information can be located through searches at reference libraries or keyword searches of on-line databases such as Medline or PubMed.
- Newspaper or magazine articles can provide information about the problem or issue. Paying particular attention to articles that refer to controversy surrounding the issues will help you to identify your supporters and/or opposition.

Adapted from: Health Communication Unit at the Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto, 2004

- The internet can also be a valuable tool for researching an issue and examining differing perspectives. Typing key words into a search engine like www.google.ca can uncover a wealth of information and ideas. In *Section 7 Resources and Tools (page 81)*, we've included a few helpful websites to get you started.

Know who your supporters are

At this stage, it's also very useful to get to know who your **supporters** are and who you might approach as supporters. Contact them and tell them about the work your group is doing. Discuss how your goals may be similar to theirs and try to gain their support for your work. See below for ideas for who your possible supporters might be.

Understand your opposition's point of view

Getting to know your **opposition** can help you to understand their viewpoint —remember, you don't have to agree with it, just understand it. This insight can help you to focus your arguments and activities in the most effective ways. It can also show you what areas people with other points of view will focus on and help you direct your research so you'll have information to counter their position.

Possible supporters:

- **Citizens** — community members affected by or interested in the issue
- **Volunteer and Non-profit Organizations** — locally, provincially, nationally and internationally
- **Businesses and Industry**
- **University researchers** working in the area
- **Media** — local or independent media groups, individual journalists
- **Government** — departments, divisions, working groups, politicians
- **Professional Associations and Organizations**

What we learned...

Tips for influencing policy from food security initiatives across Canada

- Celebrate the small successes — policy change can be a long, demanding and sometimes difficult process.
- Think big but stay focused — there are many issues to be dealt with.
- Know the political process — learn how government works.
- Meet with policy makers — don't be afraid of politicians.
- Use the media — it can be a prime driving force for shaping public opinion and political agendas, but before going this route seek assistance from others who have experience with media and be sure to communicate clear and accurate information.
- Build broad public support — there needs to be pressure for policy change from outside the political system.
- Identify a champion — someone either within the political system, or someone outside of it who knows the system.
- Develop clear messages and avoid an adversarial approach that blames or attacks certain people.
- Let policy makers know what they can do to address the issues. Develop action steps and follow through on your efforts.

"You can't be all things to all people... keep the same message... be aware of what your focus is."

"In the end, that's what clinched the deal for us ... one councilor became very excited about what we were doing and really moved for us."

"I don't think bra burning gets anybody anywhere."

"It is like the drip of water and it is going to eventually create a hole in the rock."

"The process, the structure and how government works, that is really important."

"The Minister, at the end of the day, needs to know that the work is supported on the outside."

"If you're going to be an activist, you have to act."

NSNC/AHPRC Food Security Projects, 2003

Step 1-Worksheet 5.1 Know your issues, goals, supporters and opposition

Working through this worksheet will help your group to more fully understand your issue/problem and start to identify stakeholders.

Issue/Problem: ..... Setting: ..... Population: .....

1. What is the extent of the issue/problem? (How many people and/or systems does it affect?)	4. How long has it been an issue/problem?
2. Why is it an issue/problem?	5. What has been done to try and resolve the issue/problem in the past? Are there policies that specifically target this issue?
3. What has contributed to the development of the issue/problem?	6. What could happen if this issue/problem is **NOT** dealt with?

7. What needs to be done about it?	10. Who might support you or have similar perspectives on this issue/problem?
8. What is your goal(s)?	11. Who might oppose, object or have a different perspective on this issue/problem?
9. Who else thinks this is an issue/problem?	In one sentence, describe, in a bit more detail, your issue and how you would like to see things change.

Adapted from The Health Communication Unit at the Centre of Health Promotion, University of Toronto, 2004

Step 2.

Identify and engage stakeholders and develop networks

Once you have an understanding of how policy is made, and who makes policy related to your issues your next move is to "advocate" to get your issue on the agenda of the relevant policy makers.

This is where your research, insight and commitment to your issue pay off. You can have an impact in policy development if you know your issue, present your ideas and evidence clearly, and are prepared with solutions.

Any argument is more persuasive if there are many voices supporting it. Broad support is particularly important when you are trying to get your issue on a politician's agenda. If you can convince a politician that he or she will please many voters by acting on your issue, you are more likely to win over the politician. Building networks and involving groups and individuals who also have a stake in the issue can bring that "bigger voice" forward.

Politicians may agree to a certain policy action but it may never be implemented. One big voice, including many stakeholders who are working on the same issue and advocating for the same cause, can be a key factor in keeping an issue on the policy agenda. A united, consistent voice can help to make sure the issue remains in the spotlight.

Key Term

Advocacy

A combination of individual and social actions designed to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular health goal or programme.

World Health Organization, 1995

Step 2- Worksheet 5.2 Identify and engage stakeholders and develop networks

When moving forward on an issue/problem there are certain people or organizations that you may want to involve. Brainstorm, using this worksheet, as to who this might be.

Issue/Problem: .....

1. Who are your potential partners on the issue/problem?	3. Who is going to benefit from or be affected by this issue/problem (e.g. single parents, those on low incomes, seniors, farmers, etc)?
2. Who has been—or is now— involved in similar issues/problems?	4. Who are the key stakeholders—in government and in the community—for this issue/problem?

Adapted from The Health Communication Unit at the Centre of Health Promotion, University of Toronto, 2004

Step 3.

Know the policy process, policy tools and public policy makers

The policy development process at the government level can be lengthy and complex. It helps to understand how an issue becomes a policy issue and what happens from there.

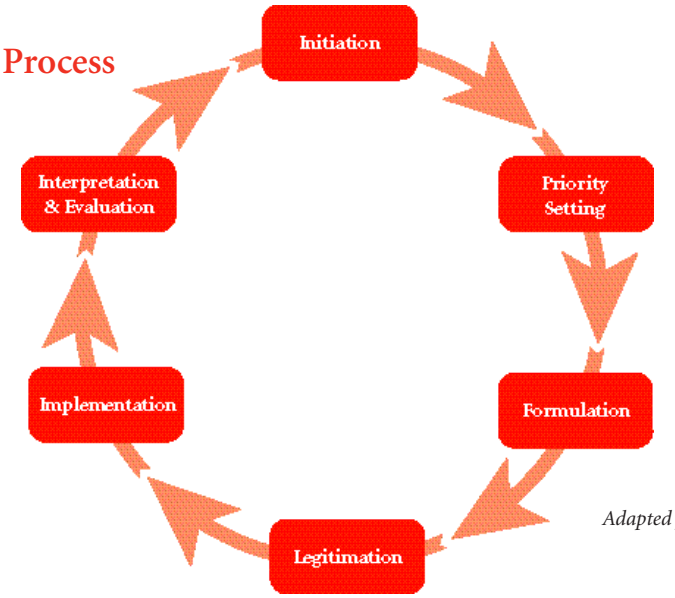
Here is an example process of how public policy is made. It shows how long and complex it can be.

Key Term

Public Policy Process

The process through which legislators or bureaucrats identify an issue and develop a public policy to address it.

The Policy Process



Adapted from: O'Neill

Initiation An issue is brought to the attention of policy-makers and possibly put onto the political agenda if it is a public policy issue.

Priority Setting The issue is looked at in terms of the many competing issues that need to be acted on.

Formulation Policy goals are set and the policy direction is developed.

Legitimation Research is done to determine what has been done in the past, what has been successful and what hasn't worked. The policy is written.

Implementation The policy is put into action.

Interpretation and Evaluation

Under ideal conditions the effectiveness and impact of the policy are monitored and evaluated. However, this is the part of the policy process that often does not occur.

Policy Tools

In *Section 4,* Activity 4.3 helped participants think about various policy tools used to address issues. Refer back to this activity on page 38. You could use this activity again if you get stuck.

Locating Public Policy Makers

Since all levels of government—federal, provincial and local —make public policy, deciding which level of government to approach is a critical step. You need to locate the people who are responsible for developing policy on the issue you are interested in. It helps if he or she is interested in your issue and willing to move it forward on the policy agenda. But even if the policy maker is not initially sympathetic, it's your job to try and change his or her mind!

It's a good idea to establish and maintain good relations with the policy makers you deal with —whether they agree with you or not. Influencing policy can sometimes take a long time, and in the long run you'll be more effective if you make as many friends —and as few enemies —as possible.

Who are the key public policy makers?

Local

Mayor

City Councillors

Members of special committees

Provincial/ Territorial

Elected officials

Premiers

Department Ministers

Federal

Senators

Prime Minister

Members of Parliament

Department Ministers

Aboriginal Governance

Chiefs

Councils

Minister of Indian Affairs

Step 3-Worksheet 5.3 Know the policy process, policy tools and public policy makers

Knowing the policy process, policy tools and public policy makers is essential when trying to move your issue/problem forward. Use this worksheet to help you brainstorm.

Issue/Problem: .....

1. Which level of government is involved in the issue/problem?	3. Which elected officials are involved and where do they stand on the issue/problem?
	4. Who are the key stakeholders—in government and in the community— for this issue/problem?
2. What departments are involved or have something at stake?	
	5. What are the possible policy tools you could use to address the issue/problem?

Adapted from The Health Communication Unit at the Centre of Health Promotion, University of Toronto, 2004

Step 4.

Take action!

At this point, you've identified your issue, done your research, and identified the relevant policy makers, stakeholders and potential partners. The next step is to develop an action plan.

Worksheet 5.4 is a check list to help you think about what strategies you might use in your action plan and make sure you are ready to act. Strategies for action are outlined in *Section 6* on page 61.

You can use Worksheet 5.5 to help you plan. You may have more than one strategy so photocopy this sheet to use for each one.

In 2002, the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet of Manitoba mandated the establishment of the Northern Food Prices Project. The purpose of the project was to submit a report to the Committee identifying strategic options to address concerns about high food prices in northern Manitoba. Strategic options focused on reducing the retail price of nutritious foods such as milk and milk products (including infant formula and lactose-reduced products), fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, whole grains and other staples to northern citizens.

Northern Food Prices Report, 2003

Step 4 — Worksheet 5.4 Checklist for action planning

Policy change occurs when a number of factors come together at the right time, with the right people. You can set the stage by being aware of these factors and trying to bring as many as possible into play.

Key Factor	Do we have this?	If no, what can we do to get it? *See Section 6 for possible strategies*
Supporting information		
Important research		
Recent reports and documents		
Examples of successful policies or guidelines		
Timing		
Interest in issue from person with authority		
Political opportunity —election, public hearings, Royal Commission, etc.		
Perception of issue as a crisis		
General consensus that change is needed		
People have started talking about the issue		
Organization		
Links between stakeholders		
Positive connections between interested groups		
Influential group is involved		
Interested groups have sufficient resources		
Interested groups have motivation and energy		
Interested groups are open-minded and flexible		
Advocates are working together and agree on actions to take		
Message		
Agenda for action is clear		
Messages are clear		
Issue can be presented as a story		

Worksheet 5.5 Making an action plan

Action Plan Template			
Issue			
Goal			
Partners			
First Step			
Action planned			
Tasks	Who will do each task?	Resources and supports needed	Completion date
What's next?			
Action planned			
Tasks	Who will do each task?	Resources and supports needed	Completion date

Section 6

Strategies for action

This section contains information on how to initiate a variety of different strategies that can help you in your efforts to influence policy.

They include:

- Start a dialogue in your community
- Form a food policy group
- Build good working relationships
- Circulate a petition
- Write letters to policy makers
- Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper
- Meet with policy makers and politicians
- Speak out
- Make presentations to key stakeholder groups

Start a dialogue in your community

The first step toward doing something about food insecurity is to get people talking about the issue. Public awareness is a good base from which to launch any of the other strategies described in this section.

The activities and information in this workbook offer many topics that would be a good starting point for a discussion, workshop, or series of discussions. You'll find some suggestions for bringing people together below, but if your group has its own way of doing things, stick with what you know will work for you.

Make a presentation on food security.

Present at a regular meeting of any group you're a member of, for example, a church group or a parent group at your child's school or daycare. You can also contact other groups in your community and ask if you could speak briefly on food security issues at one of their meetings. You'll find information on making effective presentations on page 78.

Hold a workshop in your community.

Decide who you'd like to invite and send personal invitations to these individuals telling them when and where the workshop will be held. Write the invitation so the invitee feels that their presence is important. A sample invitation can be found on page 91 in the *Resources and Tools* section. Target your workshop to the workshop participants, focusing on an aspect of food security that will appeal to each group's interest or sympathy. If you think you'll have trouble attracting people to your event, offer something extra—lunch, a food basket draw, a door prize or a tour of a community garden. The list of target audiences and some potential workshop topics includes:

The general public —Everyone Has a Right to Eat Nutritiously!

The business community —The Economic Impact of Food Insecurity

Community agencies — Food Security Challenges Facing Our Community and Links to Other Community Issues *(e.g., affordable housing, environmental issues)*

Health care workers —Food Security Is a Primary Health Issue

Academics and researchers —Opportunities for Linking Research Findings to Policy

Community activists and advocates —How Can We Use Food Costing Research and Other Evidence to Influence Policy?

Piggyback onto another community event.

This may include for example, a health fair, craft fair or any public event. Find out if you can have a table or display at the event and use the opportunity to hand out information about food security, circulate petitions, and talk to anyone you can.

Find a high-profile partner.

Look for organizations who are already involved in some aspect of the issue — for example, a local food bank or an organic farmers cooperative.

Use the media.

Contact local radio stations and try to interest them in doing a piece on the evidence you have collected, such as the results of your food costing research. Media coverage can be used to publicize a specific event — for example, a public meeting — or as a way to get your message to a wider audience.

Form a food policy group

Forming a Food Policy Group can be an effective way to bring together a range of individuals and organizations with complementary interests and skills to focus on influencing policy. Food Policy Groups address food holistically, in the context of environmental, economic, community and health issues.

Food Policy Groups are usually municipal or regional in scope and in some cases have taken on advisory roles with City councils. Some, such as the Toronto Food Policy Council (http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm), have received full sponsorship from municipal governments, including a staff person to coordinate the group.

Food Policy Groups can undertake such activities as:

- Working on projects and policies to improve both access to food and overall health and nutrition in their community
- Supporting local farmers in the development of sustainable farming practices
- Undertaking community based research
- Hosting speakers on a variety of topics
- Promoting healthier food choices through cooking classes, taste tests, and sharing recipes
- Developing or supporting the development of food access programs such as community gardens, community kitchens, farmers' markets, and produce stands

The most effective Food Policy Groups have a diverse membership that includes organic and conventional farmers, food processors, wholesalers and distributors, grocers, restaurateurs, health professionals, anti-poverty advocates, school system representatives, journalists, community leaders, researchers, and concerned citizens. The more diverse the membership, the more successful food policy groups have been in developing and implementing creative solutions and in gaining the support of government.

Adapted from: Borron, 2003 and Community Food Security Coalition, 2000.

The Toronto Food Policy Council

The Toronto Food Policy Council was formed in 1991 as a subcommittee of the Toronto Board of Health. It has 21 members with representatives from City Council, conventional and organic farmers, food co-ops, large food corporations, multicultural groups, anti-hunger and community development groups, and three full-time staff members.

Mission

"The Toronto Food Policy Council partners with business and community groups to develop policies and programs for the promotion of food security. Our aim is a food system that fosters equitable food access, nutrition, community development and environmental health."

Some Major Accomplishments

- Wrote and championed the City of Toronto Declaration on Food and Nutrition.
- Assisted with fund-raising efforts for community organizations that led to $3.5 million in grants to increase access to food.
- Contributed to many planning processes for City of Toronto land use.
- Initiated a "Buy Ontario" campaign to increase the amount of local food served in hospitals.
- Founded the Rooftop Gardening Resource Group.
- Helped expand the number of community gardens in Toronto from 50 to over 120.
- Wrote a series of landmark discussion papers on various elements of a food systems approach to public health policy. These are available at: www.city.toronto.on.ca/food_hunger

Toronto Food Policy Council

How to form a Food Policy Group

1 **Think about all the different groups that might want to join the Food Policy Group.**

You may need to do some homework on different individuals or groups in your community:

- What do they do?
- Are they involved in other community organizations focused on related issues?
- What are their views on the issue? Related issues?
- Who are their members?

2 **Think about how you will approach them and get them involved.**

You can use the strategies in this section (letters, meetings, speaking engagements, and presentations) to help attract interest, support and involvement.

Approach the groups in a way that will appeal to their interests. Be sure to highlight the benefits to their community, their members, and their organization. Organizations that are truly interested and passionate about the issue are ideal, as they will be more willing to contribute to the Food Policy Group.

3 **Once you have a Food Policy Group, you'll need to determine how to proceed.**

Use this workbook to identify the issues that need to be addressed. Remember, as a Food Policy Group, it may be possible to address more than one issue at a time. The membership of your organization can be broad and different sub-committees or working groups can be formed to work on different issues —such as inadequate income, transportation, buying locally, farming practices, and/or supports and services.

You can also use this workbook as a resource for finding out more about the policy process, connecting with policy makers, and using different tools to influence public policy.

Build good working relationships

No matter what path you take in your efforts to change policy or take other action on food security in your community, you will need to develop cooperative, constructive relationships with many different people. The people you engage may include politicians, public servants, people in your community, the media, policy makers, researchers, health professionals, and people in other organizations who are concerned about your issue.

To build good working relationships:

Be honest.

No goal is worth your integrity. Be yourself and tell the truth. Good relationships are built on trust. If the people you are working with or trying to influence think that they cannot trust you, you will not be effective. Honesty and sincerity are very powerful.

Be calm and polite.

Keep your temper in check and be polite to everyone you meet. Thank anyone who helps you. This includes secretaries, receptionists, administrators and constituency workers. People in these positions can be a big help if they are on your side so don't burn any bridges. Community action (lobbying for policy change, for example) can go on for a long time and you may see the same people again and again.

Be fair.

If you are trying to influence people, lobby or change policy, there is great value in putting yourself in the shoes of the people you are trying to influence. Don't just ask them to see your side, try to see theirs as well. People will be more willing to listen to you if they see that you are willing to listen to them. You don't have to agree with their position, but you will be able to make your points more effectively if you understand their position. It is very effective if you can state your case as "we would like to work with you to solve this problem together."

Be well informed.

Many aspects of action on food security involve lobbying and advocating for changes in policy. Good policy is based on good information. Know your issue and come to meetings prepared to explain it clearly and answer questions. Advocacy is most effective when you not only bring a problem to the table, but you can also suggest a solution. Your insights, ideas and suggestions can contribute to good policy.

Be helpful.

People will be more willing to help you if you are willing to help them. Look at activities like advocacy as an exchange —you want something from the people you are trying to influence. What can you offer in return? For example, public officials all need to know about the outcomes and effects of the policies they are responsible for. You can offer information about the effects of policy on your community and people in your community from your group's unique point of view.

Take the long view, and celebrate your small successes.

Community action can sometimes be a long, drawn-out process. This is especially true of actions like lobbying or advocating for policy change, but applies to all kinds of community action. Before you start you need to be reasonably sure that you have the energy and enthusiasm to keep at the job for what could be a long haul. Don't give up and don't expect things to fall into place immediately. Don't take conflicts and defeats personally. Keep talking. Keep coming back. Be willing to compromise as long as you're still moving toward your goal. A small step in the right direction is better than no step at all. Remember to celebrate your small successes along the way.

Adapted from: Nova Scotia Women's FishNet, 2002

Circulate a petition

A good petition contains a clear and concise request for action or policy, as well as a brief explanation of why the request is being made. Remember to attach plenty of pages for signing.

Include the petition statement and space for each person to sign. It is important to print their full name, list their address and/or organization, and provide their phone number. All of this is needed to ensure that the signatures appear valid to the person receiving the petition. You will find a sample petition on page 94. Add lots of pages for signatures.

Write a letter

Letter writing can be an effective way of communicating your issue and views. You can write to a politician to say that you don't like something, and also to let him/her know when you support something he/she does, when you feel more action is needed, or to thank him/her for supporting your view.

A letter may be more effective than meeting face-to-face, as a letter provides a record of your communication. Even so, it's always a good idea to follow-up after sending a letter to ensure it has been received and interpreted correctly. A sample letter can be found on page 95 of the *Resources and Tools* section.

Did You Know?

You can send letters to MPs for free —No Postage Required!

Tips for Writing a Good Letter

- Personalize the letter, don't send generic letters.
- Keep it short, definitely no longer than 2 pages.
- Always close with a statement regarding their response or comments, e.g. "I look forward to your response."
- Keep a positive tone to the letter.
- Write on only one subject per letter.
- Attach other relevant information, such as a key messages sheet or newspaper clippings.
- Have someone else, or better yet, a few people read and edit.
- Include your contact information.
- Follow-up with a phone call.

What to include in your letter:

1. Begin with who you are and why you are concerned.
2. If you are writing on behalf of a group, state your name and your role. If you have a lot of members or supporters, you can also say how many people make up the group.
3. State the problem or issue. Be sure to note its impact on health, the environment, the economy, or some sector that the official receiving the letter is concerned with.
4. Discuss the importance of putting this issue on the public agenda.
5. Include a local example.
6. State what actions you think are needed and why.
7. Indicate that you look forward to working with them in taking this action.
8. Finish in a way that encourages a response.

Meet with policy makers and politicians

At some point in any activity that involves advocating for policy change —and often during other kinds of community activity as well —you'll need to meet with political representatives. These can be at the municipal, provincial or federal level.

During a meeting, your goal is to make your point quickly, clearly and memorably. Most politicians meet with a lot of people and you want this person to remember you and support your issue.

Before your meeting, you will need to plan, organize and prepare.

Plan

Decide what you want to talk about.

What's your issue? What aspects of the issue do you want to address during this meeting? What do you want the person you're meeting with to do for you? What result do you want?

Decide who you want to talk to.

Who is the best political representative to talk to about the aspects of your issue that you want to address? Who can do whatever it is you want done? Is your issue best addressed at the local, provincial or federal level? Depending on the issue you're working on, you may eventually want to talk to political representatives at all levels. No matter who you're meeting with, you'll be talking about the parts of your issue that the specific representative can do something about.

Did You Know?

You can easily find your political representative

This example is for Nova Scotia but can be adapted for other provinces or territories

Municipal

The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities has contact information on all of Nova Scotia's municipal units:
www.unsm.ca
Click on "Membership Directory." Then click on "quick list of municipal units" for addresses and phone numbers.

Provincial

You'll find contact information for all MLAs at:
www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/members/Index.html

Federal

Contact information for all MPs —both in Ottawa and in their home ridings —can be found at:
www.parl.gc.ca
Click on "Senators and Members". Then click on "House of Commons —Current." This page has a handy "Find your MP using your postal code" feature.

Find out how to contact the person you want to meet with.
You'll find how to get contact information for political representatives in the box on the previous page.

Organize

Make an appointment with the political representative you want to meet with.
You can telephone, write or e-mail. Be sure everyone is clear about the date, time and place.

Decide who will go to the meeting.
Most people feel better if they have company, but you don't want to bring a crowd. Two or three is a good number —you won't be alone and there will be time for everyone to have a chance to speak. If you have partner groups working with you on your issue, bringing representatives from different groups is a good idea.

Prepare

There are two goals in an effective meeting: make your point and make a friend —or at least make an ally. You want to leave the meeting feeling that the person you've met understands your issue and is on your side. This takes preparation!

Decide what you want to say.
Meetings with politicians usually last about 30 minutes —at the most. You won't have a lot of time, so it's important to know what you want to say and to get right to the point. A good rule is to pick three points that you want to make and know those points well. Make a short list or outline of your points and send it to the politician a few days before your meeting. This gives him or her a chance to prepare too.

Prepare your presentation.

For each point you want to make:

State the issue: Be very clear about how you see the problem or issue.

Give examples that make it real: Politicians get elected because people vote for them. It's very important to them to know how issues affect their constituents. Use examples and stories to show how your issue is affecting the lives of people in your community.

Offer solutions: Describe the changes you think will help improve conditions in your community. Explain why you think your approach will work. Tell the politician what you want him (or her) to do. *Be prepared to answer questions.*

Decide who will do the talking.

Everyone who comes to the meeting should have something to say. One way to make sure this happens is to give each person a point to make. That is, for each of your points the same person states the issue, gives examples, offers solutions and answers any questions. Another approach is to have one person introduce all the points, another give all the examples or tell their story and a third offer solutions. Questions could be answered by whoever feels comfortable doing it. You should also work out the order of the speakers —know who will speak first, second and so on.

Did You Know?

Quick Advice for Meeting with Policy Makers

Be prepared, come with fact sheets or brief notes and leave them there.

Stay focused, concentrate on only a few issues (you can go a little broader with a meeting as opposed to a letter).

Bring local examples of how a policy is impacting on your community.

Be clear about what you are asking for or want them to do.

Anticipate questions and practice responses.

If you can't answer a question, don't panic, offer to send the information in a follow-up, and do it.

Arrive early!

Before leaving, summarize what you want them to remember.

After the meeting

Within a few days after the meeting, write a brief letter to the person you met with. Thank him or her for the meeting and summarize what was said. End the letter by saying that you look forward to continuing to work together on this issue. This is an important step because it provides both parties with a written record of what was said.

This kind of letter is also a handy way to let the rest of your group know what happened. You can print it in your newsletter or pass copies around to other members of your group. If you have a meeting place or community center, post copies there for everyone to read.

Adapted from: Nova Scotia Women's FishNet, 2002.

Speak out

Reaching people in your community

The best way to reach people in your community is to talk with them —either informally (whenever you happen to run into someone) or formally (through meetings and organized discussions). Your group can hold public meetings to talk about food security issues or you can ask to speak at meetings of other community groups.

Did You Know?

Places where you can speak out:

Talk Radio
Town Meetings
Public Hearings
Rallies

Reaching a bigger audience

Once you've got your organization and immediate community interested and involved in food security, you may want to share your information or involve a wider audience. This means working with media —the press, television and radio. The most common ways that community groups interact with media are through press releases and interviews.

Press releases

You use a press release to let the media know about an event or issue. Your press release will attract more media interest if your topic is interesting to the media. In other words, if it's "newsworthy."

Newsworthy stories are about something concrete: an event, a meeting, an award that can be described and reported. Newsworthy stories can also follow-up on another news story, for example, your group's response to a new government policy or a statement on food security by a Minister. It can also be newsworthy to give a local or human-interest perspective to a bigger story.

A good press release:

Is short and to the point.
This means one side of one sheet of paper, double-spaced with short paragraphs.

Has the name and phone number of a contact person.
Your contact person should be well informed, comfortable talking to media, easy to reach and someone a reporter can call for more details.

Has all the important information at the beginning.
Within the first few sentences you should answer the questions who, what, where, when and why.

Is timely.
Reporters will only pay attention to your press release if it's relevant to a current story or issue. Old news doesn't get covered.

Is interesting.
A press release is more likely to be used if it includes an interesting and informative quote from an identified speaker.

Before you distribute a press release, contact media outlets to find out to who the press release should be addressed, how it should be sent (E-mail? Fax?) and what the deadline is.

Interviews

You may be asked to give an interview in response to a press release or because a reporter has contacted you or your group looking for information.

The best way to get your message across in an interview is to:

Be brief and clear.
Most news stories are very short, so focus on the information that's most important to you. Make your point clearly, quickly and in as few words as possible. If the reporter wants more details, he or she will ask for them.

Be accurate.
Stick to the facts. Don't say anything you can't back up. If you can't answer a question, say so. Offer to get back to the reporter with an answer.

Did You Know?

Points to remember when speaking publicly

Be clear and stick a point.

Bring your fact sheets to share with people interested in more information.

Anticipate questions and prepare responses.

Don't be afraid to let your feelings about your issue show. Honest emotion is very powerful. It's okay to be passionate, as long as you don't get incoherent.

Share your own stories or stories from your community. Personal connections can have a real impact on people.

Stay calm and be careful.

Don't get angry or upset or allow yourself to be pushed into saying something you'll regret later. Don't say anything that you don't want to read in the paper or hear on the radio or see on TV. No matter how friendly the reporter seems, everything you say is fair game. Nothing is "off the record."

It takes time to develop media skills and to be comfortable talking to reporters. Many groups pick several members to be their spokespersons. This gives them a chance to develop skills for talking to the media and helps ensure that your group's message is always the same. Groups can help their spokesperson rehearse by spending a few minutes during each meeting asking tough questions so the spokesperson has a chance to practice answering.

Adapted from: Nova Scotia Women's FishNet, 2002

Make presentations

Giving presentations can be a good way to attract partners and allies to your cause. You may want to send a letter to local community groups to tell them about what you are doing and that you are interested in speaking to their group.

This can be a good way of getting in touch with the business and professional community, through Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and women's professional groups. These groups meet regularly, are often looking for speakers, and are interested in learning about what's going on in the community.

There are four key components to an effective presentation: plan, have a point, prepare, and practice.

Plan

Who will you be talking to?

Effective presentations are tailored to meet the needs and interests of the listeners. You would make different kinds of presentations to a community group, high school students or a municipal council.

How big is the group?

An informal chat with a small group requires a different approach than a formal presentation to a large group.

How much time will you have?

Speakers who go over their time limit wear out their welcome very quickly. Be sure to find out if your time includes a question period. For example, if you have 15 minutes including questions, you should plan to speak for 8 to 10 minutes so that there will be time for questions from the audience.

What facilities are available?

There's no point in preparing overheads or a PowerPoint™ presentation if the necessary equipment isn't available.

Have a point

Know WHY you're giving your talk. Do you want to inform people? Persuade them to do something? Knowing what you are trying to achieve will help you decide what to say.

Prepare

Effective presentations are short, clear and to the point. Every presentation has a beginning, a middle and an end. Most are followed by a question period.

Beginning:

Thank your audience for the opportunity to speak to them and summarize what you're going to talk about. For example:

> "Thank you so much for inviting me to speak with you tonight. Food insecurity is a serious issue for many people in our community, especially children."

Middle:

This is where you make your points and inform or persuade your listeners. Usually, you won't have time to cover more than two or three points, so choose them carefully. Make your most important point first —that way, if you run out of time, you'll at least have covered the most important thing. If you plan to use overheads, Microsoft PowerPoint™ on your computer, or other visual aids, don't get carried away and use too many. Use only those that support or illustrate the points you're making. A good rule is to use no more than one overhead for every two minutes of your talk.

Did You Know?

Presentation Pointers

Start with your key messages.

Give local examples. People are interested in what's going on in their own community.

Outline what needs to happen and who needs to act.

Summarize your message. Let people know what they can do and how they can become involved.

Allow for questions.

Give them information sheets to take away and let them know where to get more information.

End:

This is where you very briefly summarize what you've said. If the point of your presentation is to ask the listeners to do something, this is where you tell them what you want them to do or ask for their support. For example:

> "As you can see, food insecurity has serious consequences for many children in our community, but by working together, we can make a difference. My group is advocating that social assistance rates be raised to reflect the real costs of feeding growing children. We'd like your organization to support this effort by circulating our petition and writing a letter to the Minister."

Questions:

Most presentations end with questions from the audience. Part of your preparation is to try to imagine the kinds of questions you might be asked and have answers ready. If someone asks you a question you can't answer, say so. Tell the questioner that you appreciate the question and will get back to her with an answer. Ask her/him to see you after the presentation so you can get her/his contact information, then get back to her/him as soon as you can.

Practice

Once you've prepared your talk, practice the presentation by saying it out loud. Most people get bored listening to someone reading a presentation. You need to know your talk so well that you don't have to read it.

- Make notes to remind you of what you want to say.
- Stand and practice your presentation out loud. If you'll be using overheads, slides or PowerPoint™, practice using them at the same time.
- Time yourself. You may find that you need to adjust your talk to fit into your allotted time.
- Practice in front of an audience. Rehearse in front of family, friends or anyone who'll listen. Ask for honest feedback and suggestions. Is your presentation clear, informative and convincing?
- Practice answering questions. Ask whoever is watching your rehearsal to ask questions and give you feedback on your answers.

Adapted from: Nova Scotia Women's FishNet, 2002.

Section 7

Resources and Tools

This section provides resources and tools for workshops and for taking action on policies related to food security.

They include:

- Icebreakers
- Sample Invitation to a Community Dialogue/Workshop
- Sample Evaluation
- "Your Thoughts! "Activity for Community Dialogue/Workshop
- Sample Petition
- Sample Letter
- Bibliography and Other Useful Resources
- Provincial and Territorial Food Security Groups
- Provincial Steering Committee Members and National Advisory Committee Members

Icebreakers

Icebreaker 1– How food secure are you?

This activity helps to show how food security is everyone's issue and that being food secure is more than knowledge and personal choice. It also shows how quickly a person can become food insecure. It is a good icebreaker to use if you are focusing on the first few sections of the workbook for your workshop.

Materials Needed: Copies of Nutrition Quiz (page 88), Scenario Slips (page 84-87), Food Secure Snacks, Food Insecure Snacks (page 83)

Scenario Slips

There are two sets of "Scenario Slips." One set contains challenges – circumstances that could plunge a family into food insecurity. The other set contains supports – conditions that increase a person's level of food security.

Process:
Copy and cut out the scenario slips. Put them all into a bag or a hat for participants to draw from.

Divide participants into four groups. Hand out the Nutrition Quiz on page 88 to each group and allow ten minutes to complete it. The two groups that have the highest score will be the "food secure" groups and the two groups with the lowest scores will be the "food insecure" groups.

Tip: Having the room set up in a circle makes it easier for people to move around and to see each other.

Have two piles of snacks – "food secure" snacks and "food insecure" snacks. Ideas for these snacks are listed on the following page. Have participants come up and get their snack depending on which group they are in. When the participants receive their snack have them draw a slip of paper from the bag of "scenario slips." After all the participants have taken a snack and a scenario slip, ask them, one by one, to read what their scenario says.

Depending on the scenario they may stay in their original group (food insecure or secure) thus keeping their original snack, or they may move into the other group. If they move into another group they then have to trade their snack with someone who is already in that group.

Challenges

If a person in the "food secure" group draws a *challenge slip*, he/she moves into the "food insecure" group and trades snacks with a participant who is moving into the food secure group. If someone in the "food insecure" group draws a *challenge slip*, he/she remains in the food insecure group and keeps the same snack.

Supports

If a participant in the "food insecure" group draws a *support slip*, he/she moves into the food secure group and trades snacks with someone in the "food secure" group. If someone in the "food secure" group draws a *support slip*, he/she remains in the "food secure" group and keeps the same snack.

Example: If a "food secure" person has selected a piece of paper with "Your Partner lost their job and the price of heating oil has increased dramatically just this week. It is a record cold winter" he/she would move into the "food insecure" group, trading their snack with a "food insecure" person. If a "food insecure" person selected a piece of paper that read "You have a huge garden and raise chickens on your rural property" he/she would move into the "food secure" group, again trading their snack with a "food secure" person.

Snacks to use with Icebreaker :

Examples of "Food Secure" Snacks:

- Homemade muffin
- Fresh Fruit
- Yogurt
- Hard cheese and crackers
- Milk

Examples of "Food Insecure" Snacks:

- Reduced to clear fruit
- Chips or cheesies
- Cans of pop
- Fruit roll-up

As an alternative to using the Nutrition Quiz to divide participants into "food secure" and "food insecure" groups, you can place stickers on half of the name tags that are going to be worn for the day. If a participant has a name tag with a sticker on it, he or she is in the "food insecure" group. If a participant has a name tag without a sticker on it, he or she is in the "food secure" group. Once people are divided into "food secure" or "food insecure" groups proceed with the activity as described above.

Scenario Slips: Challenges

Your partner has lost his/her job and the price of heating oil has increased dramatically just this week. It is a record cold winter.

You've been diagnosed with cancer. You cannot work and medical bills soar.

A large grocery store moves in 20 km away and the local market closes down. You have no car.

The US closes the border to Canada in the fall, making certain foods unavailable. The price of produce in your area soars. Local farms have diminished. Selection is extremely limited all winter.

You are a single mother of three. Your department at work is restructuring. You lose your $50,000/year job.

The local daycare loses funding. No subsidized daycare spots are available.

Scenario Slips: Challenges

Rent increases by 30 %, Power bills increase by 10%.

Your apartment building burns. There is no affordable housing in your area.

You're self-employed. The local factory – where you normally do about 80% of your business – closes. Things are very tight.

You are a single mother of two teens. You've developed some mental health problems due to extreme stress. Your doctor orders you to give up one of your three part-time jobs.

Your partner is addicted to alcohol and not working right now. Things are becoming unbearable to manage. Something's got to give.

Your local Family Resource Centre closes down. The local Food Bank has scaled back its hours. Help with a new baby that had been available in the past is gone. All of your family lives many miles away.

Scenario Slips: Supports

You are participating in a great research project to learn more about food security and how to work together in communities to identify and address policies that affect everyone's health including food security.

You've established a good relationship with the local Family Resource Centre and are part of the Community Kitchen there.

You have a huge garden and raise chickens on your rural property.

You have many neighbours, relatives and friends in your community. You always support each other when times are rough.

You have a plot at the local Community Garden and work with a nearby farm market to offer locally grown foods from the garden to the community.

You've enrolled in low cost, nutritious cooking programs at a local resource center and have joined a community food-buying group.

Scenario Slips: Supports

You are able to offer childcare for neighbours in exchange for a trip to the grocery store every week.

You are working with a local community action group to address transportation gaps in your community.

You've recently inherited your grandfather's farm property – you have land to work with.

You've worked with your local school board to get a school breakfast program for your local community. You volunteer there and share ideas with other staff and volunteers.

You are lobbying the housing authority and local politicians in your local community for improved policies around safe, affordable housing—for example, a rent cap.

You have adopted personal food policies that will help to sustain local agriculture and food retailers. You offer less support for big business.

Nutrition Quiz

Questions	Points	Score	Complete Check mark
Name 5 Determinants of Health	50		
Canada's Food Guide is in the shape of a _____	10		
What 2 colours of vegetables does Canada's Food Guide recommend we eat more often?	20		
How many servings from the Milk Products group do adults require daily? Children?	Total 20 (10/answer)		
Hold your breath under water for 10 seconds	30		
Name four broad reasons why we should care about Food Security	40		
Who's Problem is Food Security anyway?	20		
Name three key messages from Canada's Food Guide	20		
Poke your head through a 2" diameter hole (anyone can do it!)	20		
If you all agree that Food Security is an important issue —everyone get up and circle around your chair	10		
Name two safe ways to thaw meat	30 (15/answer)		
Canada's Food Guide recommends that we choose foods from this group in moderation. **Give four examples.** Why should we eat these in moderation?	Total 30 (10/question)		
Name four vegetables that are grown in Canada	20		
TOTAL POINTS	320		

Answers to the Nutrition Quiz

Questions	Points	Answer
Name 5 Determinants of Health	50	Page 12 of workbook has these listed
Canada's Food Guide is in the shape of a _____	10	Rainbow
What 2 colours of vegetables does Canada's Food Guide recommend we eat more often?	20	Dark green & orange
How many servings from the Milk Products group do adults require daily? Children?	Total 20 (10/answer)	2-4 servings adults 2-3 for children
Hold your breath under water for 10 seconds	30	Place a cup of water on your head and hold your breath for 10 sec.
Name four broad reasons why we should care about Food Security	40	Community, Health, Economy, Families, Children and Environment
Who's Problem is Food Security anyway?	20	Everyone's!
Name three key messages from Canada's Food Guide	20	Balance, variety and moderation
Poke your head through a 2" diameter hole (anyone can do it!)	20	Make a 2" diameter hole with your fingers and poke your head through it
If you all agree that Food Security is an important issue —everyone get up and circle around your chair	10	
Name two safe ways to thaw meat	30 (15/answer)	Microwave and the refrigerator
Canada's Food Guide recommends that we choose foods from this group in moderation. **Give four examples.** Why should we eat these in moderation?	Total 30 (10/question)	Other foods soft drinks, chips, chocolate, candy, low nutrition value, empty calories
Name four vegetables that are grown in Canada	20	Broccoli, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, squash, etc.
TOTAL POINTS	320	

Icebreaker 2: What food do you feel like today?

As participants introduce themselves, ask them what food they feel like today and why. For example, someone may say they feel like scrambled eggs today because they have been running around all day.

This icebreaker could be used at a workshop or dialogue no matter what section in the workbook your group is focusing on.

Icebreaker 3: Food Traditions

As participants introduce themselves, ask them to share a food tradition or something unique that is done with food in their household or family. This icebreaker can be used with any section of the workbook.

Making connections:
Food and our Community

YOU ARE INVITED!

by representatives from the
Bridgewater and Queens
Family Resource Centres and
Public Health Services

Sponsored by the
Atlantic Health Promotion
Research Centre and
the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council

Making Connections:
Food and our Community

Have you ever wondered
how much it costs for families
to eat nutritiously in Lunenburg
and Queens Counties?

Now we know!
Come learn about the results of a
food costing study conducted by
the Participants of local Family
Resource Centres.
Join us in discussing the
implications of this study,
and how food impacts on the
health of our community.

January 21, 2004
10 am—3 pm

Kinsmen Hall
(on the left on your way to Parkview
Education Centre, King St., Bridgewater)

LUNCH IS PROVIDED

Let us know if you can join us!

Please contact:
Local contact person: .....
Phone number: .....
by January 7, 2004

I liked...

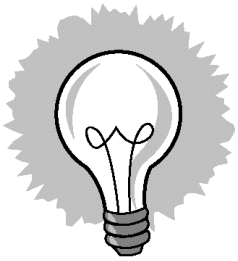
The new idea I received from the workshop...

I didn't like...

I would like to suggest this change...

I really would like to say...

Thank you.



Your Thoughts!

As you listen to the information, we invite you to write down your thoughts about the following questions. We will be discussing these questions in small groups this afternoon.

1. What did you hear in the presentations this morning that really caught your attention?

2. What do you think needs to happen next in our community to address the issues raised in the presentations?

3. What role do you see for yourself/your organization in addressing the issues raised in the presentations?

4. Who/what organizations in your community might work with you to address the issues raised in the presentations?

Sample Petition

Food for All and Food for Health

(Title of Petition)

A petition of: The Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre & NS Nutrition Council

(your group or organization)

Addressed to: MP .....

We the undersigned, ask that:

Income Assistance rates in Nova Scotia be set to reflect the cost of a nutritious diet.

We make this request because:

Ensuring all citizens have access to nutritious diet is critical to healthy child development, healthy communities and environments and a strong economy. Food costing shows that the cost of purchasing a very basic nutritious diet for a family of four in NS is $572.90/month. The income of people living on income assistance is too low for them to afford this healthy food as well as other necessities such as housing, heating, transportation, child care, personal care, education, and recreation. As a result many Nova Scotians are unable to eat a basic nutritious diet.

Sample Letter

My Elected Official
22 Address Rd.
Halifax, NS

Date

Dear ....

I have been involved with the Food Security Projects of the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre in Nova Scotia. Through my involvement I have become very concerned by the fact that many Nova Scotia families cannot afford a basic nutritious diet.

In Phase II of the food security projects we held story sharing workshops throughout Nova Scotia where people came together to share their experiences of food insecurity. One issue that was raised by most of the women in the workshops was the stress they experienced about the fact that they knew they weren't feeding their children the food they know they need for healthy development. The women said the high cost of fresh fruits, vegetables and milk prevented them from buying such foods because with a limited grocery budget they were more concerned about ensuring their kids had enough to eat —food that would fill their stomachs. In sharing such stories, the participants and facilitators of the workshops were often moved to tears —situations like this should not occur in our communities.

An inadequate diet can have short and long term consequences for health. For children in particular, a poor diet can adversely affect cognitive development and success at school. Moreover, the stress associated with not having enough food to eat, or the food one knows they need, can also have negative consequences for health. Implementing healthy public policies that ensure all families can afford a basic nutritious diet can prevent greater health problems in the long run.

Because of the implications for health, this issue must be addressed, and must be brought to the attention of the provincial government. Policies must be implemented to ensure that social assistance rates reflect the cost of a nutritious diet. Such policies would make nutritious foods more available to all Nova Scotians, and reduce some of the stress experienced by parents.

I encourage you to use the information and stories in this letter, as well as the additional fact sheets that I have attached, to bring this issue forward in the provincial legislature. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your reaction to this information and any plans that you have for using it to affect a positive and healthy public response.

Sincerely,

Name:

Contact information:

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To order:
Nova Scotia Women's FishNet
c/o CRIAW-Nova Scotia
PO Box 29087
RPO Halifax Shopping Centre
Halifax, N.S. B3L 4T8

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Other Useful Resources

The following is a list of resources you may find useful for your work on food security and policy issues. Many of these resources were retrieved on-line. While we have done our best to ensure these links are up-to-date, many of these links may have changed.

Nova Scotia Food Security Projects Reports

The following reports have been prepared by Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, Nova Scotia Family Resource Centres, & the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council Participatory Food Security Projects:

A National Environmental Scan of strategies for influencing policy to build food security: final report (2003). www.nsnc.ca

The struggle to feed our families in Nova Scotia: What does food costing tell us? (2003). www.nsnc.ca

The struggle to feed our families in Nova Scotia: What does story sharing tell us? (2003). www.nsnc.ca

Participatory Food Security Projects Phase I and Phase II — Using a participatory process to collect evidence and enhance the capacity of community groups to influence policy (2004). www.nsnc.ca

General Food Security Websites

Agriculture and Agrifood Canada's Food Security Bureau.
www.agr.gc.ca/misb/fsb/fsb-bsa_e.php?page=index

Canadian Organic Growers.
www.cog.ca

Centre for Food Security Studies.
www.ryerson.ca/~foodsec/centre_01.html

Food for the Cities, The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN.
www.fao.org/fcit/insec.asp

Oxfam Canada and Oxfam International.
www.oxfam.ca and www.oxfam.org

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

Understanding Food Security

Discussion Paper on Household and Individual Food Insecurity. (2001).Tarasuk, V.
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_security_exec_e.pdf

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Food Security, the Environment and the Economy

A Wealth of Food: A profile of Toronto's food economy (1999). Toronto Food Policy Council.
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Addressing Food Security

Building Food Security in Canada: A community guide for action on hunger. 2nd Ed. (2001). Kalina, L. Kamloops FoodShare.

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Toronto Food Charter
www.city.toronto.on.ca/food_hunger/pdf/food_charter.pdf

The Policy Process, Implementing Policy & Influencing Public Policy

Community Advocacy Toolkit. Breakfast for Learning. (2003). Breakfast for Learning. www.breakfastforlearning.ca

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VOICE in Health Policy
www.projectvoice.ca

Facilitation Resources

Building Caring Communities – A Community Workbook (August 2003) Building Caring Communities Steering Committee. www.health.gov.sk.ca/mc_dp_bcc_com_wkbk.pdf

Community Building Resources. Susan Roberts.
www.cbr-aimhigh.com

Facilitate.com
www.facilitate.com

Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making (1996) Kaner, S., Lind, L., Berger, D., Toldi, C., & Fisk, S., Gabriola Island, British Columbia, New Society Publishers.

The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups. (1994). Schwarz, R. M. Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Provincial and territorial food security groups

BC BC Food Systems Network
www.fooddemocracy.org/security.html

AB Growing Food Security in Alberta
http://www.foodsecurityalberta.ca

SASK Regina Qu'Appelle, Population and Public Health Services, Food Security
http://www.rqhealth.ca/programs/comm_hlth_services/pubhealth/food_security.shtml

MAN Winnipeg Harvest
www.winnipeg.org

ONT FoodNet, Ontario Food Security & Nutrition Network
http://www.opha.on.ca/foodnet/index.html

FoodShare
http://www.foodshare.net/

Toronto Food Policy Council, City of Toronto Public Health
http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm

PQ Eco-Initiatives of Montreal
http://www.cam.org/%7Eecoini/

NS/NB/ PE/NL Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network (ACORN)
http://www.acornorganic.org/

Nova Scotia Nutrition Council
http://www.nsnc.ca/

Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador
www.foodsecuritynews.com

YK Yukon Anti-poverty Coalition
http://www.povnet.org/regional/yt_issues.htm

NWT Yellowknife Community Garden Collective
http://www.volunteernwt.ca/orgs/organdetail.asp?organ=271

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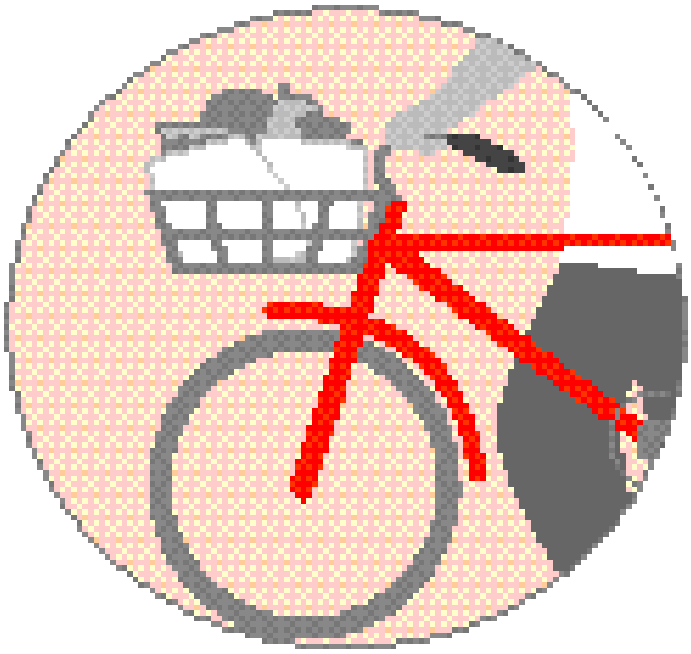
Section 8

Factsheets and handouts



Food Security versus Food Insecurity

Food Security —

Occurs when everyone can afford to purchase and is able to access nutritious and safe food that they enjoy eating

Is when everyone can access food in a way that does not compromise human dignity

Means food is grown and accessed in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just

Means you can feel confident about the food you are eating and that you will have enough

Is about sharing and celebrating your food

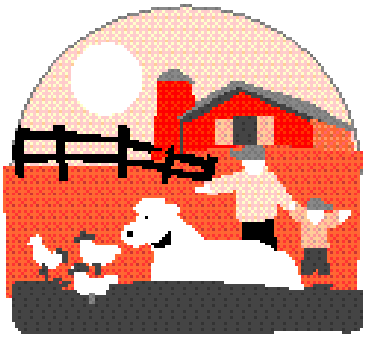
Food Insecurity —

Is when you can't access foods that you enjoy and need for you and your family to be healthy

Is not having sufficient and safe food for future generations

Is feeling stressed about whether you have enough food or about where your next meal will come from

Is worrying about the safety of your food and about what is in it



Food Security & Children, Families & Communities

Some families worry if there is enough food for dinner or the next day. Parents worry about having enough food for their children to grow up strong and healthy. Parents may be anxious that their children will be taken away from them if they cannot feed them enough good food. Poor nutrition in childhood has effects that can last a lifetime.

Food Insecurity can —

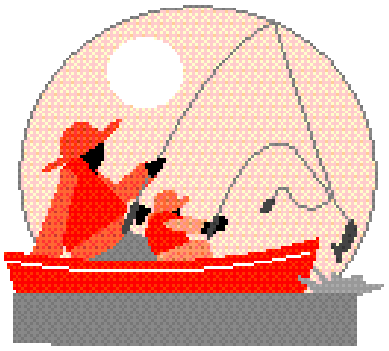
Harm our communities and lead to community breakdown

Lead to feelings that our community is not a safe, healthy or comfortable place to live

In a healthy community, people can —

Earn a living and get the food they need

Feel connected to each other and like they are part of the community



Food Security & the Environment

It is important to commit to the environment to ensure we have a sustainable food system for generations. Resources must be produced, managed and harvested in ways that provide for an ongoing and healthy food supply.

The negative effects of unsustainable food production and growing methods are already being experienced. An example in Canada is the collapse of the fisheries in Atlantic Canada due to over fishing.

Other examples include:

- Decreased land available for growing foods
- Bacterial contamination of our water supply
- Increased use of non-renewable resources, like fuel to transport food
- Increased air pollution
- Loss of natural vegetation and top soil, which will affect the number of plants our environment can support

Policies must be developed to help protect our resources

Food Security & the Economy

Many people don't recognize the negative effects caused from buying imported fruits and vegetables from large-scale agribusinesses.

Buying food locally, such as from local farmer's markets, helps to support small businesses in your community.

Buying foods locally keeps money in the community longer and provides employment opportunities in the community.

Policies need to be developed to support local businesses and build the local economy.

Food Security & Health

The environment, economy and community we live in all contribute to our health as individuals and as a population. If these aspects of our lives are put at risk, so is our health.

Environmental, economic and social factors are all determinants of health.

Income plays a major role in access to food and has a significant impact on food security.

Just as having enough money is good for health, poverty and inequality are bad for health.

Not having enough to eat and not having good quality food can have short and long term effects on mental and physical health.

Why Buy Local?

Buying local food can have positive implications for the health of the environment, economy, communities and people.

Environmental Health

Local food reduces the amount of fuel used to transport food long distances and reduces green house gases

Clean local environments are created and supported by well-managed family farms

Economic Health

Buying local food supports local farm families

Selling directly to you means farmers can keep the full price of the food and earn a better living

Local food keeps your money within your community

Social, Cultural and Spiritual Health

Local food connects you with farmers and with food production

Local food resists globalization and celebrates local diversity

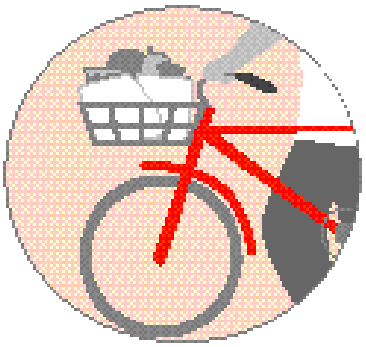
Local food ensures food for future generations

Human Health

Local food is fresher and tastes better

Local food may also be safer and use less chemicals, additives, and preservatives

Local food is better for you than food that is shipped long distances



The Food Security Continuum

There are many different strategies for addressing food insecurity. These strategies can be considered along a continuum from short-term strategies that address immediate needs, to system change strategies that aim to build food security into the future.

Food Security Continuum

Stage 1 Short-term Relief Strategies	Stage 2 Individual and Community Capacity Building Strategies	Stage 3 System Change Strategies
Food banks, soup kitchens and other emergency food assistance programs	Move beyond emergency food; focus on capacity building e.g. community kitchens, gardens and buying clubs etc.	Structural change to food, social, and economic systems through food policy and social justice networks, coalitions and councils; participatory food costing

Food Insecurity → Food Security

Adapted from Toronto Food Policy Council, 1994; Houghton, 1998; Kalina, 2001

What is Policy?

Policies can be guidelines, rules, regulations, laws, principles, or directions. They say:

- What is to be done
- Who is to do it
- How it is to be done

Policy occurs at various levels and points of interaction

Personal policy is your own guidelines for actions based on your personal standards, beliefs and values.

Organizational policy guides how organizations and businesses operate.

Public policy guides how federal, provincial and municipal governments operate and address specific issues or problems.

How can we influence policy?

Whether you are acting to influence policy on your own, as part of a group, or as part of a formal food policy organization, the process is the same.

Step 1 Know your issues, your goals, your supporters and your opposition.

Step 2 Identify and engage stakeholders and develop networks. Make connections between different people and different groups.

Step 3 Know the policy process, policy tools and public policy makers.

Step 4 Take action!

Notes