Social Innovation in Food Banks
An Environmental Scan of Social Innovation in Canadian and US Food Banks
Summer 2016
This project has been convened and overseen by the Greater Vancouver Food Bank. The advising, research, and report production for this project has been provided by Urban Food Strategies Principal Janine de la Salle & Associate, Jamie Unwin. Funding was provided by Maple Leaf Foods as part of their sustainability commitments and priorities. Please visit www.mapleleafsustainability.com for more information.
Foreword

Like other food banks in Canada and the US, The Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) is undertaking a shift away from stand-alone emergency food services to long-term, community-wide strategies that address the core causes of food insecurity. As part of this journey, we wanted to better understand what other food banks are doing as part of a similar shift. We convened this research project to achieve the following objectives:

1. Establish an understanding of the continuum of social innovation and best practices within food banks in Canada as well as identify key reference points in the United States.

2. Produce and disseminate a clear and concise summary of the research findings to project participants, food bank associations, and community health partners.

3. To contribute to the community of learning within food banks by engaging discussion around strategies and learnings for challenging the status quo in the emergency food system.

With initiatives like this we are setting out on a new pathway for better food banking and a method of evaluating the initiatives we begin. We recognize that not every seed will take root. Some we will plant and realize we don’t have the right tools, or the timing isn’t right; others will thrive and strengthen our vision. It takes a team of gardeners to sustain any community garden. Likewise, our efforts will only flourish through the hard work of the incredible staff, volunteers and the thousands of partners who make our work possible. I want to thank everyone who participated in this research and those who believe in our ability to support food security in our communities.

Together, we can and are seeding the future and effecting real change.

Aart Schuurman Hess, CEO
Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society
Acknowledgements

Many contributed to the creation of this report. The entire project team wishes to extend a warm thank you to the leaders who spoke with us and who shared their passion and insights from the front lines of social innovation in food banks. We wish to recognize these organizations as well as acknowledge the significant community of practice that is emerging in this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California Association of Food Banks</td>
<td>Oakland, California</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona</td>
<td>Tucson, Arizona</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Bread Food Bank</td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding America</td>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Bank of Central New York</td>
<td>Syracuse, New York</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Banks Canada</td>
<td>Mississauga, Ontario</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Gatherers</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, Michigan</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank</td>
<td>Duquesne, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society</td>
<td>Vancouver, British Columbia</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greener Village Community Food Centre</td>
<td>Fredericton, New Brunswick</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge</td>
<td>Lethbridge, Alberta</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops Food Bank</td>
<td>Kamloops, British Columbia</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Food Cupboard</td>
<td>Nelson, British Columbia</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon Food Bank</td>
<td>Portland, Oregon</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa Food Bank</td>
<td>Ottawa, Ontario</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatoon Food Bank &amp; Learning Centre</td>
<td>Saskatoon, Saskatchewan</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Harvest</td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The STOP</td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

Food banks are changing. Organizations across North America are taking a critical look at their role after providing emergency food services for over 30 years. Although food banking has existed as a temporary solution to food insecurity and hunger in Canada and the US since the 1980s, food bank use continues to rise. Many food banks are struggling to meet the demand under current models. The realization that food banks are no longer only serving emergency food needs, but rather contending with chronic food insecurity calls into question how food banks can better serve the long-term health, social justice, and resilience of communities. Many food banks are increasingly recognizing that they need to advocate and act around the systemic causes of poverty and food insecurity in order to create real, lasting change.

A range of new perspectives are fueling greater collaboration and appreciation for the right to food. Justice-oriented approaches, focused on enabling a full range of participation in community (including access to food), with dignity and without oppression, are increasingly central. Similarly, concerns around public health inequities and diet-related illness more often include a structural lens that includes looking at the many social determinants of health and food insecurity. These community, or system-oriented perspectives have prompted a new wave of what we term here, ‘social innovation,’ within the food banking sector.

This research was undertaken to fill a gap in the information around what social innovation means in the context of food banking and how food banks in Canada and the US are growing and diversifying their contribution towards community food security. Through reviewing online and peer-review literature as well as speaking to 19 leaders from food banks across Canada and the US, this environmental scan of social innovation in Canada and the US attempts to answer the question: What are food banks in Canada and the United States doing to foster socially innovative practices to make the shift towards community food security?

Thirteen dimensions, or aspects, of social innovation in food banks are outlined as the framework for this research. These dimensions are defined as the core functional areas of food bank work, as well as new areas of activity for food banks. From here, cross-cutting
themes, or patterns of social innovation among these dimensions provide insight into the strategies that are enabling food banks to challenge the status quo and shift towards a community food security model of food banking.

The nine patterns of social innovation derived from the research findings are summarized as:

1) Creating a platform for shift  
2) Taking a whole systems approach  
3) Focusing on quality over quantity  
4) Scaling out not up  
5) Creating a healthy and dynamic culture of shift  
6) Balancing change with the immediate need for emergency food services  
7) Engaging new voices  
8) Starting with assets  
9) Working upstream

This research finds that there is a significant amount of social innovation occurring in food banks in Canada and the US. While there is great diversity in how this is being approached and expressed, the common thread of moving towards a community food security model and using a system-oriented lens, provides powerful alignment for social change and innovation in food banks. Through this process, it was also found that there is an appetite for this information and willingness of food bank leaders to participate in and contribute to a community of practice around the questions asked. Deeper research and engagement is recommended to foster these opportunities and continue knowledge sharing.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .......................................................................................... 1  
   1.1. The Rise of Chronic Food Insecurity .............................................. 1  
   1.2. Perspectives on Food Banks ............................................................ 3  
   1.3. The Knowledge Gap: Report Objectives ....................................... 4  
   1.4. Terminology .................................................................................. 5  

2. Research Methods & Phases ................................................................. 8  
   2.1. Research Methods ......................................................................... 8  
   2.2. Research Phases ........................................................................... 8  

3. Defining Social Innovation in Food Banks .......................................... 9  
   3.1. A Broad Definition of Social Innovation ....................................... 9  
   3.2. Food Bank Definition of Social Innovation ................................... 9  
   3.3. Dimensions of Social Innovation in Food Banks ....................... 10  

4. Key Findings ....................................................................................... 12  
   4.1. Strategic Planning ......................................................................... 12  
   4.2. Food Distribution to Members & Partner Agencies ...................... 14  
   4.3. Data Collection & Metrics ............................................................. 17  
   4.4. Governance Strategies ................................................................. 19  
   4.5. Human Resources ......................................................................... 20  
   4.6. Partnerships .................................................................................. 23  
   4.7. Programming & Member Engagement ....................................... 24  
   4.8. Community & Donor, Education & Engagement ....................... 26  
   4.9. Advocacy ...................................................................................... 27  
   4.10. Development & Finance .............................................................. 29  
   4.11. Food Purchasing ......................................................................... 32  
   4.12. Food Recovery ........................................................................... 33  
   4.13. Communications ......................................................................... 35  

5. Conclusions and Recommendations ................................................. 36  
   5.1. Patterns of Social Innovation in Food Banks .............................. 36  
   5.2. Recommendations for Further Research and Engagement .......... 38  

6. Appendices ......................................................................................... 40  
   6.1. Invitation to Participate Letter ....................................................... 40  
   6.2. Self-Assessment Survey ................................................................. 42  
   6.3. Interview Questions ..................................................................... 44  
   6.4. Food Bank Contact Sheet ............................................................. 45  
   6.5. Socially Innovative Food Bank Programming ............................ 46  

7. End Notes and References .................................................................. 51
1. Introduction

Food banks are changing. After providing emergency food services for over 30 years, they are deeply questioning their role within their respective communities and more broadly within society. Although food banks were originally established in the 1980s to address emergency food needs, chronic food bank use continues to rise and food banks are struggling to meet demand under current models.\(^2\)\(^3\)\(^4\) The realization that food banks are not only addressing temporary emergency food needs but also managing the front-lines of chronic food insecurity in North America has caused food banks and their supporters to challenge the status quo and call for systems change.

Persistent and chronic food insecurity among more developed, or higher income, countries displays both government and market failures in food provision, further highlighting the lack of policy or practice in securing food as a human right or honouring it as a community value. It also centers an emergent and ongoing acknowledgement on the social determinants of health (SDH), including income status and housing, and their influence on food security. It also calls into question the ability of millions of food insecure individuals to fully participate in their communities with dignity and without oppression. The lack of social justice within the food system, is further demonstrated by the prevalence of diet-related illnesses, their concurrent costs on the health care system (estimated at 4 to over 7 billion dollars annually in Canada\(^5\)), and compounded by the prevalence of processed and convenience foods full of sugar, bad fats, and salt. This report summarizes the current landscape of social innovation in food banks and supports ongoing work in growing a community of practice around systems change within the charitable food sector.

1.1. The Rise of Chronic Food Insecurity

The Data Trends on Canadian Household Food Security

Food security has not been measured on a national scale until recently. Since 2004, and most recently in 2012, the Household Food Security Survey Module was administered in all provinces and territories as part of Statistics Canada’s annual Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). This provides the most detailed information on levels of food insecurity in Canada. This data shows that food insecurity has remained constant in Canada from 2007-2012 with 8% of adults and 5% of children being food insecure. More recent information indicates that 8.3%, or 1.1 million Canadian households, experienced food insecurity between 2011 and 2012.\(^6\)

However, as noted by prominent Canadian food security researchers, Tarasuk et al (2012), the CCHS does not account for full-time members of the Canadian forces, those living on First Nation Reserves or Crown lands, those living in prisons, in some administrative regions or health institutions, or those without a home.\(^7\) Tarasuk et al. (2012) use CCHS data to estimate that food insecurity levels have been increasing, rather than remaining constant, since 2007. Their
estimates of food insecurity are larger than those released in earlier reports by Health Canada and Statistics Canada because of two key differences: 1) The 2012 study estimates consider all members of households classified as food insecure, whereas Health Canada and Statistics Canada only report on food insecurity among those 12 years of age and older and 2) The 2012 study estimates have included marginally food insecure households in calculations, whereas Statistics Canada’s and Health Canada’s reports have only counted people living in moderately and severely food insecure households.

By including marginal food insecure households, these estimates show that household food insecurity has risen significantly since 2008, bringing the estimated national total to over 4 million people (4,005,000), or 12.5% of Canadian households. Tarasuk et al. (2012) further estimate that in 2012, 16.5% of children under 18, or about one in six, lived in households that experienced food insecurity. To better describe the continuum of food insecurity, three gradations of food security are presented as part of the 2012 study: severe, moderate and marginal. These intensities of food insecurity are defined and measured from 2007-2012 in Figure 1 to the side.

The food bank response to household food insecurity
To date, food banks, have generally been the singular strategy within North America, (with the US having the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in addition) to respond to this compound crisis. Many argue they fill what should be a government responsibility in protecting

Figure 1: Canadian Household Food Security.
and promoting public health. This reality is compelling a significant shift in how food banks see themselves as actors in addressing the root causes of chronic food insecurity. The good news is that many alliances are forming to find new socially innovative ways forward together. This research report is in itself a symbol of these emerging partnerships.

As noted above, there has been a rise of food insecurity in Canada since consistent monitoring began in 2007. This is often attributed to a general lack of public policy measures that address hunger and food insecurity. Under these conditions, food banks have become the front-line of one of the most significant aspects of community and individual health. According to Food Bank Canada’s HungerCount, 1800 food banks and 10 provincial networks distributed food to no less than 700,000 people per month over the past 15 years, with 852,137 people being served in March of 2015. The HungerCount also highlights the uneven spread of hunger in Canada; households in Canada’s north experience extremely high levels of food insecurity, ranging from 17% of households in Yukon, to 45% of households in Nunavut.

Canadian research has also found that it is common for people who use food banks to still report being food insecure, despite receiving food assistance, and that there are persistent concerns from food bank members regarding the nutritional quality, safety, and accessibility of food and the social acceptability of such programs. In response, food banks are now challenged with a dual role; meeting increasing demand while also shifting systems to increase quality of food and evolve the charitable food model to align with community food security models and practices.

The US is experiencing a similar pattern in food bank use. Nationally, the US experienced a drop in use from 2011 (14.9%) to 2014 (14%) however the rate of very low food security was essentially unchanged from 5.6% in 2013 and 5.7% in 2011 and 2012. In 2010, food banks fed approximately 12% of US households, and in 2013 the Feeding America network of food banks served 14% of the US population.

However, these and other food bank-use-based numbers do not indicate the overall level of food insecurity in a community. It is estimated that only one in four people who are food insecure use a food bank, that is, the majority of food insecure households are not currently using food banks. While Food Bank Canada’s Hunger Count Document is a useful tool for beginning to understand the level of food insecurity, the statistics understandably do not include those people turned away, unwilling or unable to visit, or those using equivalent services that are not affiliated with Food Banks Canada. In short, the number of people served by food banks is not a sensitive measure of food needs in a community. This contradicts a commonly held idea that food banks are able to address short-term and acute food insecurity needs comprehensively.

1.2. Perspectives on Food Banks
As food banks work to serve more and more people and with estimates showing an increase in food insecurity that will continue to put pressure on food banks, many observers, including food banks, have questioned not necessarily the need for emergency food services (especially
considering the stagnation of median earnings in Canada from 1980-2005\(^2\), but how food banks can become a part of reducing temporary and chronic food insecurity/increase community food security. Largely, food banks are managing a significant aspect of community health through end-of-the pipe approaches that have not historically worked to address more systemic causes of poverty and food insecurity. Though food banks were never originally intended or designed to manage chronic food insecurity on a long-term basis, with an emerging spirit of collaboration, understanding, justice, and empathy, food banks can realign their significant assets to contribute to long-term goals and food systems change.

Other observers have questioned the role food banks even more deeply, suggesting that food banks perpetuate an unhealthy and unjust system and filling an essential service gap that should be a government responsibility and, therefore, food banks should not exist. To a certain extent this perspective has led to tensions among community food security stakeholders characterized by a lack of respect, dialogue, or willingness to collaborate on solutions.

However, this dynamic has begun to soften, new dialogues have sparked, and there is a groundswell within the food bank community in shifting their role from solely emergency food services to one that supports collaborative long-term solutions for community food security and social justice. This trend also includes the emergence of social justice movements that roundly include food access as a lens to socio-economic issues. Similar to other innovation curves, there are a few leaders who are out in front and have been working on organizational shifts for decades. Others are newly seeing the benefits of change and others yet are still in the early stages of understanding where they are at and where they want to go. Not all food banking organizations see the value of making the shift to a community food security model, defined on the next page.

This report intentionally adopts a broad and inclusive definition of social innovation as any food bank activity that addresses the root causes of food insecurity and takes meaningful steps towards systems change. We believe this approach will further galvanize a large number of food banks (and their supporters) in shifting to a community food security model. Further, as food banks and their partners put impact evaluation frameworks in place, the social innovations that are being implemented may be further assessed and learned from.

1.3. **The Knowledge Gap: Report Objectives**

Applying social innovation to the charitable food sector is an emerging field, largely borrowed from the business community. While there are some excellent reports and articles on the topic of change in food banks including Building the Bridge: Linking Food Banking and Community Food Security (2005)\(^2\), Finding Food: Community Food Procurement in the City of Toronto (2013)\(^2\), Cooking Up Community: Nutrition Education in Emergency Food Programs (2013)\(^2\), and A Survey of Food Bank Operations in Five Canadian Cities (2014)\(^2\), there is no known scan of social innovation of Canadian and US food banks that consolidates information from the literature as well as one-on-one interviews with front-line leaders of social change in food banks. This research is the first step in filling this knowledge gap.
Research Question
In order to better understand its own role as part of this shifting landscape, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society commissioned this research to answer the research question:

*What are food banks in Canada and the United States doing to foster socially innovative practices to make the shift towards community food security?*

This research report attempts to answer this question by drawing from current literature as well as interviews with 19 food bank leaders. Section 2 provides an overview of the research methods, Section 3 presents a framework for investigation, Section 4 presents the key findings, and Section 5 draws out patterns of innovation and outlines conclusions and recommendations for further work.

This report has been written from the perspective of the research team as to be able to include the work of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank in the report findings. Although the GVFB has convened this research and contributed to this report, they are also a social innovator and participant in the research. All efforts have been made to treat GVFB activities equally (i.e. as to not over or under represent their work).

This information is intended for any person or organization who is interested in how food banks are realigning their assets and shifting their practices and policies to achieve community food security. This includes but is not limited to food banks and food bank associations, charitable food organizations, food security organizations (staff, members, volunteers, agencies, and donors), health service providers, Ministries of Health, Regional Health Authorities, and Universities.

Research Objectives
This research has three key objectives:

1. Establish an understanding of the continuum of social innovation and best practices within food banks in Canada as well as identify key reference points in the United States.

2. Produce and disseminate a clear and concise summary of the research findings to project participants, food bank associations, and community health partners.

3. To contribute to the community of learning within food banks by engaging discussion around strategies and learnings for challenging the status quo in the emergency food system.

1.4. Terminology
As social innovation in food banks is an emergent practice, language is beginning to evolve to better describe and reflect complexity and changing perspectives. Being reflective about language and consciously changing and adapting language, appreciating the significance of how
language affects behaviour and culture change, may be considered an innovation in-and-of itself.

Key terminology is offered here to create clarity in interpreting the literature and interview findings. These terms are intended as working definitions, recognizing the emergent nature of social innovation in food banks.

Food Bank Member
Historically and currently, some Food Banks use the term “client” or “recipient” to denote people who use food banks. This language is predicated upon a more transactional model of food banks. In the shift to a more relational model, this term is increasingly being questioned. Based on how the Greater Vancouver Food Bank has begun to change its model and language, this report uses the term food bank member to refer to a person who is directly accessing the food bank to receive a food hamper, a prepared meal, and/or to participate in a food bank convened program.

Social Justice
While social justice can be used and invoked in numerous ways, we use a definition of social justice that recognizes “society is stratified in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality and ability, among others.”

These divisions sustain unequal access to resources along group lines that can occur at the micro (individual) and macro (structural) level, and (have) result(ed) in historical and ongoing trauma. The practice of social justice, therefore, encompasses the work of thinking critically about our own positions within these groups, and acting from that awareness in ways to challenge or equalize these unequal power relations. Addressing these inequities is done in service of allowing individuals a full range of participation in their community, with dignity and without oppression.

Food security provides an important lens for understanding and making change towards creating more socially just communities.

Community food security
Community food security is a relatively new term used in this research to indicate the ultimate outcome of social innovation in the charitable food sector. Community food security is:

\[ A \text{ situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximize community self-reliance and social justice.}\]

This term assumes that the interconnected systems and organizations that impact human, ecological, and economic health are aligned to generate long lasting and sustainable solutions. Individual or household food security looks more closely at the health of the individual on a nutritional and food access basis, aiming to move people vertically from low to high food security. While household food security is a widely understood and used term, this research
hypothesizes that social innovation in the charitable food sector happens at the community level, radiating out horizontally. Community food security may be further understood as:

A relatively new concept that captures emerging ideas about the central place of food in communities. At times it refers to the measure of food access and availability at the community level, and at other times to a goal or framework for place-based food systems. It builds upon the more commonly understood concept of food security, which refers to food access and availability at an individual or household level (in health and social policy, for instance) and at a national or global level (e.g., in international development and aid work). Community food security involves social, economic, and institutional factors, and their interrelationships within a community that impact availability and access to resources to produce food locally. It takes into account environmental sustainability and social fairness, through measures of the availability and affordability of food in that community relative to the financial resources available to purchase or produce it.31

Food security

The most widely accepted definition of food security comes from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations:

Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.32

This definition was adopted by Canada at the World Food Summit in Rome 1996.

Chronic food insecurity

Chronic food insecurity is a term that acknowledges the entrenched nature of food insecurity for many Canadians and describes a state where people are not able to meet the basic needs for themselves and their families on a long-term basis. Chronic food insecurity is:

The long-term or persistent inability for people to meet their minimum food requirements over a sustained period of time. Chronic food insecurity is the result of extended periods of poverty, lack of assets and inadequate access to productive or financial resources.33
2. Research Methods & Phases

2.1. Research Methods
The research team used secondary data collection in the form of a review of current literature and online resources on social innovation in food banks. Approximately 60 sources including journal articles, reports, and websites were reviewed and highlights from this research have been integrated into the findings section of this report.

The team also used primary data collection in the form of one-on-one interviews with charitable food organizations in Canada and the US. Organizations that were known to be actively undertaking and promoting socially innovative changes were targeted for the research. After contacting 50 potential interview participants, the team successfully held 19 forty-five minute interviews with 18 organizations. Recognition of these organizations is provided in the Acknowledgements section at the beginning of this report. Materials used in these interviews including the invitation to participate letter and interview questions are provided in Appendices 6.1 and 6.2.

2.2. Research Phases
This environmental scan was conducted over the course of five months and consists of three major phases. Recommendations for next steps and project phases are included in Section 6.
3. Defining Social Innovation in Food Banks

In order to effectively approach the research, a working definition for social innovation in food banks has been developed. Working initially from the literature and then testing the definition with 18 major food banks, this research provides the first working definition of social innovation in the charitable food sector. This section describes social innovation broadly, defines what social innovation means in the context of food banks, and presents the 13 dimensions of social innovation in charitable food organizations.

3.1. A Broad Definition of Social Innovation

A general definition of social innovation is provided here to establish a starting point for how to view social innovation in the charitable food sector. According to the Centre for Social Innovation, social innovation is defined as:

The creation, development, adoption, and integration of new concepts and practices that put people and the planet first. Social Innovations resolve existing social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges. Some social innovations are systems-changing – they permanently alter the perceptions, behaviours, and structures that previously gave rise to these challenges... Social innovations come from individuals, groups or organizations, and can take place in the for-profit, non-profit and public sectors. Increasingly, they are happening in the spaces between these three sectors as perspectives collide to spark new ways of thinking.34

3.2. Food Bank Definition of Social Innovation

Fundamentally, this research defines social innovation as the re-strategizing of the food bank model for increased impact and efficiency towards community food security. Drawing from the broad definition of social innovation, a working definition for social innovation in food banks is:

- The re-strategizing of the food bank model for increased impact and efficiency towards community food security;
- The re-thinking of existing models to try to increase the spread of benefits from the process to encompass environmental, social, and economic sustainability and justice;
- Addressing root, or systemic, causes of hunger and food illiteracy;
- Sometimes a small part of a larger “non-innovative” system;
- Often incremental; and,
- May involve the adaptation of old ideas to new contexts as well as new ideas.
3.3. **Dimensions of Social Innovation in Food Banks**

Based on the literature and information from food banks, there are thirteen core functional areas, or dimensions, of charitable food organizations. Social innovation may occur in one or many of these areas and can occur at different scales. In this way, it is possible to include the many activities that food banks are undertaking that have not historically been recognized as social innovation. This research theorizes that any organization that is attempting to shift from short-term charitable food based solutions to long-term community food security based practices to any extent is involved in social innovation. In this way and in the context of the charitable food sector, there can be degrees of social innovation within each dimension. These dimensions are described in Figure 2 and Table 1 below. At this early phase of research, we currently lack the level of impact assessment and detailed information about programs to assess the degree to which practices are socially innovative. Therefore, the research findings presented in these thirteen core areas describe the breadth of activities, perspectives, challenges, and responses food banks are undergoing.

![Dimensions of Social Innovation in Food Banks](image)

*Figure 2: Dimensions of Social Innovation*
### Table 1: Social Innovation Examples in Food Banks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Bank Area</th>
<th>Examples of Social Innovation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>The development of strategic plans containing new visions, missions, values, philosophies, goals, and objectives that support community food security and social justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Distribution to Members &amp; Partner Agencies</td>
<td>Creating a more dignified and welcoming process for members, increasing the nutrition of food being distributed/chosen, reducing food access barriers (hours of operation, information required).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection &amp; Metrics</td>
<td>Establishing workable data collection systems to measure impact of programs and overall operations and conducting additional research to identify programming gaps and potential overlaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance Strategies</td>
<td>Updating bylaws to reflect the legal structure required to take on a range of strategies to increase community food security, increasing board member diversity and community voice at the board level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Increasing staff and volunteer engagement, support, and retention; celebrating volunteers/staff through team member of the month announcements; and, providing volunteer/staff learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>Maintaining existing and forging new partnerships to share knowledge, measure impact, raise funds, and launch campaigns, among others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>Education and capacity building; meal preparation, nutritional programming, and gardening programming; and, incorporating case management approaches to programming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Donor, Education &amp; Engagement</td>
<td>Undertaking public engagement efforts to de-stigmatize food bank use and raise donor awareness, creating tools, resources, and policies that focus on improving the quality of food donated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Undertaking public policy work focused on increasing community food security including pushing for federal and provincial anti-poverty legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development &amp; Finance</td>
<td>Using fundraising mechanisms and financing approaches to increase community food security including innovative campaigns and mutually beneficial business partnerships with farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Purchasing</td>
<td>Developing local food procurement relationships and increasing the nutrition of food purchased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Recovery &amp; Waste Management</td>
<td>Recovering food from healthy sources, establishing processing and storage capacity for unloved produce, increasing awareness with upstream donors around what food is acceptable, and reducing the costs of managing inedible products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Using traditional and social media outlets to engage internal and external stakeholders in galvanizing support and building momentum for socially innovative activities, projects, and policies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Key Findings

Key findings from the interviews with 19 food bank leaders are summarized here by key dimension of social innovation. Food banks interviewed ranged in size from organizations serving 15,000 individuals to over 1.5 million people annually. The annual poundage of food reported as being distributed annually ranged from around 25,000 lbs to over 8 million lbs per year. All food banks interviewed emphasized the need for innovation and change in the charitable food sector. This was also identified in the literature.35,36,37

Generally, we found that food banks are engaged in a wide range of activities in shifting to a Community food security model. Provincial/state level and national level food bank organizations have traditionally been less actively engaged in making this shift than individual food banks. However, the majority of food banks interviewed acknowledge the critical role that these umbrella organizations play and can play moving forward.38

Research findings from each dimension of social innovation in food banks are summarized below. Findings include highlights from the socially innovative approaches and strategies that food banks are developing in shifting to a Community food security model.

4.1. Strategic Planning

A fundamental starting point for innovation and change is the development of strategic plans that reflect the Community food security model of food banking. These 3-5 year plans often contain new visions, missions, values, philosophies, goals and objectives, activities, and evaluation metrics to guide the organizations activities and priorities. Of note, many of the organizations we spoke with have fresh plans or are on the brink of launching new strategic plans in the next 12-18 months.

In the transition to a different food bank model, food bank leadership is often keenly aware of avoiding the problem(s) of ‘mission drift’. Changing visions and missions from a focus on hunger to one of CFS can create concern about confusing or alienating donors and partners, as well as amongst food bank members that emergency food may not be available. Collecting the right data on which to base a strategic plan can also be challenging. Despite these issues, food banks interviewed agreed that an organizational vision and mission that aligns with CFS is a foundational aspect of shifting their respective organizations and meaningfully supports their work towards innovation and change. Food banks are using their strategic plans to evaluate progress towards goals and view them as a living document that helps guide staff in conversations around reaching targets.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in strategic planning practices include:

• **Engaging internal and external stakeholders.** Engaging staff and members in the process of developing a strategic plan so they feel ownership and understand it more
deeply, was noted as a key success factor for food banks. With big changes staff can feel left behind. Regular communication (e.g. weekly, bi-monthly, quarterly updates) with staff about steps being taken to implement plans and creating a forum for discussing the challenges and successes they are experiencing helps to bring all team members along with the process. Engaging new voices and those that have been historically underrepresented (e.g. food bank members, staff, and volunteers) is also emerging as part of how food banks are approaching programs and operations. Communicating new strategic plans with external stakeholders (e.g. donors, the public, partners, and members) was also identified as key.

- **Inventorying and leveraging assets.** Focus strategic plans based on the assets that the organization already has (e.g. relationships, fleets, facilities, skills, and knowledge).

- **Focusing strategic planning and organizational work around systems thinking.** Systems thinking considers what common ground is held between food banks and the many other agencies and organizations concerned with community health. Systems thinking can also be applied internally, or to consider the whole food bank as an organism with interconnected parts. Both of these approaches provide an important anchor for shift planning and change management.

- **Developing tangible, high-impact goals to help focus shift activities.** For example, many food banks initially target increasing the nutritional quality of food being distributed as part of their shift. This can involve updating warehouse systems, developing nutritional food categories and criteria, and food donor education, among others. The Central New York Food Bank used their strategic plan to set goals for acquiring 85% of product in the warehouse being nutritionally sound with 15% being snacks.

- **Bringing in outside expertise.** Many food banks interviewed hired consultants to help them develop their strategic plans and spoke highly of the experience.

- **Taking the time needed.** Strategic planning can take a long time, and bringing many voices to the table can be difficult. Food banks seem to be addressing this by acknowledging the time it takes to create a strategic plan, being realistic about the time it will take to achieve it, and accepting that it may be a bumpy road but it will be worth it. Practical measures, such as allocating staff time to support implementation of strategic plans, helps to maintain momentum behind change.

Leadership is looking to 10 years out or more and acknowledgment that we alone can't address the 2nd half of our mission to end hunger because we're dealing with broader issues. Shift has to be done through partnership and requires strong change management.
4.2. Food Distribution to Members & Partner Agencies

Warehousing and distributing food is one of the central functions of food banks. This can occur at many scales and often involves partner agencies that then distribute to members. This dimension of social innovation is often better developed than the others as it is part of the core work of a food bank. As such, food banks often target nutritional quality as a starting point for community food security. While increasing the quality of food can be social innovation (i.e., in the form of purchasing contracts with local farms), the stand-alone practice is not necessarily new or innovative. Some food banks have long pursued increasing food quality as an objective, while others are only recently beginning to shift quality.

The need for innovation in distribution is well documented in the literature. Key challenges that food banks commonly face include: staffing, location, and infrastructure barriers to creating relaxed, inviting and dignified spaces; food distributed by food banks regularly not meeting nutritional guidelines (which is especially challenging for members with diet related chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease); a lack of available food for distribution that can result in food banks increasing eligibility criteria and minimizing opening hours; lack of physical access to food banks can be a barrier for some members; and, food bank hours not always resulting in easy access for members. Many food banks interviewed also stressed the importance of reliable and consistent service to members and partner agencies.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in food distribution practices include:

- **Establishing nutrition guidelines.** Nutrition guidelines are being developed by many of the food banks interviewed. These guidelines provide a tool for purchasing but also for communicating to agency partners and food donors. This proactive approach often involves community nutritionists and dieticians to assess current foods and establish categories of food that the food bank will receive and distribute. The Greater Vancouver Food Bank is aligning their nutrition guidelines with provincial healthy eating frameworks. The Food Bank of Central New York was the first organization to ban soft drink donations. They set targets of 85% of the warehouse should be nutritionally sound food with 15% being for treats and snacks.

- **Normalizing healthy and fresh food access.** Oregon Food Bank’s Harvest Share program distributes free produce to people in a farmer’s market at 22 sites in Portland with food donated from wholesalers, farmers and distributors. Newsletters in four languages with recipes and resources to help people cook and prepare the fresh produce are handed out by volunteers to Harvest Share participants. It has been a particularly useful strategy for providing a predictable monthly source of food for immigrants, refugees, seniors, and people with limited mobility. Some food banks have a hard time encouraging
members to choose more nutritious options. Feeding America is undertaking a pilot project to examine the behavioural economics side of increasing healthy and fresh food distribution from food banks to better understand how to increase the chances of people choosing the healthier pantry items, in part through the adjustment of the physical design of pantries. Many food bank organizations also noted that while getting food to people is the first step, supporting them in accessing the facilities, gaining skills, or other needs to prepare the food is what is needed.

- **Working with partner agencies for distribution.** Many large food banks provide emergency food directly as well as by distributing to partner agencies who then distribute food or use donated food in meal programs. The relationship between central food banks and their partner agencies is central to changing what foods are distributed and how. Through creating a standing list of items that agencies can order from, some food banks are changing how these ordering systems and relationships work to be more predictable and efficient. For example, the Ottawa Food Bank guarantees the availability of 13 items that helps to project purchasing needs and increases predictability from the agency side.

- **Sharing information to members about food skills and types of foods provided.** All food banks interviewed spoke about the importance of enabling food choice and food skills to make use of fresh and healthy food options available through distribution. Food banks are combining food distribution with food skills such as recipe cards, food demos and tastings, labelling repackaged food with specific ingredients (e.g. labelling items as lima beans instead of just beans), and providing nutritional information on packaging, to enable people to prepare and eat foods being given out. The Daily Bread provides members with information on what foods will be available to help members’ meal plan through their Creating Health initiative in partnership with Toronto Public Health.

- **Maintaining or creating low barrier intake systems.** Many food banks do not request a means test and require minimal member information for intake to create a more welcoming and dignified first experience at the food bank. Often food banks will inquire for more detailed member information if the person comes back for a 2nd time because the first visit can be overwhelming for members. The Daily Bread asks for less information than they used to, for instance, not requiring income information any longer, and provides an optional intake information process. Generally, food banks interviewed were not concerned about low barrier intake systems contributing to abuse of emergency food services. Rather, food banks are creating new ways to collect information from members in a dignified way that supports data collection and measurement (e.g. private appointments and meeting rooms).

- **Adjusting hours and days of distribution to better meet community needs.** Food banks are working to adjust hours of operation to best suit needs and increase efficiencies of warehouse and transportation operations. For example, shifting from
weekly to bi-weekly or monthly distribution to agency partners has been undertaken or considered by many food banks.

- **Supporting partner agency capacity building.** To ensure members are served well and provided a dignified experience some organizations have partner agency guidelines. These may include guidelines around having a suitable space, excluding faith-based requirements from food access, use of donated resources, and respectful treatment of members and volunteers, etc. When partner agencies are non-compliant, their access to food bank resources can be revoked. Establishing criteria for partner agencies can be intimidating. To explain the importance of this sometimes uncomfortable the task, the Ottawa Food Bank envisions the food that they are distributing to partner agencies as cash, giving the example that a funder would not distribute $100,000 of cash without some type of accountability. Food banks noted that they are more engaged with their agency partners and make more site visits.

- **Accessing non-traditional distribution points.** This begins with identifying where the people in need are and what types of foods would be beneficial to distribute from that location. Feeding America sees innovation in this area as increasing food distribution at hospitals, clinics, schools, and colleges, by essentially, meeting people where they are and identifying what their needs are. The Greener Village Community Food Centre Mobile Truck Program, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Curbside Fresh program, and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank Green Grocer mobile truck program all explore new ways of food distribution that rely on partners for space, promotion, and some programming.

- **Looking for operational efficiencies.** Many food banks rely heavily on their trucking fleet and transportation operations to deliver food to partner agencies and pick up food efficiently. The Ottawa Food Bank has partnered with an engineering firm to assess their distribution operations in order to increase efficiencies. The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank is rolling out a new pre-ordering model called "advanced choice" that distributes food to pantries in similar locations on the same days based on pre-ordering preferences. This has increased efficiencies on both ends, allowing the food bank to reach new organizations.

- **Optimizing food choice.** For example, provide food in a grocery store style format that enables members to pick-out their own orders. The Nelson Food Cupboard is set up like a grocery store with different food available daily with a mix of 5 or more fresh produce items, in addition to protein sources like beans, salmon, eggs and tofu, and dry goods like oatmeal, rice, and pasta. Occasionally they also have a shelf of convenience foods like instant rice side dishes, crackers, and condiments. There are also foods for people with dietary restrictions. Other food banks are trying to get away from pre-packaged hampers but are experiencing challenges with food availability and shifting operations to accommodate a food market environment.
4.3. Data Collection & Metrics

All food banks interviewed touched upon the importance of data and success metrics and the need for innovation in evaluation and metrics to identify and understand which programs, policies and practices are improving member outcomes and why they are working (or not working). Collecting data to support advocacy around shifting away from traditional charitable food models in order to address root causes of food insecurity is key: "actions to expand food bank activity need to be accompanied by measures to evaluate the impact of these programs on the problems of food insecurity that they are intended to address."46

Data collection and evaluating community impact is a new area for food banks, among others, in the public and non-profit sectors. While the importance of data collection and measuring impact on the community was clearly recognized, it was also noted that food banks need to build capacity to conduct good data collection and analysis. With some food banks lacking even basic member tracking systems, data collection needs takes many forms. Food banks noted the difficulty in deciding what metrics to use to evaluate progress towards goals -- this lack of knowledge and skill set was often cited as roadblocks for addressing food insecurity. Food banks also noted that as a non-traditional part of food banking, data collection can be time consuming and costly. Given that measuring quality of life and increase in community food security is complex and involves many factors, some food banks have partnered with other institutions to help conduct this research.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in data collection practices include:

- **Aligning metrics with vision, mission, goals and values.** Questioning and reestablishing metrics that are aligned with community food security impacts (e.g. quality over quantity). For example, some food banks are beginning to track food by dollars not pounds as a proxy for addressing varying qualities of food (i.e. low quality = low cost).

- **Sharing information helps.** Piggy backing on existing projects or using existing tracking methods is of great interest to food banks and one reason they are so excited for this report, they want to know what others are doing so they can try to make it work for them. For example, in 2016, Feeding America received a 1.9 million dollar in-kind gift from the Tableau Foundation that will set up and provide software for creating a platform for tracking information to ultimately help manage operations within the organization. Feeding America has used this system in the past for establishing a Performance Benchmarking Dashboard that helped food banks to identify and connect with other food banks in the networks that are excelling on certain key performance indicators.
• **Leveraging outside skills and expertise:** Food banks described themselves as ‘magnets for research’ and university researchers are increasingly attracted to working with community organizations to conduct research. The Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona has effectively established research partnerships that help them get to know their members better and what the successful interventions are that matter to the community. Food banks have also established new partnerships with businesses to provide a wide-range of in-kind support including various types of data collection and analysis. In 2015 the Edmonton Food Bank partnered with Deloitte on *Beyond Food Client Survey 2015*. One key finding was that 42% of food bank members surveyed attended university, college, or trades school, debunking a common myth that food bank members are people with little education. One risk with private partnerships is potential strings attached to the work. Some food banks have established policies for corporate engagement. The Ottawa Food Bank has partnered with two different organizations to collect data. Stantec Consulting was contracted to identify what technology solutions they could use to increase their trucking fleet’s efficiencies to reduce transportation costs that would work within their current infrastructure. The Ottawa Food Bank also worked with an organization called Data for Good, a group of self-proclaimed data geeks made up of people who typically work in high-tech data industries. Data for Good has chapters across North America who gather raw data and hold data-a-thons on the weekends where they crunch data, analyze it, and come back with a report. In Ottawa’s case, they analyzed their food distribution.

• **Embedding data collection and evaluation into the mission.** Daily Bread included data collection as part of their strategic plan. They have found this supports long-term data collection efforts through dedicated staff and funding streams and has helped them build credibility as a research institution, which attracts further partnerships.

• **Experimenting with new tools for evaluation:** The Oregon Food Bank is using ripple effect mapping an engagement and assessment tool that visually maps out the impacts generated by changes produced by a complex program or collaboration. Ripple mapping draws from multiple sources of information to generate new thinking or create clarity in complex environments. The Oregon Food Bank is using this tool to assess the success of their FEAST (Food, Education, Agriculture Solutions Together) program. The Ottawa Food Bank, among others including Feed Nova Scotia, have also recently implemented the Link2Feed system that is a client intake and case management tool. Link2Feed is intended to protect member privacy and reduce administrative time spent on reporting.
4.4. Governance Strategies

Governance systems in Food Banks are also beginning to shift and change to adapt to a community food security and social justice model of food banking. Most food banks are registered charities and as such have a Board of Directors that governs the organization. There are also other levels of decision-making and governance, such as at the program and service delivery level, which are also restructuring to meet new goals. New voices are being invited into the decision-making bodies and food banks are finding new, creative ways to engage the Board of Directors in the shift. Governance was emphasized as a foundational dimension of organizational change, although not without its unique challenges.

Many food banks interviewed were sensitive to concerns of including more voices in the decision-making. The perception that including member voices in governance creates a conflict of interest is a barrier for organizational change. The Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona’s perspective is that members are at no greater risk of having a conflict of interest than a board member who, for example, comes from the food industry. Engaging the board in the shift at an early stage was a lesson learned by some food banks. This can help to create more buy-in and support as the organization develops.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation governance systems and practices include: diversifying

- **Improving institutional knowledge systems.** Strong governance relies on sound institutional knowledge management. Food banks noted the importance of governance practices focused on improving institutional knowledge to create resiliency if and when staff and board members transition out of the organization. The Kamloops Food Bank revised the board roles, responsibilities, bylaws, and staff job descriptions, creating an organizational manual that is a replicable model for other food banks. They are willing to share this upon request. The Food Bank of Central New York brought in a consultant to identify opportunities for growth that resulted in clear guidelines and expectations for the role of the board. As part of this study, a board needs assessment was conducted to strengthen diversity of knowledge on the board and make sure gaps are filled. With this information in hand, the organization is creating lasting documentation that builds institutional knowledge.

- **Engaging new voices.** Food banks noted that there are many ways to provide new perspectives in the decision-making process of an organization from formal appointments to the board of directors and forming advisory/governance committees to engaging staff volunteer and member voices in evaluating programs. Forming committees was raised as a way to glean expertise and as a strategy for board succession planning as new board members are groomed and selected from committees. Committees can include perspectives from a wide range of backgrounds.
from experts and professionals to people with lived-experience of the food bank system. Vision, mission, and goal statements were also discussed as a supportive driver for food banks working towards increasing a diversity of voices in their governance structures.

- **Broadening board representation and expertise.** Some food banks are working towards having their partner agencies, which they distribute food to, have a voice within the governance structure. Others are establishing board recruitment committees that seek out candidates based on the expertise needs of the organization. Some food banks find term limits helpful, although some do not have a large enough volunteer base for this.

4.5. Human Resources

Human resources are increasingly being recognized for their role in professionalizing the food bank workplace. Historically food banks have run on 100% volunteer time. Today, even the largest metropolitan food banks depend on volunteers who often make up 50% or more of all time in food banks. In this context, HR systems can provide important capacity for organizational change, particularly for larger food banks with staff teams of 40-60 plus people. Smaller food banks are often better able to manage without formal HR systems, although they recognized in interviews the value of increasing administrative efficiencies.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in human resource systems and practices include:

- **Setting-up structured systems.** Food banks are finding innovative ways to build HR capacity where previously there was little available. The Nelson Food Cupboard and Daily Bread are hiring/allocating staff time to volunteer management, training, recognition, as well as setting up HR systems. The Daily Bread Food Bank and the Ottawa Food Bank hired an HR director who has helped in providing a template for staff reviews and evaluations, among other things. Food banks are beginning to message to donors that new skill sets and salary standards are needed to operate food banks. There is growing acceptance that overhead costs, such as HR director salaries and communications, are essential parts of having positive and lasting community impact, especially during a time of transition.

- **Valuing staff and volunteers and providing meaningful experiences.** Many food bank organizations have had long-term volunteers and staff including people with up to 30 years of service. While showing appreciation and recognition of people’s contributions to the organization is a long-standing practice for many organizations, food banks are increasingly engaging staff and volunteers in the on-the-ground activities for systems change. Managing organizational development and change with such a diverse staff and volunteer base can be challenging although many food banks emphasized how critical the act of engaging volunteers and staff during transition is for success. One approach to engaging staff is through appreciation:
regularly celebrating and recognizing accomplishments. Events such as monthly lunch and learns, volunteer of the year awards, staff retreats, annual merriment events, and celebration of birthdays and work anniversaries, all help to show appreciation as well as team build. While recognizing staff and volunteers is not necessarily new or innovative as a stand-alone practice, integrating these events with keeping the team up-to-date on progress and priorities, providing learning environments, and creating opportunities for team feedback, helps to support many change goals.

• **Aligning HR policies with the direction and priorities of the organization.** Some food banks noted the importance of internalizing the vision, mission, goals and values of the organization into human resource and operating systems. For example, establishing standards for fair wages, staff treatment, and staff diversity are examples of how some food banks are aligning internal practices with new directions and priorities around social justice. Other food banks have gone further, significantly raising wages, establishing benefits for employees and creating systems for hiring, firing, and personnel/contractor management. Ottawa Food Bank discussed the importance of their mission, vision and values being brought to life in their Human Resource practices. They included HR in their strategic plan and as a result adjusted wages to be more competitive and established an HR director.

• **Increasing organizational diversity.** The Oregon Food Bank underwent a significant organizational restructuring that included the creation of the position Director of Culture and Equity. The Director is developing the food bank’s racial equity initiatives in hiring and interviewing processes, engaging staff in sensitivity training, and strengthening cultural engagement capacity. This move has already generated results with increased cultural diversity of staff members, programming shifts, more translation, and more interpreters in day-to-day operations. The STOP began an internal process three years ago around anti-oppression and anti-racism. Having more cultural competency in the work and collaboration with aboriginal people and other partners is essential for the STOP; they see this aspect of HR education as a key part of their commitment to the community and their partners.

• **Establishing organizational reviews and staff surveys.** The Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona has begun a 360-review process, providing all levels of staff with feedback from multiple sources including peers, members, and community leaders. The Daily Bread Food Bank and Food Bank of Central New York conduct staff surveys to determine how staff experiences the organization and what makes them want to come to work. Second Harvest conducts staff evaluations three times annually. Food banks report that organizational and staff reviews are important for making course corrections or identifying areas that need more support.

• **Building teams and creating culture.** Creating a culture and common cause within the food bank workplace can be challenging, but was discussed as a key focus in how staff
and volunteers are engaged with the organization. Overall, the trend is to build team strength over time by creating and filling new positions and engaging staff in visioning and goal setting through regular discussions and communications about progress towards goals. As food banks professionalize, more staff with experience in specific areas such as nutrition join the team, bringing with them new perspectives. Drawing on team strengths and assets is another way of building a common culture; as noted by the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, “staff and volunteers are experts in their own field of work.” Every month the GVFB convenes a staff lunch and learn, known as a ‘SoapBox’. Here, important announcements are made, progress updates are provided, and a learning/engagement opportunity is created through guest speakers or food skill workshops and then the entire team has lunch together.

• **Increasing transparency and trust**: Transparency was raised as an essential way to build trust with staff. Enabling staff to review progress reports or board minutes, for example, can help to create a culture where people feel like they are in the loop, creating more ownership.
4.6. **Partnerships**

All food banks interviewed emphasized the importance of partnerships to social innovation in improving individual and community food security. Partnerships with government, other social service providers, and the private sector are often formed to provide food banks with the capacity to innovate in the different focus areas (e.g. funding partners, knowledge sharing networks, fresh food purchasing partners, and research partners).

It can be challenging for food banks to manage relationships with a broad range of funding or in-kind partners. Some food banks partner on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis while others establish partnership guidelines. Some food banks like Greener Village Community Food Centre use asset mapping to identify strategic partnership priorities. Some food banks noted challenges in targeting government partners that are experiencing their own barriers internally.

Historically, the mistrust and polarization between food banks and food security or social justice organizations limited collaboration. Now, as organizations look to partner to have greater collective impact, new bridges are being made between these two sides, new conversations are opening up, and the tension between food banking and broader food systems change is softening, and even blurring, as people identify common ground and realize the significant potential for powerful strategic alliances in social innovation and change.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in partnership practices include:

- **Growing partners in public health.** There is significant growth in partnerships and alignment between food banks and public health departments. Food banks are strategically positioned and can provide an important link to hard to reach and vulnerable communities. This can support government program implementation to increase health equity and support collective data collection/analysis. For example, in October 2015, the American Academy of Pediatrics released a policy statement, recommending that pediatricians screen all children for food insecurity. Diabetes screening, eye exams, and other health services are increasingly being offered at food bank locations.

- **Linking to other social service providers.** Food banks are partnering with community health service providers connecting food bank members with other services such as dental, legal, accounting, haircuts, and employment opportunities. By leveraging existing community assets and coordinating services across organizations, this is a practical way to help members better access a wide range of services.

- **Increasing cross-sectoral representation.** The representation of food bank and community food centre leaders in broader food security, food policy, or food systems organizations indicates that new alliances and partnerships are being forged at...
leadership levels. For example, the Executive Director of The STOP is chair of the Toronto Food Policy Council (an advisory council to the City of Toronto), and the Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank is chair of Food Secure Canada (a national food security organization). Even as little as five years ago, this was rare if not unheard of.

4.7. Programming & Member Engagement

Many food banks are developing a wide range of programs to address long-term solutions for community food security. These can range from food literacy and skill building classes and learning environments to piloting mobile fresh markets and new formats for distribution. Some organizations, like The STOP that began as a food bank but have been transitioning for the past 15-20 years, have been ahead of the curve on programing and they are now far removed from the traditional food bank model and no longer self-identifying as a food bank. An inventory of the innovative programs learned about through the interviews and literature review is provided in Appendix 6.5.

Greener Village Community Food Centre explains that when multiple programs are happening at the food bank and people are there for a range of reasons, it helps to create a welcoming space for everyone, including people accessing emergency food. By combining emergency food programs with other programs such as gardening workshops, barriers are broken down and entrenched ‘us’ and ‘them’ dynamics are blurred. In this and other ways, programming is often at the forefront of how social innovation is being pursued in food banks.

As in some of the other areas of social innovation finding resources and capacities to develop, implement, evaluate, and plan programs can be challenging and create a new burden in an already stretched environment. Another challenge can be coordinating programs across large provincial or state networks. Despite these challenges, many food banks are committed to maintaining existing services while also developing new program areas.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in programming practices include:

- **Creating empowering environments through programs.** Programming that provides opportunities for members to have a voice from activities, is an important strategy food banks are taking. Increasing the element of choice, and thereby, member agency, wherever possible, is critical to creating engaging spaces and a sense of ownership. The Greater Vancouver Food Bank is developing and piloting a market-style distribution system to support site connectivity at all levels. In this format, members have coffee, tea, and soup at communal eating tables before they enter a marketplace where they select their food order. There are other service providers hosted on-site to help link people to the resources they may need. Some food banks interviewed indicated they were actively learning about and adopting Asset Based Community Development approaches that fundamentally begin engagement based around what is there (assets), instead of a problem based model around what is lacking.
• **Linking programs to employment and economic development.** Multiple food banks acknowledged the need for innovation in programming around employment skills/opportunities and supporting food security through local economic development programs. Food Banks Canada also support re-skilling programs to help Canadians get the skills they need for gaining employment.53

• **Increasing food literacy and food skills for all.** Linked to the focus on increasing quality of food and nutrition, food banks are in various stages of developing and providing food skill courses and information. Examples of food skill courses may include how to preserve food, prepare healthy affordable meals, or read food labels among others. The potentially inherent assumption in food skills programs that members do not know how to cook was raised by some food banks as a concern. In many cases, people do need support with knowing how to prepare food. However in many other cases, they are expert cooks and can offer knowledge and skills to others. People can have well-developed skill sets in cooking and be experiencing other barriers to food security, such as access to cooking space or access to culturally appropriate foods. Food banks noted the importance of a sensitive approach to changes that are supported by appropriate information and tools.

• **Integrating community gardens.** Community garden spaces provide opportunities for multiple programs and are being used by food banks in providing food literacy, food production skills, farmer training programs, gathering and community spaces, and fresh produce for programs. The Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre provides self-directed learning tours and/or school group and corporate workshops in the community garden in addition to more targeted education. The garden offers a new way to deepen relationships with donors and volunteers and provides experiential opportunities for learning.
4.8. Community & Donor, Education & Engagement

Increasingly, food banks are working to bring members and the many stakeholder groups along in the shift to a community food security model. Especially during this time of transition, all food banks interviewed acknowledge the opportunity to pro-actively work with members, volunteers, staff, donors, partners, and the general public to share the new vision for addressing root causes of food insecurity. Food banks interviewed agreed that a key message to convey to donors, partners, and the general public is the importance and benefits of providing healthy nutritious food to members. Food banks accept however that you cannot please everybody and at some point you need to draw the line and focus on achieving your goals.

Food bank approaches and strategies for pushing a community food security model in community and donor education and engagement practices include:

• Providing tours and hosting events. Tours and volunteer events can be used to explain root causes of food insecurity, why ‘traditional’ food banking is not working, and how new strategies can support the reduction of need for emergency food services. Many food banks use tours and events as an opportunity to raise awareness around the shift to a food security model. Greener Village Community Food Centre had over 3,000 people tour their facility in 2015 in addition to an annual open house that draws over 1,000 people. Also in 2015, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank hosted its first ever donor appreciation event that provided interactive learning opportunities about GVFB programs. The Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre uses fundraising events as an opportunity to educate food donors on their work and on the larger issues in food security in the province. Creating these engagement opportunities begins to address resistance to change in the community or with donors.

• Exploring new (digital) fundraising tools. The Greater Vancouver Food Bank, the Regina Food Bank, and the New York City Food Bank have all launched virtual food drives that provide individuals or companies the opportunity to run food drives within their groups or organizations online. The items included in the virtual food drive are carefully selected to reflect increased standards in nutrition and health. Virtual food drives require an upfront investment with low to medium ongoing maintenance costs. The (growing) rate of return relative to capital and operating costs suggests virtual food drives are proving to be a highly effective fundraising tool.

• Developing upstream education for food donors. In working with in-kind food donations and recovered products, food quality can be an issue. Saying ‘no’ at the loading dock is a step in the right direction but does not address the causes of unusable food donations and it can be difficult to turn food away that is already at your doorstep. Signaling to food donors what the food bank is wanting and not wanting will help to eliminate unwanted food waste from coming into the food bank system. Educating and engaging donors about the need for healthy food and what that looks like is a key way to eliminate the donation of unwanted items.
4.9. **Advocacy**

Historically, food banks have not engaged in advocacy work, with few exceptions. With the shift in the food bank model, advocacy, especially in the anti-poverty realm, has been a new area of practice as food banks begin to identify and address the root causes of chronic food insecurity, such as poverty.

As registered charities, food banks are limited to a maximum of 10% of overall revenue allocation towards advocacy efforts, under Canadian tax law. Many food banks are in the very early stages of approaching advocacy work, where others have already had great successes. For example, the Saskatoon Food Bank was instrumental in strategically advocating for anti-poverty legislation in Saskatchewan. The Saskatoon Food Bank created strategic alliances, used effective communication material, focused on positive messaging, and created an opportunity for government to respond to a broadly supported policy initiative. By contrast, British Columbia is the only province in Canada without anti-poverty legislation.

A point of commonality between food security organizations and food bank advocacy is to see the right to food addressed in the Canadian Constitution and Charter of Rights. While Canada has ratified international agreements that indirectly or directly include the right to food, the constitution has not yet been updated to reflect these commitments. As explained by Tarasuk the “ad hoc, donor-driven system of food relief,” supplied by food banks is struggling to “compensate for the chronic household budget deficits arising from fundamentally inadequate income assistance programs.” Food Banks Canada annual report also points to Canadian social assistance rates being too low for people to access shelter and food. As food bank operations struggle to meet the chronic food insecurity needs of Canadians, they are also beginning to raise their voices together, and advocate for people and systems that will eliminate chronic food insecurity.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in advocacy practices include:

- **Identifying strategic areas of advocacy intervention.** Food banks are coalescing around advocating for affordable housing, livable wages, and increased social service support for the most in need. One strategy some food banks are taking is focusing advocacy work on increasing member voice and capacity to advocate around these issues. The Daily Bread Food Bank conducted a People’s Blue Print study where people on social assistance in Ontario were asked to review the system. This work supports the organizational advocacy work to change social services for the better.

- **Busting poverty myths.** There are many deeply held assumptions and beliefs about poverty. Providing information and perspectives that respectfully challenge these assumptions and offer more accurate information about poverty and food insecurity were noted as useful ways food banks can advocate through education. For example, in a study undertaken by the Edmonton
Food Bank by Deloitte, it was found that a large portion of food bank members had some form of post-secondary education. This challenges the commonly held notion that food bank members are uneducated.

- **Creating critical mass around key issues.** The Food Bank of Central New York observes that advocacy efforts need to reach a critical mass to move legislators. An example of how to do this comes Feeding America’s work to motivate and support food banks in their advocacy through their Policy Engagement Advocacy Committee (PEAC). This committee is an elected body of representatives from our network tasked with several key functions including: informing their advocacy work; developing their Capacity Advocacy Index, a self-assessment tool for measuring the impact of advocacy work done by food banks; providing advocacy grants; creating the advocacy hall of fame to encourage food banks to engage with advocacy; and partnering with Congressional Management Foundation to create a the Advocacy Academy leadership development program for food banks.

- **Getting political.** Food Secure Canada, although not a food bank, provides a good example of effective advocacy with the launch of the Eat Think Vote Campaign during the 2015 Federal election. During this campaign, community organizers created a photo opportunity for candidates by hosting community wide dinners, BBQs, and food events to encourage discussions around food security. Other food banks like Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge and the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona get involved at the municipal level with initiatives that are addressing the needs of their members and local food security, such as agriculture policy, changing land use codes, community gardens, public health concerns related to the production of urban agriculture, and distribution of urban agriculture products.

- **Including advocacy as a core value.** Having advocacy as a core value, even a special program area, of an organization supports staff in engaging in advocacy from the personal level to the community level. Many food banks interviewed discussed how including advocacy as a core value enabled them to find resources and allocate staff time towards advocacy activities. By having advocacy firmly rooted in core values food banks like Central New York have been able to dedicate staff and consultant time to advocacy efforts.
4.10. Development & Finance

Development and finance are connected to almost every dimension of food banking. Food banks continue to use traditional fundraising methods such as direct mail campaigns while also testing out new fundraising tools such as virtual food drives, as described in previous sections. In the context of social innovation in food banks, development departments become important links to a diverse funder and donor community through adopting a relational fundraising approach. In addition, new programs and resources to create new capacities often require new money. Development and finance departments are often responsible for growing revenue and budgeting for new programs that are being developed to help shift the organization.

Communicating the shift to a community food security model as a case for support is also key for development departments. Food banks are also beginning to create or expand funding partnerships with government. This is a significant shift from the past where the vast majority of food bank revenue came from non-government sources.

Finance departments are adapting to new ways of tracking revenue and expenses that better align with the vision, mission, goals, and values of the organization. For example, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, now includes donated food in its income statement. Previously, these donations were not accounted for in the budget and finances. Every pound of food donated is valued at $2.50, an estimate based on the average combined values of various food items. This has allowed the GVFB to show a more accurate depiction of the organizational finances. Food banks are also exploring non-traditional development and financing systems, such as social impact bonds, to help better serve the long-term goals of the organization.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in development and finance practices include:

- **Providing mini-grants for community partners.** The Food Bank of Central New York and the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona provide small grants and/or loans up to $10,000 to partner agencies for scaling-out impact on community food security. These funds have been used by partners to set up community gardens and small urban farms, for technical assistance, and purchasing equipment, among others. Food banks highlight that funders appreciate the collaborative collective impact model approach.

- **Exploring new ways to fundraise for operating expenses.** Some food banks reported moving away from a strictly donations based financial model. There is an emerging interest in grants and social enterprise programs or models for food banks. Advocates like Don Pallotta have made a compelling case for why funders and donors should fund operating expenses such as communications, marketing, and good salaries for good people, in order to have a greater positive impact in the community. The need for continued community education about the cost of running non-profits/charitable organizations and why fair pay and other operational costs are needed to increase positive impact was noted by several food banks.
• **Considering social impact financing.** Social impact financing, or bonds, provide organizations with funding for programs and initiatives that reduce public health costs. Given the direct connection between food banks and some of the most vulnerable populations, programs to increase health (e.g. diabetes prevention and management) can have a significant impact on reducing health care costs. This is a very new area of innovation in development and finance for food banks.

• **Promoting cash as king (or queen).** With dollars, food banks can often leverage their purchasing power. The Greater Vancouver calculates that for every dollar donated the organization is able to purchase three dollars of food through long-standing relationships with wholesalers, local suppliers, and producers. Increasing cash donations for food also allows food banks more control over what is being distributed and enables purchasing relationships with local farms and food producers. Unrestricted cash can also be applied to many of the areas identified throughout this report as needing new resources and capacities.

• **Growing a relational fundraising approach.** Many food banks have long standing relationships with individuals, businesses, churches, schools, and unions. Despite these relationships, the traditional food bank development model is more transactional: an exchange of cash for knowing you are helping hungry people. Social innovation in development is moving towards a more relational fundraising model, where the food bank develops a long-term relationship with a funder or donor based on common goals and values. Relational fundraising does require more time and resources in instigating and taking care of relationships, but also offers potentially long-term stability.

• **Professionalizing operations.** As part of how food banks are evolving generally, finance and development departments are becoming increasingly sophisticated in presenting a case for support and developing a relational model of fundraising. This process may require new professional skills to be taught or brought in order to secure and steward these relationships. Some food banks described this as behaving more like a business rather than a non-profit. Also, as funding becomes more fine-grained (i.e. designated funds being allocated across multiple program areas) the skills required to adjust how the organization tracks revenues and expenses enables effective reporting to funders when needed.

• **Considering coordinated fundraising opportunities.** For years, Food Gatherers competed with similar organizations for funding. Recently, they got together to create a coordinated funding model that focuses on six priority areas, including nutrition and food security. While the model is still being proved-out, food banks see coordinated fundraising as worth considering despite the fact they can be time consuming and lacking in overall management.
• **Owning assets.** Although not possible for all food banks, owning land and facilities is an important financial strategy. Some food banks are integrating into mixed-use development that include housing (e.g. Food Gatherers and Avalon Housing). Owning land also allows food banks greater flexibility for installing gardens or updating the building to reflect new needs (e.g. creating more cold storage). Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge owns their building allowing them to gain rental income from an unused portion of it and have the option of expansion if they require it.
4.11. **Food Purchasing**

As food banks trend towards distributing higher quality food, including fresh produce, food purchasing is playing a larger role in operations.

Three key challenges are raised by food banks with increasing the quality of food: 1) it is more expensive and difficult to purchase the quality food in the amounts required, 2) new infrastructure like cold storage and training on food handling are required, and 3) providing fresh food is only as effective as how well people appreciate and understand how to prepare fresh foods.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in food purchasing practices include:

- **Building relationships with local farmers and farm associations.** In 2015, the Ottawa Food Bank purchased fresh produce for the first time in their history. The Greater Vancouver Food Bank has established a purchasing relationship with BC Fresh, a provincial organization representing over 60 farms. The Food Bank of Central New York works with farms to glean crops in addition to purchasing. They try to keep purchasing as local as possible. Food Banks Canada has partnerships with the turkey and egg farmers and the Nelson Food Cupboard has business partnerships with their local farms. The Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona started a produce brokerage enterprise that helps local farmers grow their businesses and provides the food bank with fresh produce. In short, many food banks are creating new direct purchasing relationships with local producers to increase the quality of food being distributed.

- **Purchasing with partners.** The Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona is assessing the opportunity to jointly purchase with some of their larger agency partners and sister agencies. The goal is to increase fresh local food as well as increase efficiencies in managing purchasing relationships. Food hubs, places where food from local producers and processors is aggregated and available for retail and wholesale, is an aspirational idea for creating joint procurement opportunities. In Toronto, Food Reach, a not-for-profit food portal, helps to coordinate over $30 million in annual food procurement. Food banks have used local food buying clubs and other types of purchasing portals over the last 10 years to purchase foods as well as connect directly to producers. Increasing purchasing power could help food banks to achieve cost savings but may also limit their autonomy in choosing the types of foods they wish to purchase.

- **Growing food for programs.** The Saskatoon Food Bank produced 20,000 pounds of food for distribution and the Nelson Food Cupboard promotes the Grow a Row program and grows produce for sharing in its small urban farm. As noted in previous sections, these gardens can also have many educational programs in addition to production for distribution.
4.12. Food Recovery

Many food banks regularly recover non-retail quality, nutritious food from wholesale or retail locations, including farms, bakeries, restaurants, and grocery stores, among others. This practice can glean high quality food from businesses that would otherwise be wasted for distribution to members and agencies. Waste diversion efforts and policies can also lead to an influx of unwanted food items that, the disposal of which, can be costly for food banks. While a partial answer to hunger, for many food banks, food recovery continues to be a strong source of donated and inexpensive food that can be used in hunger reduction and food literacy programming.

Generally, food banks have different perspectives on what types of foods they accept. Many food banks turn nothing away and will accept everything, finding appropriate ways to manage the unwanted items. Others are saying ‘no’ at various stages of the donation process and in some cases abandoning long-term donation partnerships that do not meet basic quality criteria. Others still are taking a more proactive approach working to educate staff, food donors, and waste regulators about what food banks will and will not accept.

As mentioned in 4.2, many food banks are creating nutrition guidelines to manage food received and distributed. Additionally, food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in food recovery and waste management practices include:

• **Recovering food from farms and backyards.** The California Association of Food Banks Farm to Family program\(^62\) provides over 150 million pounds of fresh produce to food banks in California annually. To facilitate donations of fresh produce they passed a tax credit for California farmers to incentivize donations. In Nelson and Victoria fruit tree-gleaning programs provide these food banks and other service providers with free produce. Quebec\(^63\), Ontario\(^64\), and British Columbia\(^65\) now provide farm tax credits to help incentivize these donations.

• **Recovering food from retailers.** Although food recovered from retail stores is can be an effective way reduce short-term hunger and waste, there is largely a lack of understanding of what is an appropriate food donation to the food bank, and large quantities of unwanted items are common. Upstream education of food donors, discussed in previous sections, is a key strategy being used by food banks. Establishing food recovery programs requires vehicles and storage space. Several food banks noted the latent potential in food recovery and there is likely much larger amounts of high quality food that could be used in food bank distribution.

• **Saying ‘no’ through the donation process.** It is difficult for food banks to turn away unwanted food at the door, especially when it comes in large mixed pallets. Refusing a food donation over the phone and/or having clear nutritional policies/guidelines is much easier than saying no when items are being dropped off. It can also be difficult to refuse a donation that is being made by a large company that is also involved with funding other programs in the organization. Regular communication and awareness
raising with donors is a successful strategy for respectfully declining some donations while being clear on the items that are wanted.

- **Recovering protein**: The Interfaith Food Bank of Lethbridge piloted Project Protein after paying for a part time coordinator for a year, funded by a provincial community innovation grant, to help develop a model for a program that salvages protein from the livestock industry. The project was piloted with six nearby food banks based on the theory that if food banks had the money to process meat, product would be donated from the meat industry. The pilot "showed that if you tell the donor that they can give you an animal and they will get a tax deduction they will donate that animal. We distributed 35,000 pounds of ground beef and pork that we wouldn't have had and drastically grew our donor base. We were able to distribute $135,000 in charitable tax receipts. We feel we've shown success in the model." Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge has compiled the project information in a manner that is transferable to other food bank organizations and is willing to share this information with those interested.
4.13. Communications

*Ninety percent of social change is marketing.* This is an observation made on the success of anti-poverty legislation that was passed in Saskatchewan in part because of the communications, convening, and advocacy work led by the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre. Communications departments are growing as food banks begin to share and exchange information with donors, the general public and many others. Providing multiple engagement and learning opportunities for a wide range of stakeholders is another way communications departments are playing an important role in change.

While interview participants did not discuss social innovation in communications directly, the importance of having a strong external identity and brand was consistently raised as important. As a result, this section has been provided as a placeholder for further research as food banks become increasingly sophisticated with their communications.

Food bank approaches and strategies for increasing social innovation in communications practices include using social media, establishing intranet systems to increasing the ability for staff to communicate with each other, updating websites, leveraging media opportunities to communicate key messages, and creating accessible and engaging annual reports. Of particular interest was:

- **Using the media to promote quality food donations.** Food banks are using media opportunities to talk about need for healthy food donations. The Daily Bread Food Bank uses a food of the month campaign to encourage quality food donations. Media events can also be used to share the message that food banks prefer cash over food donations in order to purchase healthier foods. Unrestricted cash donations are the most flexible and are able to be allocated to new areas of organizational development. Food banks are able to use their buying power to make the most out of cash donations; up to three times more than individuals can purchasing food to donate.

- **Adopting an attitude of gratitude.** A few food banks referred to actively shifting external and internal perceptions of their story from one of sadness, hunger, and deficit to one of empowerment, assets, and the power of community. Taking on this attitude of gratitude can help form key messages, determine the types of imagery used in media, and form a foundation and framework for how the food bank interacts with members, volunteers, staff, donors, and partners.
5. Conclusions and Recommendations

There is indeed a dawn of social innovation in the charitable food sector. While much of this innovation is in its infancy, a significant shift in the way food banks see their role in addressing hunger and food insecurity is occurring. Many food banks shifting to a community food security model are having similar experiences, are learning similar lessons, and want to share this information with others.

Although historically food banks have been heavily criticized by food security or justice advocates, they are now coming online as one of the most important change makers in the food system. The sheer amount of capacity, infrastructure, and community support that food banks have that can be repurposed and refocused for shifting from short to long-term community food security is significant. This is a new and invaluable asset for mobilizing significant systems change.

This research targeted a range of innovative food banks in North America. We know that there are many other food banks that are also finding novel ways to shift their organization. This scan has provided a baseline for understanding what social innovation in food banks is and how food banks are doing it. Continuing to develop inroads to and ways to respectfully engage with food bank organizations that may not share these perspectives is a critical consideration for progressing this change. Also developing shared advocacy platforms to help government and industry to better align with the shift in food banks is a key strategy to building capacity behind this movement.

Informally, there is a great deal of interest and enthusiasm from everyone that was involved with this research. This suggests that there is a strong appetite for this kind of information that engages food banks in sharing and learning from one another. This also signals that communities of practice are emerging and are important assets to food banks.

5.1. Patterns of Social Innovation in Food Banks

When all the data from the literature review and interviews has been considered, ten key patterns around social innovation in the charitable food sector have emerged. These are cross cutting patterns in all dimensions of social innovation in food banks. The ten patterns of social innovation in food banks are:

1) Creating a platform for shift.

   Establishing the systems and structures that support shift and enable innovation are the foundations for success and provide a key traction point in changing environments. Crafting new visions and strategic plans for the future of food banks that are supported by values, goals, philosophies, and action plans enables staff and volunteers to actively take on organizational shift. Strong platforms also help food banks to work across departments and break-down/rebuild systems that support shift.

2) Taking a whole systems approach.

   Social innovation cannot happen in isolation. Taking a long-term whole systems approach to strategic planning, organizational assessment, community engagement and advocacy, among others, reveals new opportunities for funding, collaboration, and collective impact. A systems
approach also enables food banks to assess costs and impacts of change on other departments and operations in order to be strategic on allocating resources and training. A systems approach is more complex and less linear, but is better suited to providing the appropriate frameworks to address the complexity behind food insecurity in Canada.

3) Focusing on quality over quantity.
Shifting education and operations to include attracting the right type of food donations as well as increasing the purchasing of higher quality foods is a priority area for many food banks. Offering quality foods furthers providing service with dignity.

4) Scaling out not up.
In order to scale-out, Food Banks are working with a diverse range of partnerships to increase program funding, conduct research and assessments, establish internal systems, and purchase local food, among others. Horizontal alignment, and forging new partnerships, with other like-minded organizations is increasing the impact and reducing inefficiencies in efforts towards community food security. The idea of working across sectors as opposed to ramping up operations, presents a new more strategic approach to creating change that through and effective use of resources.

5) Creating a healthy and dynamic culture of shift.
From the shop floor to the boardroom, strong engagement and communication builds strong teams that feel connected, supported, and aligned about creating positive change. Staff and volunteers are the lifeblood of food banks. Ensuring they have a positive experience in a time of transition that can be stressful is essential to making meaningful progress. Actively creating a culture of passion, excitement, and trust, allows change to happen in a positive way.

6) Balancing change with the immediate need for emergency food services.
Continuing emergency food services demonstrates the long history of care that food banks have provided to the community. Respectfully challenging the traditional system while still providing emergency food services is a key balance for food banks to strike.

7) Engaging new voices.
Engaging a diverse range of voices, especially those that have been historically underrepresented and marginalized, is a key pattern of social innovation in food banks. Starting with the assumption that everyone has valuable knowledge to share, engaging new voices in understanding what the shift to a community food security model means on an individual to organizational level begins to create trust and significant capacity to create systems change.

8) Starting with assets.
Many food banks are adopting an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach that
considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development. This can be considered at the individual and organizational levels. The change process is then focused on how to use and leverage existing assets (e.g. fleets, facilities, relationships, skills, gifts, and knowledge) to achieve a new vision.

9) Working upstream.

In beginning to address the root causes of food insecurity, food banks are working upstream with corporate food donors and senior levels of government, among others, to leverage other healthy community initiatives as well as raise awareness on healthy food. Drawing in the people and players that also have an interest in food security and public health enables food banks to be more strategic and better positioned to meet their community food security goals.

5.2. Recommendations for Further Research and Engagement

This section presents some observations around further action based research and engagement opportunities to foster social innovation and a community of practice. Some of these recommendations may already be taking place in full or partial ways, but we propose them here as important considerations for all readers of this report.

- Participate in knowledge sharing opportunities:
  - Explore opportunities to continue building a community of practice that specifically engages a broad range of food bank organizations and their partners in capacity building and knowledge sharing activities. Consider multiple mediums including social, online, and print media. Sharing stories, lessons learned, and impact evaluations, for example, helps to generate interest and excitement and create a community of practice.
  - Engage provincial and national food bank organizations to identify impact evaluations and success measures that are practical for food banks to use and how to increase access and uptake of these measures.
  - Create and share a ‘how to’ resources on the 13 dimensions of social innovation in food banks that provides examples of engagement and overall approach that food banks have taken.

- Further research opportunities:
  - Research the collective impact and Asset Based Community Development strategies food banks are taking and how well they are working.
  - Develop detailed case studies and impact evaluations of socially innovative activities and organizations.
  - Examine opportunities, constraints, and existing examples and solutions for social impact bonding/social innovation financing/pay for success programs in food banks.\(^{67}\)
  - Survey communications tools and strategies being used by food banks.

- Convening a community of practice opportunities:
o Develop a webinar to discuss the findings of this report. Also launch a series of 13 separate webinars focused on discussing the successes, barriers and work around what food banks are experiencing in the different dimensions of food banking social innovation. Consider publishing short white papers after each webinar. Identify areas of common interest and potential advocacy.

o Use conferences and events like the Food Secure Canada, Food Banks Canada, and Food Banks BC (among other provincial networks) conference to present and discuss social innovation in food banks.

o Create a forum to encourage research partnerships where food banks can post their research needs and companies, universities and research organizations can view them by category. The same companies, universities and research organizations could also post their research interests and skills for food banks to reach out for partnerships.

o Launch a bi-annual social innovation in food banks conference that draws together food banks, public health agencies and organizations, other social service providers, agency partners, and others in learning and identifying common ground and alignment in interventions. Consider convening just food banks one day ahead of the main conference to allow for peer-to-peer sharing and strategizing.

In conclusion, these research findings indicate that there is a great deal of social innovation in food banks. Further, food banks are beginning to galvanize a common vision for transforming the food banking model to one based on community food security and social justice. While there are many hurdles in shifting to community food security models of food banks, there is an inspiring amount of work being dedicated to having a more positive lasting impact for people. Regardless of where food banks are at on the social innovation continuum, all food banks come from a place of caring about people and communities. This foundation of care and sense of commitment to community is propelling shift to longer-term solutions, as many begin to question the status quo and develop new innovative strategies for addressing hunger and food insecurity in Canada and the US.
6. Appendices

6.1. Invitation to Participate Letter

Like other Food Banks in Canada and the US, The Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) is undertaking a shift away from stand-alone emergency food services to long-term community wide strategies that address the core causes of food insecurity. As part of this journey, we are seeking to better understand what other Food Banks are doing as part of a similar shift. The GVFB is undertaking an environmental scan and assessment to develop this knowledge base and achieve the following three objectives:

1. Establish an understanding of the continuum of social innovation and best practices within (major) food banks in Canada as well as identify key reference points in the United States.
2. Produce and disseminate a clear and concise summary of the research findings to project participants, food bank associations, and community health partners.
3. To contribute to the community of learning within food banks by engaging discussion around strategies and learnings for challenging the status quo in the emergency food system.

Research Question
What are food banks in Canada and the United States doing to foster socially innovative practices to make the shift towards community food security?

Research Scope
This research focuses on food banks within Canada and the US that provide food and programming to the community. The scope includes food banks providing food either directly or indirectly from their own physical locations or through organizations within their networks. We are aiming to speak to at least 20 different organizations, potentially multiple people per organization. We will share the results with you in the spring of 2016.

Why Engage?
We appreciate that food banks are busy places with limited resources to engage in additional activities. We are committed to respecting your time and we will share our final report with you upon its completion this spring. We hope to provide you with a meaningful resource that will inspire other conversations around how food banks are learning and working together to challenge the status quo. We are looking into convening interested food banks in further conversations and activities after this research project is completed.

Interview process
If you are willing to participate in this project a 10 minute pre-interview survey will be sent to you to fill out in order to provide more focus for the 1:1 interview process. We are requesting thirty to forty-five minutes of your time for a 1:1 interview to be scheduled between January and February of 2016. To ensure confidentiality interviewees will have the ability to choose if your organization is cited publicly or anonymously.

How we are Defining Social Innovation in the Context of Food Banks
This research defines social innovation as the re-strategizing of the food bank model for increased impact and efficiency towards community food security. For the purposes of this project, and in the context of food banks, we currently understand social innovation to be:
• The re-thinking of business models to increase the spread of benefits from the process to encompass environmental, social and economic sustainability and justice;
• Addressing root, or systemic, causes of a problem;
• Often incremental; and sometimes,
• Adapting old ideas to new contexts.

Social innovation focus areas for this research include: Vision, mission, goals, values; Advocacy and Community Engagement; Business and Financing Structures; Donor Accountability and Education; Governance Structures; Human Resources; Purchasing and Non-donated food procurement; Food Distribution; Food Recovery and Waste Management; and Programming.

Research Phases
Phase 1: Kick-off and Internal Scan
• Review public and internal documents (Oct. 2015)
• GVFB team knowledge exchange (Oct. 2015)

Phase 2: Literature Reviews and Interviews
• Literature review of existing assessments of innovation in Canadian food banks conducted (Nov. 2015)
• High-level scan of socially innovative US food banks and innovative practices to establish key reference points conducted (Nov. 2015)
• Invitations to food banks arrive (Feb. 2016)
• Self-assessment surveys arrive at food banks being interviewed (Feb. 2016)
• Interviews are conducted (Feb. 2016)

Phase 3: Summarize and Disseminate Findings
• Findings are consolidated and summarized (Feb. to Mar. 2016)
### Section 1: Your Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your organization's name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information for follow up interview:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your position(s):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a volunteer or staff member?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 2: The Basics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many staff members and volunteers do you have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many people does your food bank serve annually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many pounds of food do you distribute annually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many prepared meals are distributed annually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much fresh produce does your organization procure annually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much fresh produce is distributed annually?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 3: Social Innovation Areas Your Organization is Currently Working on and/or Beginning to Think About

To the best of your knowledge on a scale from 1 to 10 please identify where your organization falls in the below areas of social innovation to increasing community food security from a) where you are at currently and b) where you aspire to be in 5-10 years.  
(1) No work being done, (3) Beginning to think about it, (5) Creating a plan & lining up funding and staff resources, (7) Projects/program/policies have been implemented, (8) Programs showed good results, (10) Programs are being monitored for success and adjusted based on results and/or awards have been won.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eleven Areas of Social Innovation in Food Banks</th>
<th>Your assessment of current level of social innovation: Please circle or bold one</th>
<th>Your assessment of aspirational, or future, levels of social innovation: Please circle or bold one</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vision, mission, goals, values</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Advocacy &amp; Community Engagement</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3. Business and Financing Structures**

**4. Donor Accountability & Education**

**5. Governance Structures**

**6. Human Resources**

**7. Purchasing & Non-donated food procurement**

**8. Food Distribution**

**9. Food Recovery & Waste Management**

**10. Partnerships**

**11. Programming**
6.3. Interview Questions

1. Do you have any comments/questions/concerns that arose from the self-assessment survey's definition of social innovation in food banks?

2. For each social innovation topic area:
   a) What socially innovative projects, policies and initiatives are fostering/supporting the shift towards community food security?
   b) Key reasons for success?
   c) Where there any barriers to implementation experienced? If so, how were they addressed?
   d) Have there been any unexpected results?

3. Overall what areas would you most like to increase social innovation in and why? Within those what are your road blocks to starting that work and what are the supports for starting it?

4. Have you implemented any impact assessments or success metrics for the programs mentioned? If no, why not?

5. The GVFB is interested in presenting the final report from this research at the 2016 Food Secure Canada Conference in Toronto. They are also interested in working with food banks across Canada to increase food bank representation at the conference. Would you like to be notified of potential funding opportunities for increasing food bank representation at the conference?

6. The GVFB is considering hosting a webinar to discuss the project results with participants and interested organizations/individuals. If this occurs would you like to be notified?

7. Please list the names of any other food bank organizations you understand to be socially innovative.
### Food Bank Contact Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California Association of Food Banks</td>
<td>1624 Franklin St #722, Oakland, CA 94612, United States</td>
<td>510-272-4435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona</td>
<td>3003 S Country Club Rd, Tucson, AZ 85713, United States</td>
<td>520-622-0525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Bread Food Bank</td>
<td>191 New Toronto Street, Toronto, ON M8V 2E7</td>
<td>416-203-0050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding America</td>
<td>35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60601</td>
<td>800-771-2303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Bank of Central New York</td>
<td>7066 Interstate Island Rd, Syracuse, NY 13209, United States</td>
<td>315-437-1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Banks Canada</td>
<td>5025 Orbitor Dr #400, Mississauga, ON L4W 4Y5</td>
<td>905-602-5234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Gatherers</td>
<td>1 Carrot Way, Ann Arbor, MI 48105, United States</td>
<td>734-761-2796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank</td>
<td>1 N Linden St, Duquesne, PA 15110, United States</td>
<td>412-460-3663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society</td>
<td>1150 Raymur Ave, Vancouver, BC V6A 3T2</td>
<td>604-876-3601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greener Village Community Food Centre</td>
<td>686 Riverside Dr, Fredericton, NB E3A 8R6</td>
<td>506-459-7461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge</td>
<td>1103 3 Ave N, Lethbridge, AB T1H 0H7</td>
<td>403-320-8779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops Food Bank</td>
<td>171 Wilson St, Kamloops, BC</td>
<td>250-376-2252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson food Cupboard</td>
<td>602 Silica St, Nelson, BC</td>
<td>250-354-1633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon Food Bank</td>
<td>7900 NE 33rd Dr, Portland, OR 97211, United States</td>
<td>503-282-0555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa Food Bank</td>
<td>1317 Michael St, Gloucester, ON K1B 3M9</td>
<td>613-745-7001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatoon Food Bank &amp; Learning Centre</td>
<td>202 C AVE S, Saskatoon, SK</td>
<td>306-664-6565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Harvest</td>
<td>1450 Lodestar Rd, Toronto, ON M3J 3C1</td>
<td>416-408-2594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The STOP</td>
<td>1884 Davenport Rd, Toronto, ON</td>
<td>416-652-7867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thrive</strong></td>
<td>“We started a full scale garden program to teach people gardening skills. As part of that we set up partnership with a career development society here and they set up a program called Thrive through which some of our customers are part time employees at garden. Thrive provides supported one-on-one employment for 10 hrs a week. It has been really successful, really quickly. It reaches a small number of people with a deep impact.”</td>
<td>Nelson Food Cupboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choosing Healthy Options Program (CHOP)</strong></td>
<td>“The Choose Healthy Options Program (CHOP) simplifies nutrition facts into a easy-to-understand 3-point scale, so its users can make quick, informed decisions about what to eat. In 2004, the Food Bank worked with local nutritionists to develop CHOP, which since has been adopted by more than a dozen food banks around the country!”</td>
<td>Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harvest Rescue Program</strong></td>
<td>“It’s a fresh produce gleaning program through which volunteers harvest unwanted fruit and vegetables from backyard gardens and nearby farms. The produce is distributed through food banks, low income housing building and social services.”</td>
<td>Nelson Food Cupboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Garden Patch</strong></td>
<td>“The Garden Patch is a community-driven urban agriculture initiative of the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre, located in the 900 block of 3rd Ave. N in the heart of Saskatoon. Each year this vacant city-owned lot is transformed into a thriving green garden! In the last five years over 100,000 lbs of produce has been harvested for distribution to our community.”</td>
<td>Saskatoon Food Bank &amp; Learning Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Harvest Program</strong></td>
<td>“The Community Harvest Program grows and collects nutritious, local produce for clients served by Ottawa Food Bank community food programs across the national capital region. In 2015, the program distributed a total 176,553 lbs of fresh produce! Over 101,000 lbs of which we grew ourselves!”</td>
<td>Ottawa Food Bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Faith in Food**                  | “Each faith garden is asked to devote at least                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Food                        | http://www.foo
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>50% of their garden for donation to Food Gatherers; the remainder may also be donated, shared or sold among the congregation. Most gardens are located on-site but some congregations gather items from their home or community gardens for collective donation.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gatherers</td>
<td>dgatherers.org/?module=Page&amp;sID=faith-and-food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The mission of Farmers Ending Hunger is to eliminate hunger in Oregon by increasing the amount of high quality food available to hungry local communities through a partnership of farmers, food processors, Oregon Food Bank and the public.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oregon Food Bank</td>
<td><a href="http://www.farmersendinghunger.com/">http://www.farmersendinghunger.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEAST is a community organizing process that allows participants to engage in an informed and facilitated discussion about food, education and agriculture in their community and begin to work toward solutions together to help build a healthier, more equitable and more resilient local food system.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oregon Food Bank</td>
<td><a href="http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/building-food-security/communit-y-projects/feast">http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/building-food-security/communit-y-projects/feast</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The kitchen is Class 4 commercially licensed and serves as a teaching kitchen, rentable meeting space, catering location, space for clients to learn employable skills, teaching food handling services, first aid, and food safety while providing volunteer services to (potential) renters of the facility.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greener Village Community Food Centre</td>
<td><a href="http://www.greenervillage.org/our-greener-kitchen/teaching-kitchen-programming">http://www.greenervillage.org/our-greener-kitchen/teaching-kitchen-programming</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education for food service industry jobs through the kitchen program which “has maintained an 80% success rate with helping people secure jobs in food service.” (p 6)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Atlanta Community Food Bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A joint effort of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to bring nutritious, fresh produce to communities of all income levels throughout the DC area. In addition to raising vegetables in a sustainable manner on about 20 acres in Upper Marlboro, MD, this partnership works to educate the public about the relationship between agriculture, our environment, the food supply and social justice. They look at sustainability in terms of the whole community, socially and ecologically, preserving a healthy and vital bay while ensuring all people have access to nutritious food.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Capital Area Food Bank</td>
<td><a href="https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/farms-gardening-2/from-the-ground-up-at-clagett-farm/">https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/farms-gardening-2/from-the-ground-up-at-clagett-farm/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Community Food Security Coordinator who is</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Food Bank of</td>
<td><a href="http://www.foo">http://www.foo</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucket Program</td>
<td>also a registered dietician works at the program level to promote food security by coordinating initiatives such as Garden-in-a-Bucket and Garden Grants. <em>(p 41)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central New York</td>
<td>dbankcny.org/get-help/community-services/community-food-security/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Food Tuesdays Food Skills Program</td>
<td>&quot;Participants are encouraged to share their knowledge and learn new recipes to adapt to their tastes and dietary needs. Our goal is to give people the inspiration and skills to make more healthy meals from scratch, and offer an inclusive educational social activity.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Food cupboard</td>
<td><a href="http://foodcupboard.org/food-skills-program/">http://foodcupboard.org/food-skills-program/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant a Row Grow a Row</td>
<td>Encourages people growing food to donate a row of their produce to food banks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple food banks</td>
<td><a href="http://www.growarow.org/about.htm">http://www.growarow.org/about.htm</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Harvest</td>
<td>&quot;Community Harvest is a Food Bank program that enables home gardeners to donate produce to nearby member agencies.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank</td>
<td><a href="https://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/programs/community-harvest/">https://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/programs/community-harvest/</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Yards</td>
<td>&quot;The City of Saskatoon has partnered with the Saskatoon Food Bank &amp; Learning Centre and the University of Saskatchewan Master Gardeners to develop the Healthy Yards demonstration garden at the Garden Patch for the public to visit and learn about gardening. This new partnership has allowed us to create a garden that shows real Saskatoon examples of healthy choices for the garden and for the gardener,&quot; says Brenda Wallace, Director of Environmental &amp; Corporate Initiatives. “Whether you’re a new gardener or an experienced gardener, there is something for you at the Garden Patch.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatoon Food Bank &amp; Learning Centre</td>
<td><a href="https://www.saskatoon.ca/news-releases/saskatoon%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Chs-healthy-yards-garden-patch%E2%80%9D-opens">https://www.saskatoon.ca/news-releases/saskatoon%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Chs-healthy-yards-garden-patch%E2%80%9D-opens</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables Program</td>
<td>&quot;Program to deliver comprehensive nutrition education activities to our emergency food network of food pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens. Designed to prevent obesity and reduce long term chronic disease risks, JSY promotes increased fruit and vegetable consumption through a series of nutrition education workshops tailored to encourage healthful eating and food preparation. Each workshop provides practical nutrition information using USDA approved lesson plans,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kids Can Cook Classes</strong></td>
<td>This program sets out to...“engage children in a dialogue about the larger societal issues that affect their health, like lack of access to healthy foods, and how advertising affects consumer choices,” Bateson notes.”(p. 70)</td>
<td>Alameda County Community Food Bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kitchen Program</strong></td>
<td>“Provides free cooking sessions that are intended to teach healthy eating on a limited budget. FREE two hour classes are offered Monday through Friday, guided by our Kitchen Coordinator.”</td>
<td>Interfaith Food Bank of Lethbridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Produce Education Program</strong></td>
<td>“The Produce Education Program (PEP) is CAFB’s innovative nutrition education program that reaches clients waiting in line at food distributions. Short (3-5 minute), interactive nutrition lessons, taste tests and recipe cards focus on one featured produce item being offered that day through our Farm to Family program.”</td>
<td>California Association of Food Banks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Chief</strong></td>
<td>“Project CHEF Education Society, a partner with the GVFB, offers experiential programs to teach children and families about healthy eating and how to make wholesome food for themselves”</td>
<td>Greater Vancouver Food Bank</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Grow</strong></td>
<td>Community garden where individuals register for plots. “We have a strong partnership with Carrot Way apartments (social housing on property) so we negotiated that they can use our land and water for free but we want any of our Carrot Way tenants (low income) to get first priority for free and anyone else in the community can use it and they have to dedicate 10% of their produce to us like a Plant a Row program.” (Quote from Interview)</td>
<td>Food Gatherers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ready Set Back to School</strong></td>
<td>“Working with a large group of community agencies dedicated to getting children ready for the new school year. Working together, food banks are focusing on ensuring families can provide healthy school snacks and lunches, while schools focus on meeting school supply needs. Throughout August and September, Interfaith will work jointly with the Ready Set Go Back to School Fair to collect and distribute”</td>
<td>Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://interfaithfoodbank.ca/community-kitchen/

http://www.caffoodbanks.org/produce-education

https://www.foodbank.bc.ca/how-we-help/the-next-generation/

http://projectgrowgardens.org/community-gardens/sites-original/food-gatherers

supplies to children who might otherwise go without."

**Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).**

"A national program of the USDA that provides FREE meals to kids during the summer months. Local sponsors (like schools, churches and community organizations) sign up through PA Department of Education and agree to make meals for the summer. Meals are served at sites (like churches, parks, low-income housing locations, schools, YMCA’s, Boys & Girls Clubs, community centers, etc.). Sponsors receive a fixed reimbursement for every meal served to an eligible child at a site."

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

https://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/foodpartnership/summer-food-service-program/
7. End Notes and References

1 “The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.” (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. For more information please visit: http://www.fao.org/righttofood/right-to-food-home/en/.

“The right to food is a fundamental human right. It is enshrined in a range of international legal instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. It is more specifically spelled out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which Canada signed in 1976, and it is included in various other human rights instruments. Canada has a legal obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the right to food” (Food Secure Canada. For more information on the right to food in Canada please visit: http://foodsecurecanada.org/policy-advocacy/right-food)


18 Human Resources Development Canada


28 Ibid


46 Ibid
47 Further information on this study and a downloadable version is are available at: http://www.edmontonsfoodbank.com/about/gleanings-newsletter/
48 Please see the Social Innovation Lab for more information on ripple mapping. http://www.socialinnovationlab.net/what-is-ripple-effect-mapping/


To learn more about Asset Based Community Development, please visit Northwestern Universities Centre for ABCD: http://www.abcdinstitute.org/index.html


To learn more about the People’s Blue Print, please visit: http://www.dailybread.ca/learning-centre/peoples-blueprint/

To learn more about the Eat Think Vote campaign please visit: http://campaign.foodsecurecanada.org

A social impact bond is a contract with the public sector in which a commitment is made to pay for improved social outcomes that result in public sector savings.

To learn more about Don Pallotta and see his TED talk please visit: http://www.danpallotta.com

To learn more about BC Fresh please visit: http://bcfreshvegetables.com

To learn more about Food Reach please visit: http://foodreach.ca

To learn more about Grow a Row please visit: http://www.growarow.org

To learn more about Farm to Family please visit: http://www.cafoodbanks.org/farm-family

To learn more about the tax credit for farm donation in Quebec please visit: http://www.revenuquebec.ca/en/salle-de-presse/nouvelles-fiscales/2016/2016-05-24.aspx

To learn more about the tax credit for farm donation in Ontario please visit: http://www.ontario.ca/english/about/info-taxcredit.htm

To learn more about the B.C. Farmers’ Food Donation Tax Credit please visit: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/income-taxes/corporate/credits/farmers-food-donation

In-person observation made by the Saskatoon Food Bank.

To learn more about social impact bonds please see this link: https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/our-work/initiatives/social-impact-bonds/


Ibid

Ibid