Welcome to...

Food Insecurity and the Right to Food in BC

November 26, 2020
Introductions

Graham Riches

Sarah Kim

Zahra Esmail
Lori Cameron

Provincial Integration Program Manager,
AMSSA
We wish to acknowledge that the land AMSSA works from is the unceded territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.
Acknowledgements

- We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness.
Visit AMSSA.org

- Settlement and Integration Resources
- The AMSSA Institute for e-learning
- Diversity and Inclusion Workshops
- Migrant Worker Hub
- COVID-19 Resources
- More!
Today’s Webinar:
1 hour + 15 minutes + 15 minutes Q & A

2:00 – 3:30 PM Pacific time

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<th></th>
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<td>Lori Cameron</td>
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<td>Food Insecurity and the Right to Food in BC</td>
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<td>All</td>
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</table>
Participant Polls

Please respond to polls in the GoToWebinar platform when we ask for your input. Watch for slides that look like this.
Poll Question #1

What type of services do you provide?
- BC Settlement & Integration Services (BCSIS)
- Other Settlement Services
- Employment Services
- Language Instruction
- Other
Poll Question #1 Responses

What type of services do you provide?

Poll Results (single answer required):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC Settlement &amp; Integration Services (BCSIS)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Settlement Services</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Instruction</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Poll Question #2

What is your role in your organization?

❑ Senior Management
❑ Middle Management or Supervisor
❑ Front-line staff
❑ Other
Poll Question #2 Responses

What is your role in your organization?

Poll Results (single answer required):

- Senior Management: 7%
- Middle Management or Supervisor: 22%
- Front-line staff: 55%
- Other: 16%
Poll Question #3

Have you worked with clients who have experienced food insecurity?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
Have you worked with clients who have experienced food insecurity?

Poll Results (single answer required):

- Yes: 71%
- No: 12%
- Not Sure: 17%
Mentimeter Poll

- Use your mobile device, tablet or open a new window on your computer and go to: 
  menti.com
- Enter code: 97 79 73 6
Mentimeter Poll

- What food access related questions or issues are of greatest concern for you or your clients?
Mentimeter Poll #1 Responses

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 9779736

WHAT FOOD ACCESS RELATED QUESTIONS OR ISSUES ARE OF GREATEST CONCERN FOR YOU OR YOUR CLIENTS?

- How to work longer term and not just immediate
- Where our clients can access food, which organizations, where they are located
- How has food bank service changed since the pandemic?
- Just want to have more information about this unique topic.
- Lack of income/Reliance on emergency food supports
- Access to culturally appropriate options and produce
- How to find free and low cost food.
- The cost of fresh food/produce
- Clients have limited budget to buy necessities to feed family
Graham Riches

Professor Emeritus and Former Director of the UBC School of Social Work
Food Insecurity, Corporate Charity and the Right to Food
Whither British Columbia?

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC
Webinar
26 November 2020

Graham Riches
professor emeritus
UBC School of Social Work

graham.riches@ubc.ca
“There is a public agreement in Canada that those who cannot work should not be allowed to starve”

‘Today’s society, unlike yesterday’s, is capable of feeding its poor. To do otherwise is an error government’
(Fernand Braudel, 1985)

‘In every outbreak I have dealt with, the first thing that comes to my mind is, where’s the food’
(Dr Surinder Bakhshi, 2020)
Household Food Insecurity
StatsCan - Canadian Community Health Survey

**Food security** ‘physical, social, and economic access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable food with a focus on increasing availability of healthy food produced in a sustainable manner’ (BC PHSA)

**Food insecurity***  ‘inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so. Household food insecurity is often linked with the household’s financial inability to access adequate food’ (CCHS)

‘inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints’
(CCHS, PROOF)

‘not enough money to buy food’

#18 questions – adults & children’s experiences previous 12 months:
- **marginal:** worry about not having enough food

- **moderate:** reliance on low-cost foods; unable to afford balanced meals

- **severe** skip or cut size of meals; not enough to eat; most extreme going day(s) without eating

‘official euphemism for Hunger’ *(Poppendieck, 2014)*

Who is Hungry?
graham.riches@ubc.ca
Hungry Canadians and British Columbians

Prevalence of Household Food Insecurity*

2017-18

Canada (35m)  
1.8m households (12.7% - 1 in 8) ...some level of food insecurity

4.4m individuals (1.2m children)

(highest estimates since 2005)

NB 8.7m CERB applicants

(plus 1.5m food insecure)

BC (5 m)

12.4% of BC households (1 in 10) .... some level of food insecurity

555,700 individuals – 1 in 6 children

marginal 3.7%; moderate 5.5%; severe 3.2%

68 % of food insecure households - working poor

66% of social assistance households - food insecure

NB CCHS data excludes homeless/on reserve First Nations...

Diversity:

Racial/Cultural
White 11.1%; Black 28.9%; East and Southeast Asian 11.3%; South Asian 15.2%;

Identity/Indigenous
Arab and West Asian 20.4%; Indigenous 28.2%; Other/Multiple origins 16.7%**

Food Banks Canada

VISITS 1 million; BC Food Banks 124,700; GVFB* (2020) 8,000 monthly

NB only 1:5 ‘severely food insecure’ individuals use food banks

1 in 7 Canadians (14.6%) experienced food insecurity during COVID, up from 10.5% in 2017-18*

NB BC opted out of CCHS (food insecurity), 2019-20

What about Causes?

*Data: Statistics Canada/CCHSurveys, 2017-18; May 2020; PROOF 2020; HungerCount, FBC 2019; GVFB
Widespread domestic hunger – why?

#Financial constraints: low wages; inadequate social assistance/EI → income poverty
- risk factors: gender; race; Indigenous status, ethnicity; immigrant status; lone parent families; singlehood; homelessness; mental health; addictions; HIV…..
  working poor, renting - pay cheque away; debt; inequality (1%-99%) → unfair income distribution

# False promises of neo-liberalism → domestic hunger as moral vacuum
- minimal state state: privatization; deregulation; downloading, cutbacks
- ‘failure of the mantra that work is the best, and only social policy’
- polarizing labour markets: good jobs, bad jobs, precarious work, lower taxes
  recessions, interrupted earnings, under/unemployment → people surplus to labor market

# Social construction of hunger as matter for Corporate Charity → Food Bank Nation
  win-win of food waste argument ‘left-over’ food for ‘left-behind’ people → shame and stigma
- parallel food charity economy from income assistance to food assistance
  CBC food bank drives – ‘all in this together’, but ...... → depoliticising hunger

# The Indifferent State: → ignoring human rights
- dismantled welfare states/broken social safety nets; welfare reform/workfare
- government silos: Agriculture, Social Welfare, Housing, BC PUBLIC HEALTH… → public policy neglect

COVID-19 exacerbating deep fault lines in Canada’s & BC’s welfare state
Food Banks - Corporate Capture Canadian style: Big Food plus

https://www.foodbankscanada.ca

Plus 34 Partners
Corporate Capture: Ontario Association of Food Banks
https://oafb.ca/about/partners/

LEADERSHIP PARTNERS

FOOD PARTNERS

FINANCIAL PARTNERS

FRESH FOOD PROGRAM PARTNERS

MEDIA PARTNERS

CBC & Star

TRANSPORTATION PARTNERS
Corporate Capture BC Style

www.foodbanksbc.com

projection of many other independent community grocery stores
Big Food Corporate Food Charity
Who benefits and and why?

# 35 years on: “We go on giving and giving but the problem remains” (Tyee, 2007)

# Effective - **solidarity** practical compassion - **corporate expertise**; national system; bigger & better;
‘**together we can fill their fridge**’ (FA); ‘win-win’ for food waste & food insecurity

   public legitimacy committed volunteers → ‘doing our bit’

or ineffective - “uncritical’ solidarity’ ‘successful failures’; ad hoc; running out; tighter rationing;
stricter eligibility; food deserts; food drives; nutritional quality? special dietary needs?
cultural preferences? emergency food to ‘daily’ bread; **public health crisis**; 1 in 5 use food banks, many still hungry; ..... ‘not answer to long term food insecurity’ (FBC) ..

“an income not a food problem” (BC PHSA) → masking income poverty

# Values - **moral safety valve**? corporate social responsibility or investment branding, tax
& choices breaks, food sector profits; ‘surplus food’ for ‘surplus’ people – institutionalized
food consumers? stigma, shame → loss of dignity and human rights

”an INCOME BASED PROBLEM that needs INCOME BASED SOLUTIONS” (BC CDC 2017)

-------- What about the Right to Food?
The Right to Adequate Food & Nutrition  
‘we are all rights holders’  
Food is a Basic Human Need & Human Right

UDHR, 1948: universality, human dignity, autonomy, participation, empowerment, accountability, transparency, non-discrimination and the rule of law - indivisibility of human rights

AMSSA  ‘A just an equitable society in which everyone benefits from social and economic inclusion’

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976)

State obligations - moral, legal, political: food, clothing, shelter - adequate standard of living

- RTF: ‘when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or the means for its procurement’ (UN GC 12, 1999)

people's ‘capacity to feed themselves in dignity - producing or acquiring food in normal and customary ways’ → enough $$$ to shop for food

- Legal right: justiciable: a right is not a right unless it can be claimed constitutional right actionable through the courts – NOT YET in Canada

- RTF: ‘not about charity – leaving hungry people to charitable food banks; nor about GOVERNMENT doing everything, but acting as

.......... ‘Primary Duty Bearer’
Government as ‘Primary Duty Bearer’
RTF obligations under international law

Achieving Compliance .... Preventing Violations

*Respect:* by not taking measures depriving people of their access to food:
  ... neglecting inadequate minimum wages & social assistance, disability, EI benefits;
  ... austerity, cutting, delaying, denying benefits; punitive welfare reforms; land appropriation;
  ... depending on food charity to feed hungry people – regulating the poor

*Protect:* by regulating non-state actors, including individuals, Big Food & Big Ag corporations from
  ... violating the right to food of others ... e.g., nutrition, food safety, land and water rights

*Fulfill:* by facilitating, providing by recognizing and acting on
  - Food as a basic human need and fundamental human right
  - evidence-based StatsCan/CCHS and BC Public Health data: food insecurity - an income problem
  - reducing food insecurity as explicit policy outcome of the BC Poverty Reduction Plan
  - rebuilding Income Security, Social Programs/Universal Basic Services housing, child care...
  - ‘Joined-up’ food, public health, housing, social policy’....

  - exiting food banks with Adequate Basic Income (BI Panel) /living wage, child benefits, social assistance, EI, pensions and fully funding school and community food/meal programs to purchase food
  - fair income distribution, progressive taxation

→ holding Governments to account?
Post-pandemic BC - Food Charity or the Right to Food
What role for Civil Society?

A difficult conversation:

‘increasing food security for people in need: we will increase our supports to food banks; and develop program partnerships with grocery stores and not-for-profits - such as Quest and the Mustard Seed – to develop discounted food market (sic), food recovery and redistribution programs’

BC NDP Manifesto, 2020

‘research shows HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY can’t be fixed through food-based initiatives…
...the root cause isn’t the price of food – it’s the LACK OF INCOME’

BC CDC, 2017

How about – mobilizing for human rights-based approaches?

- Entrenching ICESRR in BC legislation - as with UNDRIP
- Indigenous Food Sovereignty – land, food, water rights
- Transparent UN Human Rights Periodic Review process
- Human rights education - schools, academic, civil service, non-profits...

There will always be a place for charity, but charitable responses are not an effective, principled or sustainable substitute for enforceable human rights guarantees

(Louise Arbour, 2005)
Selected Bibliography/References

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Williams, S (2020) ‘It was a total invasion: the virus that came back from the dead’. The Guardian, 21 November https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/nov/21/it-was-a-total-invasion-the-virus-that-came-back-from-the-dead?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other
WHY IS FOOD IMPORTANT TO YOU?

WRITE IN THE CHAT BOX ANY WORDS AND THOUGHTS THAT COME UP FOR YOU.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is Food Important to You?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source of energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival and security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to maintain healthy body and mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustenance, cultural family connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of sustenance and comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, identity, love,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food brings people (social connection).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It gives me energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>survival, taste, identity, pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourishing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT DOES FOOD SECURITY MEAN TO YOU?

WRITE IN THE CHAT BOX ANY WORDS AND THOUGHTS THAT COME UP FOR YOU.
### Mentimeter Poll #3 Responses

Go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) and use the code 97 79 73 6

**WHAT DOES FOOD SECURITY MEAN TO YOU?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good nutrition</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>to have enough and healthy food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>access with ease and dignity with cultural and dietary preferences</td>
<td>Enough food to eat</td>
<td>Able to go to the grocery store and purchase my own items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing there's &quot;back up&quot; food in the cupboard</td>
<td>To have food on the table every day</td>
<td>Capacity to buy nutritious food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know my family is safe and healthy. Can focus on other priorities in my life</td>
<td>Three meals per day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THINK TO THE FUTURE:
WHAT WOULD A FOOD SECURE
COMMUNITY LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

WRITE IN THE CHAT BOX ANY
WORDS AND THOUGHTS THAT
COME UP FOR YOU.
Mentimeter Poll #4 Responses

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 97 79 73 6

THINK TO THE FUTURE: WHAT WOULD A FOOD SECURE COMMUNITY LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

- A nation that can help other nations...Humanity
- Community gardens, equal access to food for all persons
- Multicultural foods equally accessible at reasonable prices. Ethnic food is usually so much more expensive
- Quality, affordable food available within easy access.
- Fair, healthy and inclusive
- Healthy happy community
- Welcoming community
- No need for emergency food supports
- A self-reliant local food system
- Better emotional well-being - less
- Feel safe and peaceful
- Enough income for everyone to buy
COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST MEETING BASIC NEEDS. IT’S ABOUT CONNECTING AND SHARING WITH OTHERS WHILE ALSO NOURISHING YOURSELF. AS HUMANS, FOOD IS OUR COMMON DENOMINATOR - ITS THE VEHICLE THAT BRINGS US TO THE GARDEN, THE KITCHEN AND THE TABLE. AND AS WE PARTICIPATE IN GROWING, COOKING, AND SHARING FOOD, OUR BODIES ARE NOURISHED, BUT SO ARE OUR SPIRITS. THESE ARE THE MOMENTS WHEN WE CAN SEE PEOPLE’S EXPERIENCES START TO SHIFT FROM SIMPLY SURVIVING TO ACTUALLY THRIVING.

JOSHNA MAHARAJ
AUTHOR OF "TAKE BACK THE TRAY"
CONTACT INFO

SARAH KIM

SARAH@VANCOUVERFOODNETWORKS.COM
OR SSKIM@CNH.BC.CA
Food Security in South Vancouver

HOW SYSTEMIC INEQUITY IMPACTS FOOD ACCESS AND AGENCY
Where is South Vancouver?

MAIN STREET TO BOUNDARY,
41ST TO FRASER RIVER

ACCORDING TO FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL DATA:
- POPULATION OF 102,000*
- AVERAGE SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD: 2.9** (HIGHEST IN VANCOUVER)
- MEDIAN PERSONAL INCOME OF $26,000** (CITY AVERAGE IS $33,000)

* FROM BC STATS 2020 (INCREASE FROM 2016 CENSUS DATA)
** FROM 2016 CENSUS DATA
- “South Vancouver” is the most racialized area of Vancouver with 80% visible minorities.

- “South Vancouver” has the most immigrants of anywhere in Vancouver (55% of the population).

- 64% of the population has a non-English First Language, and 41% of the population speaks a non-English language at home.

- 14% of the population is under 15 years and 16% of the population if over 65 years.

- “South Vancouver” has the highest average household size, lowest percentage of persons living alone (7%), highest percentage of households with children (51%)

→ implies many multigenerational households.
### Quality of Life in South Vancouver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Vancouver Overall</th>
<th>Sunset</th>
<th>Victoria-Fraserview</th>
<th>Killarney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of families with children under 6 below the after-tax Low-Income Measure</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of people who walk or cycle as their primary mode to run errands</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of people within a 15-minute walk to a “community hub” (community centre, library and neighbourhood house)</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of people who have 4+ people to confide in/turn to for help</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of people who report having excellent/very good health</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median total income, all families with children under 18</td>
<td>$83,845</td>
<td>$68,410</td>
<td>$62,930</td>
<td>$73,080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learnings from COVID-19

• Major gaps in food infrastructure and investment across Vancouver

• South Vancouver residents need additional support

• SVNH also needs additional support - need to try to bring in partners who aren’t currently active in our neighbourhoods and build capacity of smaller faith-based and grassroots groups across Killarney, Victoria-Fraserview, Sunset

• Isolation in South Vancouver neighbourhoods is an issue that needs to be addressed over the long-term; food can be used as a vehicle for social connection and to create more engaged communities
Vision for Food Security

PHASE 1: Emergency Food
- Establishment of Central Food Hub in South Vancouver
- Support to Spoke agencies across South Vancouver
- Direct distribution through Central Hub
- Adequate place-based access to appropriate, respectful emergency food

PHASE 2: Food Security
- Development of community kitchens, gardens, farms throughout South Vancouver
- Community groups leading the development and growth of food assets across South Vancouver
- Killarney, Victoria-Fraserview, Sunset have unique identities and food strategies
- Food justice, culturally appropriate access, and local leadership
Social Connection + Food Security

- Equitable access to food
- Engagement and leadership of local residents in food security solutions
  - “created with” not “done to”
- Culturally appropriate options
- Place-based solutions with long-term food assets
- Shifting from a charitable model to an empowerment-based approach
Next Steps

**Determine**
Determine how to meet the emergency food needs in neighbourhood

**Develop**
Develop stock of healthy food through multiple food suppliers

**Add**
Determine what additional spokes are required to ensure food access in Killarney, Victoria-Fraserview, Sunset, Marpole

**Identify**
Identify and secure a long-term food Hub location in South Vancouver (beyond 24 months)

**Build**
Create workplan to build long-term food security assets across South Vancouver and Marpole

**Advocate**
Demonstrate leadership, alongside neighbours, and use our voices to influence positive systems-level change

**Achieve**
Change the Food Asset Map in South Vancouver and achieve greater equity!
Thank you!

Zahra Esmail
Executive Director

Email: zahra.esmail@southvan.org OR foodhub@southvan.org

Tel: 778.927.8352
“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.”

(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1996)
Introduction to Food Insecurity
E-Learning Module
January 2021
E-Learning Module: Introduction to Food Insecurity

- What is Food Insecurity: Definitions
- Food Insecurity: A Global View
- Food Insecurity in Canada
- Food Insecurity in BC
- Health Impact of Food Insecurity: Mental Health, Physical Health, Child Development
- Public Policy Approaches to Alleviate Food Insecurity
- Social Sector Initiatives to Alleviate Food Insecurity
E-Learning Module: Introduction to Food Insecurity

COVID-19 Impact on Food Insecurity
Social Sector Initiatives to Alleviate Food Insecurity: Agencies, What They Do, Where Do They Operate, Client Referrals
(with downloadable infosheet)
Visit AMSSA.org
The Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants Program Awareness Video
Thank You!

- We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness.