



The Community Ideas Factory: Fundable Solutions in Food Security

April 4th, 2017 | Sheridan College |
Oakville, Ontario

Sheridan | Get
involved



oakville
community
foundation



food for life

With funding support from:



Foreign Affairs and
International Development
Department of Global Affairs

Government of Ontario
and the Government of Canada

Canada

The Community Ideas Factory is a community-college partnership exploring social innovations within the charitable sector of the Halton Region. The Community Ideas Factory is made possible by the College-Community Social Innovation Fund of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Michael J. McNamara, Project Director, The Community Ideas Factory- Sheridan College
Michael.mcnamara@sheridancollege.ca

Or

Angela DiNello, Project Manager, The Community Ideas Factory- Sheridan College
Angela.dinello@sheridancollege.ca

Project Partners:



The Oakville Community Foundation plays an influential role in the Town of Oakville by linking philanthropic families and organizations with the needs of the local community. Managing the contributions of Oakville's generous donors, the Foundation seeks to ensure that funds are utilized in a way that they can continually make an impact on the local community year after year. As the 10th largest Community Foundation within the Canadian Community Foundations of Canada network, the Foundation helps to ensure that the philanthropic efforts of Oakville's donors are utilized in meaningful and sustainable ways.



Food For Life Halton: Food for Life has grown into the largest food recovery program in Halton Region bringing fresh and nutritious food to those in need. In 2016, Food for Life Canada distributed over 2.5 million pounds of food, all donated by its' generous suppliers. Food for Life was named as a "Top Pick" in Charity Intelligence's (Ci) 2012 report, identifying Food for Life as one of the top-performing charities in Canada.

Contents

- Overview of the Community Ideas Factory: Community-Based Research & Community-Based Creative Problem-Solving 5
- Target Area Overview: Food Security in Halton Region 6
- Summary of the Literature Review and Qualitative Findings on Food Security 7
 - Summary Findings from Step 1a on Food Security: Summary of the Literature on “Social Innovations’ in Food Security 9
 - Summary Findings from Step 1b on Food Security: Causes, Consequences, and Ideas for Improving Quality Food Access 10
- Creative Problem-Solving in Food Security 11
 - Defining Challenge Statements 11
 - Generating Solutions: Divergent & Convergent Exercises 13
 - Developing the Social Innovation 15
 - Making the Pitch: Presentation of the Social Innovations in Food Security 16
 - “Mission Nutrition: Building access to Healthy Food” 16
 - “Path to the Plate” 17
 - “HubMobile” 17
 - “Interconnected Centre for Careers in Food and Farming” 18
 - “S.P.A.C.E. Hub” 18
 - “Sponsor a Family Program for Food Security” 19
- Moving Forward: Cross-sectional Analysis of Fundable Solutions 20
 - Table 1: Triangulation of Support for Socially Innovative Solutions in Halton’s Food Programming System 20
- References 23

Overview of the Community Ideas Factory: Community-Based Research & Community-Based Creative Problem-Solving

Community Ideas Factory: Two-Step Process for Social Innovation

1. Literature Review and Qualitative Research to define problems, opportunities, and best practice
2. Creative-Problem Solving Sessions to design social innovations

The Community Ideas Factory is a SSHRC funded collaborative research project that blends the principles of Community-Based Research with the tools of Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) to develop fundable 'social innovations' for philanthropy; solutions that are created by stakeholders, for stakeholders. The project leverages Sheridan's research capacities and expertise in social science research and creative problem-solving to support the Oakville Community Foundation and its diverse network of partners and clients in developing projects, proposals, and targeted funding for social innovations in Halton's philanthropic sector.

Over the two-year life of the project, we are targeting four key areas for action; namely, affordable housing, food security, employment services, and wrap-around programs. These target areas align with the Oakville Community Foundation's 2015 Vital Signs Issues. In the current project, each target area is addressed in two steps. In Step 1a, we use literature reviews to identify best practices in social innovation in the target area. In Step 1b, we use qualitative data in order to garner a deeper understanding of the current challenges and obstacles in the area; with specific attention to the experiences of 'service users'/'neighbours in our catchment. In Step 2, we use the information from Step 1 to engage a diverse group of stakeholders in creative problem-solving sessions with a view towards creating social innovations for greater efficiency and/or effectiveness in the target area.

Timelines for Key Target Areas:

1. Affordable Housing (Fall 2016)
2. Food Insecurity (Winter 2017)
3. Employment Equity (Fall 2017)
4. Wrap-Around Programs (Winter 2018)



In executing the project, the project team from Sheridan College and the Oakville Community Foundation are provided with support and guidance from the Project Advisory Committee (PAC); a standing advisory committee for the "Community Ideas Factory" project. PAC members include representatives from Food for Life, the Halton Poverty Roundtable, the United Way of Oakville, and the YMCA of Oakville.

Dr. Michael J. McNamara, Project Director (Sheridan College), Dr. Sara Cumming, Co-investigator (Sheridan College), Sarah McPherson (Oakville Community Foundation), and Angela

DiNello, Project Manager (Sheridan College) form the core of the Project Team.

Target Area Overview: Food Security in Halton Region

With more than 335,000 people presently depending on food banks on a monthly basis, Ontario's food banks are providing food to nearly 7% more individuals than when the recession started back in 2008. Consistent with other cities in Ontario, the Halton Region too has experienced an increase to those individuals requiring assistance to obtain alternative sources of food in order to survive. As outlined by Canada's Food Guide (Health Canada, 2011), healthy eating exists when individual's diets include grains, vegetables and fruits, as well as milk and meat or substitutes - to feel good and maintain health. However, sustaining a healthy diet is often challenging for low income families with restricted financial resources.

According to data collected in 2016, in Halton, the estimated cost for nutritious food for a family of four is about \$896 per month (Halton Region, 2016), which is \$37.19 more than what a family of four pays in Toronto at \$858.81 per month. For low income families and individuals currently receiving social assistance from Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or earning minimum wage, the cost of food can represent anywhere between 25% to 40% of their already rigid budgets. Recently, the Food Institute at the University of Guelph confirmed that food prices will sustain faster increases than general inflation, which they explained using the recent 4 to 4.5 % increase in costs for meat, vegetables and fruits between 2015 and 2016 (The Food Institute, 2016). This only adds to the existing challenges to food security for low income families and individuals in Halton.

The most recent Household Food Security & Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket Report for the Halton region revealed that during the period of 2013-2014, 4.3% of Halton households were identified as food insecure. In Halton, the average cost of a healthy diet has experienced an increase of 2% since 2014, and a whopping 52% since 2003. The monthly low income scenarios for 2015 indicated a struggle for low income households to pay rent, buy food for a nutritious diet, and pay for basic expenses.

The Region of Halton is committed, through its strong base of dedicated volunteers, the enthusiasm among organizations to collaborate and support one another and the emergent community awareness about issues of poverty and hunger to improve its hunger relief efforts. Consequently, the largest food drive in Canada takes place in Halton. Moreover, the Executive Director of Food for Life shared a number of hunger relief efforts currently being implemented in Halton which include 15 food banks and agencies with food banks, 38 Outreach Programs, 40 food distribution agencies, 19+ food literacy programs, community gardens and community kitchens, and 8+ collaboratives involved directly/indirectly with food/income related issues.



Summary of the Literature Review and Qualitative Findings on Food Security

Having completed the work on our first target area (Affordable Housing) in late 2016, we turned our attention to our second target area (Food Insecurity) in the early part of 2017.

Step 1(a) began with the conduct of an extensive review of the literature on social innovations in Food Programming. Results from the literature were contrasted with the findings from data collection activities in Step 1(b). Data collection was conducted with Food Bank Users (aka. Neighbours) held at the Oakville Neighbourhood Centre on February 22, 2017. The number of Neighbours participating in activities fluctuated between 35 to 48 participants throughout the activities. Some participants came for lunch however left before the activities were fully underway; others came part way through the activities as they came after stopping at their normal food program or once their children were in programs for the afternoon. In total, we collected data from 36 Neighbours. Data collection involved two activities:



1) Problem-Tree Analysis (cause-effect mapping); Problem tree analysis is central to many forms of project planning among development agencies. Problem tree analysis (also called Situational analysis or just Problem analysis) was used to help the group find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect around the issue of 'low access to quality food'. This methodology allowed us to break down the problem of 'food access' into manageable and definable chunks and to better understand the interconnected and even contradictory causes of 'neighbours' challenges' in accessing quality food. In this exercise, the problem of 'low access to quality food' was written in the centre of the flip chart and

became the 'trunk' of the tree as the 'focal problem'. Next, the group identified the causes of the focal problem (the roots). Next, the group identified the consequences, which become the branches. These causes

and consequences were created by *the group* through the discussion. The heart of the exercise was the discussion, debate and dialogue that was generated as factors were arranged and re-arranged, often forming subdividing roots and branches; all of which helped us better define the nature of the problems neighbours confront in accessing quality food.



2) Mind-mapping: A Mind Map is a graphic technique for data generation- particularly appropriate for working with groups. Our Mindmaps were created around a single concept; namely "Ideas for Making your Food Program Better. Facilitators wrote this phrase and wrapped it in an image in the center of the blank page. Next, facilitators worked with the groups to develop associated representations of ideas (images, words and parts of words) to be added and layered. Major ideas

were connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas branched out from those.

Findings from the literature review and data collection activities in Step 1 of the Food Security target area have been presented elsewhere (See: Cumming, 2017). They are briefly summarized below.

Summary Findings from Step 1a on Food Security: Summary of the Literature on “Social Innovations’ in Food Security

Best practices in social innovation include:

Food Distribution to Members & Partner Agencies

- **Combining food distribution with food skills.** Includes recipe cards, food demos and tastings, labelling repackaged food with specific ingredients
- **Creating innovative, low barrier intake systems.**
- **Accessing non-traditional distribution points.** Identifying where the people in need are and what types of foods would be beneficial to distribute from that location. Ex., Feeding America is increasing food distribution at hospitals, clinics, schools, and colleges

Data Collection & Metrics

- **Information Sharing.** Performance Benchmarking Dashboards have helped food banks to identify and connect with other food banks in the networks that are excelling on certain key performance indicators.

Partnerships

- **Linking to other social service providers.** Food banks are connecting food bank members with other services such as dental, legal, pensions, newcomer programs, accounting, haircuts, and employment opportunities.

Programming & Member Engagement

- **Linking programs to employment and economic development.** Linking food distribution with employment skills/opportunities and supporting food security through local economic development programs.
- **Increasing food literacy and food skills for all.** Food skill courses and information; including how to preserve food, prepare healthy affordable meals, or read food labels.
- **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.

Community & Donor, Education & Engagement

- **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.
- **Exploring new (digital) fundraising tools.** Some Food Banks have launched virtual food drives that run food drives online.

Food Purchasing

- **Building relationships with local farmers and farm associations.** Many food banks are creating new direct purchasing relationships with local producers to increase the quality of food being distributed.
- **Growing food for programs.** The Saskatoon Food Bank produced 20,000 pounds of food for distribution. These gardens can have many educational programs in addition to production for distribution.

Communications

- **Leveraging social media to communicate to and engage with members/neighbours**
- **Leverage social media to communicate and coordinate between partners**
- **Adopting an attitude of gratitude.** 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.

For a more detailed discussion, see: Schuurman Hess, 2016

Summary Findings from Step 1b on Food Security: Causes, Consequences, and Ideas for Improving Quality Food Access

Causes of “Low Access to Healthy Food” as identified by Neighbours

- Lack the Financial Means
- Confront challenges and obstacles navigating access
- Stigmatizing Experience
- Lack of Quality, Quantity, Variety, and Cultural Appropriateness at Food Banks

Consequences of “Low Access to Healthy Food” as identified by Neighbours

- Negative effects on physical health
- Negative effects on mental health
- Negative effects on emotional health
- Financial crisis
- Feelings of isolation

Ideas for “Improving Access to Healthy Food” as identified by Neighbours

- Link food distribution to other programming options
- Changing the method of transportation and distribution
- Improving the quality and variety of food available
- Improvements to Intake Processes
- Improvements to Communication Strategies
- Development of Wrap-around services

For a more detailed discussion, see: Cumming, 2017

With these findings in hand, the team then moved into Step 2 of the process: Creative Problem-Solving in the area of Food Insecurity. The methods and results of this stage are presented in the next section.

Creative Problem-Solving in Food Security

On Tuesday, April 4th from 9am-3pm, the Community Ideas Factory hosted its' Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) Workshop on Food Security at the Sheridan Conference Centre in Oakville, Ontario. In total, 37 people representing 27 organizations (not-for-profits, public, and private) participated in the CPS Workshop. Participants were seated at 8 different tables, with each group assigned its own CPS facilitator from Sheridan College.

The day began with a welcome address from Wendy Rinella, Executive Director of the Oakville Community Foundation. Brenda Hajdu, Executive Director of Food for Life Halton, then addressed the delegates with a short presentation on the "Raising the Bar" study. This was followed by a short overview of the findings from Step 1 (community-based research) on Food Security, led by Sara Cumming; Co-investigator on the Community Ideas Factory. Sara also reviewed research ethics approval for the study, consent forms, and photography release forms. Following her address, delegates were then asked to review and sign consent forms. Signed forms were collected from all participants by CPS facilitators. Following the retrieval of consent forms, the floor was turned over to Michael McNamara, Project Director of the Community Ideas Factory and lead facilitator for the CPS workshop.

Organizations in Attendance

- Action Foodshare
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Halton
- City of Burlington
- Community Development Halton
- Compassion Society of Halton
- Feeding Halton
- Food4Kids Halton
- Food for Life Halton
- HFFT
- HMC Connections
- Halton Food for Thought
- Halton Region
- Home Suite Hope
- Kerr Street Mission
- Links2Care
- Mc Master University/The Global Health Agora
- Nucleus Independent Living
- Oakville Community Foundation
- Open Doors
- The Salvation Army Lighthouse
- Shifra Homes Inc.
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
- St. Luke's Anglican Church
- Summit Housing & Outreach Programs
- Town of Oakville
- Quadra Architecture
- Wellington Square

Defining Challenge Statements

Building upon the findings from the literature review, problem-tree analysis, and mind mapping exercises, we created a 'challenge statement menu' in order to help groups frame and align the focus of the CPS session around the key issues and opportunities identified. The 'program menu' for our event (called "Creative Ideas Factory Feature Items"). The menu featured 12 challenge statements that flowed directly from the literature and research. These challenge statements were framed as opportunities for 'social innovation' in Food Programming by Dr. McNamara.

Creative Ideas Factory Feature Items

For April 4th, 2017

Today's fare features some of the finest social innovations in food programming from across North America, complimented by an assortment of uniquely local contributions. Your facilitator will be more than happy to help you and your group with your selection.

Food Distribution to Members & Partner Agencies

- **How might we improve social innovation by combining food distribution with food skills?** Observed innovation in this area includes recipe cards, food demos and tastings, labelling repackaged food with specific ingredients
 - **In what ways might we create a more innovative, low barrier intake systems?**
- **How might improve social innovation by utilizing non-traditional distribution points?** Identifying where the people in need are and what types of foods would be beneficial to distribute from that location. Ex., Feeding America is increasing food distribution at hospitals, clinics, schools, and colleges

Data Collection & Metrics

- **In what ways might we develop more innovative information sharing mechanisms?** For example, innovations in performance benchmarking dashboards have helped food banks to identify, connect, and learn from other food banks in the network.

Partnerships

- **In what ways might we improve social innovation by linking to other social service providers?** Food banks are connecting food bank members with other services such as dental, legal, pensions, newcomer programs, accounting, haircuts, and employment opportunities.

Programming & Member Engagement

- **In what ways might we improve social innovation by linking programs to employment and economic development?** Examples of innovation in this area include linking food distribution with employment skills/opportunities and supporting food security through local economic development programs
- **How might we improve social innovation by increasing food literacy and food skills for all?** Examples of innovations in this space include food skill courses; including how to preserve food, prepare healthy affordable meals, or read food labels.
- **How might we improve social innovation by integrating community gardens?** Community garden spaces are providing 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.

Community & Donor, Education & Engagement

- **How might we improve innovation in community/donor education and engagement?** 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.

Food Purchasing

- **How might we improve social innovation by building relationships with local farmers and farm associations?** Many food banks are creating new direct purchasing relationships with local producers to increase the quality of food being distributed.
- **How might we improve social innovation by growing food for programs?** The Saskatoon Food Bank produced 20,000 pounds of food for distribution. These gardens can have many educational programs in addition to production for distribution.

Communications

- **How might improve social innovation by leveraging social media to communicate to and engage with our members/neighbours?**

After reviewing each of the challenge statements, Dr. McNamara invited participants to engage in a process of 'dot voting'; wherein participants were asked to affix three sticky dots on the challenge statements they felt were most important (or promising) and could be addressed by the group. At the conclusion of the 'dot-voting' exercise, groups were then invited (collectively) to discuss results and select (or revise) a challenge statement to be pursued for their CPS workshop session.



Generating Solutions: Divergent & Convergent Exercises

The selected revised challenge statements served as the foundation for the ideation stage of the CPS workshop. During ideation, participants were asked to respond to their *challenge statement* (a challenge stated in open-ended language) that had been by the group. The hallmark of ideation is the discrete separation of *divergent thinking* (a broad search for many diverse and novel alternatives) and *convergent thinking* (a focused and affirmative evaluation of novel alternatives).

Workshop participants were guided through a divergent thinking exercise called 'stick-em up brainstorming' to allow the group to generate and explore lots of options, ideas, and possibilities in response to their challenge statement. During this divergent thinking exercise, participants were encouraged to generate as many options as possible, to suspend evaluation (defer judgement) of all ideas, to build upon the ideas of others, and to embrace wild and/or unusual ideas. These principles were encouraged with a view towards encouraging maximum participation, diversity, novelty, and creative expression.

Selected/Revised Challenge Statements

- Group 1: In what ways might we create a more innovative, low barrier intake system?
- Group 2: How might we improve social innovation by increasing food literacy and food skills for all?
- Group 3: In what ways might we improve social innovation by linking programs to other services?
- Group 4: In what ways might we improve social innovation by linking programs to employment and economic development?
- Group 5: In what ways might we improve social innovation by linking to other social services?
- Group 6: How might we improve social innovation by utilizing non-traditional distribution points?

Developed Solution Statements:

- Group 1: What we see ourselves doing is creating a system for guaranteed access to healthy food
- Group 2: What we ourselves doing is streamlining the intake process so that we can teach people to grow their own food
- Group 3: What we see ourselves doing is creating a 'mobile' community response system that brings services and resources to our neighbours
- Group 4: What we see ourselves doing is building a food and farming incubation centre
- Group 5: What we see ourselves doing is engaging multi-sectoral stakeholders to develop an integrated neighbourhood 'base-model' which is responsive to the uniqueness of diverse communities to address food security and other needs
- Group 6: What we see ourselves doing is matching families with service providers to provide meals for other families

Once a sufficiently diverse set of options was generated, participants were then guided through a convergent thinking exercise. Here, dot-voting and idea clustering were used to allow for idea vetting, idea evaluation, and idea selection. During the process, groups were encouraged to consider novelty and

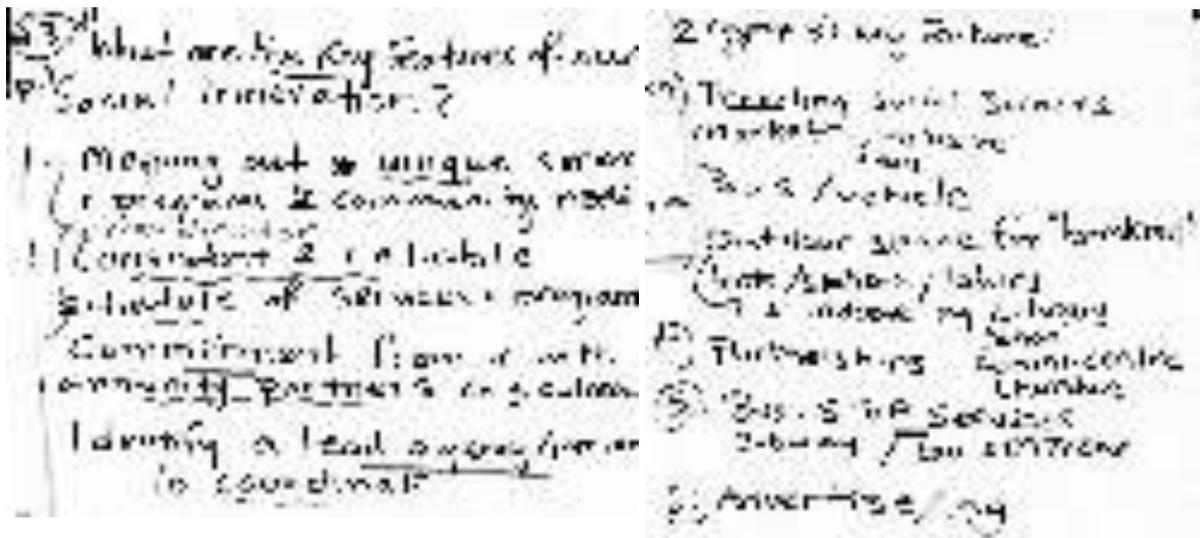
affirmative judgement in their discussion, evaluation and selection of viable solutions for further development. Once ideas for further development had been discussed and selected, groups were asked to create a *solution statement* (ex., what I see us doing is...) that best expresses their chosen alternatives.



Developing the Social Innovation

The third phase of the CPS workshop involved the development and refinement of the chosen solution into a more robust, concrete social innovation. Here, the Sheridan Facilitation team helped groups negotiate a variety of tools to develop and evaluate the components, resources, and limitations of the chosen alternative. First, groups were asked to explain, in detail, how their chosen solution might actually work. Here, groups were asked to define and explain 5-7 key features of their 'social innovation'. Next, groups engaged in a 'stakeholder analysis' activity in order to identify the key actors, their roles, expected contributions, and anticipated challenges involved in the execution of the social innovation.

Key Components of the Social Innovation (Group 3)



Stakeholder Analysis (Group 5)

STAKEHOLDERS		SPECFIC INTERESTS	
NAME	Role/Responsibility	Contributions	Challenges
1) Local Government	Regulation, funding, infrastructure	Policy, funding, support	Regulation, funding, infrastructure
2) Local Business	Partnership, funding, infrastructure	Partnership, funding, infrastructure	Partnership, funding, infrastructure
3) Local Community	Partnership, funding, infrastructure	Partnership, funding, infrastructure	Partnership, funding, infrastructure
4) Local Schools	Partnership, funding, infrastructure	Partnership, funding, infrastructure	Partnership, funding, infrastructure

Making the Pitch: Presentation of the Social Innovations in Food Security

Having discussed resource requirements and the stakeholder analysis activities, groups were then given 25 minutes to develop a '2 minute pitch' for their developed solutions. The following is a summary of those pitches:

“Mission Nutrition: Building access to Healthy Food”

- Innovation Type: Intake System
- Summary: The innovation is to create a common intake system wherein users build specific profiles and become registered within a common, online system (possibly managed by the Region). As a registered user, food bank members can build their own unique user profiles including food requirements, dietary restrictions, food preferences, as well as other social service needs/preferences.

- A 1 stop, integrated intake system for food bank members would dramatically improve the flow and coordination of the information between food bank neighbours and service providers; thereby improving system efficiencies. As the group recognized, a common intake system permits numerous opportunities for scaling out the innovation. Specifically, an integrated intake system with user registration allows food service providers (and other social service



providers) to communicate information to members about food availability, food preparation, and food skills and literacy. Additional scaling opportunities include connecting food bank members with other service providers such as dental, legal, accounting, and/or employment opportunities; thereby, enabling practical avenues for members to access a wide range of services. In doing so, it was widely agreed that the innovation would empower neighbours (food bank members), encourage greater coordination between social service providers, and address the diverse dietary requirements of food bank members.

- The creation and development of this innovation would require significant support from funders, the construction of the technical platforms, and the active participation of a host of key stakeholders including the Region, food banks, and clients.

“Path to the Plate”

- Innovation Type: Intake System
- Summary: The innovation is to create a steam-lined intake and registration system for food bank members. As a regional, one-stop, membership-based registration and referral hub for neighbours and food service providers, the system would enable neighbours to build their user profile, get a 'membership card', and match their needs to service providers within the food system. This streamlined intake process would clarify eligibility requirements and more efficiently match user needs with service providers.
- Similar to a match-making service, it was widely believed that the innovation would streamline intake and help improve access to healthy food as well as other social services. Additionally, a 'membership system' would improve data-driven decision-making, asset mapping, reduce stigma and stress for neighbours/members, ease burden for service providers; thereby enabling the identification of needs and gaps in services.
- The creation and development of this innovation would require a centralized database (perhaps hosted by the Region), training for staff, education for neighbours, and full participation of key stakeholders in the food programming system.



“HubMobile”

- Type: Accessing Non-Traditional distribution points
- A community-responsive system that brings services, resources, and a voice to our neighbours, the “HubMobile” is a mobile service unit in the community that provides access to services such as food, mental health, and professional supports in response to community needs. As a 'service vehicle', the “MobileHub” would have the capacity to travel throughout the community and feature 'breakout stations' (tents/tables) to enable service offerings, user registration, and donations intake.
- It was widely believed that the “MobileHub” would remove barriers to service access (such as time and transportation).
- The innovation would require a retrofitted vehicle, staff, a schedule of services, and a service provider capable of delivering programming.



“Interconnected Centre for Careers in Food and Farming”

- Type: Increasing Food literacy and Food Skills
- Summary- The aim of this innovation is to create a space and infrastructure to provide food members (and others in the community) with an opportunity to develop skills necessary for careers in food sector for our neighbours in need. The innovation is to provide a site and program that teaches food skills to members of the community; including food safety, handling, growing/farming, and business development. The innovation provides unique opportunities for industry collaboration in skills training and food provision. The innovation also provides food bank members (and community members more broadly) with the opportunity to acquire food-related skills that will assist them on a path to employment.
- The group believed that the innovation would provide unique value by linking food programs to economic development opportunities.
- This innovation would require a significant investment from funders, a secure space/location and accompanying infrastructure, and the active participation of numerous agencies stakeholders and private sector partners in the system.



“S.P.A.C.E. Hub”

- Type: Non-traditional food distribution points, Linking food programs to other supports
- This innovation is an Integrated Neighbourhood Hub to address food security and other needs. The core of this innovation is a re-centering and re-grounding of philanthropic service provision (ex., food programming, coupled with other social service offerings) at the level of individual community ‘satellites’, which are linked through together through a centralized hub/base. The community satellites could be centered in schools or other local buildings, mobile units, or virtual sites. The community satellites would feature service and resource offerings that are fluid and adaptable to local community needs and assets, but which are also



linked together through the centralized hub in order to coordinate action and intake processes.

- The group believed that the innovation would enable greater community buy-in of local communities, reduce barriers to food access (and other services), and greater local responsiveness of the food programming system.
- This innovation would require a significant investment from funders, the active participation of food producers and distributors, social service delivery agencies, Regional government, and significant buy-in from local neighbourhood associations.

“Sponsor a Family Program for Food Security”

- Type: Community Partnering/ Food Recovery

- Summary: The goal of this social innovation is to improve access to healthy food for food programming users through matching donor families with service providers in order to provide specific meals (and other services as appropriate) for food programming members. Similar to the many ‘Christmas Family Sponsor Programs’ in the Halton Region, the innovation would leverage the generous donations of community members, those willing and able to donate prepared meals for food program users. Sponsor and recipient families could be matched directly or the service agencies could serve as the go between. Similar to an Adopt a Family Program, members dietary requirements could be submitted in advance and contributors could respond accordingly.



- It was widely held that the innovation could greatly enhance wider community investment and involvement in neighbour food recovery. Scaling options include expanding the ‘adopt family’ program into schools and workplaces throughout the neighbourhood. These interactions would build social capital and help raise awareness about the issues of food security in the Region.



Moving Forward: Cross-sectional Analysis of Fundable Solutions

Food banks throughout Canada and the U.S. are presently undertaking a shift away from stand-alone emergency food services towards more long-term, holistic, integrated, and community-wide strategies that better address the core causes of food insecurity (Schuurman Hess, 2016). Accompanying this shift has been a range of new perspectives, ideas, technologies, and innovations for fueling greater collaboration, coordination, engagement, and efficiencies in food programming. This project, in part, represents a unique opportunity for the Halton to reflect upon and consider what it might do to foster socially innovative practices in food programming and to position itself as leader in this shifting landscape.



This portion of the Community Ideas Factory has focused its attention and effort on three dimensions of socially innovative practices in food programming; namely, best practices in the literature on food systems, neighbours experiences and ideas for improving access to healthy food, and the creative ideas of agencies for new social innovations in food programming. Viewed in triangulation, the insights of this portion of the Community Ideas Factory provide some key directions, insights, and bottom-up

support for a number of socially innovative solutions to be considered by funders, policy-makers, and programmers in Halton's Food Programming system.

Table 1: Triangulation of Support for Socially Innovative Solutions in Halton's Food Programming System

<i>Social Innovation</i>	<i>Literature on Best Practices</i>	<i>Neighbours' Feedback</i>	<i>CPS Sessions with Agencies</i>
Streamlined Intake System: <i>This begins with identifying and cataloguing the needs, preferences of members as well the resources and service availability in the system. The literature is replete with examples programs utilizing new technology to build membership profiles, utilize data analytics, and match user profiles with services and information. Variations on this innovation may include the use of membership cards, integrated online registration of members, centralized database platforms, and streamlined communication links to other resources and social services</i>	+	+	+
Accessing Non-traditional distribution points: <i>This begins with identifying where the people in need are and what types of foods would be beneficial to distribute from that location. Literature is replete with examples of food programs increasing food distribution through non-traditional sites (ex. hospitals, clinics, schools, and colleges).</i>	+	+	+

Neighbours affirm these findings by stating benefits of more localized, neighbourhood centric food distribution sites. CPS session highlights value of 'MobileHub' programs for more localized service distribution

Community-based Food Literacy, Skills, and Growing Programs: This begins with engaging communities (at times, users and non-users alike) in an effort to build people's capacity for sustainable, food management. The literature is replete with examples of new programs that give members a greater voice in activities and that increase member agency and ownership through literacy, growing, and preparation training and exchanges. Neighbours highlighted the cultural and social value of 'community gardens', 'seed-saving' initiatives, and 'community dinners'. CPS session ushered in a number of solutions for increasing community bonds and social relationships through community/ peer-to-peer food exchange, recovery, and sponsorship programs.

Linking Food Programs to Other Social Service Programs: This begins with the recognition that food insecurity is often linked to other social needs. The literature is replete with examples of food banks partnering with community social service providers to connect members with other services such as dental, legal, financial, and employment opportunities. CPS sessions highlighted these linkages and provided several practical ways by which food programs might leverage existing community assets to coordinate services across organizations

Building relationships with local farmers and farm associations: This begins with the recognition that local farms are key stakeholders in the food programming system. The literature is replete with examples of joint purchasing relationships, brokerage enterprises, and food growing partnerships that help local farmers grow their business while simultaneously providing the food bank with fresh produce. Such partnerships have the potential for increasing food literacy, employment, and educational programming in addition to enhancing production and distribution of local food.

	+	+	+
	+	+	+
	+		+

The project team would like to thank all participating community members, agencies, and volunteers who helped make this portion of the project possible.



References

- Cumming, Sara (2017). Nourishing Neighbours: A Joint Initiative to Find Creative Solutions to Food Security for Halton's Vulnerable Population (Neighbours): A Summary of the Research Findings from Focus Groups held on February 22, 2017. Unpublished Research Report. Sheridan College. Greater Vancouver Food Bank.
- Health Canada, (2011). Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. Retrieved from http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/food-guide-aliment/view_eatwell_vue_bienmang-eng.pdf
- Halton Region, Nutritious Food Basket Results 2016
- Schuurman Hess, A. (2016). Social Innovation in Food Banks: An Environmental Scan of Social Innovation in Canadian and US Food Banks. Summer 2016.
- The Food Institute, University of Guelph, Food Price Report, 2016, <http://foodinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Food-Price-Report-2016-English.pdf>