



The Social Economy and Food Security

Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series
"Social Economy Community-
University Research in Action"

November , 2007

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On behalf of the Sub-node 3 Team



SN3: Mobilization – Food Security and Community Economic Development

- Steering Committee
 - David Daughton, Canadian Worker Coop Federation
 - Consumer’s Community Coop (Vacant)
 - Kevin Randall, FEED NOVA SCOTIA
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- Consulting Members

Sub-node 3: Mobilization – Food Security and CED



- SN3 Goal: Research on mobilization around food security and community economic development. To support participatory action research projects that:
 - are driven, guided and approved by SES Project community partners
 - involve an element of university - community collaboration
 - contribute to building food security at multiple levels and with diverse groups
 - benefit the social economy in Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties
 - relevance to/impacts on the wider social economy



“ A community enjoys food security when

...all community residents obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance, and equal access for everyone”

Dietitians of Canada. (2007). Community Food Security: Position of Dietitians of Canada. Public Policy Statements.

Sub-node 3: Mobilization – Food Security and CED





Is food insecurity a problem in Nova Scotia?

- Participatory food costing studies completed in 2002 and 2004/2005 by the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre (AHPRC), Nova Scotia Nutrition Council (NSNC), and individuals in Family Resource Centre/Projects (FRC/P)
- Method of data collection
- Findings
 - Williams et al. Canadian Journal of Public Health 2006. 97(6) 430-34
 - NSNC/AHPRC/FRC-Ps. 2007. 2004/05 Participatory Food Costing Report



Scenario 1: Family of Four Earning Minimum Wage in Nova Scotia in 2002 & 06

	One PT*, one FT† \$6.00/hr. October 2002	One PT*, one FT† \$7.15/hr. April 2006 (projected)
Monthly Net Income		
Wages	\$1,076.08	\$1,317.84
CTB	\$512.07	\$457.91
GST benefit	\$55.00	\$57.83
Total	\$1,643.15	\$1,833.58
Basic Monthly Expenses		
Shelter	\$598.39	\$615.67
Power/heat/water	\$125.00	\$161.93
Telephone	\$28.75	\$23.00
Transportation‡	\$340.99	\$377.67
Childcare	\$131.09	\$149.80
Clothing, footwear, etc.	\$188.13	\$186.77
Funds remaining for food	\$230.80	\$318.74
Cost of the NNFB	\$572.90	\$614.63
Surplus Funds remaining for other expenses	-\$342.10	-\$295.89



Scenario 2: Family of Four* on Income Assistance in Nova Scotia in 2006

Monthly Net Income	
Personal Allowance	\$380.00
Shelter Allowance	\$600.00
Childcare Allowance	\$279.00
Child Tax Benefit	\$574.15
GST/HST Credit	\$57.83
Total	\$1,880.98
Basic Monthly Expenses	
Shelter	\$615.72
Power/heat/water	\$161.93
Telephone	\$23.00
Transportation	\$377.67
Childcare	\$279.00
Clothing, footwear, etc.	\$186.77
Funds remaining for food	\$236.89
Cost of the NNFB	\$617.42
Funds remaining for other expenses	-\$380.53

Sum of food, shelter, power, heat, water, telephone, transportation, childcare, clothing, footwear, etc.

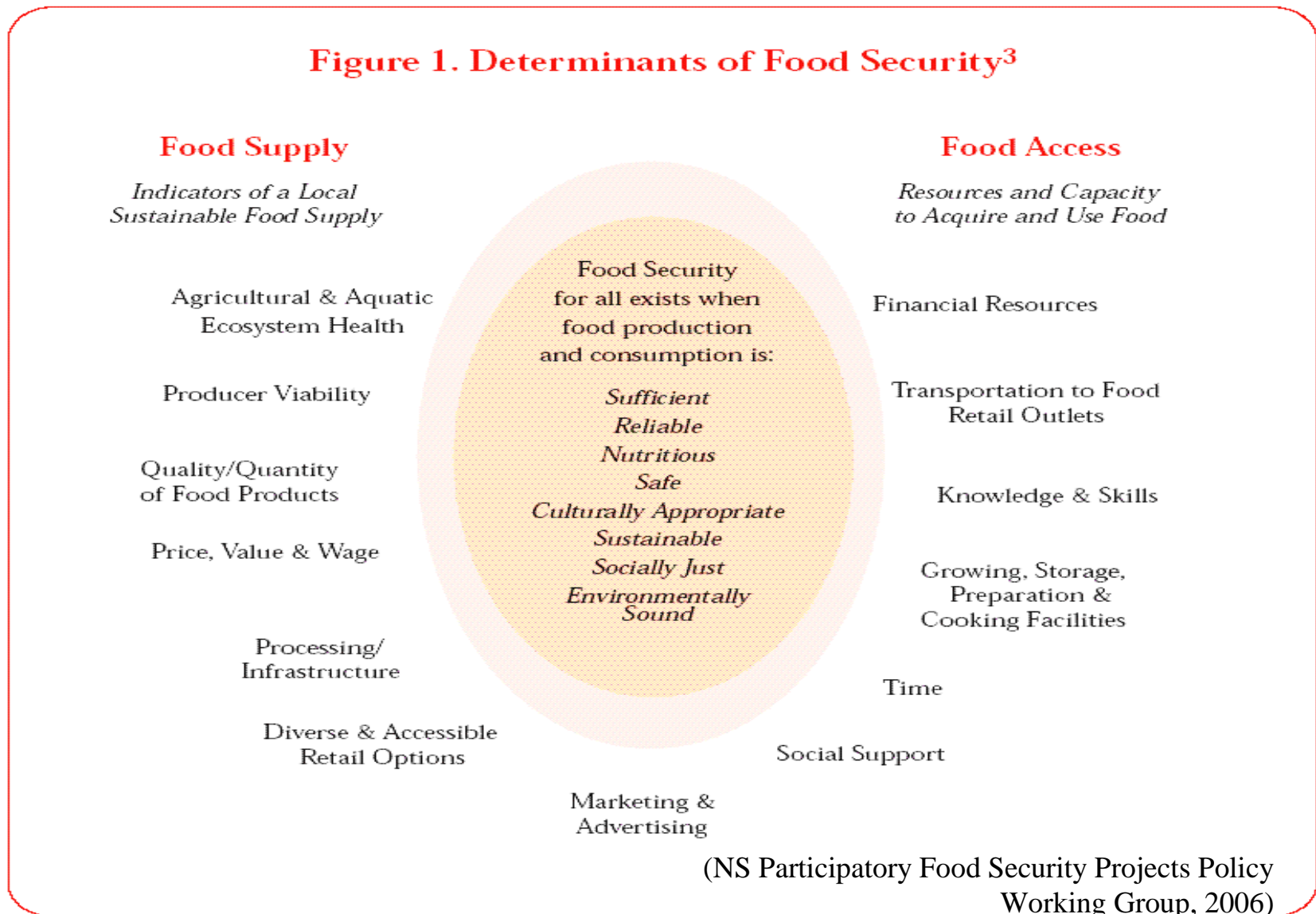
*2 parents 25-49y; 2 children, boy 13, girl 7 yrs

NSNC/AHPRC Food Security Projects, 2006

Scenario 3. Lone Seniors on Public Pensions	Single Male, 77y	Widowed Female, 85y
Location	Rural NS	Urban NS
Monthly Net Income		
Old Age Security (taxable)	\$363.50	\$363.50
Guaranteed Income Supplement	\$566.87	\$0.00
Allowance	n/a	n/a
Canada Pension Plan (taxable)	\$0.00	\$378.95
GST benefit	\$18.92	\$18.92
Monthly Basic Expenses		
Shelter/Rent	\$608.00	\$608.00
Telephone	\$28.75	\$28.75
Transportation	\$188.84	\$75.36
Clothing, footwear, etc.	\$93.39	\$93.39
Pharmacare	\$29.17	\$29.17
Total	\$948.15	\$834.67
Funds remaining for food	\$1.14	-\$73.29
Cost of the NNFB	\$193.83	\$150.89
Funds remaining for other expenses	-\$192.69	-\$224.18

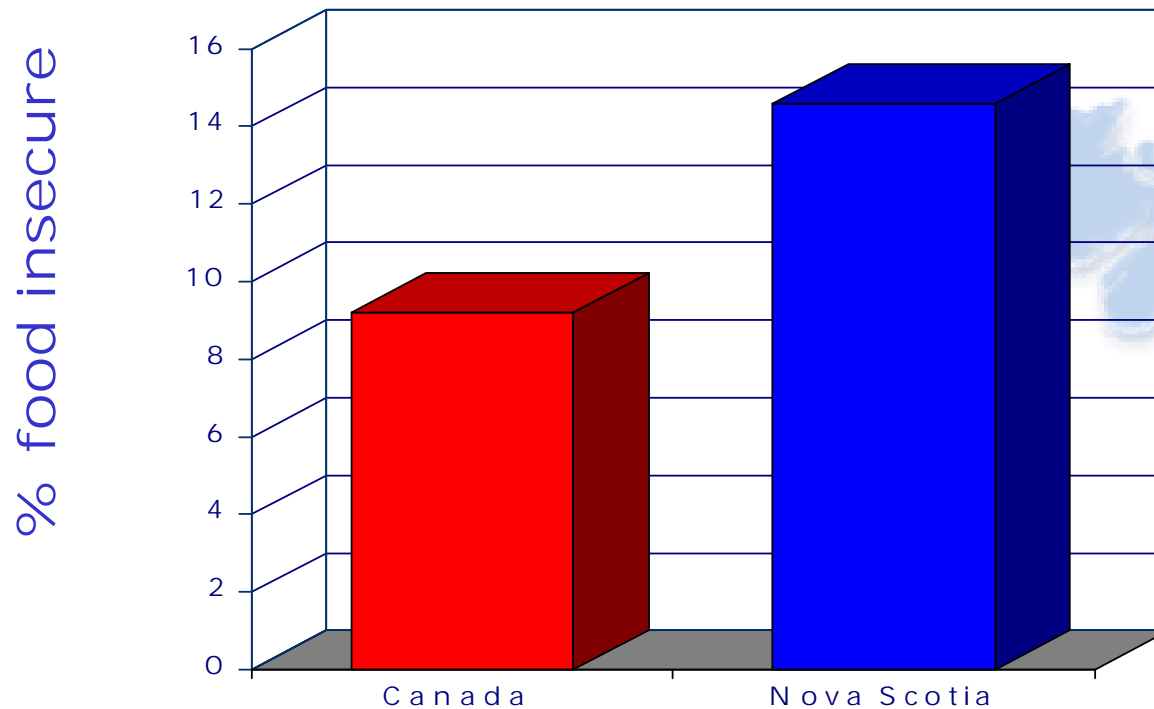
Food insecurity is a *complex* issue

Figure 1. Determinants of Food Security³





Income-Related Household Food Insecurity: 2004



Sub-node 3: Mobilization – Food Security and CED

CCHS 2004, Cycle 2.2, Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion, Health Products and Food Branch, Health Canada

What role can Participatory Action Research and the Social Economy play in our response to food insecurity?





Food Box Program: Current and Potential Contributions to the Social Economy

Research Cluster (Sub-Node) 3

Mobilization on Food Security and Community Economic Development

Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network

Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

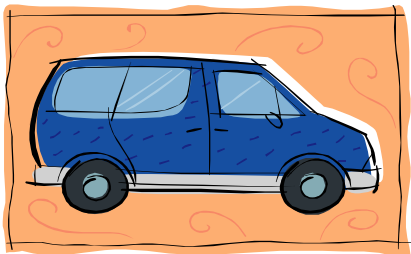
Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités





What is the Food Box Program?

- Food Security Initiative of the Kids Action Program
- Individual and Community Capacity Building Strategy to address food insecurity





Research Questions

1. What is the value of the Food Box program to families and communities?
2. How can the Food Box program be enhanced, if at all?
3. To what extent would this program be beneficial to other families and individuals facing barriers?
4. How, if at all, could the role of local producers and suppliers within the program be facilitated?



Methods

- Participatory action research and qualitative methods
- Data Collection
 - Examine different food box program models
 - 6-8 Focus Groups/8-10 In-depth Interviews
 - Community forum
- Participants
 - Recruitment and role of Kids Action
 - Current and past participants of the program
 - Others facing barriers such as low-income
 - Local producers and suppliers

What did we hear?





Food Security Barriers

- Food Access Barriers
 - Financial Resources
 - Rural issues: cost of transportation
 - Knowledge/skill/time/social support
 - Food Access issues specific to age
- Food Supply Barriers
 - Rural issue: access to retail options
 - The process of food production and distribution (producer viability, food waste, retailer and consumer standards)



Personal Strategies

- “I end up settling for a bowl of cereal or a piece of toast just so the kids can have it.”
- “A lot of seniors will stop taking medication because they can’t afford it...so that they can buy food.”
- “When [son] was 2 we moved into our very own apartment together...[the grocery store] is not that far away from [the apartment building] so we lived on the top floor unfortunately, so I had to take him in the stroller and pile as much as I could on the stroller with him and keep going back and forth to the grocery store like that and that’s how I used to do it because I would like not spend money on a cab and I didn’t have anyone around me, ...and that would take us hours to do but that is how we did it.”



Feelings

- “A week before baby allowance you’re scrounging and you’re trying to think what am I going to cook, what am I going to do?”
- “It was really hard for me to go to the food bank that time...I had no choice, I had no money, I had like 15 or \$10 for two weeks, I was on EI and it was hard to go there for me. Not that I don’t think that there are people that need it...its just...I felt embarrassed that I needed it that I couldn’t take care of my own.”
- “Almost a depressing feeling and depression is an illness ...and with depression, there is no cure so wouldn’t it be a cure to get rid of stressors that are involved?”

Difficult Choices



Food
Volume



Nutrition

Difficult Choices



Preferred
Choice



Cost



The Value of Food Box Program in the social Economy

- Increased access to healthy food for low-income families: addressing local needs
- Improved food security leads to healthier individuals and healthier communities
- “results in an improvement in the social atmosphere and viability of the community”



Is the Food Production and Distribution System part of the Social Economy?

- Food security barriers involving food systems
 - Limited relationships between producer and consumers
 - Food waste
 - Price mark-ups along the food chain
- Food is primarily controlled by 'big business' within a market economy with little regard to the social economy.
- "how food is retailed in this society.. ?...They [large food retailers] are not helpful. Not helpful to producers. They are not helpful to consumers. They have their own agenda and it doesn't haven't anything to do with the betterment of society in general."



What are the solutions?

Ways local producers and suppliers can be involved in improving local food security.

- supporting community food security projects through reciprocal relationships
- Placing a value on community needs

Improving the access to local foods by low-income consumers.

- Need for alternative food distribution processes
- Need for community food security programs that partner with local producers.
- Need for continued support from governments on poverty action (matching community mobilization)



Forum Objectives

- o To clarify the relationship between community food security (CFS) and the social economy
- o To gain an in depth understanding of CFS and how different groups are involved in our local area
- o To obtain a shared understanding of the barriers to creating a food secure community
- o To identify the resources and facilitate dialogue around opportunities to building CFS
- o To discuss and create action to help support a food security in our local community



Next Step Priorities

- o Increase the opportunity for dialogue between the agricultural community and non-profit organizations
- o Build upon the food box program and expand its availability and measure impacts on the social economy through case study research
- o Increase awareness in schools about where food comes from
 - creating a document that can be used to approach teachers and principals to encourage school gardens