



Civil Society Input to a Renewed Food Policy for Canada

Discussion results School Food

On May 9th, 2023, Food Secure Canada (FSC) held an open consultation on the future of food policy in Canada. [Watch the plenary recording and explore results from all discussion groups here.](#)

To provide context for the discussion group on School Food (2019 - 2023), FSC prepared a [backgrounder](#) summarizing current federal Food Policy language, instruments, and financing.

Recommendations to Government for 2023 Food Policy for Canada

School food programs have the potential to promote educational attainment and improve access to healthy food for communities and students. School food serves as a means to build community, support local agriculture, and engage with existing community food centers. It is imperative that individual school and community needs are considered in the implementation of school food programming.

Finally, School Food Programs have the potential to contribute directly or indirectly to meeting all of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as highlighted below and in the appendix to this document.

School Food Programs are directly relevant to meeting nine Sustainable Development Goals



and indirectly relevant to meeting the remaining eight Goals



Funding

- Prioritize federal investment in a cost-shared universal school food program.
- Recognize that the current lack of infrastructure poses a barrier to implementing effective school food programs. Consider partnering and utilizing existing infrastructure, such as food banks and community centers, to implement school food programs.
- Recognize that if non-profits are expected to play a significant role in the implementation of school food programs, additional funding must be provided.
- Ensure *equitable* allocation of funding, prioritizing rural, remote, and BIPOC communities, over an *equal* distribution.
- Create strict guidelines and regulations for private donations and philanthropic contributions regarding their influence on school food program design.

Food and climate

- Develop policies that incorporate guidelines focused on environment considerations and land use, aiming to promote increased food production while reducing reliance on animal agriculture.
- Ensure that children in healthy school food programs receive education about sustainable diets and climate impacts associated with food choices.

Program Design

- The 2019 Canada Food Guide needs to be implemented in food policy.
- Policies need to address the specific needs and capacities of individual schools.
 - Avoid setting a “gold standard” that discourages schools from participating.
 - Support schools at current capacity and status.
 - Consider the different needs of rural and remote communities compared to their urban counterparts.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster connections between school food programs and local farms and agrifood businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that BIPOC voices are included in program design, funding, and implementation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whole school food programs are inclusive and effective compared to income-focused programs that can be stigmatizing and challenging to qualify for.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider extending school food programs to post-secondary education, as there is a need for mechanisms that address food insecurity and promote healthy eating among post-secondary students.

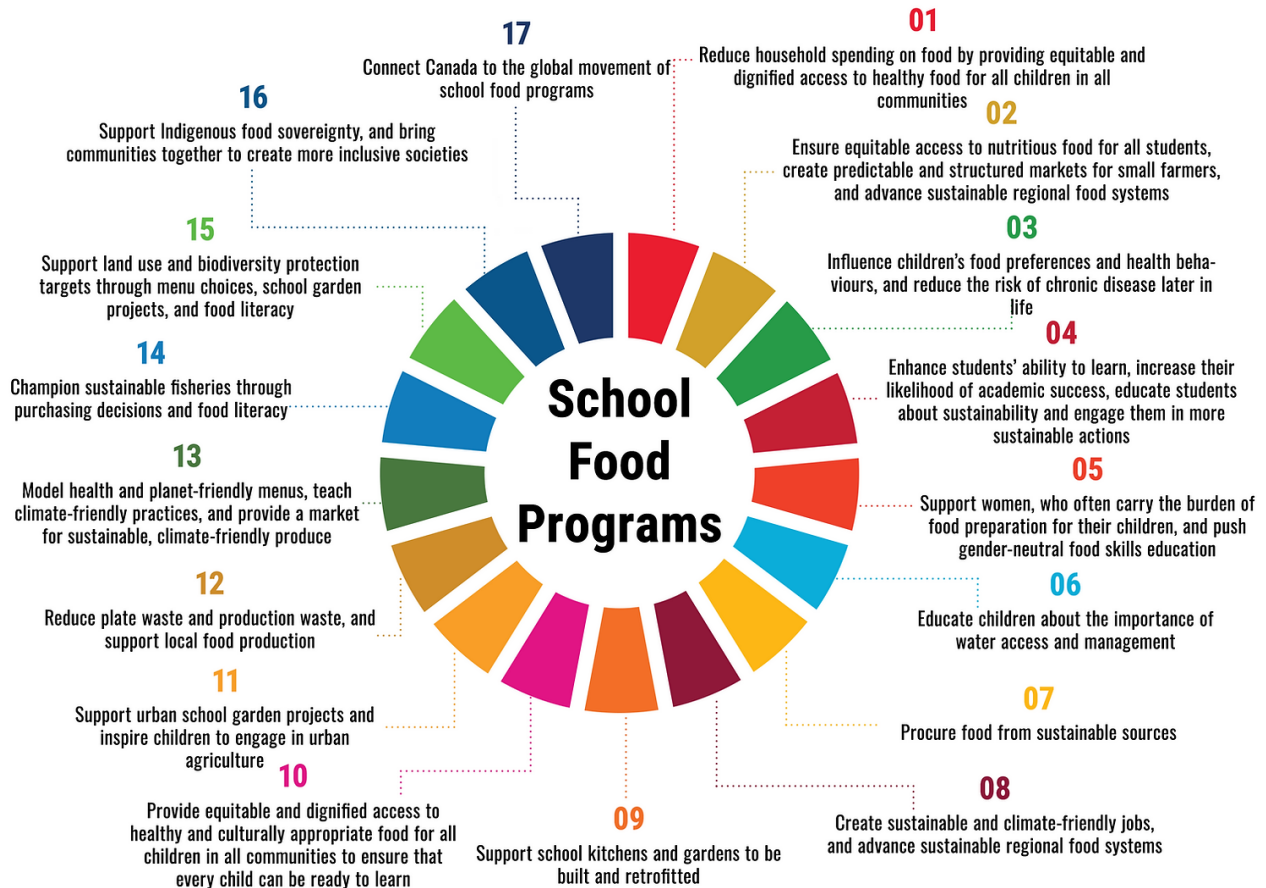
Best Practices/Successful Community Models to Scale or Replicate

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● France has examples of scalable school food infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Japan has a strong school lunch program with federal laws that ensure that all students eat while school food is delivered municipally, a hub for schools lacking infrastructure, promoting longer lunch times, food literacy, and positive relationships with food.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flexible school food programs that cater to different regional needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Income advocacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paid positions, such as chefs and dietitians.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage youth in planning and education, such as through summer programs that involve children in food preparation for the upcoming school year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local authorities should approve food safety measures; the government should consider implementing regulations and guidelines.

Appendix



Universal healthy school food programs designed with the SDGs in mind have great potential to:



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