

2022-2023  
Annual Report

# Sowing the Seeds of Tomorrow

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**FSC**

Food Secure Canada

# Land Acknowledgement

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**We would like to begin by acknowledging that the office of Food Secure Canada is located on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) Nation. This land has also been historically inhabited by the Huron-Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg peoples. Food Secure Canada also has staff living and working all across Turtle Island on the traditional territories of many Indigenous peoples.**

We recognize and honour the enduring connection that Indigenous peoples have to this land and express our gratitude for their stewardship over generations. We acknowledge the harms and injustices of colonialism, including the impact of residential schools, and the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous communities.

As we engage in the work of advancing food security and food sovereignty, we commit to fostering respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities. We strive to centre Indigenous voices, knowledge, and perspectives in our efforts to create a more just and equitable food system for all.

This land acknowledgement serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility to acknowledge, respect, and support the rights and aspirations of Indigenous peoples. May we work together towards reconciliation, understanding, and building a future rooted in justice, equity, and solidarity.



# **A just, healthy, and sustainable food system: it takes all of us to make it happen.**

Food Secure Canada is a pan-Canadian alliance of organizations and individuals working together to advance food security and food sovereignty through three interlocking goals: zero hunger, healthy and safe food, and sustainable food systems. We believe deep and lasting change can occur by facilitating accessible dialogue to foster participation of civil society in food policy; supporting dynamic networks to facilitate research and enhance learning and collaboration on food system projects and campaigns; and advocating for food policies at the federal level that reflect the priorities of Canada's food movement.



# Message

## From Our Co-Executive Directors

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As we reflect on the close of our fiscal year, September 2022 to August 2023, we are honoured to share our journey and accomplishments with you. This year marked a special chapter for Food Secure Canada, as we began serving as Co-Executive Directors from February 2023. We entered this role with enthusiasm, a commitment to positive change, and a dedication to fostering relationships within our communities. We are so grateful that our staff welcomed us with open arms and led the way forward in achieving our goals and envisioning our future.

Our commitment to food sovereignty has been central to our mission, as we actively worked towards amplifying Indigenous and Black-led initiatives. This commitment was showcased through our participation in various events, conferences, and projects that emphasised cultural relevance, community empowerment, and collaborative learning.

A significant highlight of the year was our involvement in the Indigenous and Black Food Sovereignty Project. This transformative initiative aimed to nurture equitable food systems, champion food sovereignty, and celebrate the hidden contributions of Indigenous and Black communities. The in-person convening in Bella Bella, where the Advisory Circle shaped regional plans and fostered collaboration, stood out as a monumental achievement.

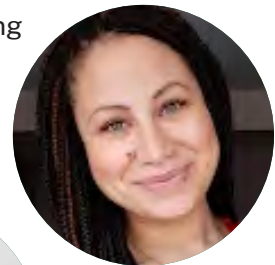
Despite the challenges, we are proud of the strides we have taken to position Food Secure Canada as a platform that can do more and better support communities across Turtle Island. Our commitment to creating a just, healthy, and sustainable food system remains unwavering. As we move forward, we are energised by the collaborative spirit within our community and look forward to deepening these connections.

This year has been a journey of rebuilding relationships, embracing change, and laying the foundation for future endeavours. We are grateful for the support of our community, partners, and stakeholders who have been integral to our success. Your commitment inspires us to continue striving for a future rooted in justice, equity, and solidarity.

Thank you for being an essential part of Food Secure Canada's transformative year.

### **In community,**

**Marissa Alexander**, she/they  
**Wade Thorhaug**, he/him  
Co-Executive Directors  
Food Secure Canada





**FSC**

Food Secure Canada

**Building  
Resilience  
and Amplifying  
the Power of  
Diverse Voices  
in the  
Food Movement**

**STRATEGIC  
PLAN | 2021-2024**

# Strategic Plan

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**FSC's  
Strategic Plan  
emerged  
through a  
collaborative  
process  
involving staff,  
directors and  
stakeholders.**



# Events, Gatherings, & Conferences

This year, Food Secure Canada, was thrilled to be able to attend and participate in a variety of events, gatherings, and conferences.

Here are just a few of the events we attended this year.

## **CAFS Conference**

In 2023, Food Secure Canada actively participated in the Canadian Association for Food Studies (CAFS) Conference.

The conference served as a pivotal platform for knowledge exchange, bringing together diverse voices and perspectives in the realm of food systems.



## **Involvement at the UN High-Level Political Forum 2023: A Global Stewardship Journey**

FSC's involvement in the HLPF was an invitation to join the Canadian delegation. This global event serves as a platform for nations to report progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. FSC contributed insights on Canada's sustainable development initiatives, leveraging the opportunity to connect with civil society advocates and government representatives. Canada, one of 39 nations presenting a Voluntary National Review, integrated valuable feedback from Food Secure Canada.

## **Participation at Extinction or Regeneration Conference 2023: Nurturing a Compassionate Food Future**

Food Secure Canada had the privilege of attending the flagship conference, "Extinction or Regeneration," organised by Compassion in World Farming in collaboration with IPES-Food. This renowned event, held in May 2023 in London, UK, served as a convergence point for a diverse audience, including animal lovers, individual donors, sentience experts, vegans, and food systems enthusiasts. Notable figures like Henry Dimbelby, the UK government advisor on food policy, and influential speakers such as Olivier de Schutter, Raj Patel, Jennifer Clapp, and Vandana Shiva, contributed to the two-day event. The event sparked ideas for potential speakers for future Food Secure Canada events.

## Black Food Sovereignty Coalition Back to the Root Gathering Conference 2023

In March 2023, as a part of the Indigenous and Black Food Sovereignty Project, Black Food Sovereignty caucus members attended the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition Back to the Root Gathering Conference in Tacoma, Washington. This event served as a dynamic platform for learning, networking, and fostering connections within the realm of food sovereignty.

The conference offered a robust program, with practical and informative workshops, strategically located in an area accessible to the majority of participants. The event prioritised inclusivity, featuring a strong Indigenous presence and integrated spaces for rest and wellness.

Reflections on the experience of shared challenges faced by people of African descent in accessing land, opportunities for growth, and capital. The conference underscored the power of collective knowledge, emphasising that, together, communities can overcome obstacles and build resilient societies.

The event inspired potential opportunities to build cross-border communities among BIPOC farmers facing similar challenges. The desire to share resources and promote awareness of agriculture and farming emerged as essential goals. For FSC, the experience has ignited a passion to promote local community awareness, with plans to visit farmers and farms throughout the summer. We envision a future of continued relationship-building and community development, inspired by the collaborative spirit of the conference.

In the spirit of sharing knowledge and fostering community, Food Secure Canada celebrates the impact of initiatives like the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition Back to the Root Gathering Conference, creating ripples of positive change in the landscape of food sovereignty.



## The Coalition for Healthy School Food

The Coalition for Healthy School Food has been working to ensure that the Liberal government keeps its promise and invests \$1 billion dollars over five years towards a National School Food Program in the upcoming March Budget 2024, with a minimum of \$200 million dollars flowing in 2024.

There is, arguably, no other initiative with this modest investment that the federal government could take that would have as big an impact on food affordability, reduce children's hunger while at school, and help families. School food programs offer a huge political opportunity to address the affordability crisis.

A National School Food Program would be very popular with Canadians, as evidenced by the Maru poll which found that 87% of Canadians supported a national school food program. A National School Food Program would complement the important investments the federal government has made such as the Child Tax Benefit and the National Childcare Program.

It would amplify existing P/T and municipal funding now estimated to be over \$230 million given expansions on recent years: notably PEI's universally accessible lunch program in 2021, BC's \$214 million over 3 years in 2022, \$10 million in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2023, and \$30 million by Manitoba in 2024.







# Projects

## Indigenous and Black Peoples Food Sovereignty (IBPFS) Project

With Black and Indigenous leaders and with the People’s Food Institute, Food Secure Canada embarked on a transformative journey aimed at fostering equitable food systems and championing food sovereignty. This summary focuses on the IBPFS’ projects in person convening in Bella Bella, emphasising the Advisory Circle’s efforts to shape regional plans and foster collaboration between Indigenous Peoples and African Canadians.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Mapping the Unseen: FSC successfully created a network map, unveiling the hidden contributions of Indigenous and racialized communities, redefining it as a communal resource.
- Empowering Indigenous and Black Food Sovereignty: Milestones included plans supporting Black and Indigenous Food Sovereignty, marking achievements in regional initiatives, and food sovereignty knowledge.
- The mapping initiative acted as a catalyst for solidarity, connecting Black and Indigenous leaders, fostering partnerships, and raising awareness for sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty.

The Walmart Foundation provided support to the People’s Food Institute which financed Black and Indigenous participation and leadership, and the project work of Food Secure Canada.

The project emphasized cultural relevance, fostering a collective bond between Afro-Canadians and Indigenous peoples. Lessons learned highlight the need for context-specific strategies and ongoing evaluation mechanisms.

After a postponement because of the wildfires across British Columbia, the IBPFS Advisory Circle convened in Bella Bella towards the end of 2023, discussing regional plans for food sovereignty. The gathering aimed to foster collaboration, understanding, and relationship-building between Indigenous Peoples and African Canadians.

An overarching success lies in the commitment of these groups to continue working autonomously, together, and likely with FSC in the future. This enduring collaboration marks a significant achievement, reinforcing the project’s impact beyond its immediate scope.



## Sustainable Food Systems and the SDGs (2021- 2024)

This year, FSC and its partners continued their three year program of work on food systems pathways that can advance Canada's commitment to reach the **17 UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030**. The phase of research and scoping was largely completed, and important knowledge-sharing took place from coast to coast to coast. Policy recommendations were advanced when opportunities arose, with the final recommendations and outcomes to follow next year. FSC warmly thanks all its partners, especially Indigenous leaders and others most impacted by injustices in the food system, for being on this learning and unlearning journey together.

Much of the project's work is focused on three action areas representing major opportunities and priorities in our food system, and highlights from the year include:

### **Equitable Access to healthy, sustainable food - led by Food Secure Canada**

- In September 2022, FSC collaborated with PROOF on a webinar based on their latest report, Household Food Insecurity in Canada. Hundreds of online participants engaged with the current state of food insecurity, who are most at risk, and the evidence-based policy interventions to address this problem
- FSC joined and advised the anti-poverty coalition Dignity for All campaign for October 17th, 2022, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The campaign concluded with an open letter to Minister Freeland that anchored the policy recommendations to Canada's SDG commitments.
- Teaming up with the filmmakers of "Food for the Rest of Us" attracted a different audience to SDG panel discussions, preceded by film screenings. Events were hosted in Montreal and Toronto jointly with Forum SAT, Carrefour Centre Sud, Centre for Social Innovation, Toronto Youth Food Policy Council, Ojibiikaan Indigenous Cultural Network and Toronto Metropolitan University's Urban Farm. Food Secure Canada provided subtitles for the film to expand screenings to Francophone audiences.

## **Healthy School Food - led by the Coalition for Healthy School Food**

- In October 2022, the Coalition submitted the **Proposals for a National School Nutritious Meal Program**, summarising their recommendations and evidence to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Bibeau and the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development Gould. This policy brief, written as a memo to Cabinet, was informed by the SDGs.
- In the fall of 2022, the government launched the **Consultation on building a pan-Canadian school food policy** "to guide the expansion of school meal programming based on common principles and objectives. It will also seek to set a foundation for greater collaboration, coordination and investment, so that more children have access to nutritious food in school."
- The **What We Heard Report** makes it clear that Canadians support a national school food program, with 96% of participants responding that programs benefit children. Participants wanted to see a program that is flexible to community needs, complements existing programs, reflects cultural diversity, supports local food systems, links to food literacy and education, enables Indigenous control over programs in Indigenous communities, and has strong guidance and accountability measures. These values are consistent with the Coalition's 8 Guiding Principles.
- In July 2023, the Coalition submitted its **pre-budget 2024 Submission**, calling on the government to:
  - (1) Allocate \$1billion over five years in Budget 2024 and collaborate with provinces, territories and Indigenous partners to provide them with an initial \$200million as soon as possible to fund existing school food programs.
  - (2) Create a separate School Food Infrastructure Fund grants program of a minimum \$50 million.
  - (3) Negotiate independent School Food Policy agreements with First Nation, Inuit and Métis leaderships.



## Indigenous Food Sovereignty - led by Plenty Canada

In 2022, with the support of the funder ESDC, the leadership and management of the Indigenous Food Sovereignty action area was delegated entirely to Indigenous partners, through Plenty Canada. FSC thanks our Indigenous partners for their guidance and patience, and ESDC for their flexibility and allyship, as we continue our shared journey of reconciliation and decolonization.

- This action area of the project is curated and implemented by Plenty Canada who acted as an Indigenous curator/contractor for Food Secure Canada. This provided the ability to act/actionize in an Indigenous context/worldview with an Indigenous led organization at the helm.
- Through this opportunity, Plenty Canada has been able to identify, develop and foster trusting, lasting relationships with First Nations people, communities and projects that are innovating actions and building expertise on SDG advancement all over Canada. The advancements identified are unconventional when compared to standard government response, however they involve community driven practices that include traditional ecological knowledge and placed-based ways of being.

## Civil Society Input on the Renewal of the Food Policy for Canada, May 2023

In May 2023, FSC organized a consultation gathering 140 food movement leaders and activists to discuss the future of the Food Policy for Canada, in the context of its renewal. This cross-cutting activity addressed all three action areas, and multiple SDGs.

- Breakout groups, facilitated by FSC staff, Board and invited experts, covered diverse topics: Food Loss and Waste, Strengthening Indigenous Food Systems, School Food, Resilient Communities, Food Security, and Food Policy Governance.
- Background Policy Briefs for each Breakout group recapped what was said in the Food Policy for Canada, policy advancement since 2019 if any, and existing civil society policy proposals. Prepared by FSC with invaluable support from thematic experts in the food movement, the Briefs linked each topic to the most relevant SDG(s).
- Discussions in each group addressed key issues, including: the importance of Indigenous voice in food policy; the potential of school food programs for community-building; the impact of climate change on resilient communities; and the need for income supports in addressing food security.
- FSC prepared a summary on each topic with the insights and recommendations which emerged from the event, and shared it directly with policy-makers at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and others.

Virtual consultation

### Civil Society Input to a Renewed Food Policy for Canada

May 9, 2023 / 1:00 - 2:30 pm ET



Food Secure Canada has received contribution funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Funding Program. The views expressed in this summary and in the wider project are not necessarily those of ESDC or the Government of Canada.



## Sustainable Consumption for All (2022)

In November 2022, FSC published a research report, Sustainable Consumption for All, analyzing the opinions and expertise of food system leaders. The study shows that sustainable food is more important than ever before. Drawing mainly from the knowledge of those working for food nonprofits and with people experiencing food insecurity, as well industry, government and academic perspectives, the leaders emphasized the importance of food that is not only environmentally sustainable, but also strengthens communities and most importantly, is within reach economically.

This study was a follow-up to a 2019 study from Food Secure Canada, examining how those living with low incomes value and access sustainably grown foods, and what challenges they face in accessing sustainably grown foods.



After years of living with COVID-19, this present research demonstrated that sustainability is increasingly important, with a special interest for local, organic, and ethically sourced foods.

However, the cost of sustainable foods and consumers' incomes are still the main barriers. These are compounded by the structural discrimination that consumers may face, especially if they are Indigenous, Black, or a member of other equity-deserving communities. This report offered important insights which were woven into FSC's work on equitable access.

The report authors, Monika Korzun and Farzaneh Barak, presented the research at a well-attended public webinar and at the Canadian Association of Food Studies, and published opinion pieces in The National Observer and The Conversation.

For this research Food Secure Canada received funding from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's Contributions Program for Non-profit Consumer and Voluntary Organizations. The views expressed in this summary and in the report are not necessarily those of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada or the Government of Canada.

### SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION FOR ALL:



REVISITING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF SUSTAINABLY-PRODUCED FOOD IN CANADA DURING COVID-19

Farzaneh Barak, Monika Korzun  
November 2022

FOOD SECURE CANADA RESEARCH REFRESHER REPORT



# With Gratitude

We extend profound gratitude to our vibrant community for their unwavering support and dedication to a just, healthy, and sustainable food system.

Special thanks to our funders, including those mentioned above, Inter Pares, Clif Family Foundation, and all of our many individual and organisational members. Their support has empowered transformative initiatives, and amplified underrepresented voices. Heartfelt appreciation goes to our event hosts and collaborators for shaping perspectives, fostering connections, and advancing shared goals.

A sincere acknowledgement to the Indigenous Food Sovereignty and the African-Canadian Food Sovereignty Network for steering our initiatives toward a more inclusive and equitable future. In recognizing both challenges and lessons learned, we value the collective strength of our community and partners that propels us forward.

Committed to justice, equity, and solidarity, we express our deepest thanks to everyone who contributes to our journey.



**FSC**

Food Secure Canada