



Sprouting Stories

Food Literacy Roundtable Report
June 2022





EVENT OVERVIEW

This past June marked the much anticipated return of our Food Literacy Roundtable. We were all so grateful to celebrate the return to an in-person event while simultaneously offering virtual participation for the first half of this gathering. This event allowed us to come together and reconnect through storytelling and expansive discussion. We look forward to sharing some of our learnings and intentions for the future that we took away from this event.

The gathering was held on the unceded territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples, specifically that of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, at KWENCH, a collaborative working space dedicated to creative and community-based work. This year we chose to center the gathering around the theme of storytelling. This theme was central to all aspects of the event, from a panel discussion on stories of food programs and initiatives in our community, to the thought-provoking conversations of our later breakout sessions.

This event included participants representing many different areas of the food system, including a number of local non-profits, neighborhood houses, representatives from local government, and other community members. We shared food and spent time networking and connecting with one another. While the virtual participants were unable to join us in the same space, there were activities and opportunities to connect one another within the virtual sphere as well.

We want to sincerely thank our panelists, namely Diana Gibson (Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria) and Elisa Birnbaum (Editor of SEE Change Magazine) for moderating, and to speakers Marcus Lobb (Farm to School), Jim McIsaac (BC Commercial Fishing Caucus), and Christina Peacock (Closing the Supply Gap).





BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Stories of Impact - with Diana Gibson and Elisa Birnbaum

The Stories of Impact session hosted by Diana Gibson and Elisa Birnbaum focused on how storytelling can not only help center our ideas, but it also helps us keep our messages clearer and truer to their intent. This session reminded us of the transformative and personalized capacity of storytelling to deepen relationships and communication. When viewed from the perspective of food literacy, we were reminded that the potential for storytelling cannot be overstated.

This session involved a [powerpoint presentation](#) by Elisa Birnbaum and a discussion exercise where participants were asked to come up with headlines and key messages to practice creating clear and concise narratives. We were left with some important reminders when it comes to storytelling which included being knowledgeable about the subject without relying on industry jargon, using clear and accessible language, defining the conflicts or challenges we are facing and explaining how we are seeking to address them. We were also reminded of the importance of keeping the human aspect present in our storytelling through tapping into our emotions and motivations, and using calls to action as a way of realizing our goals and coming together to achieve them.

Innovative Programs and Initiatives - with Ariel Reyes Antuan, Susan Tychie and Fiona Devereaux

Ariel Reyes Antuan led a [presentation](#) on the Palenke produce box program. Our discussion on how this program is seeking to address food injustice in our region was grounded in the acknowledgement that these inequities disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples, those of African descent, and those living with differing abilities. The presentation highlighted the ongoing pressures brought on by the pandemic and the community organizing and collective



impact that has arisen from this program. Action items identified within the presentation included donating land, raising awareness, volunteering with this and other programs, and providing financial support through reliable, multi-year funding.

Susan Tychie's presentation on the new Kitchen Connect facility at the South Island Farm Hub spoke to the mounting need that arose out of the pandemic to stabilize local food production and processing. The Kitchen Connect facility, in partnership with South Island Farm Hub and the Mustard Seed, offers an accessible space where local food producers can add value to their products and market them to local consumers and retailers.

Fiona Devereaux shared clips from the [Food is Medicine cooking series](#) she has been working on in collaboration with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and the Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (I-SPARC). We watched a short trailer for the show and were all excited to watch the rest of the series after hearing Fiona talk about the joy that had arisen within the series through the sharing of food and stories. The show follows the teachings of Indigenous knowledge keepers on harvesting, preserving, preparing, and enjoying cultural staples. This presentation offered an exciting glimpse of the vitality of Indigenous food systems while still serving as a poignant reminder of the work that remains to be done to uplift Indigenous food sovereignty.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

The majority of participants were able to join us in person, with about 30 folks present in person and roughly 10 in virtual attendance. While this option offered flexibility to participate for those who were unable to be there in person, we received feedback that a recorded session would



have allowed for a better flow and dynamic between the attendees and the panelists. There was also positive feedback about the opportunity to see people in person that they had previously only been able to connect with virtually. The appreciation of having good food at the event also reiterated the importance of making healthy and happy food available at our events given that it is the common link between our work as a network. There was very positive feedback from the breakout sessions, particularly those who were excited to bring the storytelling learnings into their own work.



KEY RESOURCES

[BC Food Security Gateway](#)

- Community of Practice delving into key injustices, gaps, and challenges in our provincial food system.

[Provincial Government Food Policy Survey](#)

- The Government of BC is leading the creation of a Provincial food security framework that will outline how the government can further help address food security across the province, in partnership with other organizations and sectors. Fill out the survey for your input to be included!

[Youth Climate Justice Group](#)

- Help spread the word to any youth who might be interested in joining the group this summer.

[Elisa Birnbaum's Storytelling Presentation](#)

[Ariel's Slides on Equity Centered Design](#)

[Food is Medicine cooking series](#)



THANK YOU!

Thank you to all of you who were able to attend in-person or virtually for participating, sharing, and for promoting food literacy in our communities! A special thanks to our planning committee: Janelle Hatch, Ana Mendez, Alistair Knox, Kelly Davies, Marcus Lobb, Diana Gibson and to the CRFAIR team for supporting the event on the day of.

Thank you again to our panelists and session leaders, Diana Gibson and Elisa Birnbaum, Marcus Lobb, Jim McIsaac, Christina Peacock, Ariel Reyes Antuan, Susan Tychie, and Fiona Devereaux. We appreciate you sharing your time, knowledge, and experiences with us all.

Thankyou to our sponsors and supporters! With special Thanks to the **Community Wellness Program of Island Health and the Victoria Foundation.**

CRFAIR



CRFAIR envisions a region where local, sustainable and healthy food is celebrated, abundant and central to the cultures, health and well being of residents. CRFAIR mobilizes and connects efforts to develop healthy, equitable and sustainable food systems in the Capital Region. We act as a backbone organization, supporting a broad network of food systems actors: The Good Food Network.

www.crfair.ca



The Good Food Network

The Good Food Network joins numerous organizations with the shared purpose of connecting individuals across the capital region and aligning our efforts towards a healthy and sustainable food system in our region. work together towards a healthy and sustainable food system in our region.

<https://www.goodfoodnetwork.info/>