

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 14 April 2021 18:30 GMT -04:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	GTA emergency food forum
CONVENED BY	local farm and food coop, national farmers union, oasis food hub/st.james town co-op, conscious minds co-op
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/11787/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Canada

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18	20	19-30	30	31-50	5	51-65	1	66-80	80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

20	Male	36	Female		Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

10	Agriculture/crops		Education		Health care
	Fish and aquaculture		Communication	5	Nutrition
	Livestock	5	Food processing		National or local government
	Agro-forestry		Food retail, markets		Utilities
20	Environment and ecology		Food industry		Industrial
	Trade and commerce		Financial Services	16	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

10	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation		Local authority
12	Small-scale farmer		Government and national institution
4	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
20	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
4	Indigenous People		Consumer group
	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

By including the word “Emergency” in the title of our forum, we framed the entirety of our discussion in the context of “acting with urgency.” We used the action tracks as the basis for organizing the breakout groups of our first session, thereby “committing to the summit.” We invited speakers and participants from all parts of our regional food sector, thereby “recognizing complexity” and “embracing multi-stakeholder inclusivity.” We invited those with expertise on particular aspects of the food system to talk about their projects and allowed participants to form relationships with these experts in breakout sessions. In this way we “complemented the work of others” and “built trust” among those we engaged.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

By including the word “Emergency” in the title of our forum, we framed the entirety of our discussion in the context of “acting with urgency.” We used the action tracks as the basis for organizing the breakout groups of our first session, thereby “committing to the summit.” We invited speakers and participants from all parts of our regional food sector, thereby “recognizing complexity” and “embracing multi-stakeholder inclusivity.” We invited those with expertise on particular aspects of the food system to talk about their projects and allowed participants to form relationships with these experts in breakout sessions. In this way we “complemented the work of others” and “built trust” among those we engaged.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

We had in attendance stakeholders from all parts of our local food system. Throughout the forum, our speakers and facilitators guided these participants in building trust with each other, while having the opportunity to learn about, and complement, each other’s work. In our first session, we had participants choose specific action tracks from the UN Food Systems Summit to focus on, prompting them to think about their work within the context of these levers of systemic change. We embedded our forum within the framework of the Human Right to Food and The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Covenant, which calls for mutual respect and the equitable sharing of resources among all of those who live in the Great Lakes region, which includes the Greater Toronto Area (Ontario, Canada). This supported focusing on sustainability, inclusivity for people of many cultures and decent livelihoods for all workers and producers in the food system.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Emergency Food Forum started in 2019, with the realization that our land, soil, food, and food supply are being threatened by destructive farming practices, delicate global supply chains, exploitative labour practices and rapidly changing climate. The first EFF was convened to build a community of individuals that wanted to take action in creating a healthy, sustainable and resilient food system. In March of 2020, over 100 people and 73 organizations gathered online to discuss the breakdown of our food supply and the growing food and economic insecurity the COVID-19 pandemic was causing. On April 14, 21 & 28, 2021 we held the 3rd annual Ontario Emergency Food forum to continue the conversation, review the lessons of 2020 and build on our successes for a better, more resilient and just food system. At the EFF this year, we focused on identifying issues and generating actionable solutions while looking through lenses of equity and human rights, the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Covenant, Black and Indigenous food sovereignty, the UN Action tracks, and the Human Right to Food.

ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- Finance
- Innovation
- ✓ Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

In order to organize and identify gaps and possibilities we created a spreadsheet of food system solutions. The sheet was first separated into eight different goals or intentions that had been drawn out during our break-out groups, as well as continuing conversations from the Emergency Food Forum of 2020 (ex. Indigenous Access to Local Land Spaces, Policy Demands, and Food Awareness and Literacy etc.). Under each goal we included three columns: role, resource, need, opportunity; person, organization, strategy to offer; and groups or organizations already connected to this work. The first two columns would be filled by someone offering or looking for something, and the third could be filled by another person who sees how this offer/ask fits in somewhere else. This provides an opportunity for networking and identifying gaps and opportunities. Some key areas of interest for our participants included a) collaborating and supporting existing BIPOC food sovereignty initiatives, b) building the capacity of our "Food Corps," which helps provides labour for small-scale agro-ecological farmers and healthy food for hungry food insecure communities, c) the creation of a farm training curriculum for our volunteers, d) calling for urgent action from our government regarding the current food crisis in the form of an open letter (see attached).

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- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
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- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/10

The first session introduced two lenses through which participants could discuss the food system: The Dish with One Spoon Treaty and the Human Right to Food. The first half of the event was spent familiarizing participants with these lenses, as well as with the ongoing work of the Eco Just Food Network.

The participants were then invited to attend one of five breakout rooms based on the five Action Tracks. Each group had at least one facilitator and one note taker and all participants were encouraged to view and add to a virtual white board. After their discussion, the group's designated note takers and facilitators gave summaries of what their breakout groups had talked about.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/10

Group 1: Access to Safe and Nutritious Food (framed by Action Track 1)

This group began by discussing the different ways we grow food, whether that be in soil, or using hydroponics or aeroponics, then went on to speak in more detail about the benefits of non-soil based agriculture such as increasing yield and preserving forested land. The group also talked about the limitations of food banks in addressing the food needs of diverse communities. Participants spoke of the experience of using food banks, feeling watched, judged, and not having access to healthy or culturally relevant food choices. Finally, the group talked about the challenges of living in capitalism and ways to overcome or mitigate those challenges. Some options were discussed like a universal basic income as well as time banks and other alternative economies.

ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/10

Group 2: Ecological Consumption (framed by Action Track 2)

First, this group talked about what ecological consumption meant to everyone: consuming and growing foods native to the lands we're on, ensuring living wages and good working conditions for agricultural workers, transparency in the entire chain of production to consumption. They also provided a breakdown of sustainable consumption in our notes. The group then discussed their struggles to consume sustainably during the pandemic, characterized by an increase in online services and use of plastic. If one is trying to consume in an ecologically friendly way, their choices are often limited. One might have to choose between going plastic-free, local, or organic, but rarely get the option to have all three. Time banking was once again proposed as one way of shifting the frameworks of who/what we value in our economic system. Other forms of alternative markets, such as buy-nothing groups, were also mentioned, and the concept of mutual aid came up time after time.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance
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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/10

Group 3: Ecological Production (framed by Action Track 3)

This group started by defining ecological production, as well as talking about the importance of mother earth and grandmother water. Different forms of economies were also discussed by this group, focusing on sharing economies, but also talking about cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology as decentralized, egalitarian ways of sharing equity. The group then moved to a discussion of land and land use. They talked about seed sharing, genetics of plants and animals being held in a commons, getting more people to farms, getting young people on farm land, providing resources and access to land, as well as the importance of shifting subsidies away from big agriculture and to supporting local, enriching farming practices.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
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KEYWORDS

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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/10

Group 4: Work, Income, and the Food System (framed by Action Track 4)

First, this group identified two trends in agriculture today: 1. Regenerative agriculture: low tech, lots of manual labour and 2. Digital/automated agriculture: high tech, data-driven. The group discussed the need to embrace helpful technology while also fostering employment and keeping a sacred connection to the land, this being particularly true for communities in Northern Canada. Farmers talked about how difficult it can be to get started or to even gain a foot-hold in the food system. There is a simultaneous need in urban communities for healthy food and often an abundance of it for farmers at harvest, so what is necessary is to bring these folks together. Time banking, as well as the Food Corps program being offered by the Eco Just Food Network, were discussed. Some of the concerns around time banking were issues around trust, reciprocity, as well as the difficulty of getting folks to move away from values based on our current economic system.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy
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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 6/10

Group 5: Food System Resilience (Framed by action Track 5)

This group started off by looking at resilience as a historical system built over time, but also shared different views of what resilience can look and feel like. Two important questions came up:

1. Do we need new systems or do we need to work with what we already have today?
2. How can we do both?

The group agreed that our current agricultural system has made us less resilient, and that there is a great need for education about all of this, as well as a need to organize together. The group ended with a discussion about the power of stories and storytelling and the importance of grounding our work in our material conditions and our lived realities. They emphasized that the food system needs to be a system of relationships and not rooted in elitism and corporate power.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 7/10

Session Two

The second session was meant to get participants not simply talking about the problems we are facing, but “cultivating solutions” to those problems together. The first set of breakout rooms encouraged folks to think of solutions together, while the second set focused on “driving policy change” in the food system.

Group 1: Time Banking & Alternative Economies

This group started with an overview of the Eco Just Food Network’s Food Corps program, which connects folks from urban communities to rural farmers in need of help. This led to a discussion of the program’s use of a time bank, as well as of how that time bank connects to the St. James Town Community Co-op’s time bank. The reciprocity of this relationship, as well as reciprocity as one of the foundational concepts of time banking was also discussed. The group also talked about how living inside a capitalist system shapes our attitude towards work such that we need these alternative economic systems to make it easier for us to recognize and reward the labour that keeps our communities and our food system going.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 8/10

Group 2: Co-operative, Alternative Food, and Land Access

This group discussed concrete ways of getting around lack of access, such as collective ownership models and land trusts. They gave examples of organizations doing this work like Local Food and Farm Co-op, St. James Town Community Co-op, Liberating Lawns, and the Eco Just Food Network. They also enumerated obstacles farmers face to land access such as bureaucratic red tape and zoning requirements.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 9/10

Group 3: Black Food Sovereignty and Cultural Food

This group began by talking about everyone's ancestral background as well as where each of the participants was coming from in their work. They discussed the history of food on this land and how colonization also brought foreign food which did not naturally grow here before. The great diversity on this land, both in food and in the people living here today was of particular significance to this group. Upcoming actions and events around Black food sovereignty were also mentioned as a way for participants to keep the ball rolling.

Group 4: Climate Change, Urban Agriculture, and Infrastructure

This group talked about problems with zoning, red tape, and bureaucracy when dealing with accessing growing space in the city. They also talked about ongoing actions to mitigate the impacts of climate change on our communities, such as St. James Town Community Co-op's OASIS Food Hub. Another possible solution discussed was to partner with existing institutions who already have access to space, such as schools, businesses, or faith buildings.

Another issue the group outlined is the lack of support from local politicians who too often say all the right things but have not been following through on their promises to our organizations. Ways of applying pressure to politicians such as creating campaigns were also discussed.

Group 5: UN Food Summit and Canadian Policy

The group first went over the 5 UN Action Tracks, then built on that with some of their personal experiences working in food policy.

Participants mentioned the belief that our local governments in Ontario are actively getting in the way of helpful initiatives, as opposed to other places in the world which can sometimes be more welcoming and supportive to their citizens. The group talked about the human rights abuses going on in Canada and proposed actionable solutions for holding our own dialogues and getting our story out there.

Group 6: Open Letter/GTA/Ontario

This group talked about the open letter which can be found at the end of this report. The letter was written as a result of the previous Emergency Food Forum; consequently, part of the group's discussion centred around how the letter has been used in the past year, how many individuals and organizations have signed on, and how to work on advancing and actioning the letter's demands. Despite the government's perceived eagerness to address our current climate crisis, the group felt that their local representatives were not doing enough to address the real needs of their constituents.

Group 7: Black Food Sovereignty

This group talked about the importance of engaging Black communities, especially Black youth around Toronto and the GTA in Black food sovereignty initiatives. The group stressed the significance in listening to communities who know what the problems are and often also have great plans for how to fix those problems.

During the pandemic, the government showed a lack of strategic planning and the importance of local, grassroots movements was evident. The group also discussed how to organize Black communities, especially in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 10/10

Session Three

The final session was spent organizing what next steps the participants could take to bring action to the previous sessions' discussions. Participants broke up into three breakout groups: one focusing on direct action, one on local/regional policy, and one on international policy. The group on direct action focused on developing and growing our "Food Corps" team, which provides small-scale farmers with volunteering support and hungry urban communities with access to healthy food. The regional policy group discussed strategies for working with our municipal and provincial governments to address our urgent food crisis, through such means as our open letter (attached). The third group discussed how to involve oneself in the UN Food Systems Summit itself.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

One area of divergence we as organizers encountered was one between advocacy and action. Some participants felt strongly that action oriented solutions, such as our "Food Corps," were best suited to tackling the current food crisis. Others in attendance saw political advocacy as the most effective method of change. As organizers we attempted to structure the dialogue so that participants could hear from speakers with expertise in both advocacy and action, and then choose breakout sessions related to which topic they preferred.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Eco Just Food Network**
<https://ecojustfoodnetwork.org/>
- **Open Letter**
<https://ecojustfoodnetwork.org/food-crisis-open-letter/>