



# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM

Research and Stakeholder Meeting Summary Report



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- Horticulture NS
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- Springboard Atlantic
- The Station Food Hub, Ltd.
- Valley Regional Enterprise Network
- Very Local Greens





On October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 a multi-sectoral, interdisciplinary group of stakeholders representing over 30 community-based, academic, governmental, and non-governmental organizations gathered at the Change Lab Action Research Initiative (CLARI) located at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The purpose of the stakeholder gathering was threefold:

- 1) To share the details and findings of a research project led by Dr. Jennifer Brady and Dr. Manfred Egbe titled, *Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the Halifax Regional Municipality*. The project explores the experiences and meaning of cultural food security for newcomers (i.e. immigrants and refugees) living in the HRM;
- 2) To engage a diverse group of organizations and individuals whose work is interconnected in varied ways to the aims of the research project through a series of facilitated discussions;
- 3) To identify a core team of committed individuals, as well as in-kind and financial support, to design and implement a pilot project that would enable newcomers living in the HRM to grow food at larger scales in rural areas of the province, and thereby, put into action the findings of the research project.

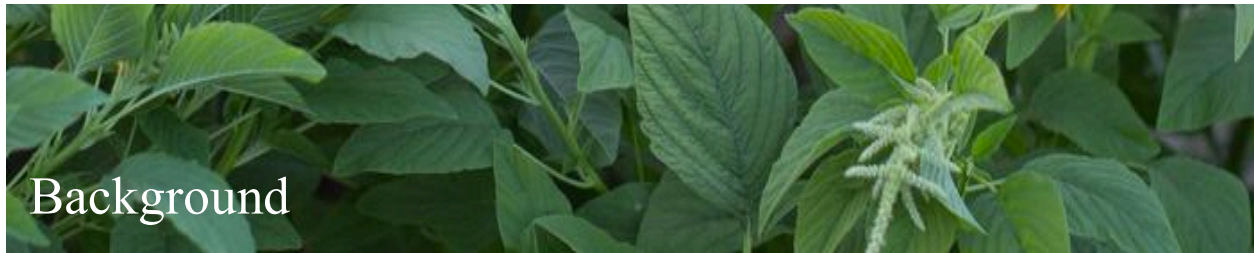
The PowerPoint slides presented at the stakeholder gathering are included in Appendix A of this summary report.



Presentation at the stakeholder gathering held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019.



Mayor Mike Savage providing a welcome address to attendees of the stakeholder gathering.



This section of the Research and Stakeholder Meeting Report presents an overview of published research and governmental reports in four key areas:

1. Immigration
2. Community, cultural, and economic development
3. Cultural food security
4. Occupational justice

This overview is important to understanding the specific social, cultural, and economic contexts that shape NS and that influence opportunities to support newcomers in settling successfully in the province. The four key areas touched on in the overview are also key to the findings of the research and the subsequent stakeholder meeting that is reported on in this report.

## Immigration, Retention, and Settlement

Immigration is important to population growth in NS. NS saw record breaking levels of immigration to the province in 2018 and 2019 (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, 2019; see Figure 1). In 2019, the number of approved applications from migrants to NS was 21% higher than those in 2018, and 300% higher than those in 2013. The 2019 rise in immigration included 6,630 permanent residents by the end of October of that year—a 26.9% increase over the same period in 2018. What is more, retention of immigrants to NS is the highest in the region at 71%, however, that rate has not increased since 2005.

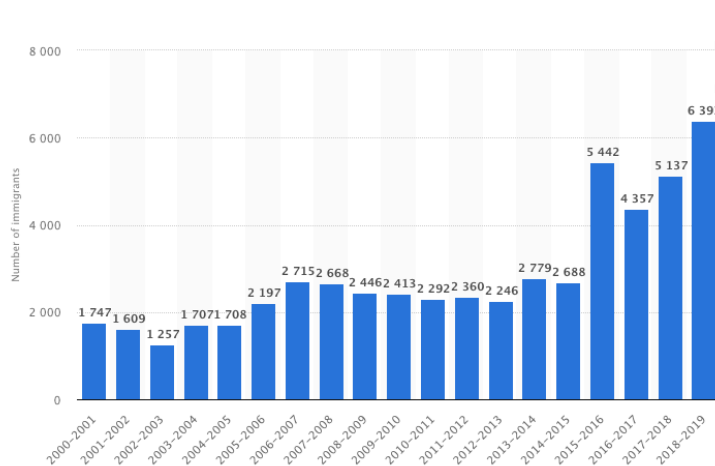


Figure 1: Number of immigrants to Nova Scotia, 2000 - 2019  
(Nova Scotia Office of Immigration - Statista, 2019)

The 2016 Census data show that, in proportion to county population, the largest share of immigrants to Nova Scotia settle in the HRM (10.6%), followed by Annapolis (6.2%), Lunenburg (5.9%), Antigonish (5.1%), and Victoria (5.0%) (see Figure 2; Statistics Canada, 2017). The majority of immigrants to NS are admitted as Economic Immigrants (61.5%), followed by Immigrant sponsored by family (21.1%), and Refugees (16.8%) (Nova Scotia Finance and Treasury Board, 2017). The Nova Scotia

Office of Immigration notes that the growing numbers of newcomers and the high retention rate reflects the province's efforts to streamline the immigration process and to recruit newcomers to fill specific labour needs, particularly in health care (Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, 2017).

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot, which was introduced in 2017, and which enables registered employers to recruit skilled workers, has also enabled Nova Scotia to attract more economic class immigrants.

Calls for efforts to increase immigration have been made in various venues, including the 2014 report, *Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians* (hereafter referred to as *One Nova Scotia*), and the 2017 report, *Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan: Creativity and Community* (hereafter the *NS Culture Action Plan*). *One Nova Scotia* identified immigration as a “critical area” for partnership and policy action to achieve a lasting turnaround of Nova Scotia’s economy. Specifically, immigration was noted as key to the economic growth of NS because of the potential for new business and investment, as well as new

perspectives and ways of thinking. Likewise, the *NS Culture Action Plan*, which outlines six guiding themes to strengthen and promote cultural activity in the province, cites increased immigration to NS as a key action point to support the fourth theme, Advance Cultural Diversity. The potential for economic and social and cultural growth as a result of increased immigration is significant given that the population of newcomers to Nova Scotia tends to be highly educated relative to the domestic population (Akbari, 2018).

An important avenue for recruiting newcomers to Nova Scotia is in the retention of international students. International students represent an important pool of young people who are highly educated and who are poised to contribute to the community, cultural, and economic growth of the province (Ivany et al., 2014).

However, the economic and socio-cultural growth that immigration promises is only beneficial if the knowledge, skills, aspirations, and other human potential that immigrants bring to NS is acknowledged, valued, and adequately translated to the labour, economic, social, and cultural contexts of the province (Akbari, 2018). *One Nova Scotia* identified attitudinal barriers among Nova Scotians to increased immigration that stem from racism and the view that newcomers take away jobs from Nova Scotians. Contrary to this view, recent data shows that newcomers are more likely to create jobs through entrepreneurial activity (Nova Scotia Finance and Treasury Board, 2019). It is also possible that negative attitudinal barriers toward immigration stem from the historical and current lack of racial and ethnic diversity in NS (see Figure 3). These attitudinal barriers negatively impact upon the success of newcomers’ settlement, and undoubtedly contribute to the stagnant retention rate of newcomers to the province. Ultimately, efforts to increase immigration must be matched with efforts to enhance retention of newcomers to Nova Scotia, such as by better facilitating settlement, and giving newcomers even more reasons to stay in the province.

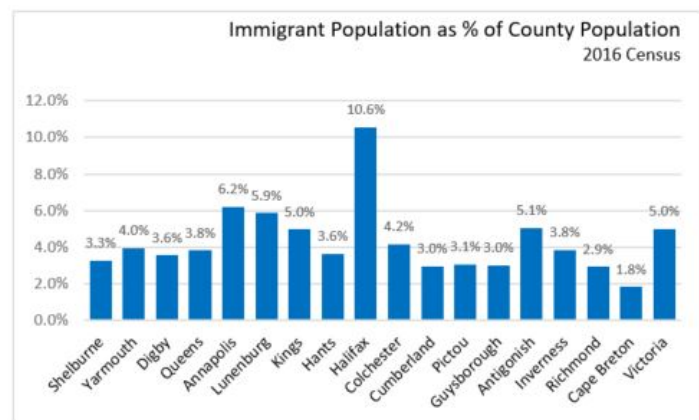


Figure 2: Immigrant population as % of county population, 2016 Census. Figure courtesy of Nova Scotia Finance and Treasury Board (2017).

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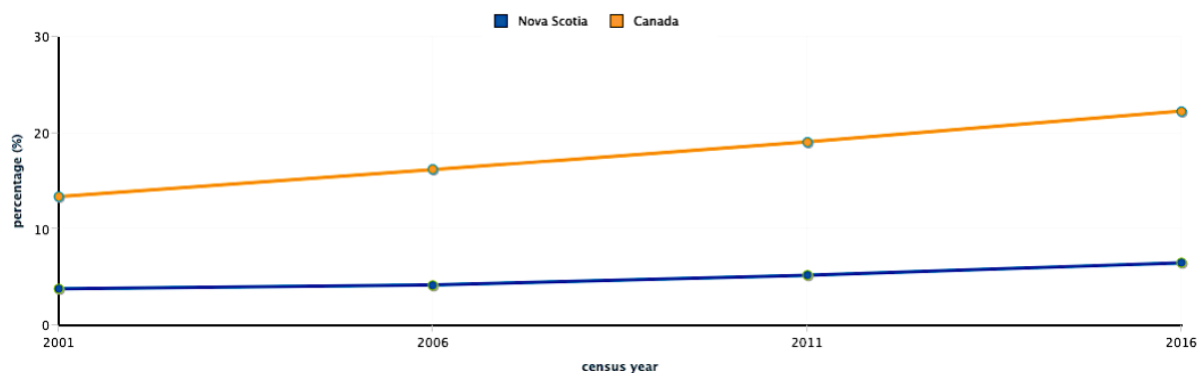


Figure 3: Population (in percentage) belonging to a visible minority group, Nova Scotia, 2001 - 2016 (Statistic Canada, 2017)

Not surprising is research that shows that food plays an important role in the settlement of immigrants in their new home. Ahmed *et al.* (2003) use the concept of “regrounding” to describe the process of settlement, which they describe not as a start of a new life, but as the tending of a re-rooting plant whereby newcomers tend to and foster the habits, practices, preferences, knowledge, skills, and dreams that they bring with them. When understood as a process of regrounding, taking retention seriously and better supporting newcomer settlement, means that Nova Scotia must attend to the conditions that allow newcomers to grow and flourish. Food is a central component of the conditions that can facilitate, strengthen, and nourish the re-rooted plant (Lessa & Rocha, 2012).

## Community, Cultural, and Economic Development

### *Community Development*

Economic development is important to the prosperity of NS and its communities. As highlighted in the *One Nova Scotia* report, economies and communities grow around cities. Entrepreneurial networks tend to cluster around urban centres, originating in universities, government agencies, and community organizations. Halifax is emerging as the largest and most influential urban centre in Atlantic Canada and has the potential to positively impact community development across Nova Scotia. However, NS is in need of more entrepreneurs, and appears to have special challenges when it comes to risk taking and creative business development.

Nova Scotia is among Canada’s most rural provinces. In 2015, 42.6% of the province’s population resided in rural areas (i.e., areas with a population of less than 1,000 lying outside population centre areas with 400 people per square kilometre<sup>2</sup>) compared to the national average of 18.7%. The proportion of the population living in population centre areas (formerly urban areas in the previous census) is 57.4% compared to 81.3% national average (Statistics Canada, 2017). Although growth in urban centres is important, collaboration between urban and rural

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areas is key to reaping benefits of economic and community development across the province. Greater cooperation among jurisdictions and regions are essential to build economic and community capacity (Ivaney et al., 2014). Furthermore, development in rural centres of Nova Scotia is vital to thriving rural communities – investments in rural infrastructure, affordable childcare, training and education initiatives, affordable housing, and transportation can help to grow these areas and to retain newcomers in rural areas (Esses & Carter, 2019).

### *Cultural Development*

Nova Scotia has a rich food and drink culture that has emerged from its diverse heritage which includes African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaw, and Acadian communities, its agricultural and fisheries resources, as well as developing ventures led by community and local business. However, there is opportunity to build upon and enrich NS's already rich foodscape.

The *NS Culture Action Plan* stresses the importance of culture to enhancing innovation, diversity, and economic growth in the province (Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, & Heritage, 2017). In addition to the arts, museums, music, fashion, and sports, the *NS Culture Action Plan* notes the importance of food and drink to culture in the province. Although food is relevant to each of the six themes that are the basis for the action plan, it is of particular importance to three of the six themes:

#### *Theme 2—Promote creativity and Innovation;*

Creative and innovative food businesses can contribute to a thriving cultural sector, which will attract more people and businesses to an area. Many newcomers to Nova Scotia bring food skills and knowledge that can drive innovation within the food sector.

#### *Theme 4—Advance Cultural Diversity;*

Diversity within Nova Scotia promotes and attracts further diversity. Restaurants and other food businesses owned by newcomers to Nova Scotia can help to drive tourism to the area and may also work to make newcomers feel more comfortable and at home, enabling the retention of newcomers to the area.

#### *Theme 6—Drive Awareness and Economic Growth of the Culture Sector.*

Farming and the production of value-added foods by newcomers to Nova Scotia have the potential to drive economic growth within the province. Stories should be told about the innovation happening within the food sector, to grow the awareness and market for these foods and products. Nova Scotia has a relatively strong “buy local” movement, and foods grown and produced by newcomers to the area should be integrated into any such marketing program.

Enriching and enhancing Nova Scotia's foodscape could be an important vehicle for bolstering cultural diversity, economic activity, and innovation.

*One Nova Scotia* also highlights the benefit of expanding the arts, culture, and creative sectors for economic gain, including a boost to employment, as well as to stimulate community development, and social inclusion and well-being. Although *One Nova Scotia* specifically identifies the arts, such as film, crafts, media, and performance, as important targets for cultural development, food is another with great potential to bolster the cultural vibrancy of the province.



### *Economic Development*

A 2018 report by The Centre for Local Prosperity highlights the trade deficit, which is the dollar value of imports versus exports exchanged by a geographic region. Across Atlantic Canada, the trade deficit is approximately \$11 billion, with NS contributing to just over one-third of that at \$4.5 billion. The trade deficit means that NS communities are “leaking” the economic benefit of producing and selling goods locally, but also are more vulnerable to disruptions in global supply and price changes, as has been seen recently with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Centre for Local Prosperity report also notes that “import replacement can be a crucial economic driver for small, rural and local communities looking for a new and different economic future.” Import replacement is a key to reversing, or significantly decreasing, NS’s trade deficit, but requires that we produce more goods and services that may be sold locally and abroad as a way to keep money circulating within the region.

Furthermore, NS needs to participate in trade to keep the economy healthy, but recent decades have shown a decline in exports. As highlighted in the *One Nova Scotia* report, the value of Nova Scotia exports fell by 30% between 2003 and 2012. One contributing factor to this fall in export value was low prices for seafood. However, a number of smaller sectors are showing promise, including frozen food products. Additionally, seafood and agri-food are two of the most significant innovation gaps in the province, which are related to insufficient industry participation and an over-reliance on government support. More start-ups in these areas would benefit the NS economy and could provide employment opportunities for newcomers who bring significant food skills from their home country. There are also significant opportunities for global trade as the world’s population grows and the demand for food increases (Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, 2014).

### **Food Insecurity and Newcomers**

Food insecurity is defined as “the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints” (Tarasuk & Mitchel, 2020). In Canada, the measurement of food insecurity is an indication of material deprivation, particularly inadequate financial resources. The most recent national survey data shows that the prevalence of income-related household food insecurity in Canada is 12.7% (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2020). Nova Scotia remains the province with highest rate of food insecurity at 15.3%, well above the national average.

For newcomers to Canada, the rate of household food insecurity is even higher. For households where the respondent was a newcomer who has been in Canada for less than 5 years the rate of food insecurity is 17.1% (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2020). The rate of food insecurity drops to 13.8% for those who have been in Canada for at least five years, which nears, but is still higher than the national average (12.2%). Of note is that, while the rate of food insecurity among recent newcomers declined from the rate of 19.6% reported two years earlier, the rate among newcomers that have been in Canada for five years or longer has increased over that time period from a previous rate of 12.6% (Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2014).

These data suggest that the financial disparity between newcomer and Canadian-born populations is increasing, and that settlement is having less of an effect on reducing poverty and food insecurity among this group. It is also important to note that the rates of food insecurity among newcomers does not include data collected from refugees, a population that has been found to experience even higher rates of food insecurity and poverty (e.g., Lane, Nisbet, &



Vatanparast, 2019; Tarraf, Sanou, & Giroux, 2017). Overall, these data indicate that newcomers are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity due to financial constraints.

## Cultural Food Security and Newcomers

Financial constraints are not the only factor that compromises newcomers' food security. In addition to the financial constraints that prevent newcomers from accessing food of sufficient quality and quantity, newcomers face obstacles in accessing culturally appropriate foods (e.g., Vahabi & Damba, 2013). Access to culturally appropriate foods is an important component of food security. Food security is defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food security is a situation in which "all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life" (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2020).

For newcomers, having access to food that meets their preferences and dietary needs means having access to culturally appropriate foods. We define culturally appropriate foods as foods that are preferred, are familiar, and that also reflect and affirm a peoples' cultural identity, and culturally rooted meanings of eating, health, and nourishment.

As the research findings presented later in this report show, for newcomers, food security also means having access to the means of growing, sharing, producing, and preparing culturally appropriate foods, or what can be understood as culturally appropriate foodways. Foodways include the food-related traditions, customs, culinary practices, and habits of a culturally, socially, or spiritually defined population, a geographic region, or a historical period. Hence, for newcomers, cultural food security comprises access to familiar, and meaningful foods, as well as to the means and practices to grow, produce, share, sell, and prepare foods in ways that are culturally meaningful, and that affirm and connect newcomers to cultural, linguistic, and spiritual communities.

Power (2008) defined the parameters of cultural food insecurity from her work with Indigenous communities as "a lack of access to cultural foods and foodways, which is an important social justice concern that lies beyond individual, household, or community food insecurity caused by financial insufficiency and is central to cultural health and survival. Thus, food security for

**Food insecurity** "is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints." Food insecurity is more prevalent among newcomers and the disparity among newcomers and Canadian-born populations is increasing. (Tarasuk & Mitchel, 2020)

**Food security** occurs when "all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life" (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2020).

**Culturally appropriate foods** are preferred foods that are familiar, and that also reflect and affirm a peoples' cultural identity, as well as culturally rooted meanings of eating, health, and nourishment.

**Foodways** include the traditions, customs, culinary practices, and eating habits of a population, a geographic region, or a historical period.

**Cultural food security** comprises access to familiar, and meaningful foods, as well as to the means and practices to grow, produce, share, sell, and prepare foods in ways that are culturally meaningful, and that affirm and connect newcomers to cultural and linguistic communities.

newcomers implies both income-related access and access to sufficient, nutritious and quality food at all times and access to the conditions that allow “regrounding” in their new home. This includes access to culturally preferred foods and engaging in meaningful occupation which represent a sense of feeling welcome, having equality and receiving recognition (Wolf et al., 2010).

## Occupational Justice

Many newcomers experience a decline in job status, e.g., a mismatch between their education and training and their employment in Canada, when they immigrate (Wilkinson et al., 2016). Data show that unemployment rates for newcomers who have been in Nova Scotia for five years or less was 11.3% in 2019 – over four percentage points higher than those Nova Scotians born in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2020). However, the unemployment rate among newcomers who have been in Canada for more than five years declines to be near equivalent with the Canadian-born population – 6.5% and 5.5% respectively – (Statistics Canada, 2020). The higher unemployment rate for newcomers is likely one contributor to the stagnant retention rates of newcomers to Nova Scotia as newcomers leave the province for other regions where job opportunities are more plentiful.

However, occupation and its importance to settlement for newcomers is not simply about paid employment, but about access to meaningful occupation. Occupation has been defined by occupational therapy scholars as the “day-to-day means through which we exercise health, citizenship and social inclusion” (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004, p. 81). Occupational therapy scholars have further defined occupational justice as “a term that emphasizes rights, responsibilities, and liberties that enable the individual to experience health and quality of life through engagement in occupations” (Wolf et al., 2010, pg. 15). Occupational injustices “occur when people are denied the physical, social, economic, or cultural resources or opportunities to be engaged in these meaningful occupations” (Wolf et al., 2010). In other words, having access to meaningful occupation is essential to individuals’ sense of belonging and personhood, and is a matter of social justice.

Enhancing opportunities for newcomers to engage in meaningful occupation is an important component of compassionate and just settlement support that acknowledges the need we all have to contribute to the lives of our communities and society. Moreover, meaningful occupation is vital to increasing retention of newcomers to Nova Scotia. The Atlantic Immigration Pilot program was launched in 2017 to attract and retain skilled immigrants and international graduates in the Atlantic Canadian region (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, 2019). It has recently been expanded from only including highly skilled positions, such as managers and medical doctors, to include more intermediate skilled positions, such as servers

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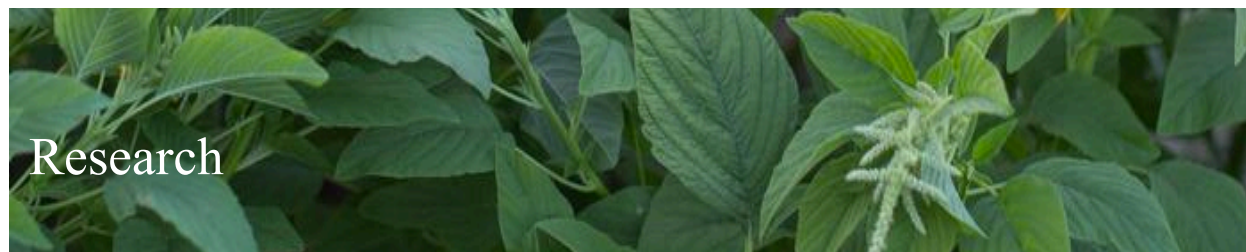
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and truck drivers (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2019). The pilot has recently been extended to 2021; its impact on employment rates and access to meaningful occupation for immigrants in Nova Scotia are of interest.

Employment and skills training are often a focus of the support services offered to newcomers. However, given that many newcomers arrive in Canada with knowledge and skills, it is possible that enabling newcomers' access to meaningful employment is as beneficial as skills training when it comes to retention and settlement.

As outlined in the *One Nova Scotia* report, the “economic and population challenges we now face in Nova Scotia, and dramatically so in our rural regions, demand new vision, innovative approaches, greater collaboration and a greater willingness to take on the risks associated with economic change and progress” (p. 34). Investing in efforts to address these challenges could lead to enhanced community (e.g., infrastructure, positive settlement experiences), culture (e.g., foodscape, tourism), and economic (e.g., local food economics, trade and export replacement) development. Addressing these challenges also provides promising avenues for enhancing immigration, retention, and settlement for newcomers to Nova Scotia, which will further enrich existing communities, cultures, and economic activities.

The remainder of this report will outline a research project we have undertaken to examine cultural food security in Nova Scotia and its relationship to economic growth, newcomer retention, and community development.



The first of the three objectives of the stakeholder gathering was to share the details and findings of a research project titled, *Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM*. The research project explored the meanings and experiences of cultural food security for newcomers in the HRM with a view to developing a conceptual framework of cultural food security that may guide future initiatives to enhance newcomer settlement, occupational justice, and cultural diversity in the HRM. The research project also sought to shed light on how, if at all, enhancing access to culturally appropriate foods for newcomers may impact newcomer settlement, strengthen NS's local, provincial and regional food system, contribute to community and economic development in Nova Scotia, and enrich the cultural heritage and foodscape of the province.

## Research Team

The research project presented at the stakeholder meeting was led by a community-university partnership among students and researchers from Mount Saint Vincent University and Common Roots Urban Farm. The core members of the research team included:

- Sara Burgess, Coordinator, Common Roots Urban Farm, BiHi
- Manfred Egbe, FoodARC/PT Faculty, Mount Saint Vincent University
- Jennifer Brady, Assistant Professor, Applied Human Nutrition, Mount Saint Vincent University
- Meredith Bessey, Research Assistant, MSc. Applied Human Nutrition, Mount Saint Vincent University
- Jaclyn MacNeil, Research Assistant, BSc (c), Applied Human Nutrition, Mount Saint Vincent University

### *Common Roots Urban Farm*

Common Roots Urban Farm was previously located at the corner of Quinpool Road and Robie Street on the grounds of the QEII Hospital. In the summer of 2019, Common Roots Urban Farm was relocated to BiHi Park (Bayers Road and Joseph Howe) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. A second location of Common Roots Urban Farm in the Woodside neighborhood of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia has operated since 2015. The mission of Common Roots Urban Farm “is to promote healthy lifestyles and landscapes through hands-on education about growing and eating healthy food.”

To fulfill its mission, Common Roots Urban Farm operates community garden plots, a market garden, as well as a program called Deep Roots in partnership with Immigrant Services

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of Nova Scotia (ISANS) that connects newcomers who have farming backgrounds with opportunities to grow and sell produce through the urban farm and market garden.

### Research Project Objectives

The research project was guided by three key objectives:

1. Shed light on the meaning of food to the experience of settlement among newcomers living in the HRM;
2. Create a conceptual framework for cultural food security that may guide future initiatives to enhance newcomer settlement and cultural diversity in the HRM;
3. Identify opportunities to enhance cultural food security for newcomers in the HRM that are socially and environmentally sustainable and that contribute to community, cultural, and economic development.

### Methods

Data collection for the research project comprised a series of in-person interviews with newcomers living in the HRM and representatives from local organizations that provide services related to food, settlement, and economic security for newcomers, or that are involved in work related to community, economic, and/or food system development.

A list of relevant service provider organizations in the HRM was developed in the preliminary stages of the project, and representatives within each organization were contacted and invited to participate in an interview. Additional service provider organizations were identified by word of mouth throughout the project. Interviews were conducted with eight representatives from six relevant HRM-based organizations, including Common Roots Urban Farm, ISANS, HUGS Community Garden, Ecology Action Centre, the Loaded Ladle, and Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) Bluewater.

Newcomers interviewed for this project were identified and contacted primarily through Common Roots Urban Farm, and through other service providers involved in the project. With the assistance of translators, the research team conducted interviews with 10 newcomers of various nationalities, including those from Bhutan, Nepal, Rwanda, Syria, Congo and Cameroon.

The interviews with representatives of service provider organizations and newcomers were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software program. Key overarching themes and sub-themes that cut across the interviews were identified through the process of analyzing the interview data. These themes and sub-themes represent the main findings of the research project and are summarized below.

### Research Results

Three key themes were identified in the interview data

- 1) The importance of culturally appropriate foods and foodways;
- 2) Barriers and strategies to access culturally appropriate foods and foodways;
- 3) Sharing food for cultural connection

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Discussion of each theme and accompanying illustrative quotes from the interview data are included below.

### *Theme 1: The importance of culturally appropriate foods and foodways*

Newcomers and service providers highlighted the central role that food plays in affirming identity, fostering connections to family, community, and culture of origin, as well as to building social networks among newcomers' and their new communities (See Figure 4: Theme 1 Illustrative Quotes). Food provided symbolic and material connection to national and linguistic communities, family, a sense of home, and connection to the land and the environment.

What is also clear from this research is that newcomers have culturally rooted ideas of what food is, what healthy food is, and how it should be grown. Newcomers discussed the importance of having access to culturally appropriate food, but also the importance of cultural foodways—the practices of growing, harvesting, preparing, eating, and sharing foods. For newcomers, culturally appropriate foods and foodways connect them to familiar ways of life, including valued roles within their families and society that were related to the work and methods of growing and sharing food.



Being able to prepare and eat their own food was also an important aspect of health for many participants. Newcomers discussed health as a holistic concept that included food that is fresh, safe for the environment, and that they can grow using traditional knowledge.

**Figure 4: Theme 1 Illustrative Quotes –**

*Without the food, I'm gone. Food is everything. Food is my health, food is money, food is family. Food is the friends. Food comes everywhere. Everything we do, food is at the front line.*

*The African, Chinese, Indians, food stores; I have tried everything, but I could not find some of the foods I wanted. I had two gardens at Common Roots, and then in my backyard. I had been looking at what I can do. I watched my tomatoes, and my kales, and my beans, everything, growing. I ate them, I felt that, oh my goodness, I am now home...I am able to feed my friends, because I can share with them. I can share with them and feel like we are together. Yeah, food brings us together.*

*Um ah, when I say food is culture as well because it's through food that I can show a friend from Halifax my origin. That is, I can use food to introduce the, Haligonian to my origins for example. So, through food I can start explaining you know, this is what we do, this is – that's a step. It doesn't mean that's all of my culture, but food can be very good start to introduce yourself and to um ah share your culture with others. And ah, when I say it is friendship it's also a place of sharing. Even between you and immigrants of African descent or different descent, your friendship can be brought through the food.*

*Healthy food to me, is the food which helps my entire body to live healthy. So, I'll go yes, we have science, right. So fresh food is healthy. Especially because there's a lot of things, research, around the food and the sickness, or those things. To me, I think the food we can grow with our own knowledge, without uh, just thinking about uh, things which damage our soil, or our food, I think that's how we can get safe food, healthy food. Yeah, because we know there are lots of things which have been done, and then it makes our food not be healthy.*

*Theme 2: Barriers and strategies to accessing culturally appropriate foods and foodways*

Access to culturally appropriate foods is a major challenge faced by newcomers living in the HRM (See Figure 5: Theme 2 Illustrative Quotes). Newcomers identified three key barriers to accessing culturally appropriate foods: 1) lack of information about where to find culturally diverse foods; 2) lack of available or sufficient transportation to ethnic grocers, which are often spread across the city; 3) the high cost of ethnic foods, which are typically imported.

The lack of information about where to find culturally diverse foods in the HRM was a barrier for several reasons. Some newcomers simply did not know where to access culturally appropriate foods in the various ethnic grocers across the HRM. The lack of location and transportation information was also cited as a barrier to economizing the time and transportation costs sufficiently enough to allow them to get to the various ethnic grocers across the city. Although the HRM is home to various ethnic grocers of various nationalities and cuisines, not all

## Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

newcomer communities are served by a grocer dedicated to that particular community. Most newcomers interviewed for this project noted that there is no ethnic grocer in the HRM that caters to their culture or cuisine of origin and described needing to purchase foods from several ethnic grocers across the city. Newcomers typically described needing to visit several grocers across the city to piece together the foods that make up culturally appropriate meals and dietary patterns. In other words, a lack of knowledge about location of ethnic grocers presented a three-fold barrier: 1) simply not knowing where to find the ethnic grocers that carried culturally appropriate foods across the city; 2) the added barrier that not knowing which culturally appropriate foods were sold at which of the various ethnic grocers; 3) the lack of knowing how or being able to afford and efficiently navigate the city to visit the various ethnic grocers at which they may purchase culturally appropriate foods. The lack of sufficient transportation, particularly for women who regularly had children in tow, made accessing ethnic grocers across the city a time consuming and costly challenge.

Beyond accessing the foods themselves, newcomers and service providers also noted additional barriers for newcomers to accessing culturally appropriate foodways. Specifically, newcomers and service providers cited the need for land and other supports for newcomers to grow culturally appropriate foods and practice familiar, culturally meaningful practices of growing food. Growing culturally appropriate food was noted as having the added benefit of providing newcomers with a means to earn money by selling raw produce or to manufacture and sell value-added foods.

A final barrier is the high cost of culturally appropriate foods, many of which are imported. Imported ethnic foods are costly and out of reach for newcomers, but they are also prohibitively expensive or logistically impossible for ethnic retailers to stock. For example, various fresh greens, which are a staple of many culturally diverse diets and cuisines, are simply not available in the ethnic grocers in the HRM.

## Theme 2 Illustrative Quotes

*Um, so I think that's more – I know in food counts – when we did that food counts report with the Halifax Food Policy Alliance it was a huge issue, we tried to find – we tried to create an inventory of food um stores, that serve culturally appropriate foods, it was really difficult like this is a really under researched and under under[sic] served population. And so, the lack of data was very difficult for us.*

*Why am I saying this? Simply mapping where the facilities are helped me to be um ah, [slight pause] to economize in transportation, even when I wasn't yet all that efficient. I was able to understand how I can economize here! So, me knowing the regular stores, the prices, and knowing the distance helped me to choose where to go. So, it helped me economize to an extent.*

*Right, so um, so I think yea, that transportation piece isn't always an easy one to solve, and I think like in an ideal world I suppose there would just be more um, it would be more readily accessible throughout you know, the city or the province of whatever to be able to access um, you know. So, you didn't have to take two or three buses um, to get to you know that one store that you know has like those [sic] ingredients you use or something like that.*

*“... of course, it is not cheap buying from ethnic groceries, it cannot be cheap. You know, they are paying uh, transportation and adding all the expenses, so, it's very complicated and I cannot continue buying from them. So, if I can get the way to grow my food locally, that's what I prefer.”*

*“I wish we can have enough spots here, enough space to be able to grow our food because I am not the only person experiencing food insecurity. I am very sure my entire community is experiencing it too. Some people don't know how they can solve the problem, they don't know how to grow their own food, how to garden, but for those of us who know how to do these, we don't have the space and tools to use. So, I am very sure if we get space and tools, we can be able to solve our food problem.”*

*So I think just based on what people have been telling me is some – they do need [pause] I mean, they ask for like better social ah assistance or like basic income so they have the money to buy the food that they want with dignity attached. And also, a lot of them talk about being able to grow food here. And also, to be able to sell their food. So, they don't need to ship them all the way from somewhere else and lowering the cost of local culturally appropriate food.*

*Theme 3: Sharing food and foodways as occupation*

Creating opportunities to grow and to share food is about access to meaningful occupation for many newcomers (See Figure 6: Theme 3 Illustrative Quotes). For some newcomers interviewed for this research, growing food was a means to income. Selling food grown at Common Roots Urban Farm (CRUF) through CRUF's Market Garden provided newcomers with a modest return on their efforts that supplemented other forms of income, or that offset the cost of groceries for their families.

However, as discussed above, occupation means more than paid employment and income. Rather, occupation is the “day-to-day means through which we exercise health, citizenship and social inclusion” (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004, p. 81). In line with this understanding of occupation, newcomers described growing and sharing food as one particularly valuable way that they could contribute to their families beyond financial support. Newcomers also described growing, selling, and sharing food as a way that they felt was a valuable contribution to their cultural and adopted communities. Beyond the small financial return, newcomers described sharing food as a means of fostering connections with others who shared the same or similar cultural background and contributing to their cultural as well as adopted communities.

In addition to sharing food, growing food was also about a form of knowledge and cultural exchange – newcomers were able to teach people from other countries and cultural backgrounds about the culture and foods of their home country. This was described as a form of self-expression, and an important means of maintaining cultural identity while making a new home for themselves in the HRM.

As discussed in the illustrative quotes below, service providers also described the importance of culturally appropriate foods and foodways to occupation for the newcomers with whom they worked. For service providers, access to occupation meant both income generating and unpaid opportunities for newcomers to contribute to their families and communities. Income generating opportunities include being able to sell locally grown culturally diverse produce, manufacturing and selling culturally diverse value-added foods such as sauces and condiments or opening a larger scale business such as a restaurant. However, growing food was also noted by service providers as providing meaning and purpose to the daily lives for some newcomers. For newcomers, policies, programs, and governance structures that guide the production, sharing, and selling of food may be key intervention points to enhance cultural food security and to facilitate meaningful occupation opportunities.

**Figure 3: Theme 3 Illustrative Quotes**

*What I see is a vast amount of knowledge and a deep sort of connection with food. People may not even recognize themselves in terms of what they could be contributing to Canadian society. So, for people to actually recognize, 'Oh you know, it's not just that I want the opportunity to buy this or this.' It's that 'I actually have all this food knowledge to contribute, agricultural knowledge, and understanding of how to grow.' And even if you have to adapt your ways of growing to growing in Canada there's some really basic stuff and really deep knowledge that's in people's bodies that people know how to do...The immigration process...people are having to start over in so many ways that it can be a really demoralizing process, especially when people have, or are facing all kinds of barriers to meaningful employment or making friends. So, it's really amazing to just work with people that way in terms of just in something that they're already good at. You know, especially when you're working with [those] who may not have had access to formal education at all, or even just a few years; people don't consider themselves often people who know things.*

*Ah most often it happens that somebody comes in and they've decided that they want to open a restaurant that's related to their cultural background. Right. And so that they want to have an authentic, because there may be a small community, but they want to make it like home, not North American version of it. And so then they discover as they go to look for the recipes that they're going to make is that those food items aren't available...depending on the country that they've come from they have contacts back in their first country and so they would be looking at importing the ingredients that they have...then that comes into what's allowed to be imported into the country. What's considered within our laws and regulations on the food side of things as to what's acceptable, what it is has to pass and things...it's just not that easy you know, to contact the whatever, and say I need a shipment of this to come in...So there is huge gap as to what's available here and what they need to get somewhere else to do what they want to do. The other side of that is often times is that working with others to look at what are the substitutions that might be available here that they can put in place...Which also will help them to look at being able to get those loans because now they are using locally sources ingredients.*

**Conclusion**

Cultural food security and occupational justice are central components of the conditions that contribute to the successful settlement of newcomers to Nova Scotia. What this research tells us is that culturally appropriate food and foodways are a vital part of newcomers' sense of identity, personhood, and agency, as well as connection to their families, familiar cultural and linguistic communities, and their new places of work, play, friendship, and family. While income remains an important obstacle to newcomers' food security, creating conditions that facilitate access to culturally appropriate foods and meaningful occupation present a means to redress financial barriers, as well as opportunities to facilitate and strengthen newcomers' ties and contributions to their new communities. Newcomers are good for Nova Scotia; it is imperative

## Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

that their needs, such as for sufficient quality and quantity of food, are adequately met, but also that the knowledge, skills, aspirations, and dreams that newcomers bring to Nova Scotia be acknowledged, supported and cultivated. Creating opportunities for newcomers to more readily access culturally meaningful foods and foodways, and to share these with culturally familiar and adopted communities, presents avenues toward fostering support and settlement services that better serve newcomers.

Addressing cultural food insecurity among newcomers also presents opportunities to revitalize rural and urban communities throughout the province. Efforts to enhance cultural food security for newcomers, such as by supporting diverse agricultural and entrepreneurial activity, can also contribute to the resilience of Nova Scotia's food system, and to economic, community, and cultural development throughout the province. Growing new foods to meet the needs of newcomers to Nova Scotia means increased agricultural biodiversity throughout the rural regions, as well as in urban farming areas. Increased biodiversity can enhance the resilience of Nova Scotia's food systems by fortifying food production and distribution against chronic and acute threats. Diversifying agricultural production also provides new prospects for increased economic and entrepreneurial activity through new food product development, which could supply retail, food service, and hospitality and tourism outlets. New food products that address newcomers' desire for familiar foods, may also address the current imbalance between Nova Scotia's import expenditures and export gains.

In sum, the results of the research and stakeholder engagement session presented here point to a wealth of opportunity that may follow efforts to address cultural food security in Nova Scotia by growing more locally and by enabling newcomers to establish themselves in the province.



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## Appendix A – Presentation Slides from Stakeholder Meeting




### Welcome

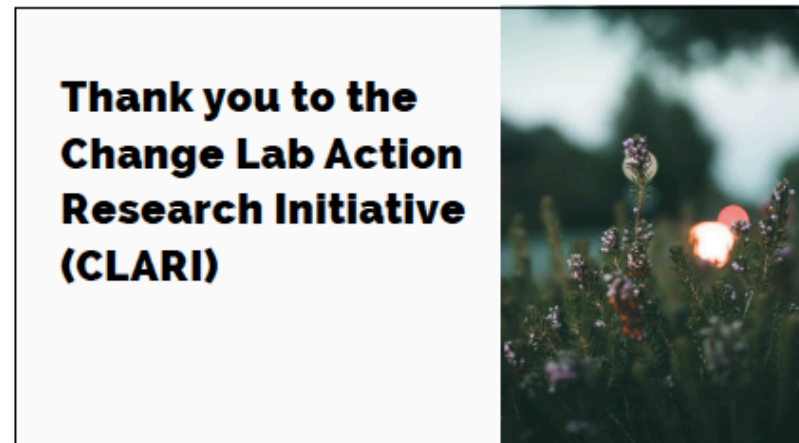
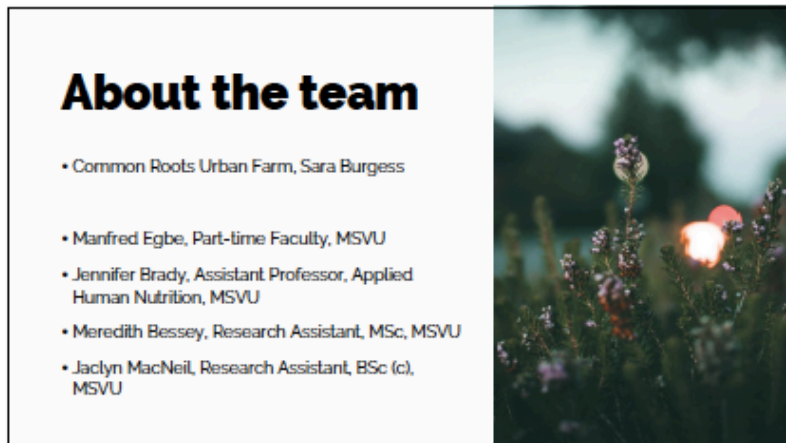
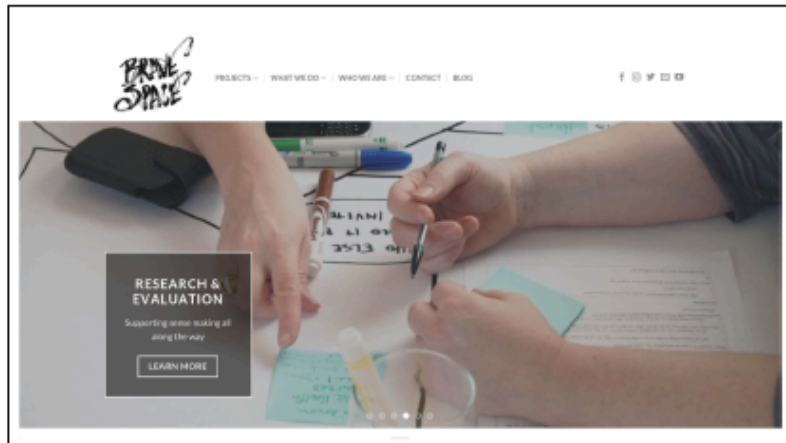
- Mayor Mike Savage
- Hugs Community Garden
- Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
- HRM, Diversity and Inclusion Office
- Mobile Food Market
- Community Business Development Centre (Hants Kings)
- Horticulture NS
- Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture
- Cultiv8
- Common Roots Urban Farm
- Farm Works Investment Co-op
- Department of Agriculture
- African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office
- Valley Regional Enterprise Network
- Feed Nova Scotia
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Dalhousie University
- Mount Saint Vincent University
- FoodARC
- Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage
- Perennia
- The Station Food Hub, Ltd.
- Climate Change Coordinator, Municipality of the County of Kings
- Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre
- Springboard Atlantic
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- CBDC Bluewater
- Saint Mary's University Entrepreneurship Centre
- Very Local Greens
- Farmer's Markets of Nova Scotia

### Goals

- Share research on cultural food security in the HRM
- Build shared vision about how to address cultural food insecurity in the HRM
- Identify core team to lead development of a pilot project
- Invite contributions, support, and participation in next steps



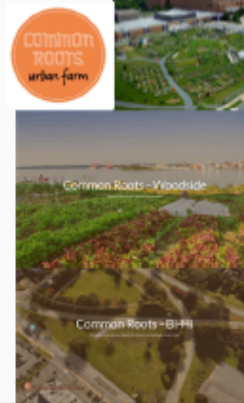
## Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report



# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Common Roots Urban Farm

- Previously at the corner of Quinpool Rd and Robie, QEII Hospital
- Moved to BiHi Park (Bayers Rd and Joseph Howe-Halifax), and Woodside (Dartmouth)
- Mission: Our mission is to promote healthy lifestyles and landscapes through hands-on education about growing and eating healthy food.
- Market garden, commons, community garden plots



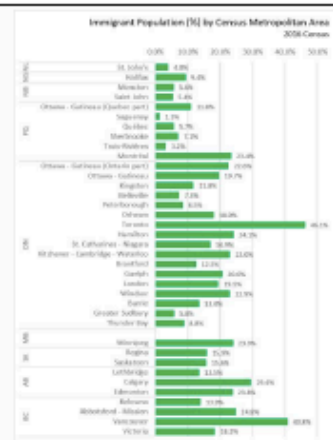
## Purpose of the project

- Create a conceptual framework for cultural food security
- Shed light on local experiences among newcomers (immigrants and refugees) of cultural food insecurity in HRM
- Identify community development and economic opportunities for newcomers that are socially and environmentally sustainable



## Background

- Immigration
  - ~55, 675 immigrants in Nova Scotia with the largest proportionate share in Halifax
  - ~6.1% of total NS population
  - ~9.4% of the HRM population
- Immigrants:
  - Face higher unemployment in Nova Scotia compared to the rest of Canada (Pathways to Prosperity, 2019)
  - Experience higher rates of income-related food insecurity (11.4-19.6%) than non-immigrants (2.1%) (Statistics Canada, 2014)



## Background

- **ONE Nova Scotia Report, Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians (2014)**
- Need to increase international migration to Nova Scotia
- Negative attitudes towards immigration
- Greater cooperation among jurisdictions and regions to build economic and community capacity (Regional Enterprise Networks)





# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Background

- Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan: Creativity and Community (2017)
- Increase the number of immigrants to Nova Scotia
- Key themes
  - Promote creativity and innovation
  - Enhance cultural diversity
  - Drive awareness and economic growth of the culture sector

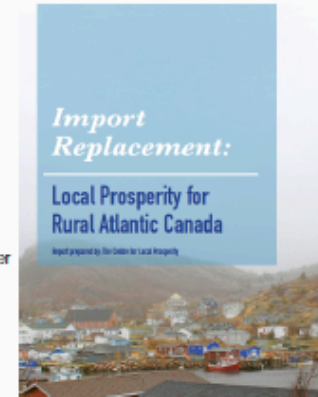


## Background

- Import Replacement: Local Prosperity for Rural Atlantic Canada (Pathways to Prosperity, 2018)
- Trade deficits (imports > exports)
  - Atlantic Canada ~\$11 billion
  - Nova Scotia ~\$4.5 billion

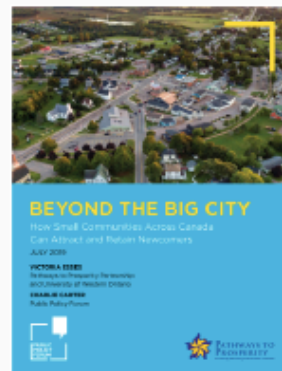
"Import replacement can be a crucial economic driver for small, rural and local communities looking for a new and different economic future."

How can we support import replacement through cooperation among jurisdictions and regions across the province?



## Background

- Beyond the Big City Report, Pathways to Prosperity (2019)
- How can Canadian communities attract and retain newcomers?
  - "Having a large and active cultural community can contribute to attracting and retaining immigrants as the religious, cultural and dietary needs of immigrants are most often provided by other immigrants in the community."
- Recommendation: "Encourage more diverse amenities and options in the community (e.g., ethnic food options, places of worship)."



## Individual & household food insecurity



"When access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that is necessary to meet dietary needs and food preferences in order to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle are not available either physically, socially and economically at all times."

(FAO, 2002)



## Community food insecurity



"Community food security exists 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."  
(Hamm and Bellows, 2003)

## Cultural food insecurity

Not well understood

"a lack of access to **cultural foods and foodways**, which is an important social justice concern that lies beyond individual, household, or community food insecurity caused by financial insufficiency" and is "**central to cultural health and survival**"  
Power (2008)



## Occupational justice

Occupation is not confined to paid employment but is defined as the "day-to-day means through which we exercise **health, citizenship and social inclusion**" and hence, occupational justice is a matter of supporting settlement for newcomers, and is an important social justice issue  
(Townsend and Wilcock, 2004).



## Methods

Qualitative interviews

### Interviews with Newcomers (10)

- Various nationalities and language communities including Bhutan, Nepal, Cameroon, Congo, Rwanda and Syria
- Identified via Common Roots and other service providers

### Interviews with Service Providers (8)

- Identified in preliminary stages of project as well as through other service providers
- From six organizations



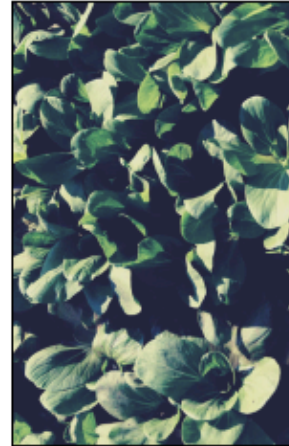
# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report



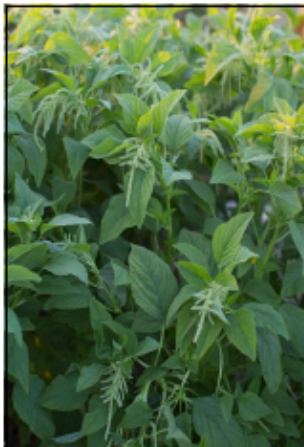
## Results

### 1. Access to cultural or ethnic foods

- Practical need for a map to show where to find cultural or ethnic foods in HRM
- How to get there bus routes, etc.
- Affordability



... of course it is not cheap buying from ethnic groceries, it cannot be cheap. You know, they are paying uh, transportation and adding all the expenses, so it's very complicated and I cannot continue buying from them. So, if I can get the way to grow my food locally, that's what I prefer  
(Newcomer)



### 2. Desire/Need for land to grow foods

- Subsistence growing to feed families or supplement food budgets
- Growing to fill gap in access to culturally appropriate foods
- Growing as a part of foodways from back home – a part of purpose and meaning



... I mean, I think the biggest thing is land access... like accessibility of the land. Like there's land 50 minutes outside of the city and people keep coming and saying like 'I have a farm, I have this' but it is just a little bit far for people to be able to drive back and forth and still care for their families. And most of the people that I've worked with have family responsibilities so, yea that's the biggest one, access to land and to tools. (Service provider)

"... I wish we can have enough spots here, enough space to be able to grow our food because I am not the only person experiencing food insecurity, I am very sure my entire community is experiencing it too. Some people don't know how they can solve the problem, they don't know how to grow their own food, how to garden, but for those of us who know how to do these, we don't have the space and tools to use. So, I am very sure if we get space and the tools, we can be able to solve our food problem."  
(Newcomer)

## Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report



### 3. Informal Economy

- a. Selling for income
- b. Sharing to meet others' need for culturally appropriate foods
- c. Cultural community building



So most of the people I sold my lenga-lenga to were from African countries. But there are some Canadians who bought some to try; not only lenga-lenga. We were able to produce and sell bean leaves, and zucchini leaves, and squash leaves and the eggplant as well. We also grew kales and spinach. (Newcomer)



### 4. Opportunity to learn and Share Knowledge

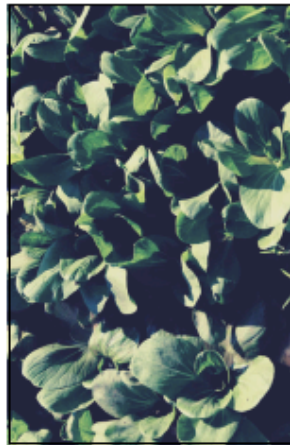
#### Beyond access

- Involves sharing & learning
  - Deeper meaning attached to food
- Leadership
  - Sense of control/ownership
- Building stronger/friendly communities



## Next Steps

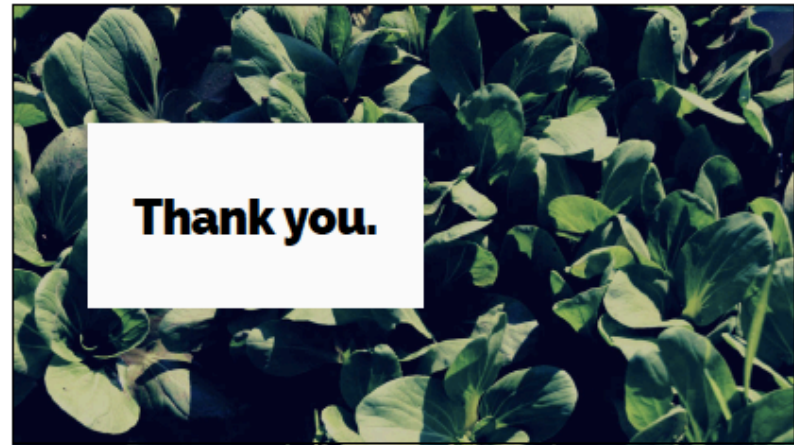




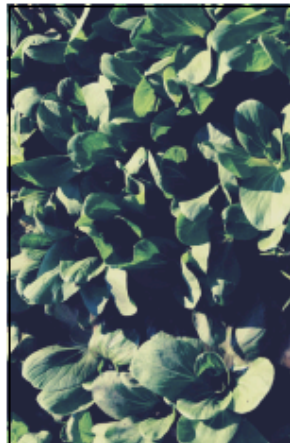
## **Pilot Project**

How can we connect newcomers rooted in the HRM with land to grow foods that will:

- Provide meaningful occupation and economic security for newcomers
- Enhance cultural, household, and community food security in Nova Scotia
- Strengthen provincial and regional food system and enable import replacement
- Diversify and enliven culinary identity and food cultures across the province



**Thank you.**



## **After today**

1. Manfred and Jen to review notes from today
2. Send out summary report of research and insights gathered from workshop
3. Get in touch with those who want to be a part of the core team and consulting group

## Appendix B – Notes from Stakeholder Meeting

### *Post-it Notes:*

#### **Transportation**

1. Access to reasonable public transit
  - a. \$
  - b. Timely → schedules
  - c. Connecting to service areas better

#### **Change the Way We Work**

1. It's ok to be an experiment – ok to fail and learn
2. Habit shift, idea shift >>>>

#### **User Centred**

1. User-centric (friendly ☺) support systems (information & funding etc.)

#### **Succession Plans – Match Making**

1. Match making – connecting new farmers with established farmers

#### **Stakeholder Engagement**

1. Stakeholders opinions – landowners and farmers

#### **Policy & Regulations**

1. Enabling regulatory environment and enhanced coordination to support new models
2. Alleviate/support regulatory barriers, e.g., food prod. regs
3. Policies and regulation to support local food production processing & distribution

#### **Diversity & Inclusion**

1. Need diversity & inclusion

#### **Land Use & Access**

1. Leveraging land-use opportunities
2. Land use + access
  - a. community models
  - b. rethinking development
  - c. long-term land leases with private holders

#### **Business Models & Sustainability**

1. set people up for success
  - a. business skills and knowledge
  - b. teaching Canadian rules/culture
  - c. permits/tax laws, etc. need to be taught/shared
  - d. educational opportunities
2. project is sustainable and not reliant on government funding (co-ops) (social enterprises)
3. farmers
  - a. advocating for newcomers with agricultural experience
  - b. financial support for small scale farmers
4. think: business model and investing in our communities vs. hand-out and reliance on grants

## Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

### **Resources, Money, Land, Service**

1. money
  - a. financing
  - b. bus development
  - c. coordination
  - d. engagement
2. resources
  - a. land
  - b. \$
  - c. Services
  - d. Experience
  - e. Technology
  - f. HR

### **Indigenous Community**

1. Creating space for indigenous community
  - a. Make them part of the conversation
  - b. You need to be an ally. Don't do the work FOR them.

### **Food as a Human Right**

1. Food is a basic human right. Access to the food that is valued to the individual must be seen as a basic human right. 😊

### **Support & Education for Food Security**

1. Cultural shift
  - a. Understanding food security provincially
  - b. Food literacy
  - c. Own as a province our value to support food security & supply
2. Public support and general education of cultural food insecurity

### **Network & Partnerships**

1. Partnerships
  - a. Network will help to increase awareness
  - b. More partners to make it viable
  - c. People who know how to work with newcomers (culturally competent)
2. Development of a network and keep them connected – “convener,” “network leader”

### **Working Together**

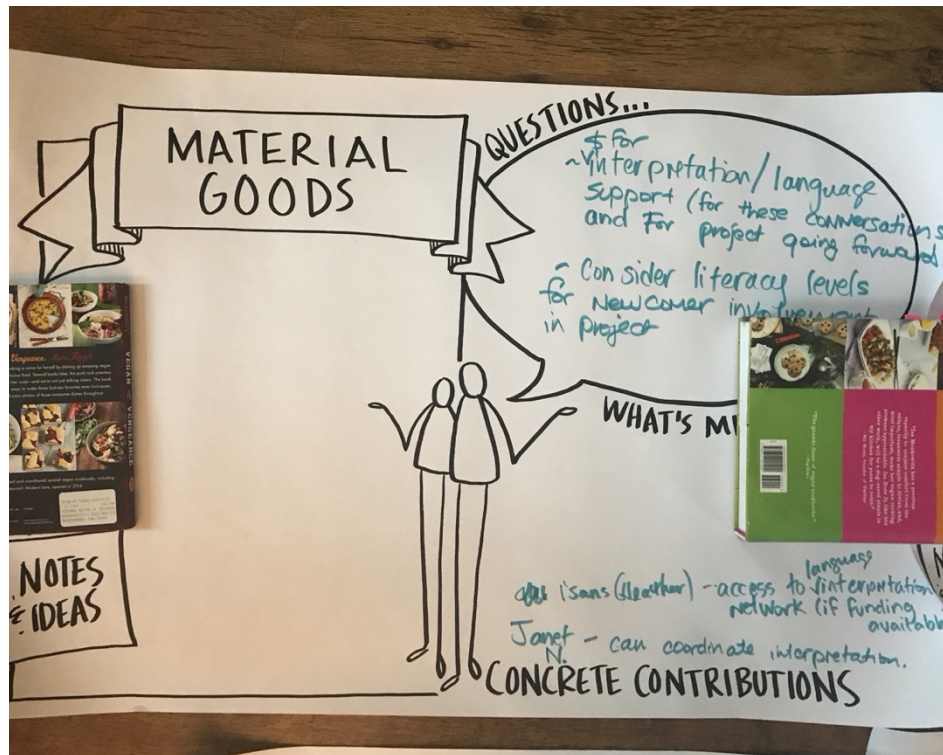
1. Bridge silos through communication, cooperation and collaboration
2. Break down barriers to working together
  - a. Talk, connect, multi-sector
3. Removing risk of collaboration/entry



# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Labelled Sheets of Paper:

### Material goods



### Questions:

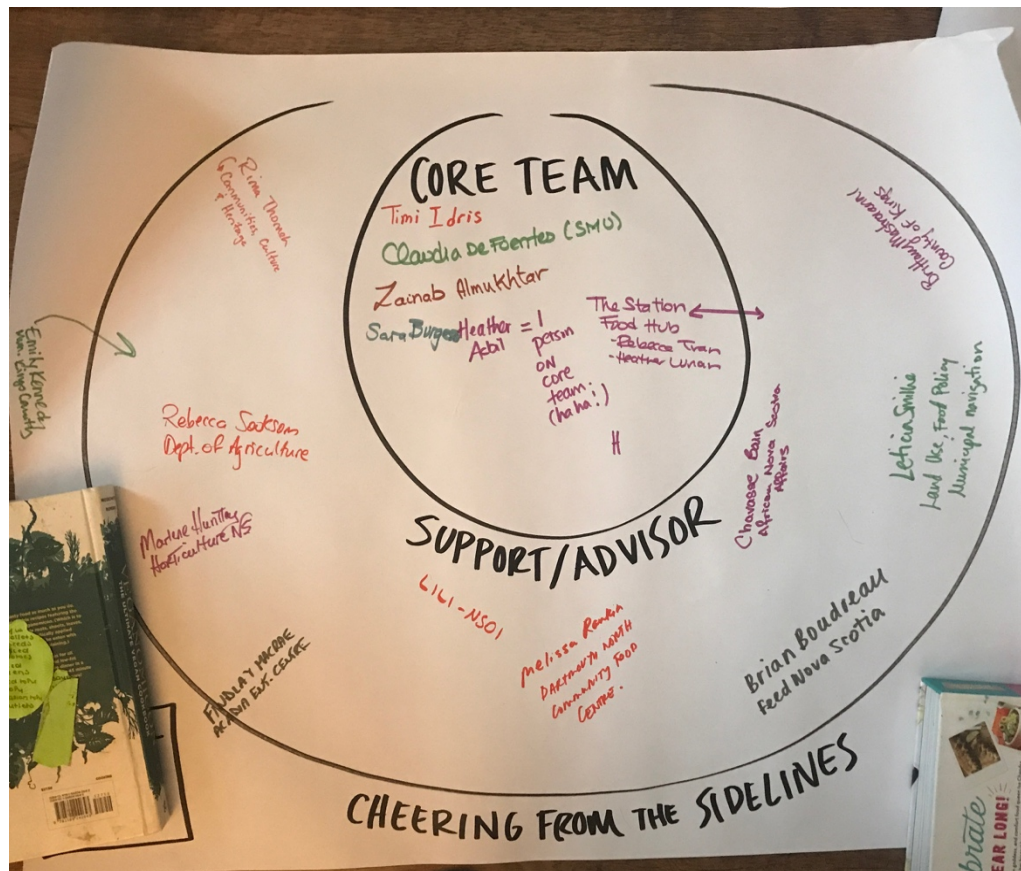
1. \$ for interpretation/language support (for these conversations and for project going forward)
2. Consider literacy levels for newcomer involvement in project

### Concrete Contributions:

1. ISANS (Heather) – access to language interpretation network (if funding available)
2. Janet N. – can coordinate interpretation

# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Team Building



### Core Team:

1. Timi Idris
2. Claudia De Fuentes (SMU)
3. Zainab Almukhtar
4. Sara Burgess
5. Heather Asbil = 1 person on core team (haha!)
6. The Station Food Hub (Rebecca Tran, Heather Wright) (interchangeable with support/advisor layer)

### Support/Advisor

1. Rima Thomeh (Communities, Culture & Heritage)
2. Rebecca Sooksom (Dept. of Agriculture)
3. Marlene Huntley (Horticulture NS)
4. Findlay MacRae (Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre) – their name straddles the “cheering from the sidelines” section
5. Lili – NSOI
6. Melissa Rankin (Dartmouth North Community Food Centre)
7. Brian Boudreau (Feed Nova Scotia)
8. Chavasse Bain (African Nova Scotia Affairs)
9. Leticia Smillie (Land Use, Food Policy Municipal Navigation)
10. Brittany Mastraanal (County of Kings)

# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## People & Connections

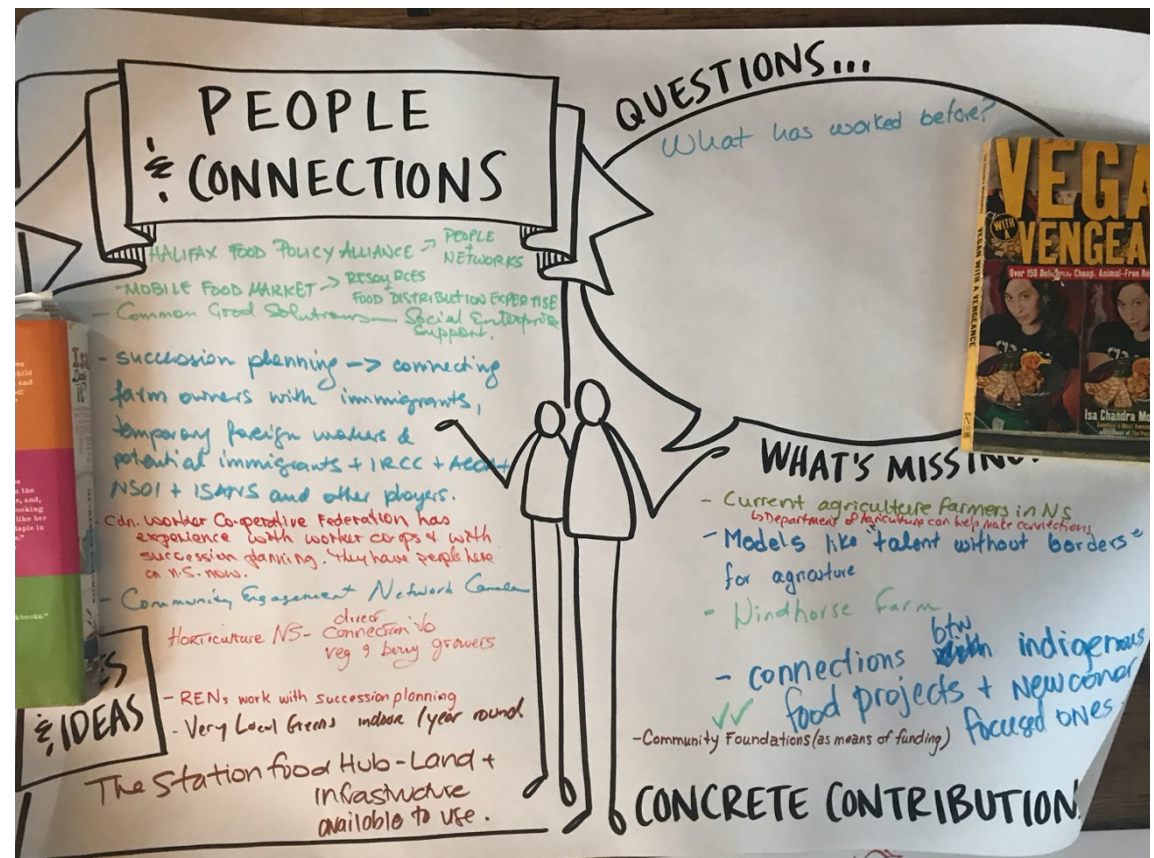
- Succession planning – connecting farm owners with immigrants, temporary foreign workers, & potential immigrants + IRCC + ACOA + NSOI + ISANS and other players
- Cdn. Worker Co-operative Federation has experience with worker corps. & with succession planning. They have people here on NS now.
- Community Engagement Network Canada
- Horticulture NS – direct connection to veg & berry growers
- RENs work with succession planning
- Very Local Greens indoor/year round
- The Station Food Hub – land & infrastructure available to use

## Notes & Ideas:

- Halifax Food Policy Alliance – people & networks
- Mobile Food Market – resources + food distribution expertise
- Common Good Solutions – social enterprise support

## Questions:

1. What has worked before?



## What's missing?:

1. Current agriculture farmers in NS – Dept. of Agriculture can help make connections
2. Models like "talent without borders" for agriculture
3. Windhorse Farm
4. Connections between indigenous food projects + newcomer focused ones
5. Community Foundations (as means of funding)



## Funding & Finances

### Notes & Ideas:

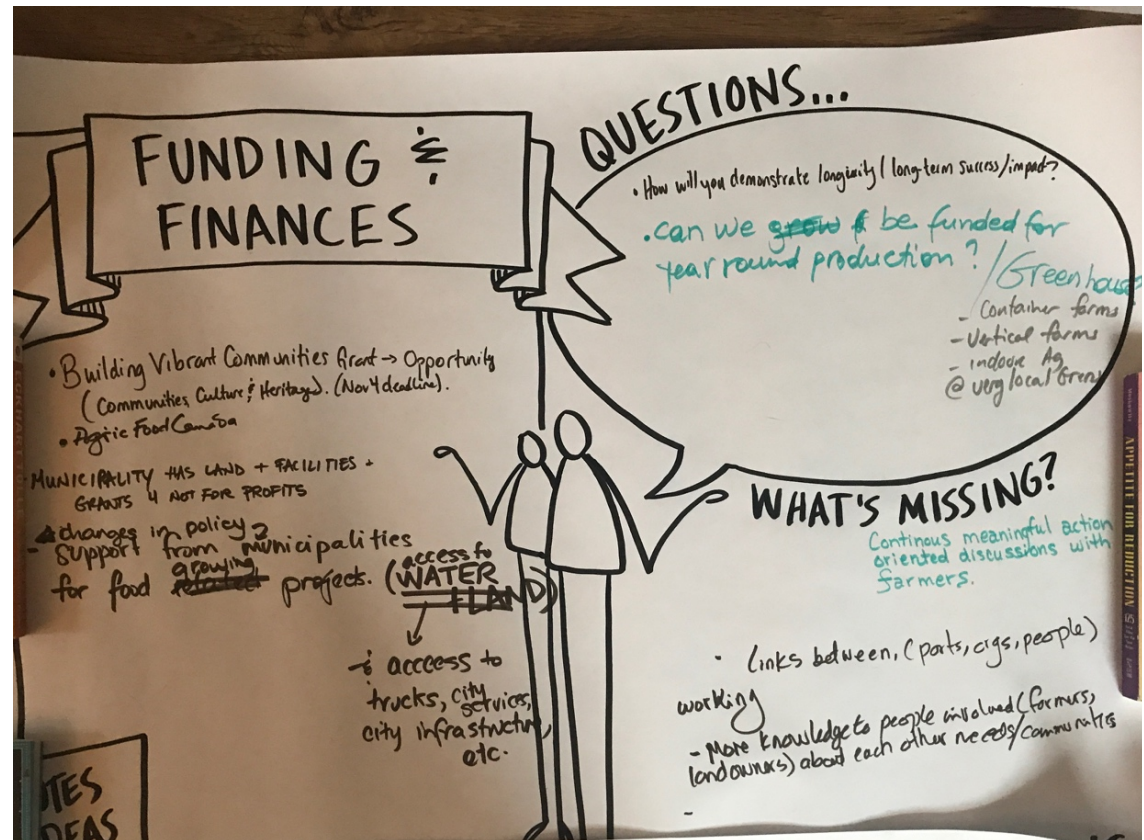
- Building Vibrant Communities Grant → opportunity (Communities Culture & Heritage) (Nov. 4 deadline)
- Agric Food Canada
- Municipality has land + facilities + grants for not for profits
- Support from municipalities for food growing project (access for water + land) → and access to trucks, city services, city infrastructure, etc.

### Questions:

1. How will you demonstrate longevity/long-term success/impact?
2. Can we be funded for year-round production? (greenhouses, container farms, vertical farms, indoor ag @ Very Local Greens)

### What's Missing?

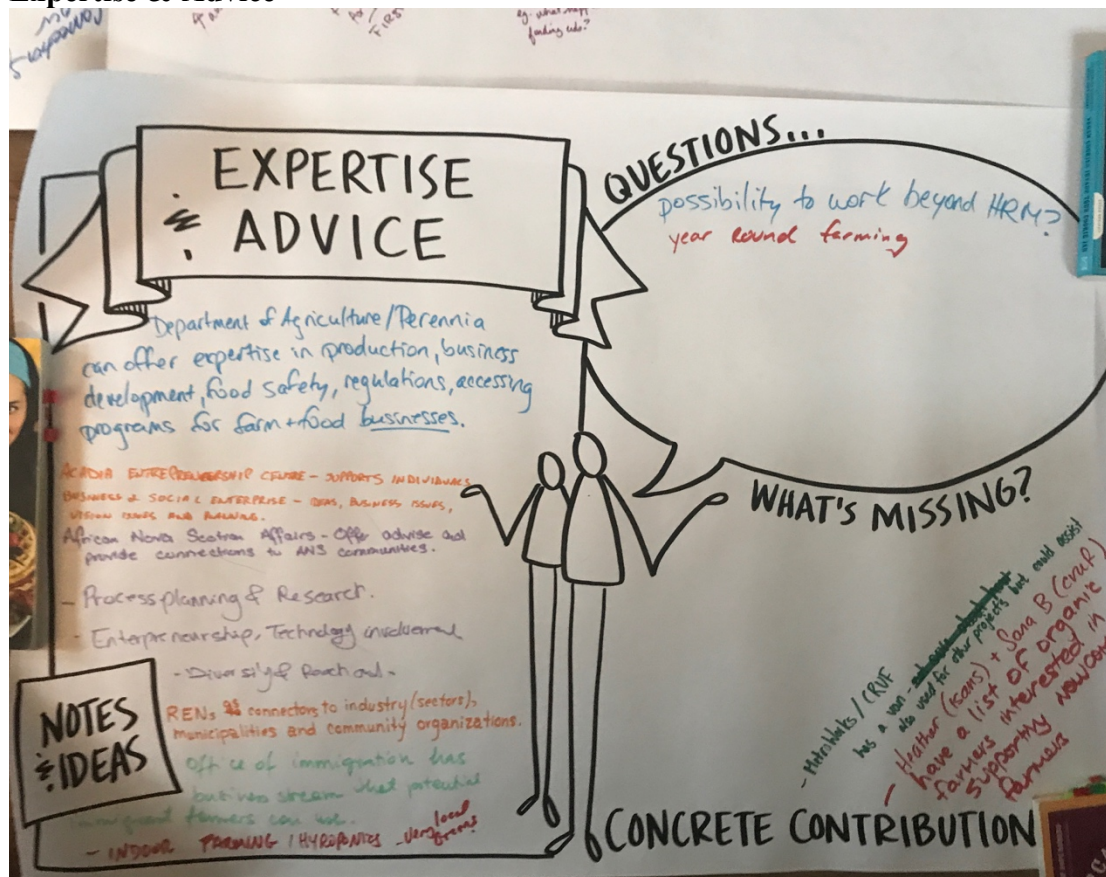
- Continuous meaningful action-oriented discussions with farmers
- Links between (ports, cigs, people) working



- More knowledge to people involve (farmers, landowners) about each other's needs/communities

## Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

### Expertise & Advice



#### Notes & Ideas:

- Department of Agriculture/Perennia can offer expertise in production, business development, food safety, regulations, accessing programs for farm + food businesses

- Acadia Entrepreneurship Centre – supports individual business & social enterprise – ideas, business ideas, vision issues and planning
- African Nova Scotian Affairs – offer advice and provide connections to ANS communities
- Process planning & research
- Entrepreneurship, technology involvement
- Diversity & reach out
- RENs as connectors to industry (sectors), municipalities and community organizations
- Office of immigration has business stream that potential immigrant farmers can use
- Indoor farming/hydroponics – Very Local Greens

#### Questions:

1. Possibility to work beyond HRM?
2. Year-round farming?

#### Concrete Contributions:

1. MetroWorks/CRUF – has a van, also used for other projects but could assist
2. Heather (ISANS) + Sara B (CRUF) have a list of organic farmers interested in supporting newcomer farmers

Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM  
– Summary Report

***Unlabelled Sheets of Paper:***

**Sheet 1, Side A**

- Food insecurity among Nova Scotians –existing in region already
- Xian – Diversity & Inclusion office
  - Cultural events & diverse community
  - How we cook & serve food
  - Shared space – connection & diverse communities
- Leticia – HFPA
  - Food action plan
    - Access
    - Local food systems
  - Culture & Heritage plan
    - Voice & representation of underrepresented groups
    - Customs, traditions
- Zainab – what exists in NS that has been successful?
  - Availability of farmland in NS & Canada – accessibility
- Brian – Feed NS
  - Who comes to food banks?
    - Better data on recent immigrants
  - FB as hubs for food + community connections
  - Food enriches & deepens
- Holly – Very Local Greens → shipping containers
  - “by-law limbo”
    - Centre plan → by-law containers for growing
- “Controlled environment agriculture” → seasonality for growing
- Subsidies
- Migrant labour → social sustainability
- Community building/led
  - Capacity building
  - Financial support
  - Opportunities?
- Other random notes (hard to figure out what the context/connection was)
  - Stakeholders
  - Collaborate
  - Transport
  - People
  - Attack
  - Health
  - Scholarly (maybe???)
  - Rural con agri
  - Food policy
  - Coordinate
  - Effort
  - Action
  - Cultural heritage priority
  - Healthy food
  - Hard to read – maybe “silent from feasible”???

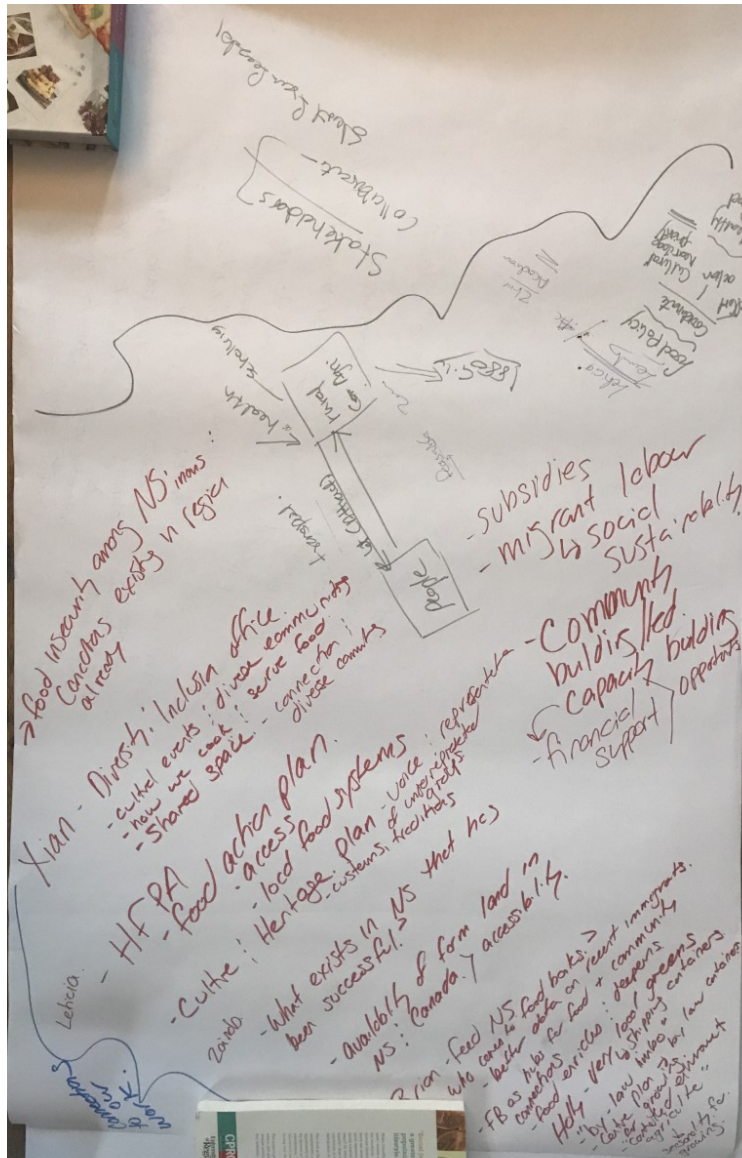


Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM  
– Summary Report

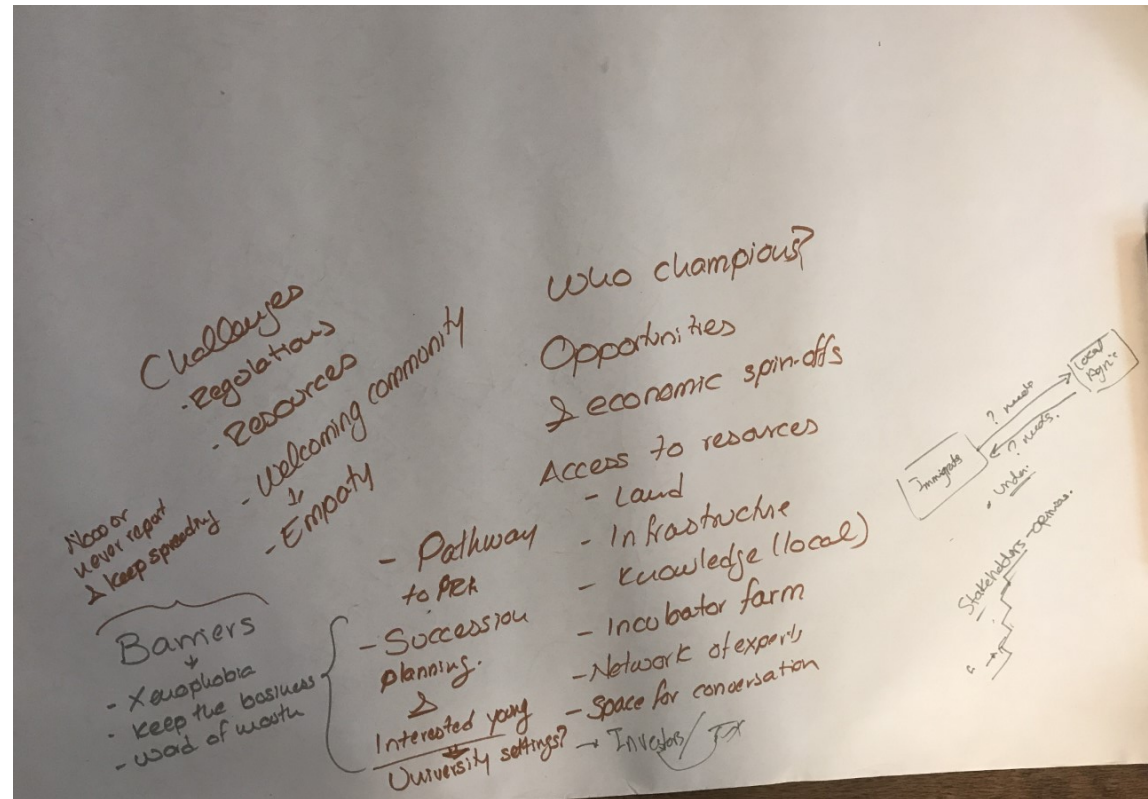
**Sheet 1, Side B**

- Challenges
  - Regulations
  - Resources
  - Welcoming community
  - Empathy
- Now or never report & keep spending
- Barriers
  - Xenophobia
  - Keep the business
  - Word of mouth
- Who champions?
- Opportunities & economic spin-offs
- Access to resource
  - Land
  - Infrastructure
  - Knowledge (local)
  - Incubator farm
  - Network of experts
  - Space for conversation
- Pathway to PR
- Succession planning & interested young → university settings →
- Immigrants [connect to] local agric. (? Needs)
  - Stakeholders – opinions

# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report



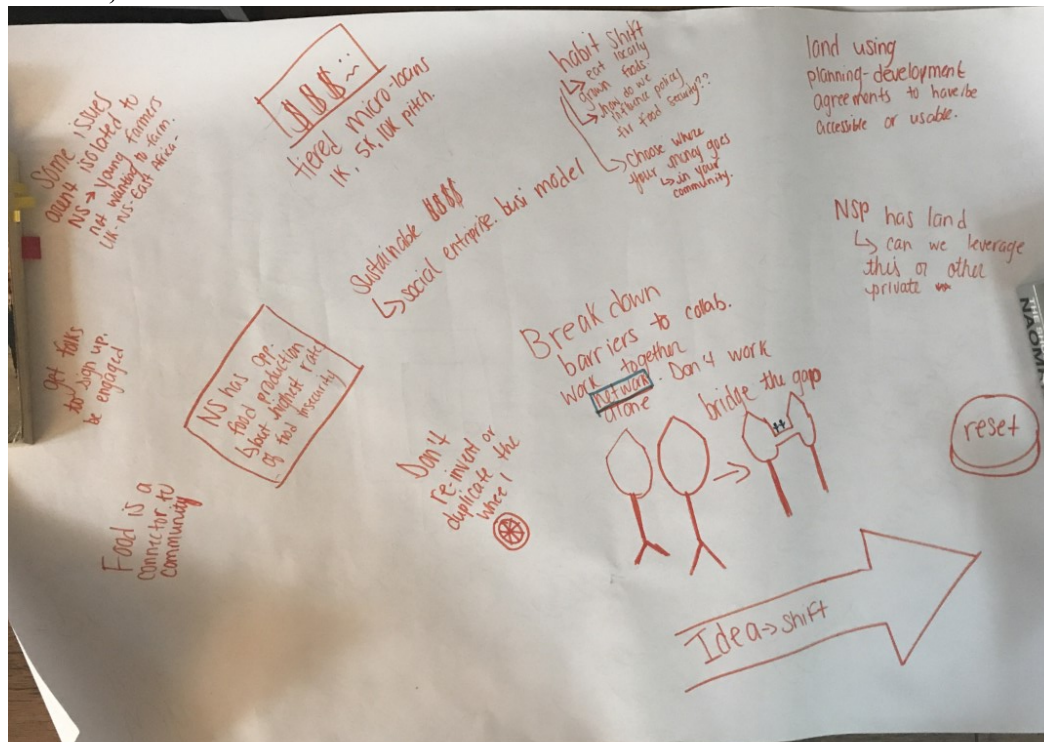
Notes Sheet 1, Side A



Notes Sheet 1, Side B

# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Sheet 2, Side A



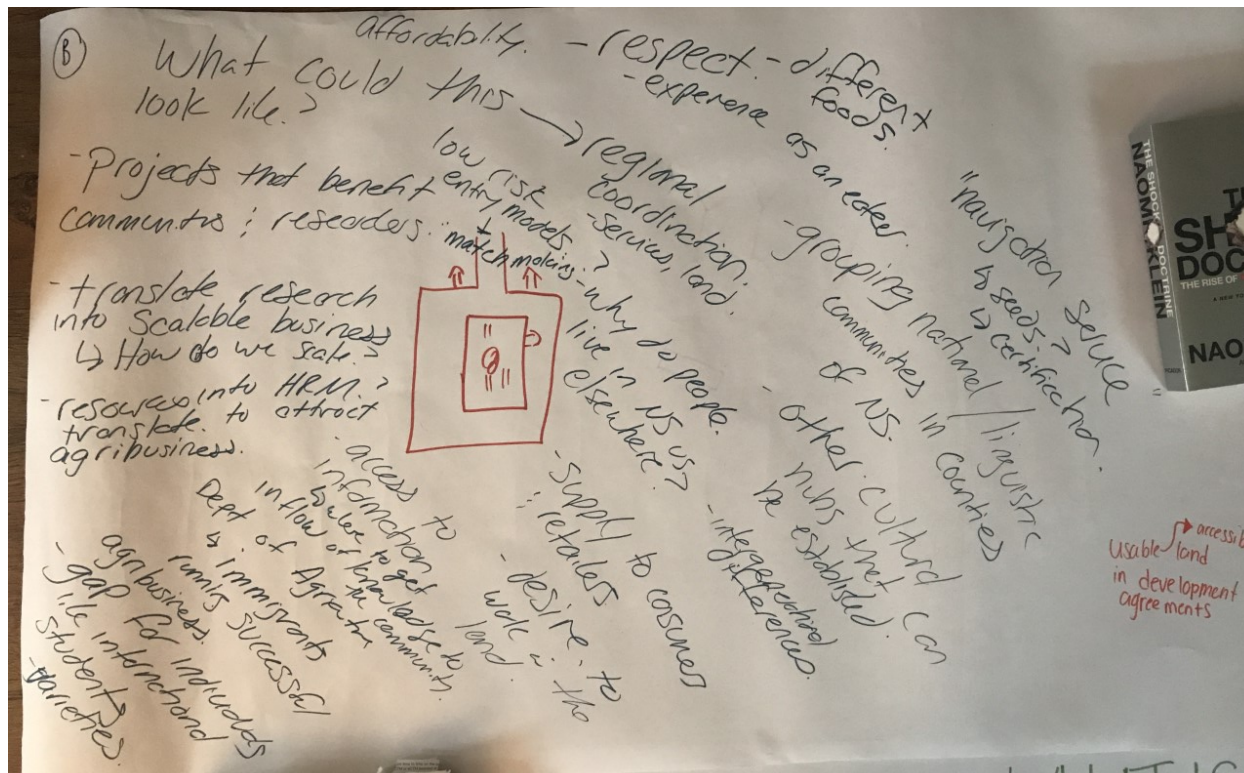
- Some issues aren't isolated to NS → young farmers not wanting to farm UK-NS-East Africa
- Get folks to sign up, be engaged
- Food is a connector to community

- NS has opp. food production → but highest rates of food insecurity
- \$\$\$ ☹ tied micro-loans 1K, 5K, 10K pitch
- Sustainable \$\$\$ → social enterprise busi. Model
- Habit shift
  - Eat locally grown foods
  - How do we influence policy for food security??
  - Choose where your money goes → in your community
- Don't reinvent or duplicate the wheel
- Breakdown barriers to collab.
  - Work together
  - Network, don't work alone
  - Bridge the gap
  - Idea → shift
- Land using
  - Planning – development
  - Agreements to have/be accessible or usable
- NSP has land
  - Can we leverage this or other private
- Reset button



# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Sheet 2, Side B



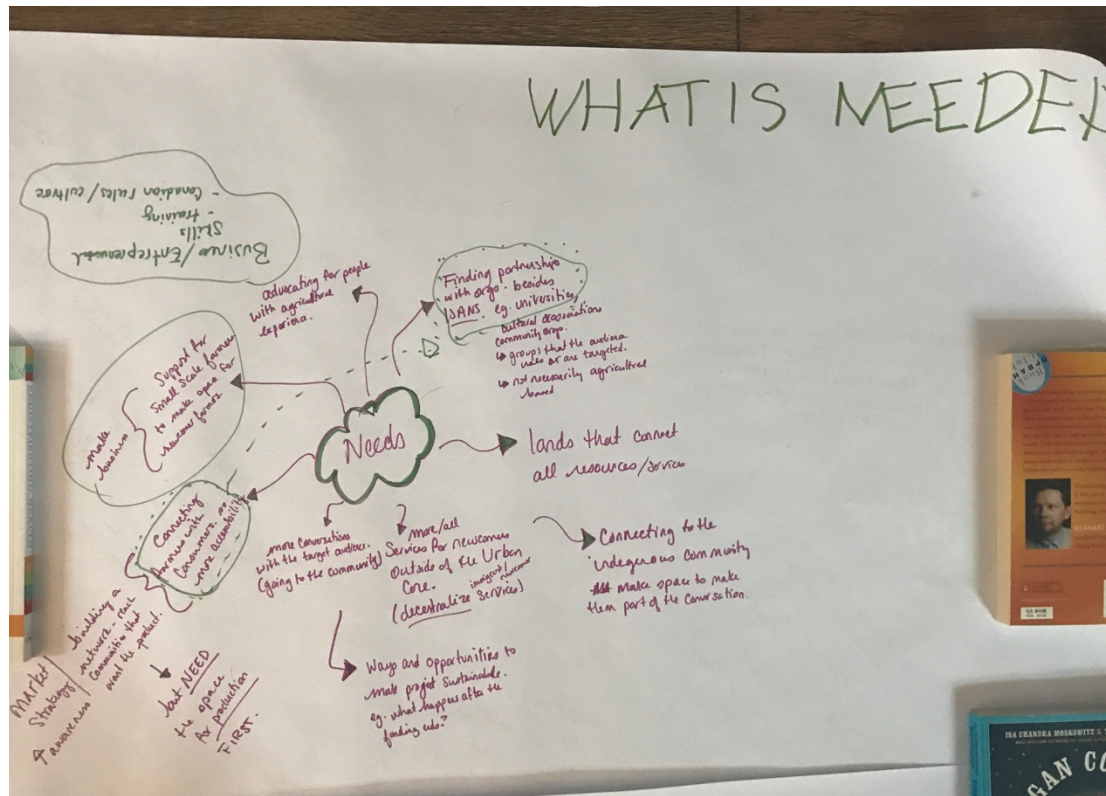
- Low risk entry models → match making?
- Why do people live in NS vs. elsewhere?
- Translate research into scalable business → how do we get scale?
- Resources into HRM? Translate to attract agribusiness
- Access to information
  - Where to get in flow of knowledge to the community
- Dept. of Agriculture
  - Immigrants running successful agribusiness
- Gap for individuals like international students
- Varieties
- Supply to consumers & retailers
- Desire to work in the land
- "navigation service"

- Affordability
- Respect
- Different foods
- Experience as an eater
- What could this look like? → regional coordination, services, land
- Projects that benefit communities and researchers

- Seeds?
- Certification
- Grouping national/linguistic communities in counties of NS
- Other cultural hubs that can be established
- Intergenerational differences
- Useable, accessible land in development agreements

# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Sheet 3, Side A



### What is needed? Needs

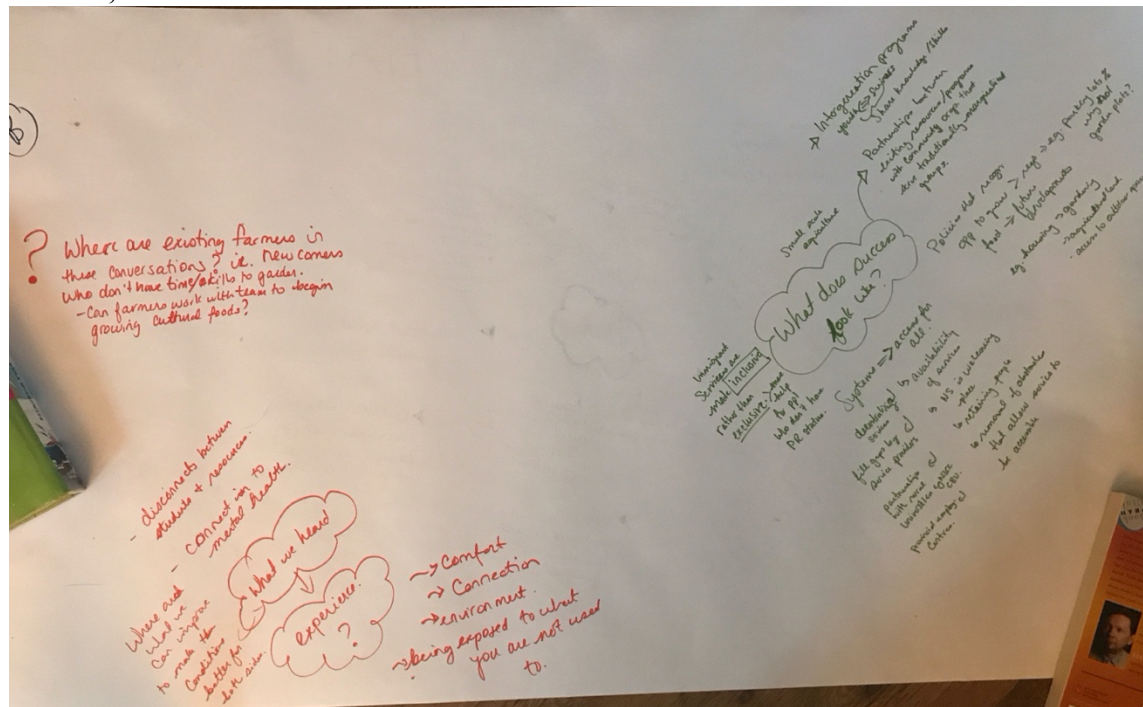
- Lands that connect all resources/services
- Connecting to the indigenous community make space to make them part of the conversation

- More/all services for newcomers outside of the Urban Core (decentralize services) - immigrant/newcomers
- Ways and opportunities to make project sustainable, e.g., what happens after the funding ends?
- More conversations with the target audience (going to the community)
- Connecting farmers with consumers so more accessibility
- Market strategy – increased awareness
- Building a network – reach communities that want the product
  - But NEED the space for production first
- Support for small scale farmers to make space for newcomer farmers
  - Make business
- Advocating for people with agriculture experience
- Finding partnerships with orgs – besides ISANS. E.g., universities, cultural association, community orgs, groups that the audience uses or are targeted, not necessarily agriculturally based
- Business/entrepreneurial skills
  - Training
  - Canadian rules/culture



# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Sheet 3, Side B



Where are existing farmers in these conversations? i.e., newcomers who don't have time/skills to garden

- Can farmers with team to begin growing cultural foods?
- Disconnects between students & resources
- Connection to mental health
- Where and what we can improve to make the conditions better for both sides
- What we heard -> experience?
  - Comfort
  - Connection

- Environment
- Being exposed to what you are not used to

• What does success look like?

- Intergeneration programs (youth <-> services) – share knowledge/skills
- Partnerships between existing resources/programs with community orgs that serve traditionally marginalized groups

- Small scale agriculture
- Immigrant services are made inclusive rather than exclusive – more help for ppl who don't have PR status

○ Systems -> access for

- Decentralized services -> availability of services
- Fill gaps by service providers -> NS is welcoming place
- Partnerships with rural universities, e.g., NSCC, CBU -> retaining people
- Provincial employment centres -> removal of obstacles that allow services to be accessible

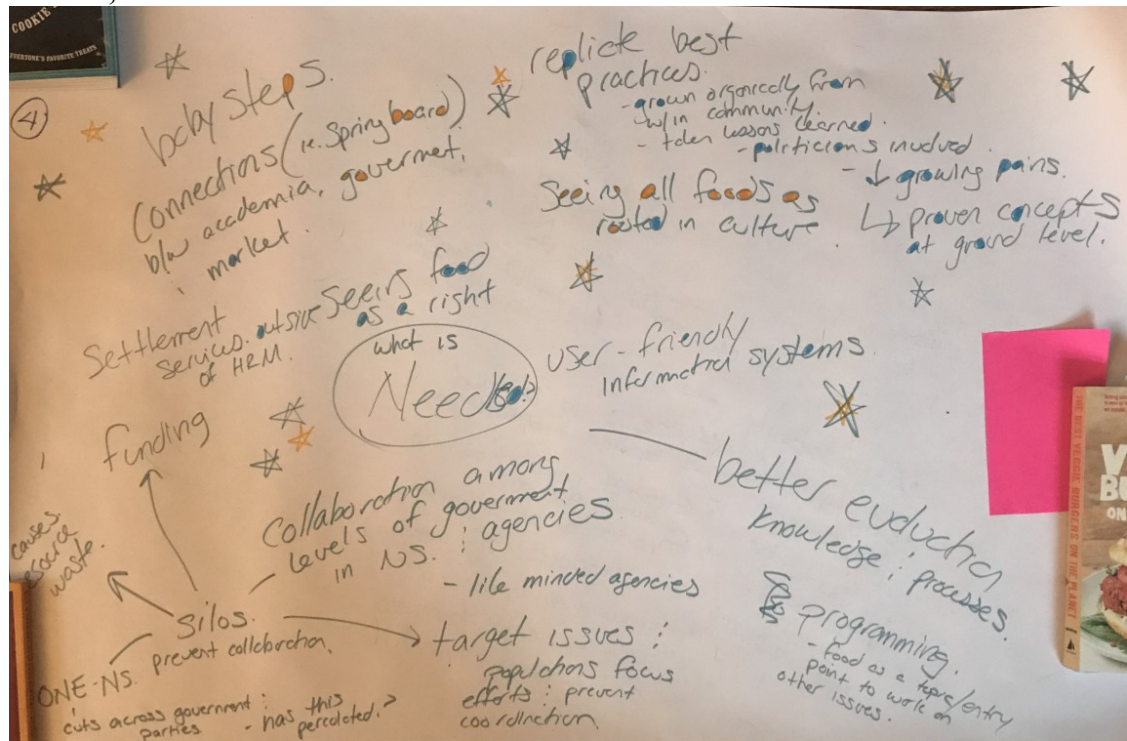
○ Policies that recognize opp. to grow > regs -> e.g., parking lots %, why not garden plots?

- Food -> future developments
- E.g., housing -> gardening
  - Agricultural land
  - Access to outdoor space



# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Sheet 4, Side A



### • What is needed?

- Baby steps connections (i.e., Springboard) between academia, government, market
- Target issues & populations focus efforts & prevent coordination

- Settlement services outside of HRM
- Seeing food as a right
- User-friendly information systems
- Replicate best practices
  - Grown organically from within community
  - Token lessons learned
  - Politicians involved
  - Less growing pains → proven concepts at ground level
- Seeing all foods as rooted in culture
- Better evaluation knowledge & processes
  - Programming
    - Food as a topic/entry point to work on other issues
- Silos prevent collaboration
- Funding
- Causes resource waste

### ○ ONE-NS

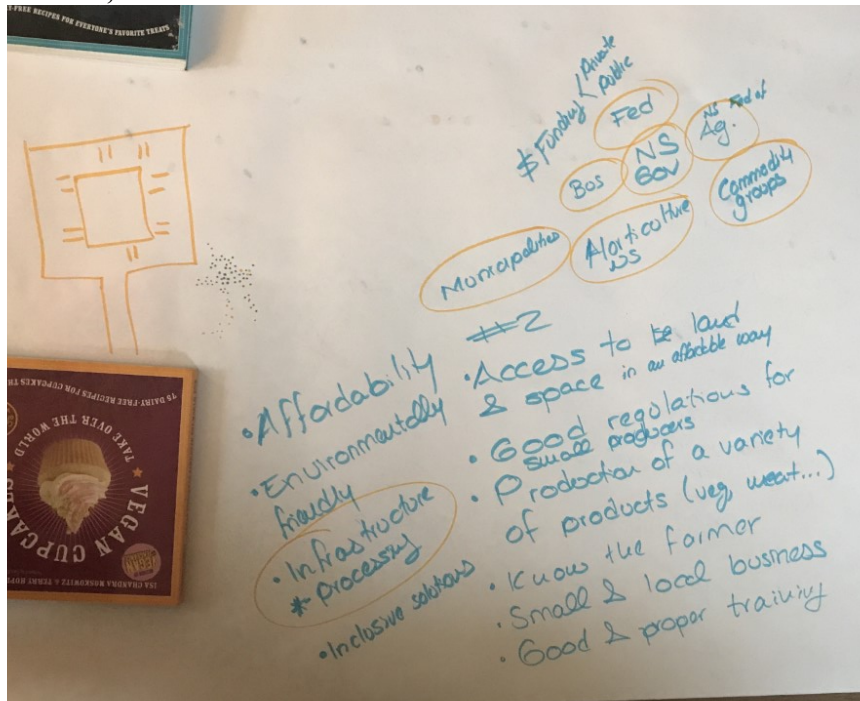
- Cuts across government parties
- Has this percolated?

### ○ Collaboration among levels of government in NS & agencies

- Like minded agencies

# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

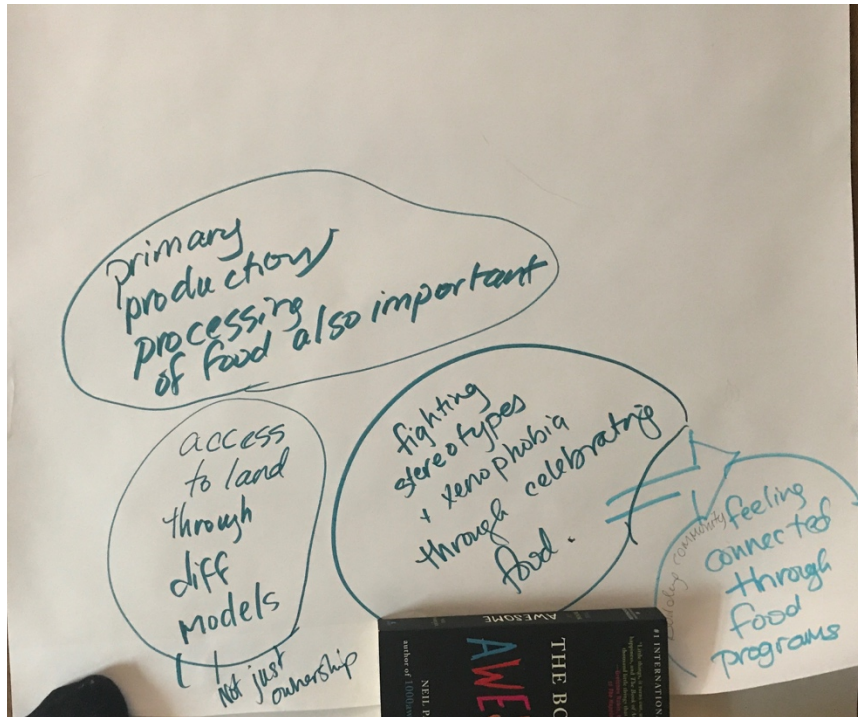
## Sheet 4, Side B



- Affordability
- Environmentally friendly
- Infrastructure processing \*
- Inclusive solutions
- Access to land & space in an affordable way
- Good regulations for small producers
- Production of a variety of products (veg, meat...)
- Know the farmer
- Small & local business
- Good & proper training
- \$ funding – private, public
  - Bus.
  - NS gov.
  - Fed
  - NS Fed. Of ag.
  - Commodity groups
  - Horticulture NS
  - Municipalities

## Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

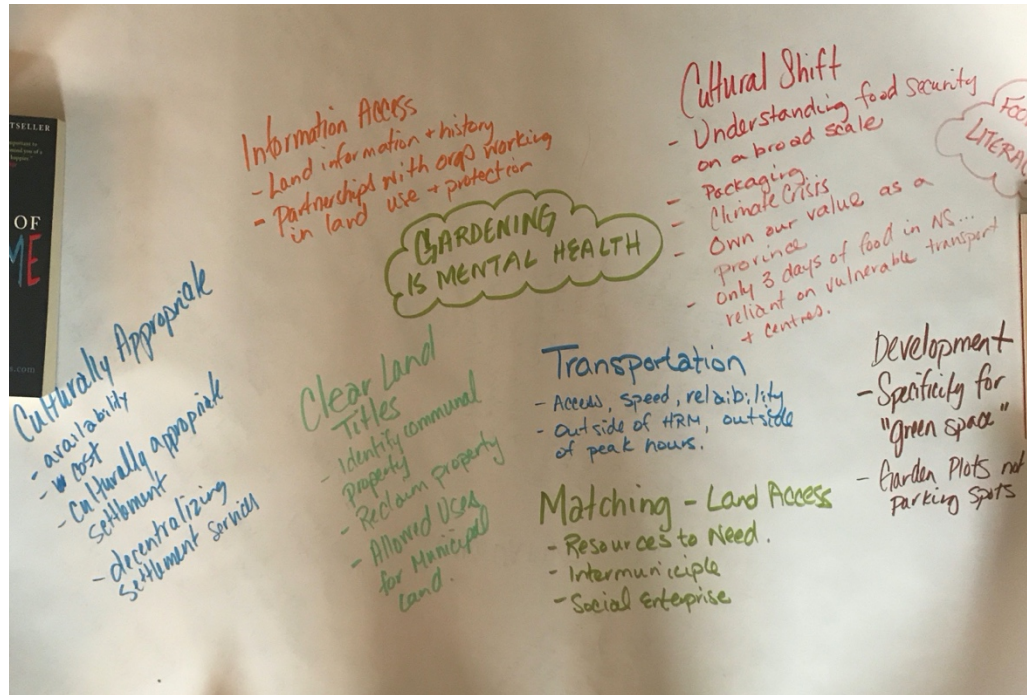
### Sheet 5, Side A



- Primary production/processing also important
- Access to land through diff. models – not just ownership
- Fighting stereotypes + xenophobia through celebrating food → Feeling connected through food programs; building community

# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Sheet 6, Side A



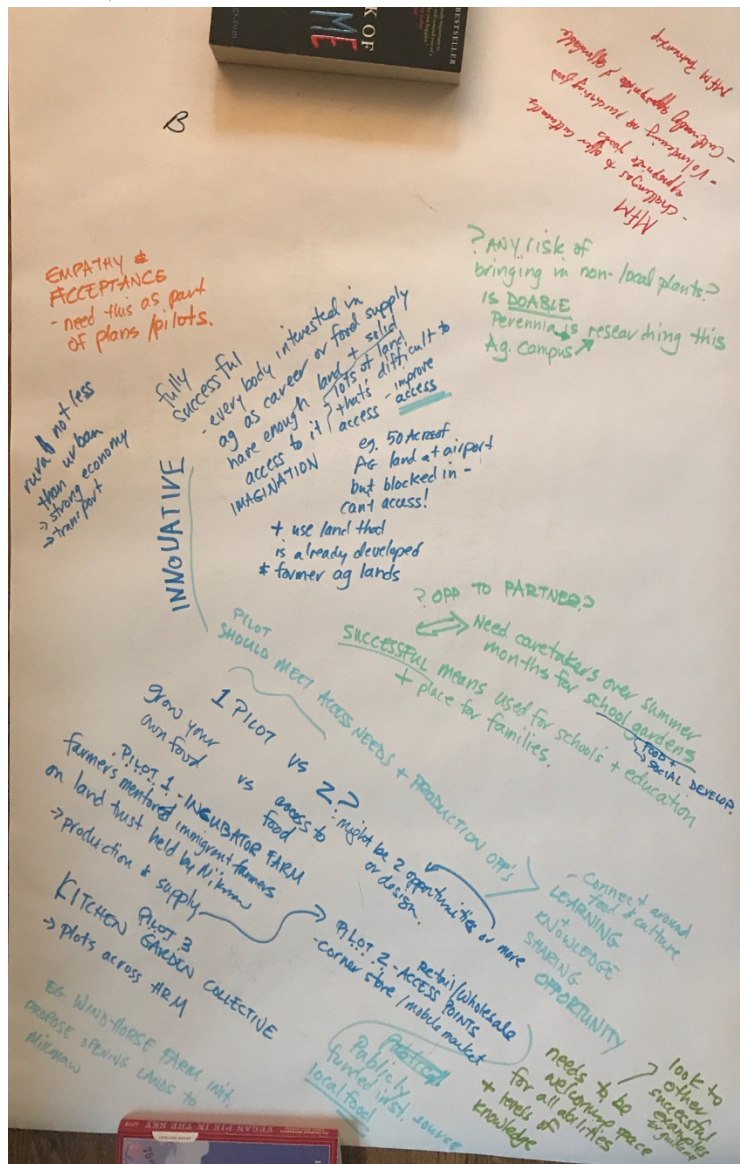
- Gardening is mental health\*
- Culturally appropriate
  - Availability
  - Cost
  - Culturally appropriate settlement
  - Decentralizing settlement services
- Information access
  - Land information + history

- Partnership with orgs. working in land use and protection
- Clear land titles
- Identify communal property
- Reclaim property
- Allowed uses for municipal land
- Transportation
  - Access, speed, reliability
  - Outside of HRM, outside of peak hours
- Matching – land access
- Resources to need
- Intermunicipal
- Social enterprise
- Cultural shift
  - Understanding food security on a broad scale
  - Packaging
  - Climate crisis
  - Own our value as a province
  - Only 3 days of food in NS... reliant on vulnerable transport + centres
- Food literacy\*
- Development
  - Specificity for “green space”
  - Garden plots and parking spots



# Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

## Sheet 6, Side B



- Empathy & acceptance
  - Need this as part of plans/pilots
- rural not less than urban
  - strong economy
  - transport
- any risk of bringing in non-local plants
  - is doable
  - Perennia is researching this
  - Ag campus
- Fully successful
  - Everybody interested in ag. as career or food supply
  - Have enough land & solid access to it
  - Lots of land that's difficult to access – improve access
    - E.g., 50 acres of AG land at airport but blocked in – can't access
    - + use land that is already developed & former ag lands
  - IMAGINATION
- Opp to partner?
  - Need caretakers over summer months for school gardens (food & social develop.)
  - Successful means used for schools + education + place for families
- INNOVATIVE
- Pilot should meet access needs and production opps.
- Connect around food & culture
- Learning & knowledge sharing opportunity
- 1 pilot vs. 2?
  - Might be 2 opportunities or more or design

## Skills Development and Knowledge Sharing for Cultural Food Security and Occupational Justice for Newcomers Living in the HRM – Summary Report

- Grow your own food vs. access to food
- Pilot 1 – incubator farm
  - Farmers mentor immigrant farmers on land trust held by Mi'kmaw
  - Production & supply
- Pilot 2 – retail/wholesale access points
  - Corner store/mobile market
- Pilot 3 – kitchen garden collective
  - Plots across HRM
- E.g., Windhorse Farm init. propose opening lands to Mi'kmaw
- Publically funded inst. source local food
- Needs to be welcoming space for all abilities + levels of knowledge
  - Look to other successful examples for guidance
- MFM
  - Challenges to offer culturally appropriate foods
  - Volunteering not purchasing food
  - Culturally appropriate & affordable
  - MFM partnership