



Project # 3.5 Making Healthy, Local Food Possible: Rural Community Solutions

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Project Description:

Background: The Forum on community food security (CFS) and the social economy was hosted by Sub Node Three (SN3): Community Mobilization around Food Security and Community Economic Development, on March 23 & 24th 2010 in Greenwich N.S. Sub Node Three (SN3) aims to facilitate participatory action research on mobilization projects around food security and community economic development that are driven, guided and approved by SN3 community partners; involve an element of university - community collaboration; contribute to building food security at multiple levels and with diverse groups; benefit the social economy in Hants, Kings and Annapolis Counties; and have relevance to/impacts on the wider social economy.

Purpose: The purpose of the March 2010 forum was to follow up on the 2007 forum by bringing together local politicians, farmers, representatives from local organizations, researchers, students, public health staff and community members to further explore what community food security looks like in Annapolis, Kings and Hants Counties. Projects funded and developed after the November 2007 forum as well as other innovative projects in the area were presented. Further, future plans for continuing action on community food security were made.

Outcomes:

As an introduction to the forum, Noreen Millar welcomed participants on behalf of *The Atlantic Social Economy and Sustainability (SES) Research Network* and shared information about the background and structure of the SES Network and its sub nodes. This was followed by an icebreaker to help give participants a sense of the diversity in the room and then an exercise to ensure all participants were working with common definitions of "food security" and "social economy" for the purpose of the forum. Then participants organized into smaller tables to discuss food security initiatives and projects they had been working on. Projects discussed included: School Garden Project, Family Matters, Strive for Five at School Program, Gaspereau School Garden, Community Shared Agriculture and projects of

Kids Action Program including rural gardening, participatory food costing Food Box programs and many more.

Next, the 2007 forum was reviewed, including its outcomes and a brief discussion on what stood out from the previous forum. This was followed by presentations from the three projects that had been funded by SN3 since the 2007 forum. Liesel Carlsson presented her thesis on the school garden case study. This was followed by Edith Callaghan and Alan Warner presenting "Great Meals for a Change". The presentations ended with "Making Healthy, Local Food Possible: Rural Community Solutions", an innovative, capacity building gardening project of Kids Action Program.

Day 2 started with a visioning exercise for the day, followed by informal conversation about other innovative projects in the area. Some of the initiatives discussed included: Valley Vegetarians, Bridgewater Community Christmas Dinner, demo booths and Wolfville farmer's market, Strive for Five, Fair Trade for Youth, and the Food Policy Council. Patty Williams then gave a brief overview and led a discussion regarding some provincial level initiatives including the Healthy Eating Nova Scotia strategy, the Nova Scotia Food Security Network, the Participatory Food Costing and Activating Policy Change for Community Food Security Community University Research Alliance (CURA), and the NS Food Policy Council to help make the links to broader capacity building and social systems change initiatives. Next, participants broke into smaller World Cafe Sessions to discuss what can be done to advance food security in the region.

After lunch, participants engaged in a discussion about developing action plans to impact local food security. Possibilities for action plans included:

- Developing income supports for people living with food insecurity. This includes increasing awareness of models already in use.
- Developing purchasing or procurement policies regarding food distribution. This requires government support and infrastructure, for example, to support transportation fresh local produce to Nova Scotia schools.
- Bringing small farms and farmers together to discuss food security and social justice.
- Sharing the food security message. This includes a personal commitment from forum participants to spread the message and promote food security websites such as Thought about Food? (www.foodthoughtful.ca)
- Increasing availability of local products in stores. This would involve making stores accountable to provide local products. Mapping local food sources may be one way to solve distribution problems.
- Developing a "Pesto Manifesto" was also discussed. This is a communiqué to the government which would express concerns about food security. Supporters, such as forum participants would sign the document.

Currently, discussion is still in progress about how to follow up on some of these action plans.

Outputs:

[Working Paper No. 2010-04: Report: 2010 forum on community food security and the social economy.](#)

Kids Action Program.

Halifax, Nova Scotia: Social Economy and Sustainability (SES/ÉSD) Research Network: 2010.

Nothing Listed Prior to Spring 2011.

