

Understanding Our Food Systems

BUILDING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

PHASE II FINAL REPORT





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- Fort William First Nation
- Ginoogaming First Nation
- Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek
- Long Lake #58 First Nation
- Namaygoosisagun
- Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg
- Pawgwasheeng
- Red Rock Indian Band
- Whitesand First Nation

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- Roots to Harvest
- Regional Food Distribution Association
- Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre
- Sustainable Food Systems Lab and Lakehead University
- Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy
- EcoSuperior Thunder Bay
- Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Local Food & Farm Coop

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Note: These documents are available as digital attachments

- A. Regional Scan
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- C. Community Food Sovereignty Visions
- D. Project Overview Documents
- E. Materials from the Gathering
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 - Minutes
 - Breakout Sessions
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- G. Initial Partner & Community Letters
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- I. Videos



1. Letter to the Reader

FROM JESSICA MCLAUGHLIN, PROJECT COORDINATOR

Booshoo,

This report is a testament to the determination of First Nation communities in Northwestern Ontario towards food sovereignty on their lands and territories. This report demonstrates how that has happened through a growing, sustained movement for change in Indigenous food systems and communities.

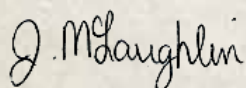
As an Anishinaabe Kwe from the region, this project has provided me with a breadth of personal and professional growth that has been a humbling experience. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity. The impacts of colonization and assimilation imposed by settler colonialism has resulted in my lifelong struggle with identity, the theft of my people's land and the creation of the reserve system that prohibited my connection with my community in addition to the loss of Traditional land-based knowledge and language that I have always felt deeply in my spirit. I was lucky to have a family that ensured I spent time on the land learning Traditional land-based skills, in spite of the disposition of my ancestors. My continued food systems work has provided me with opportunities to reclaim and reconnect with myself- and my community, and to learn more about my history and the history of the First Nation communities within my Traditional territory. This project has provided me with further depth of Traditional teachings and learnings. I have been able to develop a greater understanding of how the Anishinaabe people functioned pre-contact, and how to revisit those teachings and implement them in a modern context.

Coming from a background of community economic development that was focused in First Nation communities in Northern Ontario, I have been gifted with the ability to build and foster strength-based relationships with community members from many different places. I hold these relationships close and have utilized them throughout this project. The profound respect I have for these relationships and the conscious awareness of the impacts of colonization on Indigenous people has given me the skills to support communities to direct their own development. By creating spaces that enables productive dialogue, we have been able to arm people with information and connections that encourage community participation and ownership for action-based projects

that affect change. From my own personal struggles, I recognize that the process of reclamation takes time. It is imperative that funders, organizations and governments provide the space for this type of transformative change to happen.

When considering how transformative systemic change happens, we must be aware that power is not evenly distributed in society and that racism within the food movement locally, provincially and nationally is very real. In community, First Nation governments and their members are faced with the reality of how to access safe, healthy, culturally appropriate food. This, coupled with navigating complex intersecting systems that have racist notions engrained within them, further prohibit communities and people from determining their path forward. As Eric Holt Gimenez, the Executive Director of Food First, stated in his special, multi-authored series on racism and liberation in the food system, “Racism—individual, institutional and structural impedes good faith efforts to build a fair, sustainable food system, dismantling racism isn’t extra work, it is the work”. I agree that this is not easy work, but necessary; the decolonization of policies, funding, organizations, and governments will take time. Projects like Understanding Our Food Systems help to make “dismantling” changes. The Thunder Bay District Health Unit has made significant effort to begin this type of change. While there is still a long road ahead, small incremental changes contribute and can have a big impact. Louder commitments from organizations are needed. It is when organizations genuinely begin to look within and develop an informed understanding of their own practices and how their own power and privilege affect the progression of a sustainable food system for all – this is when real change can happen.

Chi Miigwech

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. McLaughlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the last name being a large, stylized 'M'.

Jessica McLaughlin

The background of the slide is a close-up, high-angle shot of a dark blue ocean. The water is textured with numerous small, white-capped waves and ripples, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lighting is somewhat dim, emphasizing the dark tones of the water.

2. INTRODUCTION

A. CONTEXT

Northwestern Ontario is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe people (including Ojibway, Cree and OjiCree) and through kinship is also home to many Metis peoples. Since time immemorial, Indigenous communities have attained food through hunting and gathering, fishing, and farming while sharing land, water and resources. Since the arrival of European settlers in the 16th century, Indigenous peoples' access to Traditional foods has been limited due to the establishment of reserves, an imposition of legislation, the residential school system, and a range of other efforts by British and Canadian governments to eradicate Indigenous cultures and ways of life. The diverse Indigenous traditions around food have been treated with contempt and viewed as detrimental to colonial notions of progress and development. Today, Indigenous people in Northwestern Ontario remain actively engaged in efforts to protect and revitalize land, waters and restore Traditional food systems including cultivation, fishing, hunting and foraging.

Underpinning these efforts, food sovereignty is a concept describing the vision of a food system that provides healthy, culturally appropriate and ecologically sustainable food while ensuring that communities (not governments or businesses) are able to make decisions about how the system functions.

According to the 2011 Pan-Canadian People's Food Policy Project:

Food sovereignty includes the fundamental recognition of Indigenous Peoples as nurturers of food systems that have been sustainable for thousands of years. Indigenous food sovereignty understands food as sacred and part of a web of relationships with the natural world that sustains culture and community. Food, water, soil, and air are not viewed as “resources” but as sources of life itself.

The Understanding Our Food Systems project was established to work with fourteen First Nations in Northwestern Ontario to rebuild their food systems and work towards the goal of food sovereignty. This report discusses the second phase of the project that ran from October 2018 to March 2019. While there were many successes to report, we acknowledge that this work will take many generations to complete and that it requires continued support.

¹ The People's Food Policy project's final report, *Resetting the Table* is available at <https://foodsecurecanada.org/people-food-policy>



LEFT: *Tipi and Cook Fire January 23, 2019*
"Understanding Our Food Systems Gathering"
Regional Food Distribution Association

B. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT PURPOSE

In 2017 the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) received funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care through the Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program (NFVP) to implement a new project called Understanding Our Food Systems. The original aim of this project was to build connections, examine food distribution and systems level food environments. In fall of 2018, the TBDHU received a second round of funding to continue the project. The objectives of the Understanding Our Food Systems Phase II project were to build on Phase I, which supported fourteen First Nations to begin the development of community food plans.

Phase II aimed to further develop and implement the strategies that determine community food systems through direct support and fostering regional connections. This involved community visits, a regional gathering, a regional scan of services and research, and the development of regional approaches to food sovereignty for the First Nations communities. The project team was made up of individuals with experience in community engagement and community-based participatory research with deep connections across the region. This included a number of institutions and organizations along with the Indigenous Food Circle based in Thunder Bay. Taking leadership from the communities themselves, the project team facilitated the further development of relationships through continuous communication and networking, while providing support.

PHASE II OF THE PROJECT WAS STRUCTURED AROUND FOUR KEY COMPONENTS:

- 1. Leadership from and Direct Support for First Nations** – Support for each community through further development and initial implementation of the Phase I community food plans. This involved developing action plans and budgets as well as purchasing the necessary items to achieve short- and medium-term goals. The project team took direction from the First Nations.
- 2. Network Building and Ongoing Communication** – Connecting First Nations to relevant partner organizations and support networks. This included a literature review and a regional scan of existing food system projects, programs, and funding.
- 3. Regional Food Gathering and Knowledge Sharing** – The Gathering involved a coming together of representative from the fourteen First Nations along with supporting Indigenous individuals and organizations from Northwestern Ontario, Southern Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It provided an opportunity for further relationship building and knowledge and skill sharing. It was also a space to work on community action plans.
- 4. Sharing and Next Steps** – Through oral and written communication, reports, videos and the internet, we shared back all information with the communities and provided feedback and ideas about next steps for the next phase of the project.

C. COMMUNITIES INVOLVED

The Understanding Our Food Systems project worked with fourteen First Nation communities located within road access of the city of Thunder Bay (see Figure 1.1) and within the Treaty 9 and Robinson Superior Treaty Areas (see Text Box 1.1). These communities all utilize Thunder Bay as a regional hub for access to health care, education, shopping for food and other items, as well as a myriad of other services.

Text Box 1.1: Robinson Superior Treaty and Treaty 9

Treaties are formal agreements that were signed between First Nations and the British and Settler Canadian governments. The **Robinson Superior Treaty** was signed by Ojibwa chiefs in 1850 at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario by Ojibwa Chief's and the Crown represented by William Benjamin Robinson. **Treaty 9** was signed in 1905 by Cree and Ojibwa Chiefs. Both treaties promised cash payments for land acquisition and involved the creation of reserves, education and hunting, fishing and trapping rights.



Photo by: MA Smith, Faculty of Natural Resources, Lakehead University



Figure 1.1 Artist rendition of the project area and communities involved (art credit: Caroline Cichelly).

The fourteen First Nations communities:



Animbiigoo Zaagi igan Anishinaabek (AZA) was historically located near Ombabika Lake and Auden Ontario located on the Northeast side of Lake Nipigon. Through the Lake Nipigon Reserve Negotiations, AZA focused their land negotiations on the establishment of a community (reserve) near Auden/Ombabika Lake. The government disagreed with the establishment of the community's chosen location due to the remoteness and the people were forced to negotiate and seek alternative locations. In 2002, an agreement was signed outlining the establishment of a reserve land base located at Partridge Lake near Jellico and in 2008, the community celebrated the creation of their reserve. AZA members are dispersed in municipalities along Highway 11 and 17 from Thunder Bay to Geraldton with the Band administration providing services to all its members in these communities from its office in Beardmore. AZA continues to focus on the development of their community while strengthening their members' resilience through engaging communities, households and individuals in a variety of programs. AZA has a registered community membership of 398 people.



Aroland First Nation (AFN) is located 60 km north of Geraldton, just west of Nakina, and is accessible by highway 643. AFN gained reserve status under the Indian Act on April 15, 1985 through the Six Pack Negotiations. AFN is dedicated to delivering and creating education, health, cultural and economic opportunities for its members while conserving its traditional territory. AFN has a strong connection with the land and has a long history of protecting and utilizing the land for hunting, fishing and harvesting. There are 700 registered band members, with 400 of those members living in the community while others are dispersed throughout Canada.



Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (BZA) is located on the eastern shores of Lake Nipigon and borders the municipality of Macdiarmid. BZA is 20 km from the municipality of Beardmore and 185 km from Thunder Bay. The community hosted the first Indigenous CBC television program in the late 1980's called "Spirit Bay", which focused on community member reconnection with the land using traditional methods of hunting, fishing

and harvesting and the challenges that followed. Since that time, the community has committed to providing unique methods and opportunities for its members to access more Traditional food such as sustainable fishing and the establishment of a community orchard. The community has a registered membership of 678, with 348 members living in the community.



Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek (BNA) reserve land includes 984.6 hectares in what was the former Black Sands/Lake Nipigon Provincial Park. BNA is located on the eastern shore of Pijitiwabik Bay, which is on the southeastern shores of Lake Nipigon, 50km north of highway 11/17. BNA's land was returned to them in April 2010 following years of displacement caused by the provincial and federal governments. The community and its leadership are now forging ahead with major economic development initiatives and re-establishing the community for the eventual return of its membership to their homeland. While some BNA members live on reserve seasonally, many reside in neighbouring municipalities across Northern Ontario. The total membership of BNA is 250 members and their administration office is located in Thunder Bay.



Biitigong Nishnaabeg (Pic River First Nation) is located off highway 11/17, approximately 352 km east of Thunder Bay. It is accessible by Highway 627, adjacent to Pukaskwa National Park, with reserve land totalling 332.7 hectares in size. The traditional territory encompasses over two million hectares combined with Exclusive and Shared territory on the north shore of Lake Superior. Pic River First Nation has asserted Aboriginal Title and has filed a comprehensive land claim in the Ontario Superior Court for Aboriginal title over its traditional territory. Biitigong Nishnaabeg is a vibrant and growing community with an increasing population. Currently, there are 1,200 registered members, with 500 members living in the community.



Fort William First Nation (FWFN) is located on the western end of Lake Superior adjacent to the city of Thunder Bay. The reserve land was set aside under the provisions of the Robinson-Superior Treaty in 1850 and the reserve was officially formed in 1853. The traditional territories occupied and used by the FWFN people stretch from Pigeon River to the south, north to Treaty 9 boundary and east to Nipigon. In the negotiations of the Robinson Superior Treaty, FWFN agreed not to interfere with colonial settlers. In return, the Crown promised cash payments and trade goods, annuities beginning in 1851, and complete freedom to continue to hunt and fish as before (except on private land). Most people made their living in traditional ways, utilizing an aquatic territory on Lake Superior that encompassed Pie Island, Flatland Island and south to Sturgeon Bay as "the Grand Fishery". The people of FWFN would spend their winters in the interior on their hunting grounds. The community has a registered membership of 1,798 people, with 832 members living in the community.



Ginoogaming First Nation (GFN) is located on the northeast shore of Long Lake, 1 km south of the municipality of Longlac with access from highway 11. GFN occupies an area of 7,000 hectares. The GFN people have been living along Long Lake since time immemorial and were first recorded by the Hudson's Bay company in 1840. GFN has a registered membership of 816 people, with 173 members living in the community.



Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek (KZA) is located on the western shores of Lake Nipigon. It is 200 km from Thunder Bay and 45 km from the municipality of Armstrong. KZA has a registered membership of 1,375 people, with 328 members living in the community.



Long Lake #58 First Nation (LL58) is located on highway 11 along the northeast shore of Long Lake and adjacent to the municipality of Longlac. LL58 has been located on one square mile of land since 1905 and sits within the geographic boundaries of the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. The community has not signed a treaty with the crown. The community has faced many changes to their land with the expropriation in favour of the development of the Canadian National Railway and the TransCanada highway. LL58 has a registered membership of 1,400 people, with 450 members living in the community.



Namaygoosisagagun First Nation (NFN) is a small remote access community in Northwestern Ontario within the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. NFN has been in existence since time immemorial, but has yet to receive official reserve status, although it has applied and negotiated for official band status and reserve lands through the provisions of the Indian Act. NFN members have historically lived near Onamakawash Lake on the north shore of Collins Lake, northwest of Lake Nipigon and continue to maintain a thriving, healthy community in the north. The name "Namaygoosisagagun" comes from Namegosi-zaaga'igan, meaning "Trout Lake", which is the Anishinaabemowin name for Collins Lake. Access to NFN is limited to train, portage trails, and snow machines in the winter. With limited access comes challenges, but it also makes for a strong and resilient community. There are no stores within the community so many people rely on the land for sustenance. Therefore, protection of their traditional lands is one of the community's main priorities. NFN has 140 registered members, with approximately 30 members live in the community.



Pawgwasheeng (Pays Plat First Nation) is located near the municipality of Rosspoint Ontario, 175 km east of Thunder Bay along highway 17. The people of Pawgwasheeng have lived on the north shore of Lake Superior for a long time, surviving on hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering food and were heavily involved in the fur trade. There is a registered membership of 210 people, with 70 members living in the community.



Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg (Pic Mobert First Nation) has two reserves, both of which are located off highway 17, approximately 55 km east of the municipality of Marathon, along the eastern shores of White Lake. Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg is governed by a community constitution named Chi-Naakigewin where they assert that the community never ceded, surrendered, or in any way extinguished Aboriginal title to their lands and waters. The community has a registered membership of 1,010 people, with 400 members living in the community.



Red Rock Indian Band (RRIB) is located on the Lake Helen Reserve #53A approximately 1/4 km from the junction of Highway 11/17, 100 km east of Thunder Bay. It consists of two sections, Parmachene Reserve 53 and Lake Helen Reserve 53A. The total area covered by these two reserves is approximately 950 acres. Historically, the people lived in different locations on and around Lake Nipigon such as at Jackfish Island, Gull Bay, and McIntyre Bay. RRIB became an Indian Reserve under the Indian Act in 1914. They have a registered membership of 1,823 people, with 323 of those members living in the community.



Whitesand First Nation (WFN) is located 246 km northeast of Thunder Bay on highway 527 and is situated northeast of the municipality of Armstrong. WFN has a land base of 615 acres. Historically, the community was located along the northwest shore of Lake Nipigon near Mount St. John and the Whitesand River. In 1942, high water levels began eroding the shoreline and flooding out the community's buildings and burial grounds. Many WFN people settled along the rail line with the majority settling in Armstrong, where the establishment of the new reserve lands were negotiated. The community has a registered membership of 1086 people, with 311 members living in the community.



D. SUMMARY OF PHASE I

Phase I of the Understanding Our Food Systems project set out to engage with the fourteen First Nation communities to develop community food plans. These communities all face high levels of food insecurity and limited access to fresh, healthy and culturally appropriate food. Coordinated by Superior Strategies (a First Nations owned consulting firm), Phase I consisted of a series of community visits and collecting information on existing community food initiatives, services, food sources, food delivery routes and barriers. These visits were conducted from December 2017 to March 2018. A regional gathering was held on March 28-29, 2018 in Thunder Bay that included presentations, network building and knowledge sharing. Through a brief planning exercise at the gathering, seven priority areas were identified and the communities provided examples of opportunities or solutions to include in their individual community food plans.



LEFT: Erin Beagle of Roots to Harvest demonstrating the smoothie bike at the 2018 Gathering with Community Members Lisa Echum and Alice Sasines



ABOVE: Group Photo: Understanding Our Food Systems Gathering Phase One March 2018

The identified priority areas for food were as follows:



1. Self Sufficiency

- Home and Community Gardening
- Chicken Coops
- Orchards
- Emergency Planning



2. Access

- Food Bank
- Good Food Box (Expansion)
- Food Transportation/Distribution/
Bulk Buying
- Grocery Store development/
expansion



3. Sovereignty & Traditional Knowledge

- Climate Change
- Community & Family Harvesting
- Sustainable Fishing
- Traditional Teachings on food
- Traditional Use of Land (wild blueberries/sugar bush/wild rice)



4. Funding

- Self Sufficiency
- Sustainable Traditional Economic Initiatives (blueberries/sugar bush/
wild rice/commercial fishing)
- Fishing Tournaments
- In-community funding connections
(Planning)



5. Infrastructure

- Community Freezers/Refrigeration Capacity
- Community Kitchen Space
- Greenhouse Development (winterization/tools and Resources)
- Grocery Store development/
expansion



6. Planning and Coordination

- Community Food Planning/
Coordination/Integration
- Coordination and connection between health and food
- Food Coordinator



7. Education, Skills and Capacity Building

- In community workshops/activities
- Traditional and Modern Food Teachings in schools
- Traditional and Healthy Food Use in Schools
- Food gatherings to support work



Common themes were also developed at the first Gathering that directly related to the identified community food priority areas and provided clarity on steps forward for a regional and community-based approach were also shaped at the first Gathering (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Phase I Common Community Themes



Following the Gathering in 2018, the communities began to implement their community food plans on their own. A final report was developed and distributed to the fourteen participating First Nations. Recognizing the need to continue to develop these plans and support their implementation, the TBDHU pursued a second year of funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

See Appendix H for the complete Phase I report

D. SUMMARY OF PHASE II

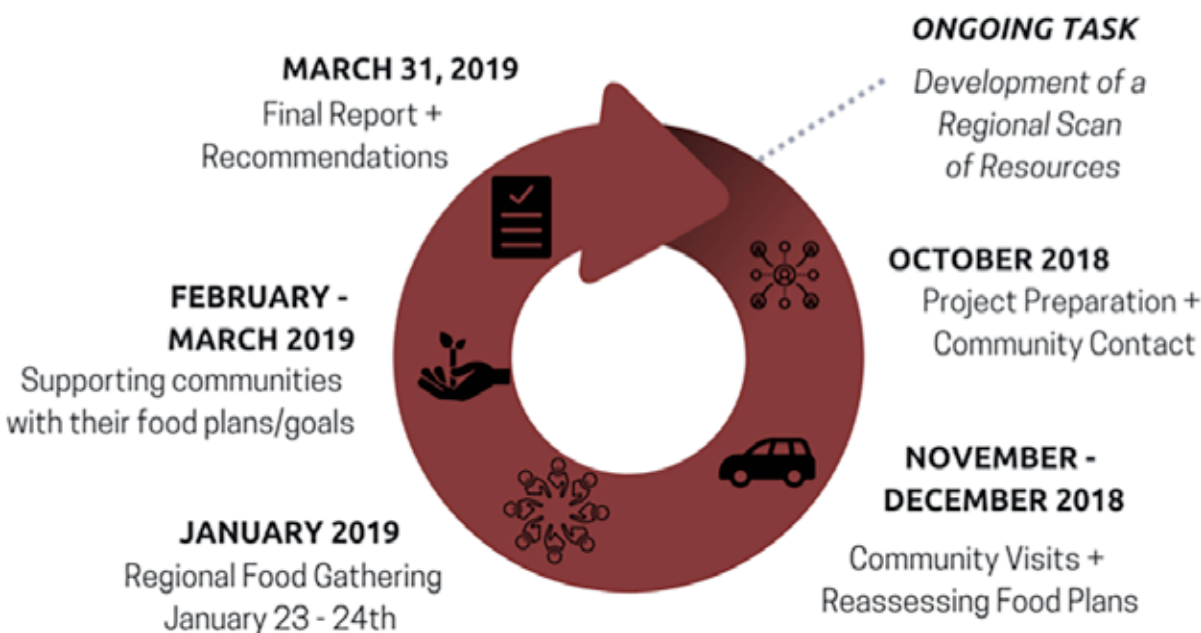
Phase II began in October 2018, coordinated by a project team affiliated with the Indigenous Food Circle, a coalition of Indigenous led and Indigenous serving organizations in the Thunder Bay area. Phase II continued to work with the fourteen First Nations to better understand the assets and needs identified by each community during Phase I of the project (see Figure 1.3). The project team aimed to consider how solutions emerging from the community food plans could be put in place. Project deliverables were developed based on outcomes from Phase I and an emphasis was put on support for the further development and implementation of the community food plans.

Through an initial round of community visits and engagements in December 2018, the project team and the fourteen First Nations identified the progress each community had made with respect to their community food plans, along with broader food sovereignty goals. It became clear that there was a need to share more information and knowledge, build further networks and foster deeper relationships. In response, a regional

food gathering was planned that would ultimately begin to shape the food sovereignty visions.

From January 22-24, 2019, the second Understanding Our Food Systems Gathering was held in Thunder Bay and provided communities and connecting partners with a forum to collaboratively learn together and explore what food sovereignty means and looks like with guests from across Canada. The Gathering also included an interactive workshop to support each community in exploring their food sovereignty vision through an action planning exercise. Communities were paired with a trained facilitator to establish short-, medium- and long-term food planning activities that would work towards their food sovereignty visions. Facilitators were asked to concentrate on one or two short-term goals that could be implemented before the end of the project in March 2019. Following the Gathering and the development of short-term actions, community representatives began to implement the identified actions. A second round of community visits took place between February and March 2019 with the focus of supporting implementation.

Figure 1.3 Phase II Timeline



3. THE TEAM



Phase II was coordinated by a project team affiliated with the Indigenous Food Circle, a coalition of Indigenous led and Indigenous breadth of experience and knowledge of community development, community engaged research, and food systems. Each of the project team members are also committed to developing healthy, equitable and sustainable food systems in Northwestern Ontario (and beyond). In this section we introduce the different organizations and individuals who formed the project's core support – the Indigenous Food Circle, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, the project team, and the connecting partners.

A. PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

This collaborative project team brought together a diverse range of knowledge and experience in food systems, food security, community development, research, and Indigenous relations. The primary team members are as follows:



Jessica McLaughlin,
PROJECT COORDINATOR

Jessica is a member of the Long Lake 58 First Nation and grew up in Nakina, Ontario, she is an executive member with the Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy, where she collaboratively assisted in the establishment of the Indigenous Food Circle. As Project Coordinator, Jessica supported the overall planning and coordination, engagement with communities, facilitation and implementation of the community food sovereignty visions.



Dr. Charles Levkoe,
PROJECT ADVISOR
& SUPPORT

Dr. Charles Levkoe is the Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Food Systems, the Director of the Sustainable Food Systems Lab and an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Sciences at Lakehead University. Dr. Levkoe's responsibilities included intellectual contributions to the overall project, providing guidance on the projects methodology and ongoing research, supporting team members, conducting community visits, and organizing and analyzing any collected information.



Courtney Strutt,
PROJECT & FACILITATION
SUPPORT

Courtney is an educator and program development practitioner who has worked with First Nation communities in Northern Ontario over the last decade in youth programming, education, and strategic program development. Courtney supported the planning, design, and implementation of the food sovereignty plans and the January Gathering. Courtney also took leadership in supporting team meetings and coordinating the compilation of the final report.



Tyler Waboose,
PROJECT SUPPORT

Tyler was born from two Matawa community members, and was raised in the city of Thunder Bay. He has worked with Roots to Harvest in many different capacities, with his last role supporting the local Poverty Reduction Partnership Project with Nishnawbe Aski Nation. Tyler supported the overall implementation of the project, with the majority of his time spent working with communities assisting in the facilitation of their food sovereignty activities.



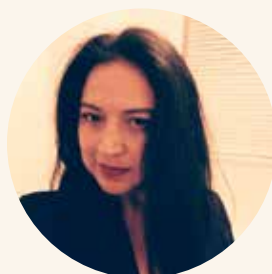
Vincent Ng,
PROJECT SUPPORT

Vincent is a Public Health Nutritionist with the TBDHU. His work focuses on food systems projects and food environments. He has collaborated on projects related to Indigenous Health and was deeply involved in Phase I of this project. Vincent provided oversight from the Health Unit and participated in regular meetings and decision making with the team.



Michaela Bohunicky,
PROJECT SUPPORT

Michaela is a Registered Dietitian and Masters student in the Department of Health Sciences program at Lakehead University. She has worked with the Sudbury & District Health Unit, First Nations & Inuit Health Branch, Roots to Harvest, and as a Food System Planner with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. Michaela assisted with project planning and conducted the research and development of the regional scan.



Veronica Rosario Paredes Calderon,
PROJECT SUPPORT

Veronica has strong Indigenous roots in Ecuador and is currently a PhD student at Lakehead University. Veronica assisted with project planning and conducted the research and development of the literature review.



Shawna Beaulieu,
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Shawna is French Canadian and grew up in Longlac, Ontario. For over a decade, Shawna has worked in several industries including not-for-profit, corporate and charitable foundations, Indigenous governance and the private sector. Shawna provided financial management of project.



B. INDIGENOUS FOOD CIRCLE

The Indigenous Food Circle is a collaborative group of twenty-two Indigenous-led or Indigenous-serving organizations in the Thunder Bay region that aims to better understand and promote Indigenous perspectives and experiences around food. Using food as a tool for reconciliation and resurgence, the Indigenous Food Circle creates the space to reclaim and weave Indigenous knowledges and experiences into food systems.

The Indigenous Food Circle has five key priorities;

1. Develop a regional network to support connections through food systems
2. Improve Indigenous food security
3. Support Indigenous food sovereignty
4. Support the resurgence of Indigenous food networks across the region
5. Establish meaningful relationship with settlers through food

Overall, members of the Indigenous Food Circle provided guidance on the project and support to the First Nations on their community food plans along with ongoing support for its implementation. The partnerships and relationships that have been developed through the Indigenous Food Circle and its member organizations will build a stronger foundation for food sovereignty into the future.



C. THE THUNDER BAY DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT (TBDHU)

The TBDHU is one of 36 Public Health Units operating in the Province of Ontario and administers programs and services to approximately 160,000 people across a large geographic area of 235,531 sq. km. They are a non-profit agency funded jointly by the provincial government and the municipalities they serve. The TBDHU is committed to improving health and reducing social inequities in health through evidence-informed practice. The TBDHU served as a project partner and a member of the Indigenous Food Circle, acting as a liaison between the Ministry of Health and the Indigenous Food Circle project team. The TBDHU's jurisdictional boundaries are host to 25 First Nations that are located within the Treaty 9 and Robinson Superior Treaty areas.



D. CONNECTING PARTNERS

Connecting partners are organizations doing food, or food related, work in the region. In collaboration with the project team, connecting partners supported the fourteen First Nation communities in the implementation of initiatives and projects as per their expertise, while also providing an overall advisory and knowledge sharing role for the project team.

Roots to Harvest provides transformative educational and employment opportunities for youth to engage with local agriculture and cultivate healthy communities. They have a vision of a future where youth are leaders, connecting a diverse community and cultivating food that's healthy and accessible.

The Regional Food Distribution Association (RFDA) provides emergency food to thousands of people in Thunder Bay and region. The RFDA has been a leader in looking at alternative methods of food access and engages in a range of programming including serving healthy meals, teaching cooking skills, planting gardens, preserving foods, and supporting local business.

The Northwestern Ontario Women's Centre is a non-profit, community based, feminist organization, with a mission to create and advocate for safe and supportive environments so that women can fully engage in their lives and communities. The centre currently coordinates the Thunder Bay Good Food Box program. The Sustainable Food Systems Lab and Lakehead University is a hub for academics and community-

based practitioners engaged in sustainable food systems research and action. They aim to build meaningful relationships that enable knowledge sharing between research, policy and practice with an ultimate goal of healthy, just and sustainable food systems for all.

The Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy is committed to creating a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system that contributes to the economic, ecological, and social well-being and health of the city of Thunder Bay and Area.

EcoSuperior is an incorporated not-for-profit organization, operated by a volunteer board of directors. Their mission is to achieve greater environmental stewardship in Northwestern Ontario and the Lake Superior Basin through engagement, education, collaboration, action and leadership.

Local Food & Farm Co-ops is an incorporated non-profit co-operative that provides organizing and development support for food and farming co-operatives in Ontario. LFFC provides training and capacity building online and in person for 75 co-ops across the province, and coordinates peer-to-peer support among the member co-ops.

ABOVE: *Erin Beagle Executive Director Roots to Harvest Presenting on Community Gardens and Greenhouses - Understanding Our Food Systems Gathering January 24, 2019*

The background of the slide is a close-up, high-angle shot of a dark blue ocean. The water is textured with numerous small, white-capped waves and ripples, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lighting is somewhat dim, emphasizing the dark tones of the water.

4. METHODOLOGY



A. APPROACH

The overall approach to Phase II of the Understanding Our Food System project was a participatory, community-engaged, action-focused methodology that involved putting the fourteen First Nations at the centre of the project. The project team, researchers and facilitators, provided access to a diverse range of knowledge and experiences in food systems, food security, food sovereignty, community development, and Indigenous relations. The project team also brought a breadth of related connections throughout the region that included Indigenous communities, institutions, researchers, and community-based organizations. Core to this approach was the desire to make space for First Nations people to derive food sovereignty goals along with short, medium and long-term actions.

Our methodological approach included the following five elements:



1. ENGAGEMENT

Working for, and taking leadership from the fourteen First Nations



2. SUPPORT

Identifying and providing knowledge and skills for short- and medium-term activities



3. CONNECTION

Building and fostering relationships to build networks and ensure long-term support for food sovereignty



4. ACTION/KNOWLEDGE CO-CREATION

Enabling communities and partners to share experiences to develop new activities



5. SYSTEMS LENS

Contextualizing food systems work within larger political and socio-economic structures of oppression and colonization.

B. PROCESS AND TOOLS

There were a number of different tools that were used to gather information with and for the fourteen First Nations communities. While the findings are presented in the next section (and in the Appendix), here we briefly describe the methods we used.

I. COMMUNITY SURVEY

A survey was developed and distributed to collect initial information from each First Nation about current needs and assets. A series of questions were asked about the perceived value of particular initiatives (e.g. community gardens, chicken coops, food banks, tradition food education and sharing, fisheries, etc.) and whether they already exist, and if not, if the initiative could work in the community. The survey also asked questions about the kinds of networks and connections that existed within and between communities, as well as with supporting organizations and partners. The information from the survey was used to inform the community visits, the January gathering and the food sovereignty visions and short term actions for each community.

II. INITIAL COMMUNITY VISITS

The initial community visits and meetings in December 2018 were used as a reconnection point and served as a means of developing deeper relationships with community members and staff that were initiated during Phase I of the project. Project team members facilitated conversations with a variety of different people in communities (e.g. Health and social service workers, economic development, band managers, etc.) around:

1. Current community food work and issues;
2. Progress on phase one community food plans;
3. Identification of current community priorities.

The identified priorities would become the basis for each First Nation's food sovereignty vision that would be further developed at the Gathering's facilitated workshop and implemented in collaboration with the communities in the remaining months of the project.



III. JANUARY GATHERING

The Understanding Our Food System Gathering was an interactive workshop to further develop food sovereignty visions with the fourteen First Nations. It also brought people together to network, share knowledge and to build a deeper understanding of food security and sovereignty in Northwestern Ontario. The Gathering was designed to allow for different spaces to be set throughout the two and a half days. The invitation list for the first day consisted of staff from the fourteen First Nations, members of the Indigenous Food Circle and Indigenous guests that were brought in to share their own food work. These guests were identified based on the First Nations' priorities developed during the initial community visits. The invitation list for the second day of the Gathering consisted of staff from the fourteen First Nations, connecting partners and invited guests.

The morning of the final day included focused conversations on common regional issues such as transportation and distribution, funding, and the establishment of greenhouses and community gardens. The afternoon was focused on assisting the fourteen First Nations to further develop their food sovereignty visions through the facilitation of an action planning exercise that utilized the decision-making framework developed by Dr. Lana Ray (see Figure 3.1). Each First Nation team was paired with a trained facilitator who was briefed and provided with an information package that contained project background and a planning template for their paired community. The facilitated approach and

access to the decision-making framework provided the space for community members to consciously build an understanding of the impacts their food sovereignty vision could have in their community. At the same, it led to an action plan that helped to guide implementation of determined short-term actions.

IV. SECOND COMMUNITY VISITS

As community's food sovereignty visions continued to take shape, the project team worked collaboratively with community partners to begin the implementation of short-term actions. In some cases, this required the project team to re-visit communities and facilitate additional project planning. The allocation of funding for each community's project implementation proved to be a successful means for generating community interest and momentum.

LEFT: *Community Action Planning - Understanding Our Food Systems Gathering January 24, 2019*

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY FOOD SOVEREIGNTY VISIONS

Implementation of short-term actions happened through collaboration with community staff, connecting partners and the project team. The ongoing community support from the project team proved successful and gave community partners the confidence to continue to put food sovereignty issues into the forefront of their work. Throughout each phase of the project there has been a progression of collaborative learning that has led to commitment to implementation within community.

Figure 3.1. Action plan decision-making framework





ABOVE: Representatives from Aroland First Nation work on a community specific “Circle of Survival” exercise during the 2019 Gathering.

ABOVE: The project team putting together Christmas Good Food Boxes for AZA and Ginoogaming First Nation.



ABOVE: Participants at the 2019 Gathering enjoying a lunch of three sisters soup, rabbit, and bannock strawberry shortcake.

5. PROJECT OUTCOMES

Phase II of the Understanding Our Food Systems project had many important outcomes that work towards supporting the fourteen First Nation communities in realizing their food sovereignty visions. This section summarizes the major outcomes from the project. Further details from these outcomes can be found in the Appendices.

A. REGIONAL SCAN

Through Phase I of the project, it became evident that there was a gap in the information communities were able to access about food system development. The ideas, projects, programs, funding and the organizations that support this work seemed difficult to access as information was often located in numerous places. The regional scan was formulated to provide communities with a compilation of this information in an easy to access way. It is hoped that First Nation communities will utilize the regional scan to assist in seeking out new opportunities, connect with regional partners and other communities, and build stronger food systems.

The scan catalogued individuals, communities and organizations working to build sustainable food systems and food sovereignty in Northwestern Ontario. The information the scan collected was represented in a spreadsheet divided into eight categories:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) Health | 5) Non-Governmental Organization Community |
| 2) Political (First Nations Governance) | 6) Research and Education |
| 3) Canadian Government | 7) Networks |
| 4) Non-Governmental Organization Funders | 8) Environmental |

Each of these categories was populated with relevant organizations and institutions. The scan also included the respective catchment areas of each organization and a brief description of their relevance to sustainable food systems and food sovereignty. A link to each respective organization’s website is embedded within the spreadsheets.

An initial draft of the scan was shared with members of the Indigenous Food Circle and connecting partners for feedback and was updated accordingly. Going forward, the scan will be a living, open-access document, which means that it will be updated on an ongoing basis and be available publicly.

See Appendix A for the complete regional scan.

ABOVE RIGHT TOP: *Wild Rice, Blueberry, Cranberry, Micro Green Salad - Understanding Our Food Systems Gathering January 23, 2019*

**Wild Rice Harvested By William Yerxa - Couchiching First Nation*

ABOVE RIGHT BOTTOM: *Lake trout prepared by Rich Francis at the 2019 Gathering*



B. OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL FOOD RESEARCH & INFORMATION

The compilation of the Overview of Regional Food Research & Information, also known as a literature review, came out of the identified need to support First Nation communities in accessing information about food sovereignty work regionally, as well as specifically in their communities. There is a lot of research and literature created that is about, or impacts, the First Nations, which may not be known in communities. This overview was intended to help close that gap.

The overview was developed largely through key term searches in both academic and non-academic databases. The compilation of resources includes articles from academic and non-academic journals; project and organization reports; articles and reports about past projects by government or private companies; and important lectures.

The information is organized in two ways:

- By themes relating to food and First Nations people in Northern Ontario;
- By specific First Nation community, out of the fourteen participating First Nation communities in this project.

See Appendix B for the complete Overview.



C. FOOD SYSTEMS GATHERING

On January 23rd - 24th, 2019, the Understanding Our Food Systems Gathering was held at the Regional Food Distribution Association (RFDA) in Thunder Bay. The purpose of the gathering was to bring together representatives from the fourteen First Nation communities along with connecting partners to discuss the concept of food sovereignty, begin community action planning, and provide a space for sharing and learning new ideas in community food work.

The first day of the gathering was open to community representatives and connecting partners and was focused on sharing knowledge and experiences from several special guests. Highlights from the day included:

- Overview of the Understanding Our Food Systems Project and the work of the Indigenous Food Circle;
- Discussion of Traditional and modern food systems;
- Examples of food sovereignty through the food prepared for the gathering by chef Rich Francis (e.g. white fish, roasted rabbit, wild rice salad, beaver tacos, three sisters stew);
- Discussion and play reading by a project team from the University of Saskatchewan and youth from Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School focused on improving Traditional food access for urban Indigenous people;
- Sharing stories from the collaborative community work of the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, & Community Collaborative.

A major outcome from the first day was deepening the understanding and dialogue around food sovereignty through being exposed to concrete examples from Indigenous communities. The first day also began the process of networking among community representatives, connecting partners and invited guests.

The second day of the gathering was geared towards working with the First Nations representatives, with a focus on requested content learning and action planning towards community food sovereignty visions. The day included three breakout groups to address key areas identified by the fourteen First Nations:

- 1) **Understanding Food Funding** featuring a panel of funders from Tides Canada, the Manitoba Food Culture and Community Collaborative, the Ontario Ministry of Food and Rural Affairs, Feed the Children, and the Maple Leaf Foundation that shared information about the kinds of work their organizations fund, as well as answering specific questions from participants;
- 2) **Approaching Greenhouse Development** with Roots to Harvest sharing information about different greenhouse models and key questions to ask when moving towards building a greenhouse; and,
- 3) **Transportation and Distribution of Food in Northern Ontario** hosted by the Local Food & Farm Coop that provided an open space for participants to share challenges in transportation and distribution of food in the north and discuss potential solutions.



FAR LEFT: *Breakout session during the 2019 Gathering.*
LEFT: *Chef Rich Francis and sous chef Amber Stockla preparing lunch for the 2019 Gathering.*

The second day also focused on action planning, which involved the representatives from each First Nation being supported by a trained facilitator to work through a decision making framework and action plan template. This day had many outcomes including:

- New understandings about challenges and opportunities in funding for both communities and funders;
- New understandings about the many varieties of greenhouses and some key questions to ask when considering purchasing and building this kind of infrastructure;
- Common challenges and opportunities around food transportation and distribution in the region; and,
- Valuable contributions and discussions held about individual community food sovereignty visions, based on all information collected to date;
- Each community developed community action plans with a focus on short-term actions and budgets to support direct implementation through this project.

Overall, the Gathering was successful in its objective of connecting regional First Nations and connecting partners to deepen knowledge about food sovereignty, create new connections, and develop action plans to implement their food sovereignty visions.

See Appendices E for more detailed information and tools.

D. FOOD SOVEREIGNTY VISIONS

Since time immemorial, First Nation people have understood and practiced the present-day concepts of natural resource management through planning, which was done to ensure that food resources lasted throughout the year. Planning is a core skill that enables individuals, families and communities to make informed decisions about their food needs. Through colonization, these knowledge and skills were weakened but not forgotten. Assisting communities to use their planning skills was the premise of the idea behind the food sovereignty visions.

The food sovereignty visions are a compilation of the information shared in Phase I of the project and in Phase II through the surveys, community visits and discussions at the Gathering. Through continued community dialogue and sharing with the project team, these visions were compiled collaboratively to assist in determining short-term actions while ensuring long-term visions are at the forefront. Each food sovereignty vision is a living document. It is intended that communities will use these visions to continue the guidance and momentum of food sovereignty work beyond the life of the project.

See Appendices C for each community's vision.



E. COMMUNITY FOOD ACTION IMPLEMENTATION

As part of the Understanding Our Food Systems project, each of the fourteen First Nations received funding to support implementation of their food sovereignty vision.

The funds supported the short-term actions developed at the January Gathering, but also aimed to meet the longer-term elements of the food sovereignty visions. The following is a summary of the short-term action projects the First Nations chose to implement:

ANIMIBIIGOO ZAAGIGN ANISHINAABEK

- Holiday Good Food Box (community continues to pursue more sustainable ways to run its good food box program)
- Community Member Raised Bed Project (raised beds project plan developed)

AROLAND FIRST NATION

- Support for community greenhouse (volunteers and planning)
- Exploration of developing a cooperative community store

BIINJITIWAABIK ZAAGING ANISHINAABEK

- New commercial sink installed in the community center kitchen (encourage use of kitchen space)
- Train-the-trainer preserving workshop for health staff

BIITIGONG NISNAABEG

- Commercial freezer purchased (building a traditional food sharing program around infrastructure)
- Grow towers for community health centre and school (learning tool)

BINGWI NEYAASHI ANISHINAABEK

- Commercial freezer and dehydrator purchased (building a food sharing program in community)

FORT WILLIAM FIRST NATION

- Fishing nets and supplies for traditional food gathering program with youth (happened March 12-15th, 2019 at Squaw Bay)
- Community Traditional Food Feast March 30, 2019

GINOOGAMING FIRST NATION

- Holiday Good Food Box (planning good food box for young mothers in community beginning in the spring)
- Raised bed community growing project (support community members with access to growing food skills and access to food in the next growing season)

KIASHKE ZAAGING ANISHNAABEK

- Holiday Good Food Box (Ontario Works will be implementing the Good Food Box with clients in the spring)
- Expansion of community garden (Community Garden Party and building of a greenhouse to support some foods that were difficult to grow last season)
- Grow towers in municipal school for learning project

LONG LAKE 58 FIRST NATION

- Business plan development (expansion of the community general store into a grocery store)
- Begin to develop an ordering system through the general store (coordination of departments within the community to order through one system)
- School Nutrition program development

NAMAYGOOSISAGAGUN

- Commercial freezer purchased (traditional food sharing program)

NETMIZAAGGAMIG NISHNAABEG

- Conducted a full community centre kitchen renovation (project purchased kitchen small wares for use within new kitchen)

PAWGWSHEENG

- Community conducted a full community centre kitchen renovation (project purchased commercial fridge for use within their new kitchen)
- Raised Beds for elders outside Health Centre (establishment of two raised gardens beds that are accessible to elders)

WHITESAND FIRST NATION

- Raised beds community garden project
- Grow towers in municipal school for learning project



ABOVE: Elders Marcel Bananish and Gene Nowgegick Opening the Understanding Our Food Systems Gathering. January 23, 2019

RIGHT: Traditional food sharing program action planning in Pic River First Nation.

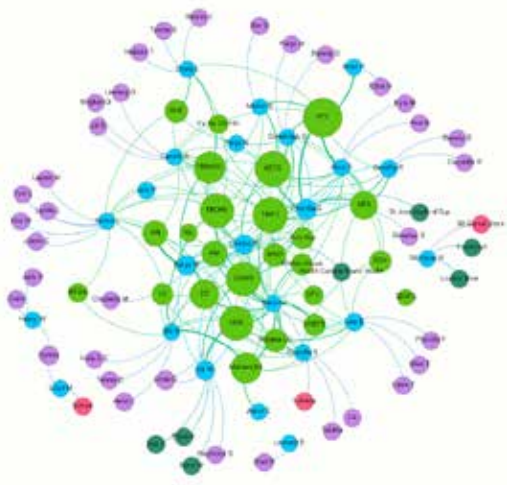


Figure 1 - The whole network

F. SURVEY SUMMARIES – SOCIAL NETWORK MAP

Using results from the community surveys completed by each of the fourteen First Nations, a social network map was developed that describes the different connections within and between the communities. The whole network (Figure 1) is made up of individuals and organizations. Participants (blue nodes) were asked to name the people (purple nodes) or departments (red nodes) they worked with most frequently (Figure 2). Participants also responded to questions about how often they worked with specific organizations (green nodes). The darker the connection, the higher the frequency of interaction (Figure 3). People and organizations from outside the participant's community are also indicated (dark green nodes).

Network maps like these can help point out individuals who play key roles in their communities. They can also help identify where gaps exist in the networks. They provide insight into how to take advantage of existing relationships, or where building social bridges will connect two separate groups. From the network maps, statistics can be derived that can guide these decisions. These include descriptions of the characteristics of the network, some of which may not be immediately apparent. For example, the betweenness statistic tells us which individuals connect two nodes that otherwise are not connected. For example, in Figure 2, Pricilla G and Debbie B have the highest betweenness values.

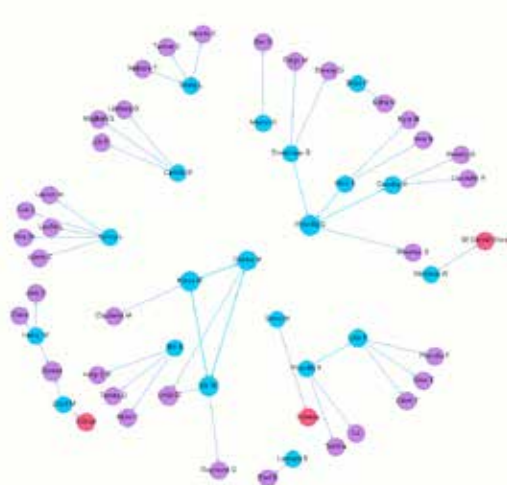


Figure 2 - Frequent people/departments

Node size can also indicate information. The node size in Figure 3 indicates which organizations have more, and more frequent, relationships amongst the participating individuals. The weights shown here varied from 1 “I work with them once or twice a year” to 3 “I work with them weekly”. The larger the node, the greater the number of different relationships weighted by their frequency. As only participants made judgments on the organizations and not vice-versa, only the organization nodes (green nodes) have varied sizes. Therefore, the node size here indicates which organizations have more, and more frequent, relationships amongst the participating individuals.

These network maps will be extremely valuable as the First Nations continue to work towards their food sovereignty visions.

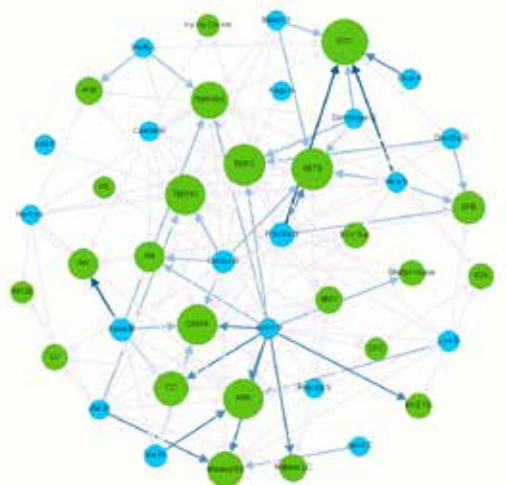


Figure 3 - Frequent relationships

6. REFLECTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Phase II of the Understanding Our Food Systems Project saw a host of successes, due in large part to the community-centered, relationship-based approaches to supporting the fourteen First Nations in their food sovereignty visions. This section notes the successes and challenges of Phase II and makes recommendations for future phases of this project. These reflections and recommendations have come directly from the First Nations and the project team to guide the food sovereignty work in Northwestern Ontario.



ABOVE: Shelly Livingston & Tami Shaw from *Biitigong Nishnaabeg* action plan with support from Jodi Strizic.

A. STRENGTHS & SUCCESSES

- **Meaningful collaboration and partnership** occurred between First Nations, the project team, and connecting partners;
- The project team remained conscious of the **long-term nature of food sovereignty work** while making clear the connections to food insecurity and short-term actions;
- Over 80 representatives from the fourteen First Nations, connecting partners, and invited knowledge holders from across Canada were **brought together at the January Gathering**;
- Recognition and awareness raising of **food sovereignty and food as a fundamental right** was at the forefront of the work. This resulted in planting the seeds of food sovereignty among all those involved;
- The project team **met partner communities where they were at in their food sovereignty work** and were supported to learn new skills, build action plans, create new partnerships, and implement identified short-term actions;
- Passionate, knowledgeable and invested **community workers and leadership** brought the project to life in the lands and lives of the First Nations communities;
- Enhanced knowledge and capacity of regional services, funding opportunities, and information offered to communities through **key research compilations**;
- **Meaningful personal learning** about Indigenous food sovereignty occurred for all members of the project team, therefore increasing the capacity of people working to improve food systems in Northwestern Ontario;
- Grounded in the values of Indigenous community development, the project had a consistent forward motion through the diverse skills, experiences, knowledge, networks, and ongoing collaboration of the **project team**;
- The value for the project team and First Nations to **work with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit**, which as an institution, keeps its feet on the ground in communities and leverages strong regional health connections;
- The **Indigenous Food Circle's** networks, capacity, and consistent role in the region as an avenue for sustainable Indigenous food sovereignty work in Northwestern Ontario was an asset to this project.

B. CHALLENGES & AREAS FOR GROWTH

- **Tight project timelines with little flexibility for continued work.** Single year, time constrained funding means having to spend time and human resources on applying for funds and often times results in uncertainty about the continuation of the work and gaps in support. Multi-year funding would allow for deeper project planning, relationship building, and implementation that occurs in line with the cycles of the natural world.
- **Funding boundaries related to capital costs/ infrastructure.** Small-scale capital costs (e.g. freezers, small outdoor structures, kitchen renovations) are a key part of supporting community-based food work. Community determination is key to food system and community development.
- **This project engaged a range of organizations and groups from different sectors (e.g., Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, the Indigenous Food Circle, the First Nations, and nonprofit organizations etc.)** At times, the competing priorities and worldviews resulted in tensions. While we recognize that these kinds of conflicts may be inevitable, mutual respect and making time and space to meet face-to-face and discuss these different needs was an essential part of the project's success. Future collaborations must account for this in the commitment of personnel, budgets and timeframes.
- **Navigating a new partnership model between the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and a community development group.** In a project management role, the TBDHU was invested as a partner, not simply a subcontractor of funds. Revisiting and determining clear roles and responsibilities for the Health Unit as a government institution within Indigenous food sovereignty work is a necessary step in creating a firm foundation for future partnerships.
- **A large number of communities to be supported in a short period of time for planning work that requires substantial community involvement, ownership, and relationship building.** The kind of support that communities need for their food sovereignty work requires a larger human resource investment, both at the community level and within the project team. Project support could be directed towards experiential learning (planning, collaborative implementation) in-community for both staff and community members.



ABOVE: Chef Rich Francis prepares Lake Nipigon Trout for Gathering participants January 22, 2019

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| ● ● ● ● | 1. Continue to support communities with their food sovereignty visions through enhanced collaborative community planning in community (e.g., development of a food charter or community specific food strategy); |
| ● ● ● ● ● | 2. Increase resources for in-community project support and implementation that includes awareness raising, skill building, knowledge sharing, and planning involving community members, as well as staff and leadership; |
| ● ● | 3. Offer flexibility in project funding that is more responsive to community contexts and determined needs; |
| ● | 4. Grant this work multi-year funding status to ensure timelines that sustainably support communities for the long-term; |
| ● ● ● ● ● | 5. Continue to offer an annual regional gathering for communities to learn from one another and other Indigenous people and organizations doing food sovereignty work in other places; |
| ● ● ● ● | 6. Increase capacity of the project team to support communities by hiring a local lead for each partner community who will collaborate on the ground action with the project team; |
| ● ● ● ● ● | 7. Explore and pilot opportunities for intercommunity knowledge exchange (e.g., one community group visiting another that is further along in achieving their common vision; bringing together key representatives from partner communities to workshop ideas); |
| ● ● ● ● | 8. Recognize the ability of this project to build the capacity and relationships of the Indigenous Food Circle to support Indigenous food sovereignty work in Northwestern Ontario beyond the timeframe of single projects; |
| ● ● ● | 9. Maintain the living nature of the Regional Services Scan and the Overview of Regional Food Research & Information through ongoing updates; |
| ● ● | 10. Project team to debrief roles and responsibilities, team structure, communication, and subcontract partnership model to help lay the foundation for an effective future work. |