FOOD SYSTEM GOVERNANCE, PUBLIC Policy, and building resilient food Systems in canada











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Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada SUSTAIN ONTARIO

Food Communities Network



Agenda: Land Acknowledgement Introductions

Themes: CSO understandings of participatory food governance Governing the Canadian Organic Standard Federal Pandemic Food Funding and Indigenous Communities The Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council

Discussion



Advancing Food Systems Governance Perspectives of Canadian Civil Society Organizations

Objective

To better understand the theory and practice of food systems governance, our research explores the experiences and perspectives of Civil Society Organizations involved in food systems governance initiatives across Canada and Indigenous territories

Initial Findings

CSOs had a broad, sophisticated understanding of food systems governance and diverse approaches

- **1**. Confronting Power Relations
- 2. Integrative, Cross-Scalar, Collaborative and Context-Specific
- 3. Modeling Participatory Decision-Making Processes

"One of our lessons over the last few years is that it's not a one size fits all, it's an ecosystem."

~ Gisele Yasmeen, Food Secure Canada

"Food systems governance...is [about] who's participating, who's making decisions, whose voices are being heard, who has power and who doesn't."

~ Ali English, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario

Governing the Canadian Organic Standards

Objectives

- What is the "practice" of governance within Organics?
- How can the experiences of organics governance inform other instances of collaborative and inclusive food systems governance?

Initial findings

- Early drivers of the standards Canada were values-based and are leaving
- Increasingly complex ecosystem to manage
- Funding rarely commensurate with the (ideal) level of work
- Inconsistency in perspectives amongst participants as to the integrity of the governance processes and participation in the standards maintenance
- Livestock standards appear to be the most contentious

"I can't think of a better way to do it. Obviously, when you're dealing with potentially 40 different opinions around the table, there can be concerns but for the most part it has worked very well"

"I've learned that what I believe are core organic principles and values are constantly at risk and threat from commodity group influences."

"to do a good job you have to have enough expertise there to really be knowledgeable and really make the process smooth and with integrity."

"It's a human process, you're dealing with the people and the personalities underneath it all in their emotional reactions to things and maybe you go into it thinking that it really is about the content when it's actually about the process."

Federal Pandemic Food Funding & Indigenous Communities

Objectives

- To understand the unique experiences of Indigenous communities
- Learn how much federal emergency funding/food reached Indigenous people
- Gather learnings from those administering Federal Emergency Food Funding

Findings

- Center/Periphery: National Food Charities did not have sufficient relationships with Indigenous communities to distrubute funds and food.
- Reliance on smaller community based organizations as intermediaries.
- Preexisting food insecurity- who decides when it is an emergency?
- Lack of transparency
- 50% or more of funds were spent on shipping
- Inconsistency in approval of funds to pay for local food systems
- Recommendation: support Indigenous food systems instead of shipping emergency food to rural and remote locations

"I felt like that was one of the biggest barriers we had, is that trust part. They didn't trust that the application was actually real, they didn't know who we were or they didn't really trust unless we had a community partner involved." (National charity staff).

"It is just not sustainable to keep giving money for just hampers and meals. ..there needed to be a longerterm sustainable solution, and accessible. Country foods are accessible. You don't have to pay for all the shipping costs and it is a key part of the diet in the Northern communities." (National charity staff)



Objective

To better understand the experiences of council members and expectations of advocates as it relates to the implementation of the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council.

Initial Findings

Overall, there was a sense that the Council is learning-by-doing in creating more innovative governance processes between government and stakeholders. Based on early feedback, ways of strengthening the Council include:

- ensuring members' feel their time and expertise are valued and
- establishing a more transparent feedback process on advice offered to the government may strengthen overall CFPAC processes.

"The Council will incorporate diverse perspectives in its advice to contribute to building consensus on the nature of food challenges and solutions to address them, building greater trust among key food system stakeholders, and supporting the ability to collaborate across sectors."

- Government of Canada

Emerging Themes:

- 1. Relationships with Staff
- 2. Members Have More to Offer
- 3. Representation and Participation
- 4. Agenda Setting
- 5. Feedback and Evaluation
- 6. Collaboration
- 7. Diverse Understandings

Discussion

More info

food_governance/

<u>https://foodsystems.lakeheadu.ca/participatory-</u>

