IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY IN PENTICTON, BC, THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKING AND COMMUNITY CAPACITY-BUILDING USING PARTICIPATORY AND ACTION RESEARCH

by

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Abstract

Food security agreements have been in force in Canada since 1976. Yet, between 2008 and 2015, Food Banks Canada identified a 26% increase in food bank use. Between 2008 and 2018, researchers stated only 20-25% of food insecure individuals utilized food banks. In November 2020, others identified 60,000 charities in Canada helping to feed those in need. Sustainable food security solutions seemed imperative. Food bank charities were not an adequate solution due to inconsistent quality and quantities of donated surplus. The current study, within the United Nations context of human rights, intended to improve awareness and access to healthy food in Penticton, BC, through participatory action research in collaboration with the Salvation Army food bank. Theoretical foundations underpinning the study included pragmatism, advocacy, participation, adaptive leadership, and empowerment theory. The study was grounded in assets-based community development, organizational and community engagement through social network expansion and capacity-building. The researcher was viewed as a critical friend with relevant skills. Eleven participants engaged during the three-cycle project. Cycle 1-2 included a six-person participatory team. In Cycle 1, preliminary interviews of 15-45 minutes with each team member explored study concepts. Seven focus groups discussed potential projects for implementation and community sectors where contacts with decision-making authority were accessible. Cycle 2 engaged sector representatives (education, media, governance, and agriculture) in five focus groups and six interviews. Assets, funding procedures, and collaborative capacity were assessed. Although Salvation Army sponsorship was lost due to changes in personnel and priorities, we defined functional barriers, partners, and strategies for community capacity-building. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cycle 3 intervention (CoVic Garden Box Project) included four paid university students and a project coordinator. Two facilities and 26 families grew food for themselves and the food bank. We installed 61 raised beds and generated 1580 pounds of produce. The Penticton city councillors unanimously approved further engagement with staff toward inclusion in the 2021 Municipal Plan. In October 2020, the Action Research Network of the Americas Executive Committee assigned a Sustainability Action Research Committee (ARC) to help move the work forward. A closing survey provided insights for future work.

Lay Summary

This research explored how networking and strengthening community relationships could improve food quality and quantity for the Penticton Salvation Army food bank. Cycle 1 included a six-person participatory team, interviewed regarding study concepts. Seven focus groups explored innovative food security projects and potential collaborations within community sectors where team members had contacts with decision-making authority. Cycle 2 included five focus groups and six interviews with representatives from four sectors: education, governance, media, and agriculture. Community assets, funding procedures, and collaborative capacity were evaluated. The Cycle 3 intervention (CoVic Garden Box Project) during the COVID-19 pandemic included a paid coordinator and four university students. Two facilities and 26 families grew food for themselves and the food bank. We installed 61 raised beds, generated 1580 pounds of produce, created a video, and conducted a closing survey. Penticton city councillors unanimously approved further engagement with staff toward inclusion in the 2021 Municipal Plan.

Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Donna Benson. The following persons assisted with the design of the study, reviewed progress and provided feedback regarding: the performance of the study, analysis of data, presentation of findings.

> Dr. Mary Ann Murphy, University of British Columbia Associate Professor, holds a cross-appointment on aging between the School of Social Work, Faculty of Health and Social Development and the Department of History and Sociology within the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Science.
>
> Dr. Wendy Griswold, University of Memphis Assistant Professor, Department of Leadership, and Director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education with a focus on community education engaged in environmental, economic, and social renewal.
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>
> Dr. Carlos Teixeira, University of British Columbia Professor, Department of Community, Culture and Global Studies with a focus on geography including urban and social geography with an emphasis on migration processes.
>
> Dr. Budd Hall, Professor Emeritus with the School of Public Administration and Senior Associate at the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria. Dr. Hall is UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education and served as External Examiner for this dissertation.

Design and performance of the research: The current study was conducted by me in three cycles: The first two cycles utilized participatory action research in collaboration with the Penticton Salvation Army food bank to identify potential sectors and projects for organizational collaboration in the community. Prior to Cycle 1, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with three staff from the Salvation Army food bank in Penticton and three volunteers from the

food bank community garden. These individuals formed the core participatory research team during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Seven focus group sessions with the participatory team took place during Cycle 1. In Cycle 2, five focus groups and six unstructured interviews took place with experts from specifically targeted community sectors (education, media, governance, and agriculture). Insights were sought with regard to collaboration on local food security issues, collaborative strategies and procedures. During the third and last cycle, I utilized an interventionist action research approach to proactively and directly improve the quality and quantity of food at the food bank. The Cycle 3 team included paid staff: a community garden coordinator and four university students. My administrative assistant provided support on request.

Analysis of the research data: Observations and reflections were captured by my active and reflective journaling throughout the three cycles. In Cycle 1, I analyzed interview transcripts, focus group minutes, written notes, and recordings to evaluate themes and target sectors using a spreadsheet matrix. In Cycle 2, I analyzed focus group and interview notes using a spreadsheet matrix. In Cycle 3, weekly notes taken by the coordinator and I were a source of data, along with survey feedback from the research team. The students also created a video by engaging with members of the community who were growing produce for themselves and the food bank.

Approval to proceed was granted at various stages by The University of British Columbia Okanagan Behavioural Research Ethics Board, Office of Research Services, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences as follows: May 16, 2017, approval with “minimal risk” was granted to commence the study (original title): The Food Bank as an Agent of Change: A Case Study of a PAR Intervention (H15-02517)

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February 10, 2021:	H15-02517-A010	(Amendments to Study)

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Glossary

Action Research, Participatory Action Research

According to Bhattacherjee (2012), action research was an interpretive method (p. 35) and assumed complex social phenomena were "best understood by introducing interventions" (p. 40), then observing their effects as a consultant or member of an organization (p. 40) or another environment. As effects were observed, the researcher was problem-solving and generating insight, while simultaneously learning from the action about the target problem and the efficacy of the intervention. Participatory action research seemed a more incremental, democratic approach to change initiatives (than intervention-oriented action research) as it included the *participation* of members of the community in the planning and implementation processes. Researchers work with members of the community to "understand what occurs in the network of human relationships that either moves it toward or away from desired goals. Using this information, the community members develop a new and better realized plan of action" (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 214).

Civic Communion

Civic communion was defined as "the communicative performance of a significant moment that arouses and transforms an individual citizen's latent feelings into collective support, emotional, rhetorical and behavioural - for local communal structures that become recognized as bonds of community" (Procter, 2004, p. 59). There were two components of civic communion: how these events or moments were organized, and how they were scripted or performed so as to influence and enhance social change. The declared purpose of civic communion was to enhance the effectiveness of social change initiatives and to build community spirit, as well as to anchor and reinforce values. The interaction was to function as a powerful catalyst by invoking a communal vision amongst its citizens through community development (Procter, 2004, p. 59).

Community Capacity-Building

For the purpose of the current study, the definition of community capacity-building promoted by Hawe and Shiell (2000) was most apt, further elaborated on by Labonte et al. (2002). Hawe and Shiell (2000) viewed community capacity-building as a set of components and processes with a rhetorical, multiplier effect that could be used in promotional health interventions (p. 872). Labonte et al. (2002) felt community capacity-building could increase the capabilities of people to articulate and address community health issues and to overcome barriers to improved outcomes in the quality of their lives.

Food Bank

The first food bank in Canada, the Edmonton Food bank, opened in 1981 (Edmonton's Foodbank, 2020), viewed as a short-term emergency response to hunger among vulnerable populations. Between 1982 and 2002, food banks became one of the fastest growing charities in Canada (Riches, 2002, p. 648). Between 2008 and 2015, food bank use increased by 26% (Food Banks Canada, 2015, p. 1). Yet, food banks depend on community donors and food industry waste (Riches & Silvasti, 2016). They provide hampers of donated foods to qualified clients.

Food Insecurity, Food Security

Food *insecurity* was defined by a lack of availability, access, or adequate quality and quantity of food as described by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner [UNHR], 2010) and Food Secure Canada (Food Secure Canada, 2020a). Food *security* meant:

1. Availability: there being sufficient food on the market or from natural resources.
2. Accessibility, which required both physical and economic access:
    a. physical access meant food should be accessible to all people including the physically vulnerable such as children, older persons, or persons with disabilities;
    b. economic access meant food must be affordable without compromising other basic needs such as education, medical care, or housing.
3. Adequacy: dietary needs are met based on a person's age, living conditions, health, etc. Adequacy also meant food should be safe for human consumption, free of adverse substances, and culturally acceptable. (Food Secure Canada, 2020a, para. 3c)

Food Justice

Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011) described food justice as a progressive political discourse focused on inequity in food systems and the need for empowerment in terms of agroecologically-produced food; investment in underserved communities; community benefit packages for production, processing and retail; and related inequities around wages, land access, regulated markets and supply, safety nets, the sustainability of local food sources, and more (pp. 117-118). Alkon and Norgaard (2009) stated that food justice placed the need for food security, "access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food" (p. 289), in the context of institutional inequities, like racism, including the impacts of environmental degradation (pp. 289-290). People could no longer "purchase what they once produced on their own" (p. 300).

Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty was defined by Nyéléni, The First Global Forum on Food Sovereignty at the United States Food Sovereignty Alliance in Mali in 2007, as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems" (United States Food Sovereignty Alliance, 2020, Food Sovereignty section). The United Nations Human Rights (UNHR) Office of the High Commissioner (in Fact Sheet No. 34) described food sovereignty as follows:

> Food sovereignty is an emerging concept according to which peoples define their own food and model of food production (such as agriculture and fisheries), determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant and protect domestic food production and regulate trade … to achieve sustainable development objectives (UNHR, 2010, p. 4).

Right to Food

The right to food was considered an obligation of governments to create an environment supporting the right of people "to all nutritional elements that a person needs to live a healthy

and active life" (UNHR, 2010, p. 2). The first Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations in 1948, Article 25 stated "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being … including food…" (United Nations, 1948). In 1966, the specifics were delineated by the United Nations International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by the Canadian Government and in force since 1976 (UNHR, 1976). The Canadian government also made commitments to the right to food through charters such as the *Code of Conduct on the Human Right to Adequate Food* of 1997 and *Canada's Action Plan for Food Security* of 1998 (Rideout et al., 2007, p. 567).

Social Capital

The most relevant definition of social capital was proposed by Woolcock and Narayan (2000), who referred to "the norms and networks which enable people to act collectively" (p. 255). Social capital, with its element of empowerment, was understood to be, theoretically, a means to facilitate capacity-building and social change. A useful description of the concept of social capital for the purpose of the current study was the common aphorism, "It's not what you know, but who you know". Social capital was all about relationships and the value of relationships as resources or assets. Communities with a higher stock of social capital were considered to be in a stronger position to fight poverty and vulnerabilities, and to pursue new opportunities (p. 226).

Social Networks

According to Burt (2004), people or organizations could be represented in two-dimensional space by nodes. The relationships between or among them were represented by lines referred to as ties. What emerged were web-like constellations around a single individual, cluster of people, or around an organization. These constellations were the individual or organizational social networks. "Networks do not act; they are a context for action" (p. 354). Burt discussed bridge-and-cluster structures and suggested entrepreneurial leadership roles might bring together people outside of their normal routines and facilitate a flow of information (p. 353). People or organizations along the margins of social networks were much more likely to have suggestions which could assist in propelling the work forward (p. 358). Magrin et al. (2014) identified ways to employ and strengthen existing social networks in order to influence change within and between different organizations. The authors determined functional social support was more important than the structural aspects of relationships and proposed the strength of influence was due to increased psychological reinforcement and material resources (p. 307).

Sustainable Development Goals

There were 17 Sustainable Development Goals to transform the world identified according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Disability "Imagine the world in 2030" graphic (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2020). "#Envision2030 Goal 2: Zero Hunger" targets included ensuring the genetic diversity of cultivars and species by 2020; ending malnutrition and achieving targets in that regard by 2025; and ensuring access to nutritious and safe food year-round, sustainable and resilient food production systems, doubling small-scale agricultural productivity; and adopting measures to limit food price volatility by 2030 (UNDESA, 2020, Targets section).

Acknowledgements

"When you walk across the fields with your mind pure and holy, then from all the stones, and all growing things, and all animals, the sparks of their soul come out and cling to you, and then they are purified and become a holy fire in you." (Hasidic saying)

... and you are compelled, it is your duty to take action

First, I wish to thank Dr. Mark Baillie for the trigger, and for providing the space for the idea of doing a PhD to emerge. It was 2012; he had sent a text with two quotes from George Bernard Shaw:

> "*This is the true joy in life, the being used by a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; to be thoroughly worn out before being thrown on the scrap heap; to be a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.*
>
> *I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to the future generations."*

I texted back that I was going to pursue a PhD. While was later horrified by what I had committed to; it has been the most meaningful, challenging, and life changing choice I have ever made. I hope, with all I have learned, I will be able to contribute further.

I want to thank Mary Ann Murphy, my UBCO Chair, and committee members Wendy Griswold, Dixon Sookraj, and Mary Stockdale, for your patience, guidance and belief that there was something there, even if I may not have always been able to articulate my thoughts well.

I want to thank my friends Heather, Jodi, Angie, and Margaret – I have a lot of making up to do, due to my isolation and lack of time for coffee.

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I want to thank all of the volunteers at the Garden. This was not a great year for lunches and dinners, but hopefully 2021 will be!

Dr. Stephanie Galindo – I am so grateful to you for your attention to details and superior super editorial powers, helping me stay within the lines.

Thank you to my parents Vi and Vern Bretin. You have inspired me with your love, encouragement, and dedication to the promotion and celebration of local food. You have set a high bar – you are both dearly loved.

Last, but definitely not least, thank you to my home base team – Peter, Natasha, Brendan, Jen, and Amy.

Peace, Joy, Love

Dedication

In celebration of food for all, and beauty, sharing and kindness.

Is there anything else?

To the younger generations…this study has consistently clarified how they will have the answers.

Chapter One: Introduction

Synopsis

This dissertation begins with a discussion of goals and background information in terms of the key concepts, contexts, and rationale which formed the environment within which the current study was initiated. Discussions include the potential significance, limitations, delimitations and assumptions within the current study. In Chapter Two, the literature upon which the research was based has been summarized. The method, approach, design, and timeframe for the current study have been detailed in Chapter Three, along with the specifics of the population and sample, ethics review, trustworthiness of the data and the data collection strategy. In Chapter Four, the data analysis process, in terms of thematic distillation of data, has been illustrated and findings presented. In Chapter Five, links to conceptual foundations in the literature have been discussed along with the study strengths, significance, and conclusions. Finally, questions, implications, and plans for future research have been presented.

Key Concepts

Food as a Human Right

The Rome Declaration on Food Security of 1996 was a non-binding agreement made at the World Food Summit in Rome in 1992 and signed by 186 countries, including Canada (Rideout, et al., 2007, p. 567). These countries, as signatories, also committed to the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, setting the goal of halving the worlds' hunger by 2015 (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] of the United Nations, 1996, para. 2).

One of the purposes of the United Nations, according to its Charter, was to protect human rights (UNHR, 2010, p. 23). The right to food was linked to the right to health (via nutrition), life, water, housing, education, work, social security, information, the freedom to take part in

public affairs, and freedom from child labour, torture, degradation, etc. (pp. 5-6). Further, States had an obligation under international law to protect the right to food (pp. 17-23) and this included both State influence in the private sector (p. 25) and all social systems in their jurisdiction (pp. 25-31). Examples of case law in India, Nepal, and South Africa were described (p. 32). States were expected to consider their obligations in the following three contexts: to respect, protect, and to fulfil the right to food. This was a policy endorsed by United Nations member states when the Food and Agricultural Organization Council adopted Right to Food Guidelines in 2004 (Ziegler, 2008, "The right to food gives rise" section). The right to food was upheld when following principles and beliefs guided action:

- An obligation to respect the right to food meant governments should not take any measures that arbitrarily deprived people of their right to food;
- An obligation to protect meant states should enforce laws preventing third parties (including corporations) from violating the right to food;
- An obligation to fulfil meant governments must proactively strengthen people's access to and full utilization of resources for self sufficiency, or directly fulfil the right to food (such as during disasters). (Ziegler, 2008, "The right to food gives rise" section).

The right to food was also linked to the principle of non-discrimination (Ziegler, 2008, "The right to food gives rise" section) because food insecurity was positively correlated to poverty and discrimination. The States' legal obligation required the identification and removal of factors contributing to poverty and discrimination. In this context, those living in poverty often lacked available, accessible, and adequate food. Poverty was often caused by a lack of education, housing, and information, and exacerbated by social and political participation

inequities in justice systems and elsewhere (UNHR, 2010, pp. 9-10). This situation was very likely to affect Indigenous populations (p. 12) in terms of access and control over traditional resources. It was highly likely to affect women worldwide, who were disproportionately affected by food insecurity and poverty as a result of gender inequality: lack of socio-economic status or rights such as inheritance, equal pay, and property ownership; the glass ceiling in employment; and, thereby, lack of access to natural resources, civil and political power. Discrimination against women often included violence (p.16) and "In many countries, girls are twice as likely as boys to die from malnutrition and preventable childhood disease" (p. 14). Further, twice as many women as men suffered from malnutrition even though, in "many countries" (p. 14) such as sub-Saharan Africa, women accounted for approximately 70-80% of agricultural workers and food processors (p. 14). By way of discrimination against women and the poor, children were also impacted by food insecurity.

"In 2000, the Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur on the right to food" (UNHR, 2010, p. 36). The mandate of the Special Rapporteur was to promote the full realization of the right to food and adoption of measures at national, regional, and international levels. This included examining existing and emerging obstacles, to "mainstream a gender perspective and an age dimension" (p. 37); submit proposals and recommendations while working in close cooperation with all States, committees, government and non-government organizations; and to participate in relevant conferences. Millennium development goal Number One was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and, in 2006, the United Nations General Assembly decided the Human Rights Council would undertake a regular review of each member state's progress (p. 39). The Special Rapporteur's report on Canada's progress is discussed in Chapter Two of the current study.

Food as a Human Right in Canada

The first Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations in 1948, Article 25, stated "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food…" (United Nations, 1948). In 1966, the specifics of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights were further delineated by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In the 1970's additional progress was made. Canada Without Poverty (CWP) was founded officially in 1971 (CWP, 2020a, para. 1) as the National Anti-Poverty Organization. The CWP Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights General Comment 12, declared "the right to adequate food is realized when every man woman and child alone or in community with others has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement" (CWP, 2020b, para. 2). The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights was ratified by the Canadian Government and in force in Canada since 1976 (UNHR, 1976; Rideout, et.al., 2007, p. 567).

An overview of additional national and international agreements acknowledged or ratified by Canada are included in Table 1. For example, Canada's action plan for food security in 1998 was a Federal policy framework in response to World Food Summit Plan of Action commitments and included cross-sectoral participation in efforts to achieve the right-to-food. This led to formation of the Food Security Bureau within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Rideout et al., 2007, p. 567). A number of other non-binding agreements, declarations, clarifications, and authoritative initiatives recognised food as part of a right to an adequate standard of living and specified the means for implementation of the right to adequate food.

Table 1.

Canada's Commitments to the Right to Food

Type	Agreement	Date	Content
Int'l	*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*	1948	Declaration adopted by United Nations General Assembly, including Canada Describes human rights to be protected internationally, including Article 25, right to an adequate standard of living, including food
Int'l	*(ICESCR) International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*	1966	Internationally binding treaty ratified by and in force in Canada since 1976 Explicitly recognised in Article 11, the right to an adequate food and the fundamental right to be free from hunger
Int'l	*World Declaration of Nutrition*	1992	Non-binding declaration endorsed by 159 countries in World Conference on Nutrition, Rome, 1992 Recognises food as part of a right to an adequate standard of living
Int'l	*Rome Declaration on World Food Summit Plan of Action*	1996	Non-binding declaration adopted by 186 countries at the World Food Summit Seeks clarification of content of the right-to-food
Int'l	*Code of Conduct: Human Right to Adequate Food*	1997	Guidelines and principles for nations to implement the right to adequate food
Domestic	*Canada's Action Plan for Food Security*	1998	Federal policy framework response to World Food Summit Plan of Action commitments, including cross-sectoral participation in efforts to achieve the right-to-food Led to formation of the Food Security Bureau within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Int'l	*General Comment 12, The Right to Adequate Food (Article 11 of ICESCR)*	1999	*Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* interpretation of the right to adequate food as outlined in the ICESCR • Not binding but considered authoritative • Establishes precise content and means of implementation of the right to adequate food

Note. Adapted and excerpted from "Bringing home the right to food in Canada: challenges and possibilities for achieving food security". *Public Health Nutrition*, 10(6), 567 (https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980007246622) ©2007 K. Rideout, G. Riches, A. Ostry, D. Buckingham, & R. MacRae.

According to Food Secure Canada (2020a), the country's legal obligations to implement its covenants were specifically spelled out and required action. The government's responsibility

relating to availability, accessibility, and adequacy was clear. The right to food required that governments ensure the ability of all people to either purchase food or feed themselves directly from productive land or other natural resources. As previously described in the Glossary of this dissertation, the right to food was considered a "right to all nutritional elements that a person needs to live a healthy and active life" (UNHR, 2010, p. 2). Pike (2017) created a poster presentation illustrating an expanded interpretation and understanding of the right to food over time in which it was stated:

> The human right to food is recognized in several international conventions such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, placing legal obligations on States to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to food. Yet, despite Canada being a signatory to those treaties, 13% of its households continue to be food insecure. (Pike, 2017, Introduction section)

Pike (2017) provided an interpretation of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization Council Right to Food Guidelines in 2004 previously described herein (Ziegler, 2008, "The right to food gives rise" section). The right to food was upheld when following the principles and beliefs previously described (respect, protect, fulfil). Pike (2017) also identified six strategies for upholding food as a human right in Canada, including:

- a national food strategy,
- a framework of laws,
- regulation and restructuring of the agricultural sector,
- monitoring food insecurity to advance evidence-based interventions,
- coordination across sectors, and
- including the right to food in constitutional law (Pike, 2017, "Strategy" section).

Aligned with those strategies, Pike (2017) further identified six intended outcomes, including crafting legislation to ground the right to food in law, allowing the courts to set

precedence, and increasing the accountability of public officials ("Explicit inclusion" section). Pike concluded with a warning that "Canada had failed to uphold its human rights commitments for a significant portion of the population" (Conclusion section).

In 2020, TogetherBC, the first poverty reduction strategy broadly implemented by the government of British Columbia, "set a path to reduce overall poverty" by 25% by 2024, and to reduce child poverty by 50% (British Columbia, 2020b). Six priority action areas included affordable housing, expanded access to education, investing in social inclusion, job expansion, and improving "income supports" and supporting families ("TogetherBC" section).

Background: Food Bank Usage

Prior to 2010: Food banks were a relatively new phenomena in Canada. The first food bank opened its doors in Edmonton, Alberta, in 1981 (Edmonton's Foodbank, 2020). At that time, the Edmonton Food bank was viewed as a short-term emergency response to hunger among vulnerable populations. Between 1982 and 2002, food banks were reported as one of the fastest growing charities in Canada and internationally (Riches, 2002, p. 648). In the 21st Century, food banks were criticized for their inability to provide adequate quality and quantities of nutritional food in a dignified manner to those who needed help (Riches, 2002; Tarasuk & Eakin, 2002, 2005). This criticism was understandable, as much of the food distributed by food banks was sourced from donations and industry surplus (Riches, 2002, p. 648). For example, individuals who were diabetic, had a low salt requirement, or those who had celiac disease might not be able to access appropriate foods through the food banks. Food quality was dependent on donations and quality standards were either low or not enforced.

According to a 2004 Canadian Community Health Survey, as cited in Vahabi et al. (2011, p. 930), food insecurity in Canada was 60% more prevalent in households on social assistance as

compared to households with other primary sources of income; 48% more prevalent in low-income households; and 25% more prevalent when households were headed by female lone parents as compared with couple-led households. With respect to the quality and quantity of food available to food bank recipients, the quality of food at food banks was universally reported as poor and there were insufficient donations of food to meet demand (Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2007). Food banks were generally dependent on community donors and food industry waste (Riches & Silvasti, 2016). Frequently, food banks did not have sufficient food of any type, neither healthy nor unhealthy (Riches, 2002; Sriram & Tarasuk, 2016).

Due to the overall growth in demand and lack of availability of food of sufficient quality or quantity, food banks began shifting their focus toward creative and innovative solutions such as training in food preparation and storage, establishing community gardens, assisting in finding safe and affordable housing for clients, and raising community awareness about poverty and hunger (Butcher et al., 2014; Food Banks Canada, 2020a; Food Secure Canada, 2020b). The introduction of self-serve food bank models was a major change in strategy with the potential to replace the one-size-fits-all food hamper system that had previously characterized many food banks. Major Rolf Guenther, a community and family services coordinator, explained why this change occurred (Salvation Army, 2009): Because people were returning food they did not use when it was provided in a prepackaged box (the hamper system), the Salvation Army realized they needed to facilitate more appropriate distribution of food. Using the self-serve model, a Salvation Army volunteer accompanied clients through the warehouse so they could select what they needed according to guidelines based on family size (Salvation Army, 2009, para. 2).

From 2010 to 2020: Although Canadian delegates attending the Rome Declaration on Food Security of 1996 agreed to human right to food commitments, and voluntary guidelines

were developed (FAO, 2004a; 2004b; Rideout et al., 2007), by 2012 Canada had failed to meet those commitments (De Schutter, 2012). The Hunger Count 2015 report from Food Banks Canada identified over 4,000 food banks and other food programs in Canada (p. ii). The report specified that food bank use had increased by 26% between 2008 and 2015 (Food Banks Canada, 2015, p. 1). Galloway (CBC, 2020c) stated there were 60,000 charities in Canada helping to feed those in need (para. 21, 32:54/1:14:29).

PROOF, food insecurity policy researchers led by Dr. Valerie Tarasuk at the University of Toronto, worked to identify effective policy interventions to reduce household food insecurity in Canada. They found food insecurity had disproportionately affected children, Indigenous and black peoples, and households on social assistance in 2017-2018 (PROOF, 2020a, para. 9). "About 60% of households who report their main source of income as social assistance were food insecure" (PROOF, 2020d, Who is food insecure? section). Statistics Canada measured household food insecurity using the Household Food Security Survey Model (HFSSM) on the Canadian Community Health Survey. The latest HFSSM survey included data for 2017-2018, as well. The HFSSM used 18 questions (PROOF, 2020a, para. 2) to measure or assess food insecurity, such as whether respondents worried about running out of food entirely or going whole days without eating due to financial constraints (para. 2). Survey results indicated that more than 4.4 million people in Canada in 2017-2018 experienced food insecurity and/or hunger (para. 2).

Hunger Count 2019 identified 2,326 food banks responding to its' survey (Food Banks Canada, 2019, The Data section) and indicated there were over a million visits to food banks between 2018 and 2019 with a *decrease* in food bank usage overall only 1.1% during that timeframe. This included 150,732 people coming to rural food banks. One in eight were

employed, one in eleven were on pensions (6.8% seniors), 48.1% were single adult households (persons living alone), 18.3% were single parent households (persons living with children), and 57.4% were on social or disability assistance.

In their 2019 Impact Report, Food Banks British Columbia (Food Banks BC) reported "Over 80,000 people access our food banks every month; one of every three of these clients is a child; more than 10,000 are seniors; 11,000 are employed but their income is insufficient" (Food Banks BC, 2019, p. 9). According to Food Banks Canada (2019), there were attempts to improve strategies to meet demand and initiatives such as developing community gardens, teaching kitchens, trainings, education, and initiatives to help people find employment (Did you know? section). PROOF (2020c) expressed concern that community-based initiatives, such as food banks, perpetuated the food insecurity problem and allowed "the government to abdicate responsibility" (para. 3). They were of the perspective that food banks masked the downloading of government responsibilities to the private and non-profit sectors, enabling government to avoid responsibility for resources, infrastructure, tools, or policy responses to deal with rising poverty and hunger. This issue appeared to have been in discussion for quite some time. In 2002, Riches concluded the rise of food banks in Canada was "concrete evidence" (p. 548) with regard to the breakdown of social safety nets.

According to PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Researchers in 2020, the need for food banks continued to grow. However, there was little evidence that community-based initiatives reliant on donated food and labour had "the capacity to effectively address the very serious food problems" facing over one million households. (PROOF, 2020c, para. 3). Clearly, food banks did not appear to be a successful strategy for reducing hunger. The indicators of hunger continued to

rise in every province in Canada and across the developed world between 2015 and 2020 (Riches & Silvasti, 2016; Tarasuk & McIntyre, 2020).

COVID-19 and Beyond: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the nine months between March and November 2020 were a time of great uncertainty. Yet, new lessons were learned and strategies and recommendations emerged on a frequent basis. For example, driven by Food Secure Canada (2020c, 2020d), advocacy for a guaranteed annual income intensified and gathered momentum in Canada. The urgent and long-term needs for food security forced governments to respond with timely, creative, and costly initiatives in North America and worldwide (Barker & Russell, 2020; Crush & Si, 2020; Lawson-Lartego & Cohen, 2020; Manfrinato et al., 2020; Pérez-Escamilla et al., 2020; Raja, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2020; Teng, 2020; Woertz, 2020). For example, the government of Canada provided funds to Food Banks Canada to help address hunger nationwide and web-based campaigns successfully encouraged the public to donate more to food banks in communities across Canada (Food Banks Canada, 2020a, 2020b). Those who had the means donated generously to CBC Vancouver's annual Open House and Food Bank Day in December 2020: $2.7 million shattered records as compared to the 33-year total of $10 million in donations (CBC, 2020d, para. 7). PROOF's research team actively collaborated with scholars across the globe to find solutions to the problems revealed and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (PROOF, 2020a). Yet, food insecurity and hunger were predicted to nearly double due to COVID-19 (World Food Program, 2020, para. 1).

Background: Model for Food Bank Research

When designing the current study, a participatory action research approach seemed appropriate for Penticton, British Columbia. I entered into an agreement with the Penticton Salvation Army food bank in 2016 (Appendix A), and worked in collaboration with Salvation

Army food bank staff and volunteers to see if anything could be done to increase the quality and quantity of food for food bank clients. The hope was, if I learned what was helpful, I could share those insights with a wider network of food banks, e.g., through Food Banks British Columbia. The literature that underpinned the current study is discussed in Chapter Two and integrated into discussions in other chapters where appropriate. Details and reflections on process are provided in Chapter Three (research design and method), Chapter Four (research findings), and Chapter Five (conclusions and recommendations) of the current study.

Much later during the current study, I learned Swords (2019) took an action research approach to determine whether a regional food bank in the southern part of New York could undertake organizational change in order to move their efforts beyond a charity approach. Their program was a ten-year endeavor. Participants included food bank leadership, staff and clients, along with 48 college students (p. 854). The objective was to address the root causes of hunger through a participatory process and collaborative analysis of organizational changes. The study demonstrated a new way to conceptualize the problem of systemic poverty, a shift in service focus, and increased funding for advocacy (p. 849). This project was able to enhance social capital whereby management and staff moved away from the concept and acceptance of a charity model (p. 856). Outcomes were observed, such as increased allocation of funding and activities related to advocacy. For example, they created a speakers' bureau and an outreach program to engage the broader community. This was inspirational during Cycle 3 of the current study.

Contexts for the Current Study

Theoretical Context and Research Question

While much of the literature and conversations around food banks focused on hunger or food insecurity, Swords (2019) sociological and historical analysis indicated a necessary shift

toward examining poverty, occurring as a result of structures built into economy and society (p. 850). Swords cited Goldsmith and Blakely (2010), Baptist and Rehmnn (2011), and Harvey (2003), stating (in part):

> Under capitalism, poverty is a necessary byproduct of capital accumulation; the creation of wealth for a few requires the impoverishment of many. … A structural approach argues that poverty is a product of historical, social relations; that policies contribute and exacerbate it; and that dynamics inherent in the economic system impoverish and dispossess people. Further, structural explanations clarify that individuals who are poor are not to blame for their own poverty. … Poverty is not individual, but an ill of the whole society. (Swords, 2019, pp. 850-851)

The current study employed three theoretical elements of community development within a participatory action research framework to examine and address the problem of access to healthy food for food bank clients in Penticton. (How these were implemented will be described in Chapter 5.)

- The first element was to work within the framework and practice of assets-based community development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996). Hall (2009) stated "Communities need to take an asset-based approach to increasing the sustainability of community health and economic development" (p. 13). This meant a clear commitment investigating existing capacities and assets within the community of Penticton to further capacity-building.
- The second element built upon existing networks and social capital, e.g., the Salvation Army, positioning the study within the context of the community and an overarching coalition for change.
- The third element drew upon empowerment theory (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005, 2007) to employ frameworks proven to provide guidance for facilitating and increasing social capital and community capacity-building.

Empowerment evaluation was intended to foster self-determination and increase "the likelihood that programs would achieve results by increasing the capacity of program stakeholders to plan, implement, and evaluate their own programs" (Fetterman, 2009, p. 200). This researcher proposed to guide the process of the current study from within (participatory action research) and use these elements to provide a structure for the research enabling social action and change (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Burt, 2004; Chaskin, 2001; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013; Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005; Glassman et al., 2013; Glassman & Erdem, 2014; Heifetz et al., 2009; Ivankova, 2014; James et al., 2012; Johnson, 2017). Thus, the initial research question was: Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

Community Development Context

Four interdependent contextual points of view existed throughout the current study which helped to shape and inform the study activities. They included the international debate as previously discussed (to be expanded upon in Chapter Two) and my personal context and abilities in terms of being a critical friend (Fetterman, 2009), discussed herein. During Cycle 3, the contexts of a food bank community garden and the COVID-19 pandemic were important to understanding the environment within which the research took place.

Critical Friend Role. The role of the researcher could be viewed as a critical friend (Fetterman, 2009) with responsibilities related to clearing away obstacles and identifying and clarifying miscommunication patterns. The critical friend/researcher was expected to participate in meetings and provide explanations, suggestions and advice at various junctures to help ensure the process had a fair chance. This individual was to be skilled at facilitation, balance analytical

and social skill, work with resistance, and vigilantly maintain and monitor the process. I felt that I had relevant skills and capabilities due to my experience within the food bank community, community gardens, in my professional life and business, and due to the knowledge gained as a doctoral student with regard to research methods.

Personal Context. I was fortunate to have parents who left the big city life in their early 50's to transform 80 acres of bare land in Leduc, Alberta, into an oasis of flowers, fruits and vegetables which they shared with family, friends local, you-pick programs, and farm gate markets. A farm gate market is a roadside table, common in the Penticton area, where farmers could directly market agricultural produce and other products to consumers of all types. Having seen firsthand what could be done, I naively thought that I could set up gardens in the City of Penticton on a property I owned on a typical city block. I wanted to provide food for a soup kitchen one block away. I quickly realized I needed to find like-minded collaborative individuals who might contribute to creating a productive oasis in the city.

In 2011, I established a few garden beds and a loose coalition of collaborators, and as the job became a bit too much to handle, I contacted the Salvation Army food bank. The Penticton Salvation Army acquired a grant toward funding volunteer students, arts and drama, equipment, etcetera, and assumed responsibility for coordination of the community garden. They recruited a local gardening instructor to oversee the technical and educational aspects of the garden and engaged a retiree with handy-man expertise, and also set up balcony gardens in the community. The Global News produced a brief video of the harvest that year, posted on YouTube on September 26, 2013, in which they interviewed members of the Salvation Army team and myself (Global News, 2013). My role was to collaborate with the Salvation Army Community Development staff member, to establish a vision, prepare grant proposals for funding, and help

engage local businesses (who were happy to become involved). Thus, I gained critical friend skills: facilitation, the ability to balance analytical and social skills, work with resistance, and maintain and monitor the process (Fetterman, 2009). This set the foundation for my drive to contribute even further to food security in Penticton.

Over the course of my development as a doctoral student, insights into the deeper nature of the core problems related to food insecurity were shared with the Salvation Army team. I found common values were embedded within a right to food perspective, not built upon the charity model but built upon a vision that eliminated the need for food banks entirely. This common orientation, a desire for a social justice solution, the many moving parts, and the existence of conflicting agendas within the community, led to a participatory action approach.

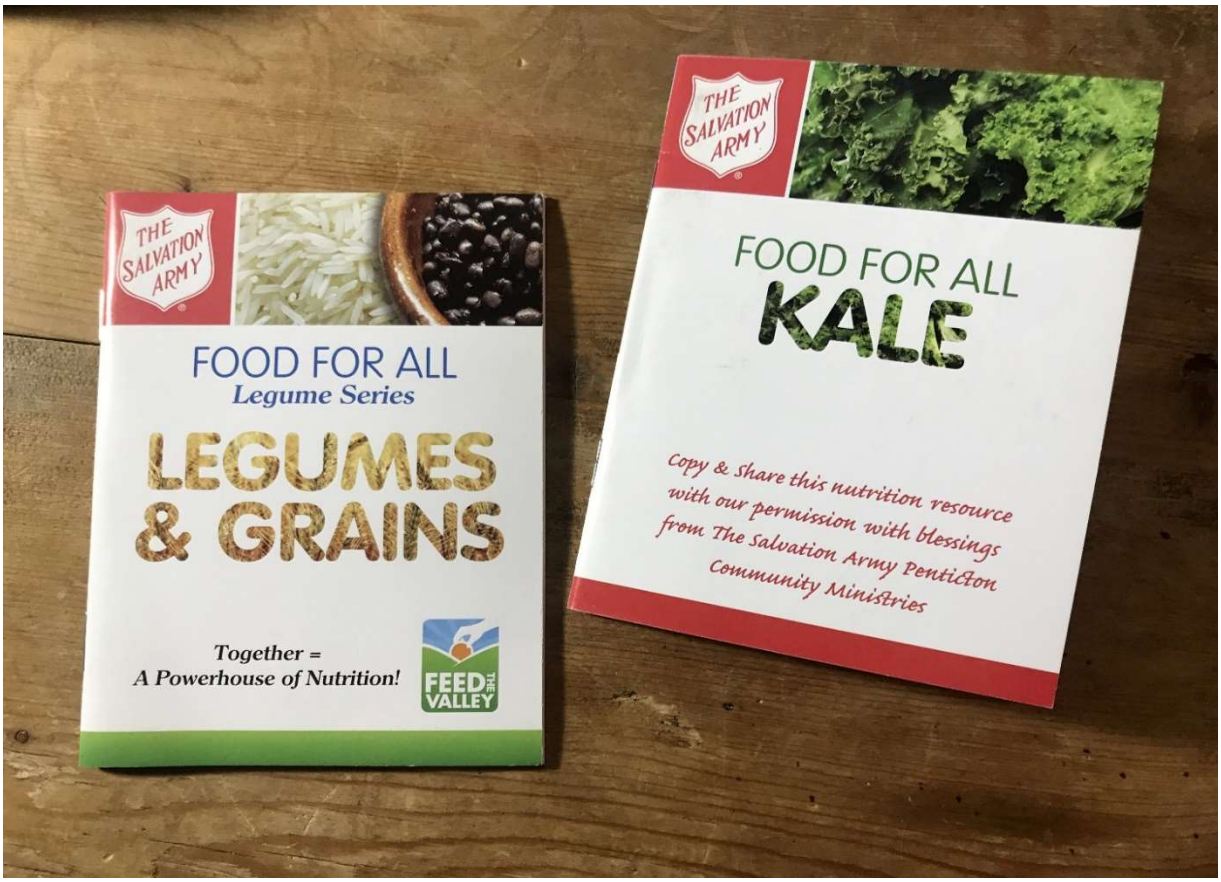
Food Bank Garden Context. Between 2011 and 2017, before this research proposal was approved as mentioned, I had worked with Salvation Army food bank staff and volunteers to establish and enhance community gardens for food bank clients, to improve outreach, and to secure opportunities for balcony gardening. I participated in cooking classes, enjoyed civic community meals and presentations, and reached out to explore other ways their efforts could be more effective in finding long-term solutions to local food security issues.

When the current study began in 2017, the gardens had grown to include over 40 volunteers, including food bank clients and community members. Produce was provided to the food bank and the Salvation Army community kitchen where people were taught various skills in an environment of communitarianism and camaraderie. Summer students from the University of Victoria and University of British Columbia were typically hired to liaise with the garden volunteers and youth groups from local churches. They looked after all the core logistics under the direction of a Salvation Army staff member.

The wider community of Penticton had a history of being actively involved in the work of the food bank in a variety of ad hoc projects with the Salvation Army. For example, Valley First Bank supplied funds for little veggie books (Figure 1), as they were called. This came about because recipients of the food bank did not know how to use some of the fresh produce. Food bank clients and volunteers tested and selected the recipes for the little booklets. The educational project grew to include a series of booklets on legumes, beans, kale, and other fresh produce. Meals were prepared at the food bank featuring the new recipes to launch and promote the little booklets. This type of community engagement was reportedly well received and was evidence of the spirit of the community and its capacity for learning, action, and collaboration.

Figure 1.

Little Veggie Books



Note. Valley First Bank provided funds to create a series of recipe booklets for utilizing produce. ©2020 Salvation Army Community & Family Services.

Circumstances dovetailed into, I believed at the time, a state of community readiness for change (Achilich, 2015; Findholt, 2007; Oetting et al., 1995). The Penticton food bank appeared to be an ideal setting for the current study due to the sincere interest and commitment of the participants. The core group seemed inspired to be engaged in social change at the policy level while continuing to make improvements to the quality and quantity of healthy food available to food bank clients at the grass-roots level. In addition, there was an evolving consciousness of the critique of food bank as the problem. This inspired curiosity as to what actions and approaches could create sustainable change and reduce community reliance on the Penticton food bank.

Local Community Context. Penticton is within the Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS). The city of Penticton is situated in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia over 42 square kilometers (Penticton Official Community Plan [Penticton OCP], 2020, p. 22) and is bordered by environmentally sensitive areas, the Penticton Indian Band (west) and the Summerland and Naramata (north), and Okanagan Falls (south). The community of Syilx/Okanagan people have lived in Penticton for 3,000 years (p. 23). The original site of the town was laid out in 1892 by the largest land owner (an Irish immigrant) and by 1908 the city was incorporated with a population of about 600 settlers (p. 23). Many people traveled via steamships (sternwheelers) across the lake and, in 1915 the Kettle Valley Railway line opened up the area to increasing settlement, fruit exports, and tourism. After the second World War, returning veterans changed the face of the city through large infrastructure projects (p. 24) in the 1950's and 1960's. By 1986, the city had 23,588 residents (p. 33).

> Penticton continues to evolve. Downtown is revitalizing and attracting businesses, craft breweries and new places to live. The South Okanagan Events Centre opened in 2008 and brings conventions, sporting events, and performances of all kinds. The unique natural environment, athletic events and recreation opportunities, the wine industry, and a combination of rich urban amenities and 'small-town feel' are all factors that continue to attract a diverse range of people to move here and to visit. (Penticton OCP, 2020, p. 24)

In 2016, prior to the beginning of the current study, Penticton had a population of 33,761 (Statistics Canada, 2017, Population section; Penticton OCP, 2020, p. 22). The median household income was $54,219 in 2015 (Penticton OCP, 2020, p. 25) and the median age was 52.8 years (Statistics Canada, 2017, Ages section). In comparison, the median household income in 2015 was higher ($68,995) for all of British Columbia, and downtown Penticton had median income of only $36,143 (Penticton OCB, 2020, p. 25).

Women outnumbered men in Penticton by 2,045 people (Statistics Canada, 2017, Gender section) and the majority of the population was between age 55 and 59 years old (Ages section). However, seniors (over age 65) were expected to make up 77% of Penticton's population growth between 2016 and 2046, growing at a rate of 7% per year (para. 3) which meant this cohort was likely to make up as much as 37% (para. 4) of the total population by 2046 (Godfrey, 2018). For the sake of comparison, in 2016, seniors over age 65 made up 29% of the population. Of those households, 75% had only one or two persons and 100 different nationalities were represented (Penticton OCP, 2020, p. 25). The Official Community Plan for Penticton estimated a population of around 45,000 by 2018 (p. 34).

Future housing development was expected to be dense (row houses, duplexes, apartments) rather than single-family homes (Statistics Canada, 2017, para. 19). Due to a low vacancy rate, a three-bedroom rental increased in cost 6% per year between 2011 and 2016 (Penticton OCP, 2020, p. 26) and the median price of a single family detached home was $425,000 ($525,000 for new homes) in 2016. The dominant economic sector in 2016 was health and social services (19.3%), followed by retail (17.2%), accommodation and food service (10.9%), followed by public administration and manufacturing (p. 27). Growth was anticipated in agriculture, food processing, bioproducts, and cannabis production by 2045 (p. 39) and it was

"quite likely that a proportion of the demand for new industrial land will be met outside of the city, such as on Penticton Indian Band lands, or elsewhere in the region (e.g., Okanagan Falls)" (p. 39).

About a fifth of Penticton's land is part of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), long central to the local economy and identity, lands which required protection to be sustainable (Penticton OCP, 2020, p. 40). Areas close to downtown would see "densification" (p. 43), particularly high-density residential developments, although 22% of the area was reserved to maintain natural areas within city limits in addition to 4% designated for parks (p. 47). The Official Community Plan through 2045 contained many, many more specifics, but the information provided here would seem sufficient to sharing an overview of the community context within which the current study was implemented.

Community Quality of Life

Vital Signs was a program of the Community Foundation of South Okanagan (CFSO) which produced a report every two years beginning in 2011 on the quality of life in the community. Along with the Community Foundations of Canada, CFSO grants were provided to further charitable objectives viewed as critical at the time. The CFSO Vital Signs report measured "the vitality of our community, identifies issues and trends, and provides citizens with the opportunity to assign grades in a range of areas critical to our quality of life" (CFSO, 2011, para. 3). I recalled a presentation on community health and well-being at the 2011 Vital Signs bi-annual meeting in Penticton. The Penticton Western News reported at the time that Penticton rated a "D-" (Patton, 2011, para. 2). This grade reflected a gap between rich and poor, a need for concern, and a call to focus on resolving the problem. The presentations that I witnessed also highlighted that the use of food banks had significantly increased, particularly for seniors,

families, and the working poor. The trend was not anticipated to reverse without significant action.

I attended a second Vital Signs meeting in 2013 hosted by the CFSO, during which a gentleman expressed concerns regarding a need to rely on the food bank. This gentleman explained that people with diabetics were unable to obtain proper nutrition at the food bank. Those words haunted me and remained with me, causing considerable discomfort. From a pragmatic perspective, the situation sparked and fueled my curiosity as to how there was such disparity in an environment of agricultural abundance, dedicated experts, and well-meaning people.

The 2018 Vital Signs report from the CFSO was released on October 11th that year. It was interesting that 44% of respondents were from Penticton (p. 5). In summary, the report advocated action in terms of "what resonates for you" (p. 4):

> While we live in a beautiful part of the country and enjoy many benefits, it is clear that a subsection of our population continues to suffer greatly. It is incumbent on all of us to do our part in improving the lives of our friends, neighbors, and fellow residents. When you read this report, please take note of what resonates for you and then take action! (CFSO, 2018, p. 4)

More recently, the 2019 Penticton Citizen Survey stated "The majority of residents (68%) rate their quality of life in Penticton as good or excellent" (City of Penticton, 2019a, para. 3). Although 68% of participants rated quality of life in Penticton as good (4/5) or excellent (5/5), 58% felt quality of life had decreased between 2016 and 2019 (p. 1).

> The top three priorities for the future that received the most interest from the list provided include improving safety and security (84 per cent), smart growth and development (75 per cent) and advancing environmental initiatives and practices (70 per cent). (City of Penticton, 2019a, bulleted list para. 5)

Between February 2017 and May 2019, the City of Penticton prepared an Official Community Plan (Penticton OCP, 2020) looking forward through the year 2045. The guiding

principles were innovative: broad and inclusive engagement; knowledge sharing and capacity-building; clarity and openness; sustainability; and action while planning (p. 14). Penticton residents shared over 3,000 conversations during the planning process (p. 18).

The City expected to grow from a population in 2016 of 33,761 (Statistics Canada, 2017, Population section), to about 42-45,000 people (Penticton OCP, 2020, pp. 10, 34). In this context, because of the complexity of the problem of poverty and hunger, and my personal desire to implement change and improve food security in Penticton, along with the relevant theoretically practical aspects of the plan, a participatory action research approach was selected for the current study in 2017. The hope was to create sustainable change locally through working with the Salvation Army food bank staff and volunteers, as well as to generate new knowledge to share with other communities (knowledge transfer) and to possibly have influence at the policy level. Although this was years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic became part of the context for the current study.

COVID-19

The first Cycle of the current study began in 2017. Cycle 2 began in October 2018, and I was still focused on outreach in 2019 when, at the 74th General Assembly of the United Nations, a past United Nations Rapporteur, Hilal Elver, stated his message was urgent:

> For a third year in a row, hunger and malnutrition are on the rise, back to levels last seen nearly 10 years ago. One in nine people are facing hunger and 2 billion people are food insecure. (Elver, 2019, p. 2)

The COVID-19 crisis arrived at a dire time, and with it came a sense of urgency with regard to the current study that influenced the launch of Cycle 3 and the immediate objective to make a direct contribution to the Salvation Army food bank. In spite of ambitious initiatives around the world and in Canada, food insecurity had remained a seemingly insurmountable problem. The COVID-19 pandemic was universally and globally disruptive. Not only were

people's health, mobility, and economic well-being quickly affected, but even by April of 2020, the consequences for those already suffering food insecurity were exacerbated (United Nations News, 2020).

> As progress in fighting hunger stalls, the COVID-19 pandemic is intensifying the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of global food systems – understood as all the activities and processes affecting the production, distribution and consumption of food. While it is too soon to assess the full impact of the lockdowns and other containment measures, the report estimates that at a minimum, another 83 million people, and possibly as many as 132 million, may go hungry in 2020 as a result of the economic recession triggered by COVID-19.[iii] The setback throws into further doubt the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger). (World Health Organization, 2020, The pandemic's toll section)

At the same time (April of 2020), the United Nations World Food Programme expected the number of people suffering acute hunger to nearly double by the end of the year, rising to 265 million (World Food Program, 2020, para. 1). Chief Economist Arif Husain stated:

> COVID-19 is potentially catastrophic for millions who are already hanging by a thread. It is a hammer blow for millions more who can only eat if they earn a wage. Lockdowns and global economic recession have already decimated their nest eggs. It only takes one more shock – like COVID-19 – to push them over the edge. We must collectively act now to mitigate the impact of this global catastrophe. (World Food Program, 2020, para. 4)

La Via Campesina (2020a) also expressed concern both within the global context and within the national context of Canada:

> The global pandemic has not only revealed our food system's vulnerability, it has truly demonstrated that we are connected: a virus so tiny its size is measured in nanometres has travelled around the world on a network of human relationships in a matter of months, taking lives and wreaking destruction — but also activating world-wide, community-based cooperation and caring. We have shown Canadians can act together to keep COVID-19 from causing massive, uncontrolled deaths. Likewise, we can rebuild our agriculture and food system to support healthy nutrition for people, sustainable family farms, intact ecosystems and a livable climate for future generations. (La Via Campesina, 2020a, "Big Lessons" section)

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically disrupted Canada's food supply chains, raising the prices of food and increasing demand on the national food banks (Food Banks Canada,

2020a; 2020b; Lourenco, 2020). The adverse financial impact of the pandemic caused an increase in food bank usage with 50% of food banks reporting an increase in demand according to CBC Radio Canada (CBC, 2020d, para. 1). According to a survey conducted in May 2020 by Statistics Canada (2020), ***one in seven*** families (14.6%) had experienced food insecurity (Statistics Canada, p. 3; Lourenco, 2020, para. 2) as compared to ***one in ten*** families in 2012 (Pike, 2017, "Visit of the UN" section). In May of 2020, those who were out of work were nearly three times more likely to be food insecure than those who were working (Statistics Canada, 2020, p. 4). Those who had the means, however, donated generously to the CBC Vancouver's annual Open House and Food Bank Day: Over $1 million was raised in 2019, but the event on December 4, 2020, raised $2,721,112.00 "shattering previous years' totals" (CBC, 2020d, para. 5). In fact, as of 2019, the 33-year total raised was $10 million (para. 7), so the COVID-19 pandemic brought an unprecedented outpouring of donations and support from the British Columbia community. Clearly the community seemed ready to help each other and engage.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed food system vulnerabilities across Canadian communities and the world. Although past and current approaches to improve food security were numerous and included food banks, for example, those approaches were found to be highly inadequate. Food banks generally provided foods of inadequate quality and in insufficient quantities to meet the need (Riches, 2002; Sriram & Tarasuk, 2016). However, food banks do have vast reach locally and globally, and extensive networks extending into the social, economic and political spheres of society. Their capacities for contributing to food security may not have been fully utilized.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, policy makers urgently sought solutions and attempted to develop best practices as various recommendations were debated. For example, it

was interesting to learn from my own sources that that Salvation Army food banks did not usually have access to Provincial Government Community Gaming Grants. According to Food Banks Canada, early in the COVID-19 Emergency Response process, British Columbia food banks were provided with $3 million dollars along with directives to allow drive-through and delivery opportunities, larger hampers, increased home delivery capability, and to remove the requirement for means testing (Food Banks Canada, 2020a, para. 1). On May 5th, 2020, access was expanded and funds disbursed to food banks throughout British Columbia (para. 2). On May 15th, 2020, Emmanuel (2020) of *i*Politics reported COVID-19 uncovered gaps in local food systems and "provided a window to transform Canada's food production system into a more sustainable model" (para. 1), referencing Food Secure Canada's executive director Gisèle Yasmeen's suggestion that, since the food production model was slowed by the virus, government investment in local infrastructure could help Canada meet related environmental and social goals while boosting the economy (para. 2).

Purpose: Addressing Food Insecurity in Penticton

The overarching goal and intent of the current study was to facilitate better access to healthy food for food bank clients and to reduce food insecurity, particularly in the local community of Penticton. Specifically, the current study aimed to examine how the food bank could be a catalyst within the community, to mobilize effective action, and to improve access to adequate quantities of healthy food for food bank clients. A research strategy was developed that included engagement with the Penticton Salvation Army and the local food bank.

Members of my participatory team (during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the current study) included three staff from the Salvation Army food bank in Penticton and three volunteers from the food bank community garden that I hosted on my land. All were invited to participate in

municipal and provincial discussions and information gathering groups in an attempt to solve local food security issues through policy reform. We all began the journey as part of the core participatory action research team in May 2017.

I and my fellow researchers intended to undertake a 16-week participatory action research intervention with a right to food perspective. We intended to explore innovative projects from elsewhere and whether creating the appropriate social networks and developing social capital through community capacity-building activities would lead to new innovations in food bank procedures and enhance the quantity and quality of food available locally. Participatory action research would allow the community to involve themselves in identifying the problem, generating and implementing strategy, and reflective processes (James et al., 2012; Koch & Kralik, 2006; Stoecker, 2013). At the same time the researcher was, according to James et al. (2012), guiding the processes of investigation into the issues; planning for implementation, data collection and analysis; and, finally, the researcher(s) utilized reflection and reflexivity following each cycle before beginning the next phase of the research and change effort (p. 16).

The research did not proceed entirely as planned, although there were three phases to the current study as expected. There was a significant shift in approach two-thirds of the way through from participatory action research to action research. The rationale for this will be explained in a subsequent chapter. The initial research question was the focus through Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the project, as intended at the time the current study was proposed. A new research question became the focus of the study in Cycle 3 and informed the final discussion:

- Cycle 1 and Cycle 2: Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward

sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

- Cycle 3: Taking an active leadership role, to what extent could I create and empower a team of university students and an administrator to catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

Rationale for the Study

I was also motivated to undertake this research based on my concern that the numerous, incremental, and uncoordinated small initiatives which currently existed might not lead to major impacts on food insecurity either locally or globally. The current study sought to examine whether local food bank systems, due to their established social networks and widespread public legitimacy, could become an agent of change through "public education and advocacy" (Riches, 2002, p. 648), and through collaboration across community sectors.

I wanted to investigate whether a participatory action-oriented approach might have more success in creating sustainable impact, providing both better quality food and a more significant quantity of food in the community of Penticton. The participatory action research approach was informed by contributions and refinements from the disciplines of social work, community development, management, and psychology. Having donated the use of my land for a community garden to supply the Penticton, British Columbia, Canada, Salvation Army food bank with fresh produce, I decided to engage the Salvation Army to attempt to facilitate broader support for food bank clients in the community. Actions taken during the study were conceived and informed by the policy work undertaken by Foods Bank Canada, Food Secure Canada, PROOF: Food Insecure Policy Research, Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA), a United Nations

Rapporteur Report (De Schutter, 2012), and the mission of the Salvation Army of Canada. Encouragement and support were received from numerous community organizations such as the Salvation Army, the Penticton Community Foundation, media outlets, lumber and soil suppliers, landscapers, nurseries, food bank volunteers, agricultural organizations and farmers, and students from the University of Victoria and University of British Columbia.

Strategic Approach

I constantly reviewed the research question that guided the current study while examining the literature and determining an appropriate approach and method. I was continually aware of the potential for community impact. I considered recommendations from the literature which could be helpful to implementing complicated complex change at the local level. The current study intended to examine how social networks and purposeful well-orchestrated capacity-building activities could enhance social capital and, potentially, influence policy change. The strategic approach was to embed the inquiry first within the United Nations human rights framework, rather than a charity model, and within the framework of commitments made by Canadian delegates since the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights "in force in Canada since 1976" (Rideout et al., 2007, p. 567).

From this position, the core participatory action research team were introduced to policy and program innovations in a global context to demonstrate what others had undertaken to sustainably address the problems related to ensuring adequate healthy food for vulnerable populations within their communities. These undertakings were intended to serve as inspiration as to what was possible when community members collectively and collaboratively developed solutions. From this base, it was expected that the assets and capacities, social networks and social capital required to implement innovative projects could be identified, and then a cross-

sector collaborative project could be implemented to increase the quantity and quality of food at the food bank.

When the current study was conceived, it was anticipated that building additional social networks and strengthening existing networks through capacity-building activities would increase social capital. Social capital, with its element of empowerment, was understood to be, theoretically, a means to facilitate capacity-building and social change. These ideas were well developed by Fetterman (2009), Fetterman and Wandersman (2005, 2007), and Labonte et al. (2002) and will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Comparative policy theory and methods were explored by Kennett (2001), and each was considered on its own merit in terms of how it could provide insights relevant to the local situation in terms of policy innovation. Community capacity-building referred to actions defined, planned, executed as processes to "build sustainable skills, resources, and commitments to health promotion in (various) settings and sectors (in order to) prolong and multiply health gains many times over" (Hawe et al., 2000, p. 2, as cited in Labonte et al., 2002, p. 181).

Significance of the Study

Green (1992) was cited as saying, "the real issue for action researchers is less about getting it right than making it meaningful (p. 39, in Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 72) in terms of whether the research had addressed questions about significance. The current study was expected to create meaningful change and hoped to be significant on several levels:

1. First, I hoped to impact the issue of food insecurity locally and help food bank clients by finding ways to improve the quality and quantity of food at the food bank.

2. Second, I hoped to reduce the angst felt by staff and volunteers when they recognized the food they provided was not of great quality or when insufficient quantities of food were available.
3. Third, I hoped to share any solutions found with the food bank community and food security organizations, thus creating a ripple in the larger pond with regard to improving food security and community health more broadly.
4. Fourth, I hoped to bring a change initiative or initiatives to the attention of those with political authority and power.
5. Fifth, I hoped to contribute to the academic literature and action research community by developing insights with regard to social networking and capacity-building in terms of food security.

Delimitations

Bernard (2000) discussed the various ways to consider potential for bias, as well as the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of a social research study. The following sections illustrate my thoughts on these matters.

At the time of the initial research proposal, the current study was delimited by the constraints of working within a single community. The scope of the current study included work conducted only in Penticton with one food bank, their staff, volunteers, and clients. Characteristics of participants in the current study may have been different than the any other local population. Therefore, the findings may not be relevant to any other country, municipality, population, or food bank.

The literature review was narrowed to focus on issues and policies related to food insecurity in Canada with a few exceptions to investigate the broader context. I saw the current

study as an intervention seeking an improved health-related outcome and concentrated on the literature in this context in order to narrow the inquiry and assure it was highly relevant.

I wanted to investigate whether a participatory action-oriented approach might have success in creating sustainable impact, but neither quantitative indicators nor qualitative feedback were expected to further or demonstrate rapid change in the community. In addition, it was recognized that the study would be limited as there was no funding for the research and, because this was a student research project, the researcher had minimal experience implementing an effort in this context.

Limitations

Limitations of Participant Bias and Accuracy

Field research was limited by the participant self-reported perceptions of their experiences and speculation about future engagements. This could mean the data are inaccurate. The emotional state of the participants may have been at a unique point at the time reflections were requested. Participants recollecting experiences from the past or speculating about the future, rather than contributing reflections immediately following an experience, may not provide perfectly accurate data. Two people may witness the same event from the same position and have different or substantial differences in perception of the experience.

In addition, a significant limitation of the current study was the potential for bias on the part of the study participants. Demographics distinctions, such as gender, race, age, level of education, or nationality were not expected to be useful for identifying potential for bias in the current study. Years of work in the field and/or level of responsibility or influence could have been an influence in terms of a favorable bias towards the study. Positive bias may have been

minimized by engaging deeply so interpretations of individual perceptions could be clarified, but negative bias (such as toward community service) could exist whether stated or not.

Because it was unlikely that all constituents could or would attend all the interactive sessions face-to-face during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, it was unlikely that everyone's voice would be equally heard. This was a particular constraint once the coronavirus became a pandemic prior to Cycle 3. Participation in each session is detailed herein.

Further, the results of the current study were based on a volunteer sample and did not necessarily define a larger population to which the individuals belonged. The volunteers may have participated in the study because they had stronger opinions than the general population. They may have formed relationships with the researcher over time. As a result, their responses may not be relevant to other relationships, to relationships at other points in time, to their organization at other points in time, to other organizations or to other related activities.

The researcher-as-interviewer influence could be considered a weakness of the method. The interview process could have created participant bias if participants were overly influenced by the new information presented to them; bias may have occurred if participants mitigated or enhanced their responses intentionally or unintentionally based upon the quality of their relationship with the researcher or their enthusiasm (or not) for the project. Participants in the current study could be subject to observation bias. They were aware of their participation in a research study. Therefore, their knowledge of being observed and having developed a personal and professional relationship with the researcher could create bias.

In May 2020, as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic disruptions, the researcher in the current study hired a past garden coordinator (to be called the "Past Garden Coordinator" from now on) for the summer garden work. The fact that the Past Garden Coordinator and university

students in Cycle 3 were paid to participate in part of the study was a factor in terms of potential for participant bias. For Cycle 3 of the study, university students expected to receive tuition rebates for volunteering to assist on community projects, such as the current study. The work-study type tuition rebate program experienced an ethics scandal which delayed its planned implementation, rendering the program infeasible that summer (CBC, 2020a) and the program administration withdrew in July. Following the demise of the government student tuition rebate program, students from the University of Victoria and University of British Columbia asked if they could still be paid to join the current study and I took steps to arrange this: A submission was prepared for the Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) of the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) describing the employment vs. volunteer relationships. Board approval was received August 31, 2020 (Certificate #H15-0217-008).

As these individuals were university students volunteering for various paid work/study projects in the local area, consent to participate in a closing survey was inferred. The university students were informed that completion of the closing survey in Cycle 3 would in no way influence their employment relationship. Since they were sharing their lived experiences and, by expressing interest in being involved, there responses could demonstrate recall bias. Meaning, they could remember or anticipate the events in a more positive light, and they could recall certain types of events while obscuring others.

Limitations of the Literature

Potential limitations included the availability and specificity of the literature regarding the dissertation topic. Additional limitations included the reliability, dependability, accuracy and generalizability of the information and data available as well as the researcher's interpretation of data and literature. Due to time limitations for the current study, there were limits to the breadth

and depth of literature that could be reviewed. The literature representing trends related to the identified problem generally spanned 25 years from 1995 to 2020. However, some earlier literature seemed relevant to the history of the issue, the research approach, and the relevant international agreements to which Canada was signatory.

There were limitations in that food security literature increasingly trended negative as the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and progressed. Publishing bias normally meant that negative findings were less likely to be published, and, therefore, knowledge of a topic could be skewed. However, this bias may have been reversed due to exacerbation of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic progressed, the literature became more alarming and placed more emphasis on two common themes:

a) governments needed to create national mandates because increasing food insecurity was not something the charity sector was equipped to handle, and
b) hunger due to food insecurity and poverty was an increasing problem due to business closures and unemployment.

Limitations of the Researcher

There were limitations in terms of researcher bias. Bias may be evident in field research as a sample is gathered because the researcher (or participating agency) uses their own judgment to select the sample based on prior information or experience, or convenience. Researcher bias can also occur when the leader of a study poses questions to participants. An analysis of the data from the field study could be biased due to student-researcher inexperience, previously held opinions, and preexisting beliefs. Perceptions of the value of information, availability of sources from which to draw information, and potentially hidden preconceptions and assumptions may limit researcher perspective and may skew conclusions.

In the literature review, researcher bias was present in terms of the researcher's choice as to what information, best practices, strategies, and models might be relevant to the current study. An example of this was when the researcher chose innovative model projects for research team consideration during Cycle 1, and none were selected for implementation by the team. Also because of the selectivity of focal points for the current study, it was not a comprehensive study of strategies that might be applied to the problem phenomenon. In addition, some ideas, concepts, models, and strategies may have been overlooked.

In addition, confirmation bias could have occurred during the literature review and interpretation of study data, as the researcher may have unconsciously sought information or patterns in the data that confirmed pre-existing opinions: I was motivated to achieve progress in improving the food quality and quantity for foodbank recipients in Penticton and complete my dissertation.

However, an attempt was made to offset potential for bias. With the iterative (cyclic, repetitive) process of participatory action research I consistently evaluated data as the work progressed, observing what was working or not working, and reflected after each activity. This could be viewed as persistent observation (Anney, 2014, p. 277), extended interaction within the context and with participants in order to gain greater understanding and clarity. For example, data gained at the beginning of a study is generally weaker than data gathered at the end; "This suggests that persistent observation gives an understanding of participants' world view and effects of the researcher's presence during fieldwork are minimized" (p. 277).

In addition to a consistent level of intentional self-reflection, a number of additional steps were taken to offset confirmation bias, including prolonged engagement in the field and research site. According to Anney (2014), prolonged engagement can help improve the trust of

participants, “understanding of core issues that might affect quality of data”, and provide “greater understanding of the context” (p. 276). An attempt was made to offset potential for researcher bias through peer debriefing. A qualitative researcher who sought support and feedback from professionals, peers, and academic staff, such as the doctoral committee, helped to minimize bias and improve the quality of the inquiry and findings (Anney, 2014, pp. 276-277).

An attempt was made to epistemologically consider preconceptions and prior assumptions of both the participants and researcher within the research design and to implement specific strategies to aid in the trustworthiness of the findings. For example, triangulation is a means by which a researcher uses multiple tools, methods, sources of inquiry to reduce bias and cross-examine the integrity of the data (Anney, 2014, p. 277). In the current study, interviews, a survey, focus groups, recordings, journal notes, and a closing survey were all utilized and cross referenced where appropriate to produce findings.

Finally, any advisory conclusions may have limited impact on the status quo when applied on their own. The goal was to contribute to the body of knowledge and practice, but it was understood that the current study was unlikely to resolve the problem phenomenon by itself. In particular, it was hoped that measures of baseline food quality and quantity could be taken at the food bank, and metrics evaluated every two weeks. Due to changes in research team objectives during Cycle 1, from implementing a pre-selected project to exploring community resources and assets, specific quantitative measures were never taken as planned at the food bank. The current study focused on social networking and capacity-building within the community as a means for increasing food quality and quantity. This was accomplished as described later in this dissertation.

Assumptions

The current study was launched under the assumption that food banks could be part of the solution to food insecurity and that it was possible for food banks to play a key role in creating solutions. As the primary researcher in the current study, I assumed the quality of the data relied only upon the need for sufficient participation in the study from the sample population and assumed the participants would be representative of the desired study population in terms of segments of industry, demographics, etc. Similarly, I assumed participants were capable of speaking for a relevant general population and partner organization.

There was little information in the literature to demonstrate whether issues encountered and best practices identified were as applicable to one group as another. The methodology and solicited participants for the field research were assumed to be effective in producing information useful for answering the research questions. A comparison of qualitative methodologies was undertaken and the chosen approach – participatory action research and, later, action research - seemed the most effective for obtaining the desired quality of findings.

Given the community-oriented nature of this initiative, no attempt was made to protect individual confidentiality and anonymity during the interview process. Without complete confidentiality, the potential for bias could have been enhanced and the concept of independent thought could have been somewhat jeopardized. The procedures and performance of the current study were intended to occur in a professional and objective manner.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Synopsis

Chapter One introduced key concepts, contexts, and the rationale for the current study. The significance of the study and its delimitations, limitations, and assumptions were discussed. In Chapter Two, the literature upon which the research was based has been summarized beginning with an overview of the global context and conceptual framework for the current study, and followed by exploration of policies which could benefit from advocacy related action, inspirational projects, and contradictions between policies, goals, and outcomes that result in barriers to policy implementation. Key terms were defined, such as social networks, social capital, community capacity-building, and participatory and action research were differentiated. The relationship between social capital and health promotion initiatives was explored, along with topical literature and perspectives on food banks.

Finally, theoretical literature related to implementing the current study was sought, and, as the current study required the active engagement of the researcher in the community, personal action literature provided helpful insights. These frameworks – topical, personal, and theoretical literature - were then integrated in areas where they appeared to overlap. Core lessons or take-aways were identified for the purpose of implementing a community-based initiative and making an impact on food insecurity in Penticton, British Columbia.

The Right to Food, Food Security, Food Justice, Food Sovereignty

Although food policy was discussed to some extent in Chapter One, and terms defined in the Glossary herein, no review of the literature in the context of the current study would have been complete without discussion of and further differentiation between the concepts of the right to food, food security, food justice, and food sovereignty.

The Right to Food

The right to food was about the obligation of governments to create an environment where people had access to food under the broad United Nations human rights convention. "The right to food is not the same as a right to be fed" (UNHR, 2010, pp. 3-4). There was no imperative to facilitate dependency on governments for a hand out. The right to food meant a right to feed oneself with dignity, having access to natural resources for growing food or access and ability to pay for food. In other words, the United Nations considered governments responsible for providing an environment that enabled people to meet their full potential for self sufficiency. In environments of armed conflict or natural disaster, the State must provide food directly (pp. 3-4).

This seemed to imply that governments were responsible for supporting food security, food justice, and food sovereignty in some contexts. For example,

- Food justice was defined by Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011) within the context of the right to food in terms of the need for better safety nets during food crises (p. 118).
- According to the United Nations (UNHR, 2010), food security could be linked to the right to food in terms of policies supporting the right to sufficient resources for the procurement of adequate food. Ziegler (2008) linked the right to food and food insecurity to vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized groups such as women, peasants, "fisherpeople", Indigenous people, refugees from hunger, and others ("The right to food gives rise" section, para.10).
- Food sovereignty had some overlap with the right to food in that it was about the right of people at national and sub-national levels to determine their own course in terms of

food production and consumption without being constrained by powerful trade interests or the power of agri-food corporations as discussed in this section.

Food Security

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, food security was a precondition for the right to food but did not imply any obligation on stakeholders or entitlement of stakeholders. The PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research Program, a Canadian university-based interdisciplinary national research network, sought to identify effective policy interventions to reduce household food insecurity in Canada. PROOF (2020c) expressed concern that community-based initiatives, such as food banks, perpetuated the food insecurity problem and allowed "the government to abdicate responsibility" (para. 3) in terms of right to food obligations.

Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011) seemed to criticize established food enterprises and reformist food security initiatives as part of the "corporate food regime" (p. 117), which included food banks. The authors discussed the existing neoliberal food enterprise (corporate) system and its orientation towards corporate power and global markets. The enterprise system was based in overproduction, unregulated markets, monopolies, monocultures (including organic), genetically modified organisms (GMO's), agrofuels, mass global consumption by humanity of industrialized food, and phasing out peasant and family agriculture and local retailers (p. 117). In addition, the food enterprise system approach to food crises involved public-private partnerships, microenterprise, and internationally sourced food aid (p. 118). Food Secure Canada (2020b) defined food security as being concerned with the protection and distribution of existing food systems, as did Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011). Holt Giménez and Shattuck differentiated

between the terms: food security, food justice, and food sovereignty (pp. 117-118) as paraphrased here (excerpted) in Table 2.

Table 2.

Differentiation Between Food Security, Justice and Sovereignty

Paradigm	Food security	Food justice	Food sovereignty
Politics	Reformist	Progressive	Radical
Orientation	Development/Aid	Empowerment	Entitlement/Redistribution
Approach	To address availability and access to adequate quality and quantities of food	To address inequality in food systems	Right to localized self-determination in food systems
Approach to food crisis	Increased middle (peasant) production, some locally sourced food aid, microcredit, agricultural aid tied to climate-resistant crops, bio-fortified	Right to food in terms of better safety nets, sustainably produced, locally sourced, agroecologically-based development	Includes culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. Ability to determine level of self-reliance. Human right to food.
Drive	Mainstreaming certification of niche markets (organic, fair trade, local, sustainable), northern agricultural subsidies, roundtables for sustainable agrofuels, soy, forest products, market-led land reform, microcredit	Includes agroecologically-produced local food, investment in underserved communities, community benefit models for production/processing/retail, better wages for ag workers, land access, regulated markets and supply	Dismantle corporate agri-food monopoly, redistributive land reform, community rights to water & seed, democratization of food systems with protection from overproduction, distribution of wealth, sustainable livelihoods, climate
Cited source	World Bank 2008 Development Report	International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)	Declaration of Nyéléni and others

Note. Excerpted from Table 1 (pp. 117-118) in "Food crises, food regimes and food movements: rumblings of reform or tides of transformation?", *Journal of Peasant Studies, 38(1)*, 109-144 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2010.538578) ©2011 E. Holt Giménez, A. Shattuck.

As a reformist trend within the existing infrastructure, advocates for food security sought to "mainstream less socially and environmentally damaging alternatives into existing market structures", hoping for transcendence of existing systems by new standards (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 121). The reformist food security movement called for self-regulatory and third-party certification systems to address sustainability and equity issues within the existing system with a new role for the State, for example – establishing safety nets and reinvesting in agricultural development to help ensure good governance (p. 121).

Food Justice

Food justice and food sovereignty were considered "food movements" (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 117). As shown in Table 2, Holt Giménez and Shattuck considered the food justice movement to be a progressive trend (p. 115) "rich in local/alternative food system practice" (p. 116). This trend, which Holt Giménez and Shattuck stated was primarily based in northern countries and involved the middle and working classes, focused on empowerment and community organization (p. 124). Marginalized groups, "self-defined by ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status", as actors within this trend, "advance practical alternatives to industrial agri-foods, such as sustainable, agroecological and organic agriculture and farmer–consumer community food networks – largely within the economic and political frameworks of existing capitalist food systems" (p. 115). Alkon and Norgaard (2009) stated that food justice placed the need for food security, "access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food" (p. 289), in the context of institutional racism and related inequities, including the impacts of environmental degradation (pp. 289-290). People could no longer "purchase what they once produced on their own" (p. 300).

Urban agriculture (in multiple contexts) was a strong component of the food justice model (Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, p. 124). As food movements, progressive food justice and radical food sovereignty trends overlapped "significantly in their constituencies" (p. 116) as compared to the two prongs of the corporate food regime. Food justice was considered a movement similar to climate justice and environmental justice. Holt Giménez and Shattuck stated progressivism emerged in the 1920's in the United States as its' advocates sought economic and social justice through government regulation of large corporations. The movement

was closely related to women's rights and labor rights, religious freedom and other institutional inequities such as racism (p. 124).

Food Sovereignty

"Food security is a goal while food sovereignty describes how to get there" according to Food Secure Canada's website (2020b). Food sovereignty was "rooted in grass-roots food movements" and highlighted the need for a democratic food system ("Food security is a goal" section). Pimbert (2009) discussed "citizen-centered food systems" in the context of food sovereignty (p. 13), embracing equity, democracy, and gender inclusion. The concept of food sovereignty was aligned with local people defining their choices of food and food production and the extent that they wanted to be self-reliant or to regulate trade to ensure food system sustainability (UNHR, 2010, p. 4).

Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011) saw food sovereignty as a more radical trend focused on "entitlements, structural reforms to markets and property regimes, and class-based, redistributive demands for land, water and resources" (p. 115). Entitlement and redistribution were key terms within this concept (p. 128). Hunger was not caused by productivity issues, poor wages, inadequate distribution, or unemployment. The food sovereignty model embraced transformational means similar to the food justice movement in terms of agroecology, traditional knowledge and urban food systems. However, to scale up and transform the existing system, the radical movement advocated for dismantling corporate agri-food structures and establishing community and regional rights to resources and control of food systems (p. 128).

While the right to food and food insecurity were defined at the United Nations, food sovereignty developed as a grass-roots movement. As an example, La Via Campesina is a global movement representing over 200 million farmers in 81 countries and 182 local and national

organizations (Food Secure Canada, 2020b, para. 4) comprised of agricultural workers, Indigenous people, migrants, youth, and landless people from around the world, united people to fight injustice in the food system. Since its conception in 1993, the La Via Campesina advocated for food sovereignty. They launched the concept at the 1996 World Food Summit and called for food sovereignty to "reach beyond the state and into global arenas to pressure national governments and raise awareness (Martinez-Torres & Rosset, 2010, cited in Holt Giménez & Shattuck, 2011, pp. 128-129). La Via Campesina promoted:

> …a Universal Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, which includes right to life and adequate standards of living, the right to land and territory, to seeds, information, justice and equality between women and men. (La Via Campesina, 2020b, "3. Promoting Peasant Rights" section)

Food Secure Canada also advocated for people to have more control over their own food production rather than food production being primarily a for-profit industry. They referenced 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by United Nations' member countries, including Envision 2030 Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (UNDESA, 2020). Goal 2 targets included ensuring:

- by 2020 the genetic diversity of cultivars and species;
- by 2025 ending malnutrition and achieving targets in that regard; and
- by 2030 ensuring access to sustainable and resilient food production systems,
- doubling small-scale agricultural productivity, and
- adopting measures to limit food price volatility.

The World Health Organization (2020) also advocated for zero hunger by 2030, and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner stated everyone had the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being (UNHR, 2010, p. 7). However, even though small-scale sustainable agriculture was an objective, it seemed likely that some of these goals may have

included utilizing global-scale food enterprise systems. In fact, Pimbert (2009) stated the "modernist development agenda" which "envisages achieving the Millennium Development Goals by reducing the number of people engaged in food production" was a key threat to local people's autonomy and self-determination (p. 2); "the food sovereignty movement emerged as a reaction to this situation" (p. 2) and indicated a fundamental shift away from industrialization toward a more democratized, participatory, local and equitable paradigm. (The eight Millennium Development Goals through 2015 preceded the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in place today through 2030.)

To define the concept, six pillars of food sovereignty were developed at the International Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali in 2007 and a seventh pillar, 'Food is Sacred', was "added by members of the Indigenous Circle during the People's Food Policy process" according to Food Secure Canada (2020b, "Seven Pillars" section). The focus of each pillar, shown in Table 3, was excerpted from information on Food Secure Canada's (2020b) website.

Table 3.

Seven Pillars of Food Sovereignty and Their Focus

Pillar	Focus
Pillar 1: Food for people	a) Put people's need for food at the center of policies b) Insist that food is more than just a commodity
Pillar 2: Build skills and knowledge	a) Build on traditional knowledge b) Use research to support and pass knowledge to future generations c) Reject technologies that undermine or contaminate local food systems
Pillar 3: Work with nature	a) Optimize the contributions of ecosystems b) Improve resilience
Pillar 4: Value food providers	a) Support sustainable livelihoods b) Respect the work of all food providers
Pillar 5: Local food systems	a) Reduce distance between food providers and consumers b) Reject dumping and inappropriate food aid c) Resist dependency on remote and unaccountable corporations
Pillar 6: Local control	a) Place control in the hands of local food providers b) Recognize the need to inhabit and to share territories c) Reject the privatization of natural resources
Pillar 7: Food is sacred	a) Recognize that food is a gift of life, and not to be squandered b) Assert that food cannot be commodified

As examples of the different types of organizations involved in various political agenda, Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011) identified the World Trade Organization and World Bank as food enterprise institutions; the Food and Agriculture Organization and OXFAM-America were identified as reformist (food security) institutions. Food banks and food aid programs were included in the context of food security. The authors saw food policy councils and community organizations as progressive food justice entities along with other local/alternative food system practices. They saw La Via Campesina as an example of a politically radical agrarian-based farmers' food sovereignty movement (pp. 116-118) "along with many Food Justice and rights-based movements" that also fit the category of food sovereignty movements (p. 117).

In 2011, Holt Giménez and Shattuck stated there was already an existing global food crisis that would, like food justice and food sovereignty movements, continue to grow under pressures such as climate, financial and fuel crises (p. 136). In recent times, the COVID-19 pandemic added to the urgency (described by Holt Giménez and Shattuck) of identifying and promoting sustainable, democratic, equitable solutions by advancing clear political proposals for action. The current study sought to have an impact at the municipal level and, potentially, an even broader policy impact.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual strategy for the current study emerged from a review and synthesis of the literature on policy and comparative analysis, social networks, community capacity-building and social capital. The strategy could briefly be summarized as follows:

1. identify policy innovations from other jurisdictions that inspire and provide guidance for what could be implemented in the current study;

2. identify the social networks and capacity-building activities that would be necessary to implement the selected policy change or project locally;
3. develop evaluation measures to identify study success and for tracking progress; and
4. utilize the iterative participatory action research cycles of reflect, plan, take action, measure, observe and repeat.

The literature identified in the current study was extensive with regard to policy, social networks, community capacity-building, and social capital. There were as many perspectives as there were disciplines (Chaskin, 2001; Labonte et al., 2002; Sluzki, 2010). For the purpose of the current study some of the key scholars are described briefly here:

- Creswell (2008) summarized the roots of pragmatism and stated it opened the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis (p. 11). Morgan and Nica (2020), Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) conveyed the relevance of pragmatism for focusing attention on the research problem in social science research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem.
- Hall (2005) stated that "Doubt may be one of our most identifiable common denominators" and "As we know, intentions do not always produce desired results" (p. 16). Hall et al. (2015) explored supporting community-based research and service learning with the purpose of serving the public good through transforming the health and well-being of communities. These insights and knowledge with regard to participatory action research, as well as the authors who discussed the growth

mindset, strategic questioning and related concepts (Chen et al., 2020; Dweck & Yeager, 2019) were relevant and helpful in both personal and practical contexts.

- Hawe and Shiell (2000) viewed community capacity-building as a set of components and processes with a rhetorical, multiplier effect that could be used in promotional health interventions (p. 872). Labonte et al. (2002) felt community capacity-building could increase the capabilities of people to articulate and address community health issues and to overcome barriers to improved outcomes in the quality of their lives (p. 182). Labonte et al. offered a practical framework for a deliberate attempt to build community capacity within health promotion programs.
- According to James et al. (2012), participatory and action research cycles were iterative in nature and included investigation into the issues → planning, implementation → data collection and analysis → and, finally, the researcher(s) utilized reflection and reflexivity following each cycle before beginning the next phase of the research and change effort (p. 16). The imagery included a spiral pattern because the problem under investigation was considered central, then the relevant activities spiraled outward in an ongoing effort as knowledge increased.
- Rand et al. (2011) provided key insights into social networks during experiments with social network interventions to facilitate change in health outcomes. Burt (2004) discussed bridge-and-cluster structures and suggested entrepreneurial leadership roles might bring together people outside of their normal social network routines in order to facilitate a flow of information (p. 353). Magrin et al. (2014) identified some ways to employ and strengthen existing social networks in order to influence change within and between different organizations, as well as the effects of social networks on

health. Sluzki (2010) also discussed social network analysis in terms of health promotion and change initiatives. He found correlations between health and stable social networks.

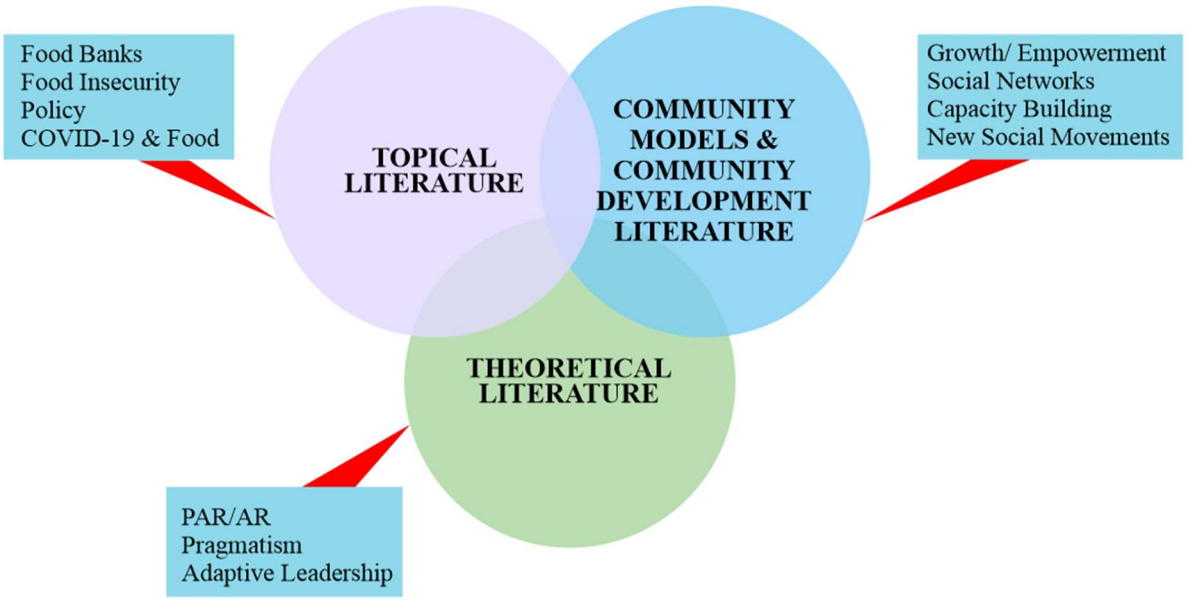
- Rideout et al. (2007) shared a historical perspective and identified four major challenges to food security progress in Canada that were critical to defining the objectives of the current study.
- Swords (2019) took an action research approach to determine whether a regional food bank could undertake organizational change in order to move their efforts beyond a charity approach. The objective of this ten-year endeavor was to address the root causes of hunger through a participatory process and collaborative analysis of organizational changes.

While there were multiple layers of analysis and multiple purposes to using the concepts uncovered, the literature was value neutral. Perspectives could be manipulated and leveraged for positive or negative change. The primary authors that influenced the conceptual strategies for this research are briefly highlighted in the topical literature with the linkages between them as they relate to the current study. This chapter was then organized according to a model proposed by Ravitch and Riggan (2012) for creating a useful conceptual framework design (p. 10). Ravitch and Riggan described a conceptual framework (illustrated in Figure 2) comprised of three parts intersecting:

- literature which served as a platform for the topic of the research as it pertained to the local story (topical literature);
- literature informing and resonating with the authors' personal interests; and
- literature supporting the theoretical framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012, p. 10).

Figure 2.

Conceptual Framework for the Current Study



Note. Figure designed by Donna Benson to illustrate the conceptual framework for the current study based on ideas found in *Reason & Rigor: How Conceptual Frameworks Guide Research* (p. 10), by S.M. Ravitch and M. Riggan, 2012. SAGE. ©2019 Donna Benson.

The overarching goal and intent of the current study was to facilitate better access to healthy food for food bank clients and to reduce food insecurity. The literature review included the policy frameworks within which the food banks were entrenched; the definition and utilization of social networks, social capital, and community capacity-building methods in general and in health interventions, as well as debates on these topics; topical literature on food banks and their role in food insecurity; and perspectives and critiques of food banks.

The literature was polarized: at one end were researchers interested in improving food banks by studying the nutritional gaps, waste retrieval systems, donation campaigns, distribution methods, and tools for building a better foodbank approach (De Schutter, 2012; Koc et al., 2008; McCullum et al., 2005; Metcalf Foundation, 2008; Swords, 2019). At the other end were advocates of political and policy reforms, particularly guaranteed annual income, similar to

Canada's pension programs or social security, toward the elimination of the need for food banks entirely (Food Secure Canada, 2015; Loopstra et al., 2016; McIntyre, 2003; PROOF, 2020a; Tarasuk, 2017; Tarasuk & McIntyre, 2020).

I also discussed the literature which informed and guided me throughout the messy, evolving process of the study. This literature supported my commitment to social change, personal learning, action, and growth. Importantly, I discussed the underlying theoretical paradigm: Pragmatism provided an understanding of participatory action research through the lens of Stoecker (2005, 2009, 2013) who struggled to make research relevant to both the community and to academia. The theoretical frame expanded as I considered the work of Heifetz et al. (2009) and Heifetz and Linsky (2017) who promoted adaptive leadership. The literature on adaptive leadership highlighted issues around power and delineated the effectiveness (or not) of authoritarian power contrasted with adaptive leadership. Two key points emerged from this literature: the difficulty of managing a change initiative and the need for introspection and self-knowledge when designing and implementing effective interventions (Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017). These literature threads were particularly helpful in navigating and negotiating sharp turns in the project as it progressed. The literature informed and grounded the current study in the untidy, emergent, and exciting research environment. I and my teammates ran into and successfully scaled more than a few inevitable brick walls (Kasl & Yorks, 2010).

Policy Literature

During my comprehensive review of the policy framework within which the Penticton food bank operated, findings revealed there was no well-coordinated policy framework in Canada effectively in addressing hunger (PROOF, 2020c). Food security commitments made by Canada included the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

in force in Canada since 1976, the Covenant on the Rights of the Child (1989), the establishment of a Food Security Bureau in Canada following the 1998 Action Plan for Food Security, and other non-binding agreements between 1992 and 1999 (Rideout et al., 2007, p. 567). However, Rideout et al. stated food security had not been achieved in Canada despite strong economic growth between 1997 and 2007 (p. 566) prior to the economic recession in 2008.

For the purposes of the current study, it was proposed that the research team identify policies which could benefit from advocacy related action and also identify contradictions between policies, goals, and outcomes that result in barriers to policy implementation. Rideout et al. (2007), who championed ideas for reform, identified four major challenges to food security progress in Canada:

- The first barrier was justiciability, which played out in terms of case law. There had not been successful legal challenges to the governmental role in food security at the time of this writing. A landmark case, *Gosselin v. Quebec* in 2002, was the first claim to a right to an adequate level of social assistance under "section 7" (Rideout et al., 2007, p. 567) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guaranteed that people were not to be deprived of basic necessities. This action took over 13 years, was expensive, and raised several important points but was ultimately unsuccessful (pp. 568-569).
- In 2002, Riches concluded the rise of food banks in Canada was "concrete evidence" (p. 548) with regard to the breakdown of social safety nets. According to Rideout et al. (2007), the second and third barriers to progress were the breakdown of the social safety net in Canada (p. 569-570) and the institutionalization of food banks and other charitable solutions to food insecurity (p. 570). Rideout et al. stated non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations had become part of the problem (p. 570). The proliferation of food banks and other charity solutions between 1989 and 2001 enabled governments to ignore the human right to adequate food (p. 570), fostering reliance on a benevolent civic society, including food banks. It appeared to this researcher, due to the rise of a neoliberal agenda which emphasized cuts in social funding and privatization of certain government responsibilities, the social safety net for vulnerable populations had eroded (Rideout et al., 2007, p. 570).

- Rideout et al. (2007) stated the fourth challenge was a lack of integration between food and nutrition policy. Integration would require a comprehensive program structure across all jurisdictional levels including "health, agriculture, environment, and social policy" (p. 570). Rideout et al. felt food security "should be a justiciable right in Canada" (p. 571). The fragmented approach at the time hindered any rational analysis of problems and hindered the development of effective policy.

There were significant gaps between the commitments Canada had made since 1976 (Rideout et al., 2007) and the then current reality in Canada in 2007. It was recommended that changes should be made in municipalities within a national and provincial visionary framework with a clear set of achievable and realistic goals. Barriers to progress proposed by Rideout et al. could be summarized as follows:

- Lack of consistent effort: silos of work with unique and overlapping agendas, focus, and interests;
- Conflicting governmental departments: For example, non-local fruit (such as Washington apples) and local fruit were both included in Buy Local campaigns;

- Lack of legislative/judiciary clout: There was no legal ground for ensuring the human right to food (although there were unsuccessful attempts to create legislation);
- Institutionalization of food banks was perceived as a charitable solution rather than as a municipal requirement; and
- Erosion of a safety net and growing gaps in meeting needs of those most vulnerable who were falling between the cracks. (Rideout et al., 2007, pp. 566-573)

Five years later, in 2012, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, reviewed Canada's commitments and progress, producing an unflattering report (De Schutter, 2012). The objective of this visit to Canada was to ascertain progress on the Canadian commitment to the United Nations initiative (De Schutter, 2012). Olivier De Shutter interviewed politicians, bureaucrats, and civic society organizations all across Canada. Results included dozens of concerns and recommendations for improvement:

> Despite the best efforts of provinces and territories, social protection schemes and minimum wages fail to meet peoples' basic daily needs. An increasing number are turning to food banks in Canada. The reliance on food banks serves as a moral release valve for the State. But it is symptomatic of the need to step up social protection systems to align them with the increased costs of living. (De Schutter, 2012, p. 12, #37)

It was recommended that changes should be made in municipalities within a national and provincial visionary framework with a clear set of achievable and realistic goals. In 2016, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations stated objective was to monitor and report on strategies and best practices based on a right to food. Specifically, the main areas of work were focused as follows, to:

- Stimulate research on the physical and economic access to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food of vulnerable communities suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition in society;

- Monitor existing policies, institutions, laws and programs at international, national, autonomous and local levels;
- Analyze the coherency and convergence between policies and programs from different stakeholders aiming to guarantee food security; and
- Produce an annual report reviewing strategies and good practices based on the right to food. (FAO, 2016)

The Canadian government had committed to food security. However, the growth of food banks could partly be attributed to government failure to follow through on its commitments (Food Banks Canada, 2015; 2019). While there were campaigns in election years, such as Eat Think Vote, advocating for national food policies (Food Secure Canada, 2015), after those elections, priorities shifted. The first Eat Think Vote campaign took place in 2015 ahead of the federal election. Thousands of Canadians took part by gathering over a meal to discuss food issues affecting their communities. At the time, the campaign called for a bold new national food policy that delivered on the following: a basic income, better support for new farmers, investing in a healthy school food program, and addressing high food prices (para. 5), with an overarching objective of zero hunger, healthy and safe food, and sustainable food systems (para. 9). At that time, in 2015, an overarching national food policy had not been drafted. It was hoped policies might have provided provinces and municipalities with essential clarity for organization and designated responsibility.

Between 2016 and 2019, the government of Canada launched several campaigns to facilitate a Healthy Eating Strategy, initially launched in October 2016 (Government of Canada, 2020a). This strategy included a variety of programs such as the Nutrition North Canada program expansion to 37 isolated northern communities ("Supporting increased access" section,

para. 3). There was a report on the Sodium Intake of Canadians in 2017, after which the government targeted goals to reduce sodium levels in processed food by 2025 ("Improving nutrition" section, para. 2). Partially hydrogenated oils were added to a list of contaminants in food in 2018, para. 1). In December 2019, a new food guide and new front-of-package labelling were established ("Improving healthy eating" section). Attempts were being made, in 2019, to pass legislation to restrict advertising of food and beverages to children under age 13.

On June 17, 2019, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced the long-awaited Food Policy for Canada: Everyone at the Table (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2019; Food Secure Canada, 2019c; Government of Canada, 2019). This was an ambitious initiative, the product of consultation and collaboration with Canadians across the country.

> The vision for the Food Policy for Canada developed through these consultations is: All people in Canada are able to access a sufficient amount of safe, nutritious and culturally diverse food. Canada's food system is resilient and innovative, sustains our environment, and supports our economy. (Food Secure Canada, 2019d, para. 4)

To realize this vision in 2019, the government of Canada contacted more than 45,000 people "including food producers and processors, experts in environment, health and food security, Indigenous groups, non-government organizations, and community advocates." (Food Secure Canada, 2019b; 2019d, para. 3) and planned to invest $134.4 million (2019d, para, 5) toward Food Policy for Canada over the next five years, which included new initiatives to help achieve key objectives (2019b, para. 1). Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2019), the ministry leading the development of Canada's national food policy, provided a persuasive logic for the work of aligning, coordinating and integrating elements of food systems and related decisions (p. 4). The plan for the policy, to be implemented between 2019 and 2024 (p. 9), was to establish a vision with priorities across communities, food systems (including Indigenous food systems),

health outcomes, impacting economic growth and utilizing sustainable practices (pp. 6-7). Principles guiding the approach were inclusion and diversity, reconciliation, collaboration, innovation, sustainability, evidence and accountability (pp. 10-12). Measurable targets, aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals #2, #3, #12, and #13 (zero hunger, good health and well-being, responsible production and consumption, and climate action) were to be overseen by a Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council (p. 13). The emphasized outcomes anticipated more food-related work would be community-led, cross-collaborative, and culturally diverse; improving dietary nutrition and reducing food-related disease; supporting the development of strong Indigenous food systems, and promoting sustainable food practices that could ultimately increase the global demand for Canada's (healthy) food product. The four areas for action were to:

1. help Canadian communities access healthy food,
2. make Canadian food the top choice at home and abroad,
3. support food security in northern and Indigenous communities, specifically First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, and
4. reduce food waste and shift toward more sustainable food practices. (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2019, p. 9)

The 2019 Eat Think Vote campaign, launched on July 23 of that year, also advocated for federal candidates to focus on food security in Canada (Food Secure Canada, 2019a). On August 15th, 2019, the $50 million Local Food Infrastructure Fund was launched, "designed to support community-led projects that improve access to safe, healthy and culturally diverse food" (Food Secure Canada, 2019d, para. 7), along with five other initiatives that included community led projects, Indigenous communities, food inspection, and a National School Food Program.

The COVID-19 pandemic created an imperative for government response in 2020. In April, 2020, an investment of $100 million was promised to support food banks, community food centres, and local food organizations as part of the Food Policy for Canada (Food Secure Canada, 2020e). This emergency funding supported 1,765 individual projects (Government of Canada, 2020b, para. 4). It was announced that food, like shelter, was a necessity of life and a human right (Food Secure Canada, 2020e, para. 2). In May, Food Secure Canada advocated for a number of steps to be taken in the public interest, such as to:

- Address the root cause of food insecurity through establishing a universal livable income;
- Build resilient, ecological local food systems that shorten and diversify food chains, ensure greater access to healthy and fresh foods, build greater resiliency and reduce waste;
- Support Indigenous food sovereignty where First Nations, Métis, and Inuit determine their own place-based food systems;
- Champion decent pay, conditions, and justice for all workers along the food chain;
- Ensure everyone is at the policy-making table through immediately convening, resourcing and empowering the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council;
- Harmonize Canada's national and international food policies, prioritizing food sovereignty approaches; and
- Immediately advance a National School Food Program, as promised in Budget 2019 and in the Food Policy for Canada. (Food Secure Canada, 2020f)

In June, 2020, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced a new call for proposals under the Local Food Infrastructure Fund, a $50 million five-

year program (Government of Canada, 2020b, para. 3). The first call for proposals had resulted in 362 projects receiving funding of up to $25,000 for a total of $6.6 million (para. 3). For example, refrigerated trucks, kitchen equipment, community gardens, storage equipment, solar panels, irrigation systems, and more were eligible. The second would provide $43.4 million (para. 1) to support a cluster of organizations, or small or large community-led projects of up to $250,000 at facilities such as "urban gardens, community kitchens, food banks, and greenhouses" (para. 2). The goal was to strengthen or establish sustainable local food networks.

Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada presented the 2020 federal Speech from the Throne, September 23, 2020. As reported by the Canada Governor General, the Speech from the Throne was especially concerned with the COVID-19 pandemic as "the most serious public health crisis Canada ever faced" (Canada Governor General, 2020, p. 3) and acknowledged that the first six months of the pandemic had "laid bare fundamental gaps in our society, and in societies around the world" (p. 4). Governor General Julie Payette highlighted some of the COVID-related federal benefits created that year, such as the Canada Recovery Benefit, the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (p. 12), the Emergency Wage Subsidy, expansion of the Canada Emergency Business Account, and improvements to the Business Credit Availability Program (p. 14).

The Speech from the Throne set important policy targets. A specifically stated foundational objective was a "resiliency agenda" (p. 17) to strengthen and build the middle class (pp. 5, 15, 17). In addition,

- It was noted that in 2017 the government of Canada had announced an objective to reduce homelessness by 50%. Now, the objective was to "eliminate chronic homelessness entirely" (p. 20), to which end the government invested over $1 billion

that week to fight homelessness and planned "substantial investments" to further enrich the National Housing Strategy and enhance First-Time Home Buyer Incentives. Housing construction was viewed as job creation (p. 20).

- "Just like everyone deserves a home, everyone deserves to be able to put nutritious food on the table" (p. 20), and the government promised to work with First Nations, Inuit, Métis Nation, migrant workers, farmers and other partners to address food insecurity and strengthen local food supply chains.
- A particular priority was to support Indigenous communities and work on reconciliation (p. 25), implementing and accelerating commitments made in 2019; to enact legislation related to health and wellness, clean drinking water, and capacity-building; and to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples before the end of 2020.
- The government asserted women, particularly low-income women, were the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic (p. 12). It was noted that nearly 50 years had passed since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women "outlined the necessity of child care services for women's social and economic equality". A significant "long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system" was promised (p. 13) in addition to accelerating the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy.
- The government expressed a commitment to increasing Old Age Security (over age 75) and boosting the Canada Pension Plan survivor's benefit (p. 17). Additional policy targets included a universal pharmacare program (p. 18) and a new Disability

Inclusion Plan intended to include a "Canadian Disability Benefit modeled after the Guaranteed Income Supplement for Seniors," (p. 17).

- Additional broad targets included continuing to put a price on pollution, to ban harmful single-use plastics in 2021, improve recycling, and create a new Canada Water Agency (p. 24).
- The two official languages were to be protected; more was to be done with regard to systemic racism (p. 26); and there was to be a shift towards community-led policing and civilian oversight (p. 28) among other reforms.

In September, 2020, Governor General Payette also announced the "to-do list for the federal government" (Food Secure Canada, 2020g, para. 1) including discussion of topics such as food insecurity, supply chains, and farming. Food Secure Canada emphasized that these commitments must translate into budgets. An additional $100 million was budgeted for the Emergency Food Security Fund in October 2020 (Trudeau, 2020, para. 2) with access available to food banks and other local and Indigenous groups.

On November 19, 2020, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced that part of the new food policy would be Canada's Food Waste Reduction Challenge (Government of Canada, 2020c, para. 1). According to estimates at that time, during the COVID-19 pandemic, more than half of Canada's food supply was wasted, and nearly $50 billion of that waste was avoidable "from farm to plate, through production, processing, distribution, retail, food-service and at home" (para. 2). Two Challenge Streams were opened through January 18, 2021, to award up to $20 Million to innovators coming up with new models to prevent or divert food waste in any context. Two of the four Challenges described ("A" and "B") included opportunities to move innovators "through the process of developing and

deploying their solutions" (para. 4) with external subject experts selecting those projects suitable to move forward at each stage. One winner, whose project appeared to have the greatest potential to reduce food waste, would be selected from each challenge to be awarded $1.5 million. Two additional challenges ("C" and "D") would focus on supporting technologies that could extend the life of food or transform food that would be otherwise wasted. It was noteworthy that the "first-ever Surplus Food Purchase Program" provided $50 million to help redistribute existing and unsold inventories of food (Government of Canada, 2020b, Quick Facts section), and that 8% of greenhouse gasses worldwide were estimated to be due to food waste (Government of Canada, 2020c, Quick Facts section).

Policies and Project Innovation

In 2017, to prepare for the current study, I reviewed innovations and policies that might have potential for application within the local environment, or that could spark ideas to be implemented in Penticton, British Columbia. Deloitte (2013) anticipated it would be important to seek out policy and project innovations from other communities, provinces, and countries in order to learn how others have catalyzed and mobilized community action and created sustainable change. Ideas for change initiatives could be found in stories of what others have done and shared in some way as they sought solutions to extant problems in the food security context (p. 19). Deloitte produced a guide intended to help municipal governments consider a variety of initiatives related to a proposed Bill 36, the Local Food Act (p.1). This report identified surveys of projects in which municipalities engaged to create improved access to healthy food in their communities. Those models could serve as inspiration and examples to participatory action researchers (p. 27) who, for example, might compare the number of food sector jobs as a percent of local employment using provincial employment surveys. Relevant

metrics could be monitored such as the percent of local food in a household food basket, linear feet at grocery stores, the number of community gardens, urban farms, farmers markets and their vendors and sales, participating NGOs, incubator kitchens, the number of citizens who know where to buy local food, etc. (pp. 41-42). The grey literature was extensive in terms of innovations ranging from tax reform to land use changes, fines, and penalties, support for urban gardening, promotions by physicians for social prescription (prescribing gardening for their patients, or horticulture therapy), and more.

As an incentive, in 2016, the government of British Columbia implemented a tax credit policy intended to facilitate donations of food to registered charities, such as food banks or school meal programs, in addition to all other charitable or gift tax credits available. The credit was in effect from February 16, 2016 through January 1, 2021 (British Columbia, 2020a, para. 2) and allowed 25% of the eligible amount of qualifying gifts each tax year. The credit was in effect through January 1, 2021, then extended to January 1, 2024.

I continued to review policy news throughout the current study. As I prepared for Cycle 3, an article on in February 2019 by the National Health Service and National Health Service Improvement London (National Health Service [NHS] England, 2019) caught my attention. It stated Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Cornwall, visited a food co-op garden to celebrate its success in supporting local patients through gardening. Clinicians (general practitioners, or GP's) and patients grew food for the community at hospital sites and GP offices "to support patients with long term health conditions" as part of a "social prescribing initiative". "Social prescribing is a referral system through which GPs help patients engage with community-based activities as a means of improving their health" (NHS England, 2019, para. 1-3). The concept of a social prescription was a very exciting approach launched by a food co-op in partnership with clinicians

in the United Kingdom. Although I discovered this idea late in the current study, I considered this actionable for the future.

Defining Participatory and Action Research

The process of finding food solutions in Penticton was intended to be grounded in community participation, generating innovation, and priority setting. Participatory action research evolved from the work of Paulo Freire and Kurt Lewin, and there were a wide variety of refinements and developments thereafter (Glassman et al., 2013; Glassman & Erdem, 2014). Lewin believed that social problems could be addressed with cross-functional teams by exploring deep rooted organizational issues through recurring cycles of reflection, analysis and action (Dickens & Watkins, 1999). Fetterman and Wandersman (2005) and Fetterman et al. (2015) defined ten principles for researchers to adhere to including a focus on improvement, organizational learning, community ownership, inclusion, democratic participation, social justice, community knowledge, evidence-based strategies, capacity-building, and accountability (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005, pp. 2, 30; Fetterman et al., 2015, pp. 5-6). Fetterman's (2009) refinement of the research strategy, empowerment evaluation, was of particular interest as it focused on evaluation and empowerment aspects of social change initiatives.

Participatory action research was used to create systems and policy level changes for vulnerable populations around the world (Dickens & Watkins, 1999; Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007; Stoecker, 2013). It was suggested as the most appropriate approach for both research and community action when there were multiple perspectives within a social problem and when social justice and sustainable change were desired outcomes (Stoecker, 2013). A participatory action approach was determined to be the most appropriate research design for the purpose of the current study since it involved collective, self-reflective inquiry by the participating research

participants in order to improve the delivery of services in a meaningful way for all involved. In participatory action research studies, four stages were identified by Stoecker (2013):

1. Diagnostic stage: a social problem was defined (diagnosed) by the group affected by the problem.
2. Prescriptive stage: stakeholders connected to the problem were invited to participate in brainstorming and planning. A common vision (prescription) was created to establish the desired outcomes in measurable terms.
3. Implementation stage: a schedule was to be established to take action and to monitor results in reference to the desired outcome, to reflect on those results, and to proceed to the next stage of action after making any course corrections and revisions to the original plan.
4. Evaluation stage: stakeholders were to collect data for evaluation and further reflection. (Stoecker, 2013, p. 119)

I created, for my own use, a simple outline illustrating key questions and strategies to utilize during each of the four stages (diagnose, prescribe, implement, and evaluate) of the participatory action research process (shown in Appendix C). In the current study, there were expected to be several iterative planning, learning and action cycles in that plans for future action in subsequent cycles were intended to be informed by the analysis of data and reflection on earlier cycles.

Participatory action research was chosen as a foundational approach for the current study, in part, because it was relevant to influencing sustainable social change. The social problem was embedded in a complex multidimensional, multisectoral frame; it was influenced by conflicting paradigms, values and beliefs; and it included a component of and desire for social justice and

sustainability. To encompass health, community building, social change, and social justice, participatory action research appeared to be the most appropriate strategy for implementation in the current study.

In addition to guidance from Dickens and Watkins (1999), Fetterman (2009), Fetterman and Wandersman (2005, 2007), James et al. (2012), and Stoecker (2013), one additional participatory action research sub-school informed the design of the current study: Civic communion (Procter, 2006) held promise for enhancing the potential for social change. Civic communion was defined as "the communicative performance of a significant moment that arouses and transforms an individual citizen's latent feelings into collective support, emotional, rhetorical and behavioural - for local communal structures that become recognized as bonds of community" (Procter, 2004, p. 59). There were two components of civic communion: how these events or moments were organized, and how they were scripted or performed so as to influence and enhance social change.

The declared purpose of civic communion was to enhance the effectiveness of social change initiatives and to build community spirit, as well as to anchor and reinforce values. The interaction was to function as a powerful catalyst by invoking a communal vision amongst its citizens through community development (Procter, 2004, p. 59). Procter offered a disciplined approach and a set of criteria with which a civic communion event must comply. The following summarizes the three major criteria and evaluation standards for designing an event in this context:

- The event must be a segmented moment in the life of the community; the event must be planned for a certain time and place.

- The event must be highly participatory; include broad participation by organizers, stakeholders and citizens.
- The event must be generative; expand civic participation among citizens and widen the public agenda.

As well, the event would be intended to meet the following rhetorical characteristics:

- Scripting must be symbolically constructed with language and performance help to construct the significant moment in time for the community.
- The rhetoric must emphasize interdependence, language and performance connecting and solidifying community groups.
- The language must be affirmative in terms of cultural presence, and articulate spiritual rhetoric. (Procter, 2004, p. 60)

Second, narrative inquiry influenced the current study design: The gaps in assessing and evaluating evidence of empowerment in participatory action research studies were highlighted by Miller and Campbell (2006). It was anticipated that participants would be able to identify specific factors in participatory action research intervention which could be trigger points for the change they experienced in themselves.

Clandinin (2006) described a three-dimensional framework for analyses and inquiry (pp. 46-47): personal and social interaction in time (past, present and future in terms of continuity) and in place (a situation). I interpreted this to mean there were links between examining experiences from the individual perspective as related to the broader social landscape in a particular setting in terms of the continuity of the investigation. Foundationally, I hoped to learn how empowerment may have been influenced in these contexts during the current study,

particularly my own influence in this context, as well as what aspects of the process influenced sustainable change.

Defining Social Networks

In sociology, social network studies identified and mapped the relationships or links between individuals, groups, and organizations. According to Burt (2004), people or organizations could be represented in two-dimensional space by nodes. The relationships between or among them were represented by lines referred to as ties. What emerged were web-like constellations around a single individual, cluster of people, or around an organization. With regard to the places between social networks without existing linkages, Burt referred to the phenomenon of structural holes as means for creating new ties and generating new ideas for synthesis (p. 350, 353). Structural holes were the places with the most potential for innovative ideas and non-redundant advice and information (p. 358). Burt discussed bridge-and-cluster structures and suggested entrepreneurial leadership roles might bring together people outside of their normal routines and facilitate a flow of information (p. 353). People or organizations along the margins of these structural holes were much more likely to have suggestions which could assist in propelling the work forward (p. 358). Categorized as ideas that could move the initiative forward, these suggestions could spark new collaborations and multidisciplinary perspectives. Structural holes were, thus, opportunities for social networking: When bridged, they could create synergistic connections and access to more diverse information and resources than either cluster had on its own. "Networks do not act; they are a context for action" (p. 354). This was a very useful concept to the current study.

Rand et al. (2011) also discussed how ties might create dyads between two individuals or triads between multiple egos or actors. Social networks were typically mapped as constellations

around an individual and illustrated social complexity; the visual interpretation could be enhanced by sophisticated computer programs (p. 19196), although the software was not used in the current study. Rand et al. emphasized a dynamic dimension of social networks and experimented with social network interventions to facilitate change in health outcomes. The dynamic nature of social networks involved new people entering and leaving the network frequently. This could be seen as a positive condition, yet it could also work against facilitating change when stability and long-term commitments were preferable (p. 19193). Further, participants could be inserted into the network as either cooperators or deflectors, depending on research goals (p. 19196). Rand et al. referred to this as strategically making and breaking ties (p. 19196). Relationship ties, especially functional ties, were not always stable and, therefore, research needed to take into account the continual re-forming and decay of ties (p. 19193). In their research, Rand et al. were able to experimentally influence subjects to re-wire ties (p. 19194). Subjects formed new ties with cooperators and broke ties with defectors. The research demonstrated the important role that dynamic social networks played in interventions requiring large-scale human cooperation and how cooperation could be facilitated through an intervention, resulting in the formation of new ties, i.e., network rewiring (p. 19193). This work had implications for the current study in that attention had to be paid to evidence of cooperation to ensure communications were well orchestrated in order that stakeholder-researchers were aware of progress and connections.

While there was substantive research describing how social networks could positively or negatively influence individual and group change, there was little information regarding a mechanism for action. Magrin et al. (2014), however, identified some ways to employ and strengthen existing social networks in order to influence change within and between different

organizations. In their meta-analysis of studies on social support networks for a chronic health issue, Magrin et al. found it was functional social support rather than structural aspects of relationships that were the most important for promoting adherence to a health promotion strategy. Although Rand et a. (2011) had stated functional ties were not always stable, Magrin et al. (2014) suggested functional relationships must be considered when planning interventions, and could be influential. It was proposed that the strength of influence was due to increased psychological reinforcement and material resources (p. 307). Therefore, in addition to looking at structural links within social networks in the current study, it was important to determine the functional linkages involved as primary leverage points for action.

Magrin et al. (2014) described protective effects that a social network provided in terms of material resources and psychological support, but warned the mechanisms could be better understood if the dimensions of adherence and social support were also differentiated. As well, functional ties appeared more effective in times of crisis, whereas structural social ties could affect health (pp. 307-318). A challenge in the current study would be to accurately map/assess the social networks around the Salvation Army food bank and community garden so that it might be possible to harness the mechanisms discussed in the literature to achieve positive actions.

There was a wealth of research on the positive and negative effects of social networks on health. Sluzki (2010), a physician, explored clinical implications for health-enhancing interventions (p. 1). I saw the current study as an intervention seeking a health-related outcome and concentrated on the literature in this context in order to narrow the inquiry. My intent was to focus on how social network analysis could be employed in health promotion and related social change interventions in society. Because relationships were dynamic rather than stable, they afforded the opportunity for intervention. At the same time, they were vulnerable to purposeful

leveraging toward the achievement of community health objectives (Rand, et al., 2011, pp. 19193-19194).

Sluzki (2010) also viewed social network analysis in health promotion and change initiatives and found correlations between health and stable social networks. However, data on health interventions were not as rich and there was a need for greater understanding of the mechanisms for designing more effective interventions (Perkins et al., 2015). Sluzki (2010) concluded that reliable and dynamic social networks played a critical role in individual health and an important role in the health of the networks collectively through reaffirming value to one another ("Social Network Enhancement" section, para. 5). Networks must be substantive in quantity and quality, availability, reciprocity, and evaluated in terms of intimacy and loyalty (Social Network and Health section, Virtuous). This idea appeared to support intentional large-scale cooperative human efforts at capacity-building. Social ties could be purposely updated and strengthened. The current study intended to test Sluzki's conclusion in the context of the Penticton food bank.

During the current study, once a potential sector for action within the community was identified, the group was expected to determine whether they had appropriate professional or personal connections, or whether external expertise within or outside the sector was needed. It was challenging and time consuming to identify individuals with sufficient knowledge and the authority to make commitments. Thus, awareness of the concept of structural ties and holes truly illustrated the problem and the need for evaluation of those assets and possibilities. For example, the charity sector typically had volunteer boards which needed to be consulted prior to taking major decisions. Assessing those connections through group discussions, as well as what connections might be missing (as assets) in the process of decision-making, helped to prioritize

the time and efforts necessary to expand the social network for the purpose of community capacity-building.

Defining Community Capacity-building

Community capacity-building was understood to be a broad set of principles, a varying number of components, depending on the perspective, or a toolkit of processes rather than a well specified intervention model. Definitions across the literature varied widely, with some scholars referring to community capacity-building with definitive clarity and exactness (Sanigorski et al., 2008) while others, such as Chaskin (2001), described capacity-building as simply a notion. Others disputed the legitimacy of the term, claiming that it was rhetoric intended to obscure structural reasons for poverty and inequality, the failure of governments (Craig, 2007, Abstract), and to facilitate government cost saving initiatives (Mowbray, 2005, Abstract).

For the purpose of the current study, the definition promoted by Hawe and Shiell (2000) was most apt, further elaborated on by Labonte et al. (2002). Hawe and Shiell (2000) viewed community capacity-building as a set of components and processes with a rhetorical, multiplier effect that could be used in promotional health interventions (p. 872). There was the potential to prolong and multiply health gains many times over. Labonte et al. (2002) felt community capacity-building added parallel outcome measures beyond program or individual goals (p. 182) and could increase the capabilities of people to articulate and address community health issues, to overcome barriers, and to improve outcomes in the quality of their lives.

According to Labonte et al. (2002), interest in community capacity-building emerged due to the modest effect of individual life-style education and social marketing programs, especially in marginalized communities (p. 181). The earliest sustained references to community capacity-building appeared in the early 1990s in reference to United Nations development initiatives

(Craig, 2007, p. 339), but the term was quickly adopted in Europe and spread to the United Kingdom, Australia, and North America. Craig identified over 3,000 separate community capacity-building initiatives (p. 335) which had been adopted by governments and NGO's, often included as criterion for community organizations to receive project funding and approvals.

In the literature, generally, the lines were blurred between closely related concepts such as community development, political economy, and empowerment. There was extensive literature related to projects across developed and developing countries, each with the intent to improve health on a community level. Many of the initiatives were driven by government grants and NGO administrations. The purpose of community capacity-building therein was to facilitate social change through the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies. For these reasons, it was appropriate as part of the conceptual model for the current study. While community capacity-building was often a framework used for health promotion initiatives (Raeburn et al., 2006, p. 84), it was also employed in addressing other social issues such as community housing, increasing public participation in community decision making, and job creation (Chaskin, 2001).

Labonte et al. (2002) offered a practical framework for a deliberate attempt to build community capacity within health promotion programs. They devised nine operational domains of community capacity to be monitored to track capacity-building initiatives. These appeared very useful to defining action within the current study and included:

- improved stakeholder participation;
- leadership development;
- improved problem assessment capacities;
- creation of empowering organizational structures;

- improved resource mobilization;
- strengthened ability to ask why;
- improved links with other organizations;
- creation of equitable relationships with outside agents; and
- increase stakeholder control over program management. (Labonte et al., 2002, p. 182)

For the purposed of the current study, community capacity-building was seen as a strategy and a means to an end. The strategy was based upon an assumption that, if certain organizational capacities were improved, individual and community-level health indicators could improve and be sustained beyond the time-limited program intervention period (Labonte et al., 2002, p. 181). Labonte et al. promoted community capacity-building and described the advantages of using it in parallel with other health promotion initiatives. They claimed this approach would multiply the health gains by making them more effective and sustainable (p. 181).

Labonte et al. (2002) described three implications for integrating community capacity-building practices into health promotion programs. First, they added a parallel set of outcomes: allowing community capacity domains to be monitored in addition to the health outcomes. Second, they suggested program staff examine the ways in which their work added capacity in the community. Third, they challenged institutions to be accountable to community groups for how their programs enhanced community capacities (p. 182). Raeburn et al. (2006) concluded community capacity-building "and its associated community development processes, together with wise global policy and regulation, might very well provide the most important forces at our disposal for promoting the world's health in the future" (p. 90). At the same time, Mowbray (2005) questioned social policy discourse, government papers and speeches heavily laden with

the language of community as if that created a wholesomeness and promise of caring, responsiveness, and progressiveness (p. 257).

As illustrated herein, the literature provided support, if not evidence, for the assumption that building capacity within community organizations could affect wider improvements in health and social determinants of health - a key topic under consideration in the current study. Community capacity-building was presented here as a strategy, a means to an end, based upon the assumption: If certain organizational capacities were improved, individual and community-level health indicators could improve and could be sustainable beyond the intervention period (Labonte et al., 2002). There was some evidence of this: For example, in a Missouri initiative to improve physical activity where community coalitions were established, there was a sustained increase in the community's capacity to support successful physical activity programs (Labonte et al., 2002, p. 181). Much later in the current study, I found Swords (2019) work with a New York food bank created the social capital whereby management and staff moved away from the concept and acceptance of a charity model, to turn the conversation from hunger to poverty and the systems that support it (p. 856). Outcomes were observed, such as increased allocation of funding and activities related to advocacy, such as creating a speakers' bureau and an outreach program to engage the broader community (p. 856).

Defining Social Capital

The concept of social capital was used by multiple disciplines. Scholars from economic development, sociology, social work, political science, anthropology, communications and political science presented a variety of perspectives and definitions. A useful description of the concept of social capital for the purpose of the current study was the common aphorism, "It's not what you know, it's who you know" (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 225). This description

could easily be understood by all and summed up succinctly a common theme running through academic definitions of social capital. Social capital was all about relationships and the value of relationships as resources or assets.

When examining individuals or communities, social capital could be evaluated and studied, similar to other assets such as education, disposable income or acquisitions. Social capital seemed to be viewed as an asset owned by an individual and measured by the number and strength of relationships with friends and acquaintances (by means of memberships in clubs and schools) and the extent and nature of family networks. Capital assets that could be called upon in crisis, enjoyed individually, or leveraged for material gain (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 225). Other scholars studied social capital at a higher level, examining the relationships and networks among societal sectors, organizations and institutions within the community. At this level, communities with a higher stock of social capital were considered to be in a stronger position to fight poverty and vulnerabilities, solve problems and take advantage of opportunities (p. 226).

A more formal definition, relevant to participatory action research, was that social capital referred to "the norms and networks which enable people to act collectively" (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 225). While this was a simple definition, it highlighted the source of social capital as something to be leveraged and harnessed for collective action and change. Social capital featured trust and reciprocity, which could be developed.

Woolcock and Narayan (2000) referenced a body of research published in a special issue of *World Development* in 1996 that examined international cases which fostered a social development "synergy view" (p. 235). These developmental synergies were dynamic professional alliances and relationships between various actors in civil society and within state

bureaucracies (p. 236). Three primary considerations intended to facilitate a perspective relevant to amplifying social capital. One should:

1. recognize that neither governments, corporations, civic groups, or societies "are inherently good or bad" (p. 236), and social capital created between and among institutions could be used to either "promote or undermine the public good" (p. 243).
2. be aware that one institution or community or State alone will not have the resources to sustainably raise social capital across sectors (p. 236).
3. recognize that government has roles as the provider (of stable currency, public health and education), as the final arbitrator and enforcer of law within a community, and as an actor best able to facilitate alliances across boundaries (race, gender, religion, class, ethnicity, politics) (p. 236).

Further, according to Woolcock and Narayan (2000), the firms and communities had the ability to create conditions that produced, recognized and rewarded good governance, providing a feedback mechanism. The inter-relatedness between the two had certain features, including mutually supportive relationships between the public and private sectors and the extent to which government and public officials connected with citizens (p. 236). Woolcock and Narayan described four main approaches within social capital today including: communitarianism, networks, institutional and synergy. The current study intended to use their synergetic approach as a guide in addition to the elements suggested by Kretzmann and McKnight (1996): to work within the framework and practice of assets-based community development (p. 25) and build capacity through social networking. The positive and negative aspects of social capital were illustrated in the literature and experienced throughout the current study. The concept was demonstrated to have extensive empirical support; it was prescriptive, offered practical

guidelines; and it lent itself to promotion of policy change. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) described six elements of social capital and the implications for development theory and policy. They urged researchers to consider:

- groups and networks involving all sectors and levels;
- trust and solidarity in terms of building bridges between communities and social groups;
- collective action and cooperation for a common good;
- transparent information and communications using modern methods;
- social cohesion and inclusion with a focus on creating interventions through the lens of social capital; and
- empowerment and political action conceptualized within the larger context of development projects. (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, pp. 242-243)

Debates on Social Capital and Health Promotion

The concept of social capital as it related to health promotion was heavily debated and criticized. For example, Woodcock and Narayan (2000) felt social capital useful to promoting the advancement of health care. In contrast, Hawe and Shiell (2000) concluded that social capital added little to the community health promotion discussion. They did, however, suggest that there was some value in the rhetoric of social capital for bringing in new ideas and connections. Portes (2014) described those who saw social capital as "an unqualified public good" (p. 1) and "deplored" its loss and the resulting rise of "individualism, social atomization, and anomie" (p. 1). Portes contrasted this perspective to "the negative consequences of ethnic particularism and excessive reliance on community and trust" (p. 1), a cause of social exclusion.

Eriksson's (2011) article stated "the labelling of old facts with new terms can help us gain new knowledge within the complex fields on health promotion and the social determinants of health" (Discussion section, para. 4). Eriksson iterated the importance of looking at ways that social capital could contribute to the field of health promotion and suggested there was a need to design social network interventions so as to gain knowledge about effective strategies (Strengthening individual social capital, para. 2) to mobilize collective social capital (Mobilizing collective social capital section, para. 4-5). While mapping and mobilization were key components of social capital analysis, Eriksson concluded each community would have to take guidance from theories and models to create their own environments to support and sustain health promotion initiatives because social capital was "context-bound by necessity" (Abstract). This was a welcome insight and supported the approach taken within the current study.

Topical Literature on Food Banks

The Birth of Food Banks and Growth of Food Insecurity

In 1981, the first foodbank in Canada opened in Edmonton to deal with what was intended to be a short-term emergency response to food shortages (Edmonton's Foodbank, 2020). Between 1982 and 2002, food banks became one of the fastest growing charities in Canada (Riches, 2002, p. 648). Between 2008 and 2015, food bank use increased by 26% (Food Banks Canada, 2015, p. 1). Roshanafshar and Hawkins (2015), of Statistics Canada, reported between 2007 and 2012 "41.4% of those with government benefits as their main source of income experienced food insecurity, while 23.0% of those with an alternate main source of income experienced food insecurity" (p. 5). In spite of the tremendous growth in food banks, food insecurity was on the rise (PROOF, 2020c). The literature demonstrated this increasing trend:

- A report in May 2012 by the United Nations Special Rapporteur indicated widespread food insecurity affecting ***one in ten*** families (Pike, 2017, "Visit of the UN" section).
- Five years later, in 2017-2018, according to PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research**,** ***one in eight*** Canadians experienced food insecurity "amounting to 4.4 million people" (PROOF, 2020a, para. 2).
- In October 2018 when, at the 74th General Assembly of the United Nations, a past United Nations Rapporteur, Hilal Elver, stated "***One in nine people*** *[emphasis added]* are facing hunger and 2 billion people are food insecure" (Elver, 2019, p. 2).
- In their 2019 Impact Report, Food Banks British Columbia (Food Banks BC) reported "Over 80,000 people access our food banks every month; one of every three of these clients is a child; more than 10,000 are seniors; 11,000 are employed but their income is insufficient" (Food Banks BC, 2019, p. 9).
- In May of 2020, due to COVID-19, Statistics Canada (2020) reported ***one in seven*** families now experienced food insecurity (p. 3). In total, 14.6% of Canadians (para. 3) indicated they had experienced food insecurity within the previous 30 days as compared to 10.5% in 2017-2018 (para. 5). The number of households affected was expected to double world-wide during the pandemic (World Food Program, 2020).

Food, Health, and Food Banks

Prior research explored food bank usage from a health and nutritional perspective (Willows & Au, 2006). Securing food at food banks was identified as risk factor for poor nutrition, contributing to poor health outcomes (Vozoris & Tarasuk, 2003). Food security had "become recognized as a public health issue" (p. 120). The quality of food at food banks was universally reported as poor and there were generally insufficient donations of food to meet

demand (Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2007). From a nutritional perspective, researchers attempted to examine the nutritional contents of hampers but, because it was impossible to know how the hamper was being used, the assessment was inconclusive (Willows & Au, 2006).

A lack of access to healthy food became recognized as a major social determinant contributing to health disparities in Canada and across the globe (Men et al., 2020a, 2020b; Men & Tarasuk, 2020; Vozoris & Tarasuk, 2003; Wakefield et al., 2014). Evidence from Canadian researchers at Statistics Canada, via the Canadian Community Health Survey of 2005-2017 as reported in PROOF (2020a), revealed people in Canada who were food insecure had a life expectancy reduced by nine years as compared to the normal population (PROOF, 2020a, Food Insecurity and Mortality section). Being food insecure had consistent negative influence, contributing to mobility impairments, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, back problems, hypertension, and "a wide range of chronic conditions" (PROOF, 2020a, para. 8). There was ample evidence to support a direct relationship between physical and mental health and a healthy diet. Childhood food insecurity was associated with mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and mood disorders, and suicidal thoughts (PROOF, 2020a, para. 9).

From a procedural perspective, Tarasuk and Eakin (2002) described how the method of dispersing food at food banks from donations could be seen as disconnected to people's needs (p. 1512). This disconnect could potentially exacerbate feelings of stigma and humiliation endured by food bank clients (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012, p. 506). The literature indicated a continuing trend in food bank usage: Some researchers, community activists, politicians, and policymakers believed the current food bank system did not actually address the root causes of hunger. Tarasuk et al. (2019) and PROOF (2019) found only around 20-21.1% of food insecure households used food banks. In addition, PROOF stated "More recent data from provinces that measured food

insecurity in 2015-2016" suggested that "this large disconnect persists" (PROOF, 2019, p. 1, sidebar section). The food banks had neither the resources nor the structure needed to address a rising demand for nutritious food (Riches, 2011; Tarasuk et al., 2014a). An alternative solution was proposed: that the government provide a guaranteed annual income (Food Secure Canada, 2015; Loopstra et al., 2016; McIntyre, 2003; PROOF, 2020a; Tarasuk, 2017; Tarasuk & McIntyre, 2020).

Food Insecurity and Food Banks

It was unclear how much progress had been made regarding concerns raised by Riches in 2002, namely that the charity sector was primarily in the business of redirecting food industry waste (Riches, 2002, p. 648) rather than attempting to meet social and nutritional needs. The majority of the food shared was donated waste that could not be sold and would be disposed of if not utilized in a charitable context (Riches & Silvasti, 2016).

Tarasuk (2017) demonstrated, via Statistics Canada (Canadian Community Health Survey 2013-2014), that food insecurity was directly correlated to a reliable basic income (pp. 12-13). In 2017-2018, in Canada, 4.4 million people were considered food insecure (PROOF, 2020a, para. 2). This issue was not equally distributed throughout the population. Households with children under age 18 were at greater risk for food insecurity, particularly 33.5% of all families with a lone woman as the only parent, those on employment insurance or workers compensation (35.6%), and those on social assistance (60.90%) in 2014 (Tarasuk et al., 2014a, Appendix C). PROOF reported food insecurity did not affect seniors disproportionally due to protections in Canada's pension programs (PROOF, 2020a, Did you know? section), and Men & Tarasuk (2020) agreed but concluded severely food-insecure adults approaching retirement were likely to die before collecting their pensions.

Globally, people's health, mobility, and economic well-being were quickly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, even by April of 2020. The consequences for those already suffering food insecurity were exacerbated (United Nations News, 2020). In Canada, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically disrupted food supply chains and increased demand on the national food banks (Food Banks Canada, 2020a; 2020b). CBC Radio Canada indicated 50% of food banks had reported an increase in demand (CBC, 2020d, para. 1). PROOF searched to find solutions to the increasing problems revealed and exacerbated by the pandemic.

Barker and Russell (2020) discussed the concerns in Britain where, as in Canada, food insecurity was addressed through the "voluntary sector" prior to COVID-19 (Background section, para. 5). To those reading this dissertation, the situation in Britain closely mirrored discussions in Canada and elsewhere. There was no prior state support for people enduring food shortages, temporary or otherwise, other than certain emergency measures (Barker & Russell, 2020, Background section, para. 5). Since the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, "a large national survey estimated" food insecurity had quadrupled to 16% of the population ("Increase" section, para. 1): "notably people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, unemployed adults, households with children and people with health conditions and disability were most at risk" (para. 1). Individuals furloughed or who became unemployed were expected to suffer food insecurity during lockdowns (para. 2). Both in the decade prior to COVID-19 and since the COVID-19 pandemic, Barker and Russell cited numerous statistics related to food insecurity as they related to government responses, a disrupted food supply chain, institutionalization of the charity sector, food bank statistics and response, the lack of nutritional value in emergency food packages, highly vulnerable populations, and how the "government's reliance on the voluntary

sector to feed the food insecure has led to a financial crisis within the charitable sector" itself, "compounded by reduced donations" (Conclusion section, para. 3).

Statistics Canada (2020) reported during the COVID-19 pandemic, as of May 2020, that nearly one in seven Canadians reported food insecurity; particularly those "absent from work due to business closure, layoff, or personal circumstances due to COVID-19" were nearly three times as likely to be food insecure (p.4). In total, 14.6% of Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2020, para. 3) indicated they had experienced food insecurity within the previous 30 days as compared to 10.5% in 2017-2018 (para. 5). This was based on a list of six experiences which included running out of food or the money to buy food. While most households reported only one issue, two per cent reported experiencing five or six. The different types of issues were considered underreported in the years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic because researchers found only about 20% of needy families utilized the food banks between 2008 and 2016 (PROOF, 2019, pp. 1-2; Tarasuk, 2017, Abstract). Thus, policy shortcomings, and the vulnerably and fragility of food systems locally, nationally, and globally, which had been here all along since the first food bank opened in Edmonton in 1981, became clearly exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic nearly forty years later in 2020.

Perspectives

Perspectives on Food Banks

By now it became clear the literature illustrated two conflicting camps proposing solutions to food insecurity in Canada: One camp promoted and developed sophisticated methods for soliciting donations on behalf of the food banks. The other camp was juxtaposed to this approach, advocating a guaranteed annual income, similar to Canada's pension programs or social security (Food Secure Canada, 2015; PROOF, 2020a; Tarasuk, 2017; Tarasuk &

McIntyre, 2020) for individuals so that food banks could be rendered unnecessary (Loopstra et al., 2016; McIntyre, 2003; McIntyre et al., 2015). Many approaches to hunger were mirrored on the international stage as well (Swords, 2019).

Some scholars critically analyzed the food bank phenomenon and determined the charity model was part of the problem (Riches & Silvasti, 2016; Rideout et al., 2007; Tarasuk & Eakin, 2002). It was argued that the institution needed rethinking. Support was needed for the internationally endorsed United Nations perspective on the human right to food. Researchers involved with PROOF, led by Dr. Tarasuk at the University of Toronto, dedicated their efforts to exposing the breadth of food insecurity in Canada and illuminating the underlying cause of this problem: a lack of income (PROOF, 2020a; Tarasuk, 2017; Tarasuk & McIntyre, 2020; Socha et al., 2012).

An invisible structure, hidden from public view, created misplaced confidence in the charity model, which was only supposed to provide a short-term emergency response (Edmonton's Foodbank, 2020) not a long-term solution to food insecurity. In their work, PROOF (2019) unmasked the niceties the charity model conveyed to the public. They stated "there is no evidence that food banks are a solution to the very serious problem of food insecurity in Canada" (p. 2). Downloading social responsibilities to the nonprofit sector was "insufficient to address food security" (PROOF, 2020c, para. 2), at least in Quebec where PROOF discussed public policy and programs in the cited article. They described a fragmented approach (via the nonprofit/charity sector) to a highly complex and complicated problem requiring a national response. PROOF (2020c) expressed concern that community-based initiatives, such as food banks, perpetuated food insecurity problems and allowed "the government to abdicate responsibility" (para. 3). The efforts of the charity sector appeared to enable government

avoidance of responsibility for resources, infrastructure, tools, or policy responses to deal with rising poverty and hunger.

> There's no denying a moral imperative to act, but U.S.-style food charity acts as a moral safety valve allowing the public to believe the problem is addressed while enabling politicians of all stripes to neglect their human rights obligations. However well-intentioned, the sheer scale of the problem is beyond the scope of charitable food banks. … In the immediate future, as the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition has demanded, the province must increase social assistance rates first to 75 per cent, then 100 per cent of the poverty line. An essential step made more urgent by the pandemic and the need for wide-ranging income security, health and housing reforms. (Riches, 2020, para. 20-21)

On November 16, 2020, Paul Taylor, executive director of FoodShare Toronto, a food justice organization, agreed when he stated: communities were struggling under the burden and leadership was needed to "Put down the tins and go sort the policy" (CBC, 2020b). "In the longer term, food security for all must guarantee an adequate universal basic income, now inadvertently being piloted by the Canada Emergency Response Benefit" … "Ending food insecurity must be an outcome of successful poverty reduction policies, fair income distribution and progressive taxation" (Riches, 2020, para. 22-23).

Public health administrators, community activists, policy makers, politicians, and researchers examined the situation from a variety of perspectives and ontological positions (Ford & Beaumier, 2011; Furgal & Seguin, 2006; McCullum et al., 2005; McIntyre et al., 2015; Mercille et al., 2012; Riches, 2002, 2011, 2020; Rideout et al., 2007; Socha et al., 2012; Tarasuk, 2017; Tarasuk & Eakin, 2002, 2005; Tarasuk et al., 2014b). There seemed to be general agreement in the literature that the food provided in an urgent context was not of sufficient quality or quantity to effectively address food insecurity for either individuals or families (Riches, 2002; Sriram & Tarasuk, 2016). For example, it was reported that minority households were disproportionately affected, as were people with health conditions or ability challenges (Barker & Russell, 2020; Lourenco, 2020; PROOF, 2020a). In addition, there was evidence that

severely food insecure adults approaching retirement were a high-risk population, likely to die before receiving retirement benefits (Men & Tarasuk, 2020). These households already experienced food insecurities prior to COVID-19 and the pandemic only brought them greater public awareness.

Part of a Solution

Swords (2019) took an action research approach to facilitating organizational change at a food bank in New York and argued that food security actions should be grounded in understanding the structure of poverty (p. 849). Swords cited Poppendieck, who asked "what might happen if food banks put all the effort soliciting and distributing wasted food into ending hunger and poverty?" (Poppendieck, 1999, p. 77, in Swords, 2019, p. 853). According to McCullum et al. (2005), food banks were viewed as part of a response to hunger and food insecurity. McCullum et al. described food banks as being on a continuum of development, initially raising awareness prior to establishing community gardens and teaching kitchens. It seemed to the researcher in the current study as though, now a mature stage, food banks should have entered into the political arena, taking on policy change and advocacy.

Koc et al. (2008) identified a path for food policy change. They described neoliberal practices after World War II, such as enhanced free trade and dismantling of social programs. They stated many governments created further regulations to "public policies, programs and institutions that tried to regulate markets at national levels" ("Post-War" section, para. 1) such as minimum wage laws, trade unions, environmental protection act, unemployment, public medicine, and other social support networks. Neoliberalism envisioned society "based on a privatized and deregulated economy, where the state's interventions would be limited primarily to providing basic services and infrastructure for the private sector, and maintaining law and

order" (para. 2). Since the 1990's "environmental and health concerns" ("CSO Activism" section, para. 6) regarding all aspects of food production and global commodity chains led to sustainability concerns. In this environment, trade associations and business lobbies could have considerable influence on government priorities ("Shifts" section, para. 6) and parliamentary debates by providing committee members at the legislative level with expert analyses (para. 8):

> Even more oddly, it creates the conditions for new kinds of business–CSO collaborations to advance mutual agendas, since agreement from these normally adversarial sectors takes away one reason for government inaction, namely that no consensus has emerged among the stakeholders. (Koc et al., 2008, "Shifts" section, para. 8)

Koc et al. (2008) also suggested, instead of a focus on the parliamentary level, there was a path for Civil Society Organizations through the engagement of civil servants. The Civil Society Organizations must …

> Display an ability to understand civil service realities, a detailed grasp of programs and regulatory instruments (down to the regulatory protocol and directive level), and a willingness to provide information and legitimacy to civil servants in a useful, politically sensitive manner. (Koc et al., 2008, "Conclusion" section, para. 2)

Canada's Metcalf Foundation (Metcalf Foundation, 2008) spent six years seeding food and agriculture initiatives to better meet food needs and offset poverty through a 'systems' approach to expanded services. They recognized that the food bank model was unsatisfactory (p. 16). The establishment or transformation of food banks into community food centres at the provincial level, possibly based in community health centres, was a key effort (p. 5, 28). The community food center approach emphasized current initiatives such as sustainable local produce, "community and school gardens, food co-ops, urban gardens, farmer training programs" and more (p. 4). The Metcalf Foundation also addressed policy gaps, advocating for government policy change related to income gaps, geography, and distribution (p. 17) and specific provincial-level programs (pp. 25-28).

The United Nations Rapporteur, Olivier De Shutter believed in the potential for food banks and recommended municipal levels of action with national support (De Schutter, 2012). Australian researchers (Butcher et al., 2014) accepted food banks as community institutions and attempted to develop best practices by taking a holistic health approach focused on exploring ways to improve service and programming. In addition to community gardens and teaching kitchens, they promoted health initiatives, nutritional education and exercise programs (para. 1).

A growing body of literature viewed food banks as part of the solution to food insecurity, particularly in the absence of a government response. At the heart of the academic debate seemed to be the question: Are food banks part of the problem or part of the solution? The current study was launched under the assumption that food banks could be part of the solution and sought to learn whether it was possible for food banks to have a key role to play in creating solutions. However, many authorities saw food banks as part of the problem as described herein.

Part of the Problem

According to Swords (2019), Poppendieck was an early scholar in the food security space criticizing the need for food banks and promoting a different approach. In the pivotal 1999 book, *Sweet Charity? Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement,* Poppendieck outlined seven problems with food banks, called the "seven deadly ins" (Poppendieck, 1999, p. 301, as cited in Swords, 2019, p. 852):

- insufficient food quantity,
- inappropriate food or food mismatched with consumer choices,
- inadequate nutritional value,
- instability with regard to source providers,
- inaccessible to certain populations,

- inefficient to meet the need due to reliance on volunteers, and
- indignity, creating a culture of have vs. have not. (Swords, 2019, p. 852)

Citing Poppendieck again, Swords (2019) argued emergency food programs were "created to compensate for the limitations of public entitlements, but actually further undermined food security by providing a "moral safety valve" to the public (Poppendieck 1999, p. 301)" (Swords, 2019, p. 852). "The proliferation of charity relieved pressure on governments to do something about food security and legitimized personal action as a response to economic dislocation (Poppendieck, 1999, as cited in Swords, 2019, p. 852).

As stated earlier, food banks were also criticized for their inability to provide adequate quality and quantities of nutritional food in a dignified manner to those who needed help (Riches, 2002; Tarasuk & Eakin, 2002, 2005). This criticism was understandable, as much of the food distributed by food banks was sourced from donations and industry surplus (Riches, 2002, p. 648). Tarasuk and Eakin (2002, 2005) also identified food banks and charity solutions as part of the problem of food insecurity.

Loopstra and Tarasuk (2012) conducted a study in 2007-2008 and found food insecurity could lead to poor health (p. 497) and many food-insecure families chose not to use food banks due to poor quality food (p. 504). A significant number of participants perceived food banks as primarily for those who were far more needy, such as the homeless (p. 505), and anticipated feelings of stigma and humiliation related to food bank usage (p. 506). Loopstra and Tarasuk saw barriers in terms of access to the food banks or access to information (pp. 506-507). Food bank usage among needy populations was low:

- Tarasuk (2017) utilized data from the 2008 Canadian Household Panel Survey Pilot and found only 21.1% of food insecure households used food banks, and those individuals seemed more desperate (Abstract).
- PROOF reported that research in 2012, four years later, also demonstrated only 20% of people who were food insecure accessed food banks (PROOF, 2019, p. 1-2).
- More recent data "from provinces that measured food insecurity in 2015-2016" suggested "this large disconnect persists" (PROOF, 2019, p. 1, sidebar).
- PROOF (2020a) reported 65% of food-insecure households overall in 2017-2018 included working people (Did you know? section). Yet only 25% of the 4.4 million food insecure individuals utilized food banks ("Policy Action" section, para. 2) as of March 2018.

Although food banks had become an accepted component of the community landscape, Riches (2011) warned against their proliferation. Food drives and community appeals hid the structural dimensions of the food security problem and actually reinforced them. In general, the perspective was that food banks allowed the status quo to continue and were totally disconnected to the upstream root cause of the food security problem. PROOF expressed concern that community-based initiatives, such as food banks, perpetuated the food insecurity problem and enabled "the government to abdicate responsibility" (2020c, para. 3).

Indigenous Perspective

The United Nations system formally represented Indigenous peoples since 1977 (FAO, 2020, p. 5). At the United Nations, the term "Indigenous peoples", plural, was utilized to include local and transnational kingdoms, bands, pueblos, aboriginals, and tribes of people who have often occupied their territories for centuries prior to the existence of modern national borders in

seven socio-cultural regions: Africa; the Arctic; Asia; Central and South America and the Caribbean; Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; North America; and the Pacific region (p. 4).

In 1996, the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples created a research division mandated to follow the principles of Indigenous participatory research in community-based research (Hall et al., 2015, p. 97). Prior to this it was thought Western research and knowledge construction might not pay attention to building relationships of dignity with Indigenous participants. At the time of writing (2015), the authors stated that nearly every Canadian university had some kind of community-university support structure placing emphasis on the rise of Indigenous research approaches, particularly OCAP: the ownership, control, access and possession of the knowledge generated in the research process (p. 97).

> The Arctic and Northern Territories, the home of Inuit and First Nations Peoples as well as diverse settler populations, have also played an important role in the development of community based participatory research in Canada. In these regions, distances are vast and populations are small. There are few post-secondary institutions and local university research communities are virtually non-existent. Research practice has, by necessity, been created with a home grown, local character that links Indigenous leadership with government services and settler researchers. Community-based participatory research has often been the approach of choice over the past years throughout these territories. The work is supported by the Arctic Institute for Community-based Research, which works in all three of the Arctic territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut), and is jointly governed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership. (Arctic Institute of Community Based Research, n.d., as cited in Hall et al., 2015, pp. 97-98)

Even so, a third of Indigenous people living on reservations were not represented in the Canadian Community Health Survey which captured food security data (PROOF, 2020b, para. 1). According to PROOF, the survey questions did not probe for information that may have been important to Indigenous people as they related to traditional means for gathering food (hunting and fishing), such as climate change and environmental pollution and their impacts “on the availability of edible plants and animals found in nature” (FAO, 2020, para. 3). Several

international agreements and declarations, such as the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), reinforced recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights through the concept of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the right to participation, consultation, and agreement (or not) with regard to any activity that affected their livelihoods (p. 5). The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had oversight for four reporting agencies/entities in this context. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a United Nations Agency, considered Indigenous peoples key allies for food security and did not consider them vulnerable populations: "…they are placed in situations of vulnerability when their rights are not respected" (FAO, 2020, p. 7). The FAO took a number of actions related to engagement with Indigenous peoples, such as the 2004 Voluntary Right to Food Guidelines and the 2010 FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (p. 8).

According to Statistics Canada, in 2016 the Indigenous population in Canada was 4.9% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2018, Population section). Indigenous people in Canada included the original Inuit, Métis, and first Nations living on or off reserves. Indigenous populations living in the remote northern regions were at great risk of food insecurity (Furgal & Seguin, 2006) due to the impacts of climate change on their traditional reliance on fresh food from the land, lakes, sea and rivers. A study on climate change and health conducted in two communities in Québec and Labrador in 2000-2001 (Furgal et al., 2001, 2002, as cited in Furgal & Seguin, 2006, "Climate Change" section) revealed significant effects of climate change, such as an increase in infectious diseases and accidents (Table 2), temperature related morbidity, mortality, and health risks (Table 1).

In 2011, Ford and Beaumier (2011) reported 50-80% of the Inuit population experienced "unique patterns of food insecurity" (p. 44). Even high-income Inuit households in one

community experienced food insecurity at least once, the situation was dynamic year-round, and transitory food insecurity was the most common issue (p. 55). Food insecurity for Indigenous peoples in Canada was typically attributed to three major factors: location (far north), lower income due to the type of employment available, and climate change (Furgal & Seguin, 2006; Socha et al., 2012).

Mercille et al. (2012) studied household food insecurity with regard to Canadian Aboriginal women and concluded behavioral interventions, such as teaching meal planning and preparation, could be helpful in addressing self-efficacy in food preparation, however public policy changes were needed to improve food quality. These conclusions were similar to those reached previously by McIntyre (2003) and Riches (2002). Socha et al. (2012) warned that food insecurity in Aboriginal peoples was not a problem unique to Canada and stated "A large body of literature documents similar problems in other countries…" (p. 6).

The Food and Agriculture Organization created an Indigenous Peoples team in 2014 and made the FPIC process (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent) compulsory in all projects and programs in 2015 (p.8). In 2018, the FAO collaborated to organize the first High-Level Expert Seminar on Indigenous Food Systems which included 200 participants from 23 countries with invited speakers from 22 Indigenous communities and 20 research centers (p. 8). The focus of this seminar was on climate change and reinforcing the sustainability of Indigenous peoples' food systems. The seminar resulted in an agreement to create (in 2020) a series of recommendations in the global context under the auspices of a "Global Hub" (pp. 8-9). In 2019, Finland, Canada, and various agencies within the United Nations organized at FAO headquarters for a similar seminar focused on conservation models and restoration as it related to the well-functioning of Indigenous food systems in the Arctic region.

In April 2020, the Yellowhead Institute reported half of First Nation households experienced food insecurity (Levi & Robin, 2020, Food Insecurity in Canada section). It seems worth noting that, in May of 2020, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations stated Indigenous people were the "guardians" of 80% of the remaining global biodiversity of the world (FAO, 2020, p. 3) in more than 90 countries worldwide (p. 3). "Their territories encompass 28% of the surface of the globe and contain 11% of the world's forests" (p. 3) which they managed sustainably for centuries. In 2020, the FAO Indigenous Peoples Team was mandated with three major objectives including to "influence key policy processes" (p.10). A large number of initiatives and processes were referenced in the FAO document cited herein, *Indigenous Peoples and the FAO: Allies for Sustainable Development in the Context of Climate Change*. Food insecurity is a complicated problem, even more so with regard to particularly vulnerable populations. It seemed unlikely that food banks could address the growing need for healthy food in the face of the economic realities brought to bear on Indigenous peoples, and it did not seem culturally appropriate that food banks be part of the solution to food insecurity in this population.

Personal Action Literature

A Growth Mindset

Dr. Carol Dweck is an award-winning Lewis and Virginia Eaton Professor of Psychology at Stanford University known for work on the strategic mindset (Chen et al., 2020, para. 1) and the growth mindset (Dweck & Yeager, 2019) as psychological traits. The strategic mindset development could be considered a shift in perspective intended to increase an individual's ability to harness and employ metacognitive skills. Chen et al. (2020), for example, referenced the struggle to reposition questions in order to develop new language within the growth mindset:

"What can I do to help myself? How else can I do this? Is there a way to do this even better? in the face of challenges or insufficient progress" (Chen et al., 2020, Abstract). In their studies, Chen et al. found people reported greater progress towards their professional, educational, health and fitness goals when they used strategic questioning.

During the current study, with all its emergent twists and turns with regard to processes and people, it was necessary to expand my mindset. I recalled Dr. Budd Hall (2005) stated that "Doubt may be one of our most identifiable common denominators" and "As we know, intentions do not always produce desired results" (p. 16). Studying this material specifically helped me recognize set-backs as opportunities for continuous improvement. Practicing a growth mindset was a skill that could be taught, enhanced, leveraged and practiced (Yeager et al., 2019). It was helpful to view the growth mindset as a skill to be developed in reference to my personal and professional journey during the current study. I continually attempted to develop a growth mindset in order to understand setbacks in terms of the lessons learned.

Social Movements

Social movements were defined as "The voluntary coming together of people in joint action" (Almeida, 2019, p. 1), major engines of social transformation throughout human history. Examples of recent social movements that came to mind included: the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989; La Via Campesina founded in 1993 in Belgium; the Arab Spring in 2010; the Black Lives Matter movement founded in 2013 in the United States; the referendum in Britain to leave the EU, a process which began formally in 2016; and massive protests to protect Hong Kong's legal autonomy from China in 2020.

As a social movement, food security was a global issue but seemed to inspire less broadly visible urgency. According to Swords (2019), Poppendieck argued that "a number of interest

groups benefited from the emergency food system", including agriculture departments, businesses, churches, environmentalists, organizations and institutions that enjoy "the halo effect of feeding the hungry", stating "if we didn't have hunger, we'd have to invent it" (Poppendieck, 1999, p. 293, in Swords, 2019, p. 852). Fisher (2017) argued against a narrow, pragmatic definition of hunger as the lack of access to adequate food, saying that ignored the relationship between hunger and poverty which acted "as a barrier to its own elimination" (p. 20). Despite the depth of their critiques many years apart, Poppendieck (1999, in Swords, 2019) and Fisher (2017) envisioned roles for emergency food providers in transforming the emergency food regime. Certainly, organized social movements and organizations such as Food Secure Canada, Canada Without Poverty, and La Via Campesina, had indicated emergency food providers generated awareness and effected positive social change.

Theoretical Literature

Pragmatism

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Legg & Hookway, 2020) defined pragmatism as a philosophical tradition and stated:

> All philosophical concepts should be tested via scientific experimentation, that a claim is true if and only if it is useful (relatedly: if a philosophical theory does not contribute directly to social progress, then it is not worth much), that experience consists in transacting with rather than representing nature. (Legg & Hookway, 2020, para. 1).

Creswell (2008) summarized the roots of pragmatism and characterized it simply as "what works" (p. 10). To find solutions to problems, one should, rather than focusing on methods, emphasize the research problem and use all approaches available to understand it. As a philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies (the current study was intended to utilize mixed methods), Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) conveyed the relevance of pragmatism for focusing attention on the research problem in social science

research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem. However, pragmatism did not seem committed to any one system of philosophy or reality (Creswell, 2008, p. 10). In designing a methodology, researchers were free to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best met their needs and purposes.

Using these and other viewpoints, I felt I had permission to colour outside the lines as a philosophical basis for the current study, and to implement the most pragmatic methodology to facilitate the research as it progressed. Creswell (2008) spoke of pragmatism, pragmatists, and critical contexts for social research (pp. 10-11). In terms of why quantitative and qualitative data need to be mixed in the study context, the original plan was to measure quantities of food, the ability of the current study to impact inventory at the Salvation Army food bank in Penticton, and the intent was to collect demographic data from food bank clients. These measures did not take place although an estimate of the food produced by this research was provided by the Salvation Army (shown in Chapter Four). The current study included semi-structured interviews, observations, focus groups, a video, and an online closing survey of participants at the end of Cycle 3. The pragmatic strategy still seemed relevant as a critical context for social research in the current study:

- Pragmatists do not see the world in absolute unity. In a similar way, researchers look to many approaches for collecting and analyzing data rather than subscribing to only one way.
- Truth is what works at the time. It is not based in a duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. Thus, investigators may use both quantitative and qualitative data when they work together to provide the best understanding of a research problem.

- Pragmatic researchers look to the *what* and *how* to conduct research based on the intended consequences. Researchers need to establish a purpose and a rationale for why quantitative and qualitative data need to be mixed in the study context.
- Pragmatists agreed that research always occurred in social, historical, political, and other contexts. Therefore, studies may include a postmodern turn, a theoretical lens reflective of social justice and political aims.
- Pragmatists believed in an external world independent of the mind as well as that lodged in the mind.
- For the researcher, pragmatism opened the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis. (Creswell, 2008, pp.10-11)

Participatory and Action Research

Glassman et al. (2013) saw action research as having its roots in an adult education movement influenced by the work of Eduard Lindeman, Kurt Lewin, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget, as well as Chris Argyris and Eric Trist (p. 272). Action research was said to focus more on democratic process and egalitarian decision-making rather than understanding problems through the eyes of participants. Yet action research did not mean approaching change as an individual endeavor, it recognized the web of human interaction "collectively working toward shared goals within a general community framework" (p. 272). The best way to facilitate change was through changing interactive patterns in a community, usually to become more democratic so as to inspire collective action (pp. 272-273). Action research attempted to break historical roles to develop individuals and new community processes, and effect social transformation (p. 273). Glassman et al. concluded "…the creativity of action researchers and the diversity of their

approaches can contribute greatly to the advancement of social sciences, making social sciences what they potentially are" (p. 285). They stated, a "second branch of action research, participatory action research, emerged about five years later guided by the sociological work of William Foote Whyte" (p. 272).

Glassman and Erdem (2014) did not believe participatory action research evolved from action research in the United States, however they saw strong ties to "the sociopolitical context of developing societies and their fight for liberation" as well as integration with feminist perspectives (p. 206). They identified several proponents of participatory action research, such as Paulo Freire, Budd Hall, Marja-Lisa Swantz, and William Foote Whyte, who pushed for democratic participation and civic engagement in order to resolve conflict between the majority and minority to maintain social order (citing Glassman et al., 2013). They also identified international actors such as Gandhi and Tagore (p. 219). The participatory action research strategy that emerged in the 1960's and 1970's, a "second genre" (p. 207), was revolutionary rather than reactionary in terms of its opposition to bureaucratic and imperial powers around the world. Hall (1985) added the element of reflection and stated "Research, learning, and knowledge production are often aspects of the same intellectual processes in the context of action" (Hall, 1985, p. 292, as cited in Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 210). Glassman & Erdem (2014) concluded that participatory action research was always evolving due to its cyclical and dynamic nature and implementation in global contexts (p. 219).

Ideally, diverse participants with unique experiences and capacities gathered to seek solutions to problems, which were then tested in practice (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 111). A core commitment was to generate social change and ease oppressive conditions by participating in enacting change along-side of those directly affected (Swords, 2019, p. 853). Through

reviewing the literature, it seemed clear: in North America action research related to poverty and hunger was used to identify issues that affected participants and generated social action or policy change. When participatory action research was used as an approach for research, social change or capacity-building, it appeared to be inherently pragmatic: an individual researcher or team of researchers and community members focused on a desired outcome. As described earlier, according to James et al. (2012), participatory and action research cycles were iterative in nature and included investigation → implementation → data collection and analysis → reflection and reflexivity following each cycle before beginning the next phase of the research and change effort (p. 16). The problem under investigation was considered central, with the relevant activities spiraling outward in an ongoing effort as knowledge increased, rather than going in a circle.

Adaptive Leadership

Ron Heifetz and Marty Linksy had a firm in Seattle, Washington, called Cambridge Leadership, which trained coaches and guides in adaptive leadership. Their literature on adaptive leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017) highlighted the issues around power and delineated the effectiveness (or not) of authoritarian power contrasted with adaptive leadership. In the latter structure, the leader worked with what they had and adapted ideas as they moved along. Anyone could lead from any position when change was necessary. There were ways and means for both formal and informal leadership to work together to create change (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive leadership broadened the framework from participatory action, with commitments to equality in power, to a stronger leadership position relating to creating change. Two key points emerged from this literature: the difficulty of managing a change

initiative and the need for cyclic introspection to generate self-knowledge when designing effective interventions (Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).

A Synthesis of the Literature

The overarching goal and intent of the current study was to facilitate better access to healthy food for food bank clients and to reduce food insecurity. During the literature review I reflected and considered how the ideas expressed overlapped:

Where Topical Met Personal

I re-conceptualized food banks within the larger frame of food insecurity very early in the process of outlining the research proposal. Food bank literature and the social network literature together illustrated how food banks operated within a larger social context. The expanded frame demonstrated that stakeholders included not only food bank clients, but academic institutions, other charity organizations, the agricultural sector, the media, and governments at municipal, provincial, national and international levels. Many groups and individuals had the ability to contribute within the social network in terms of community capacity-building, to build community spirit and to anchor and reinforce values in the spirit of civic communion. The participatory action research strategy could become a catalyst for collaboration in this context within the vision of the right to food, food security, food justice, and food sovereignty.

Where Personal Met Theoretical (PAR)

When I considered literature in the personal section of my conceptual framework, especially the relationship between social networks and capacity-building, I was encouraged by how social network theory created positive change. As mentioned, Sluzki (2010) found correlations between health and stable social networks and concluded that reliable and dynamic social networks played a critical role in individual health and an important role in the health of

the networks collectively through reaffirming value to one another ("Social Network Enhancement" section, para. 5). When I considered social networks along with a participatory action research approach in terms of capacity-building, it became clear that it would be pragmatic to identify stakeholders, structural and functional ties.

Where Topical Met Theoretical (Pragmatism)

As described earlier, Creswell (2008) characterized pragmatism simply as "what works" (p. 10). Rather than focusing on methods, one should emphasize the research problem and use all approaches available to fine solutions. This was a succinct approach to participatory action research. As an adaptive leader, I would adapt ideas as the study moved along. The realities were complicated, encompassing people with competing agendas. Participatory action research and adaptive leadership contributed frameworks for identifying progress (James et al., 2012). There were ways and means for both formal and informal leadership to work together to create change (Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).

Together, a higher-level view of food banks, food insecurity literature, theoretical literature on pragmatism, participatory action research, and adaptive leadership, it became clear that solutions would be obtained through an iterative process. Due to the diversity among the various players, to orchestrate change at any level required complex navigation across a variety of situations and issues to produce solutions. The food bank existed in an environment of food insecurity which existed within issues related to poverty. The larger context indicated work must be embedded at all societal levels, requiring significant multi-level organizational support.

Core Lessons Learned

Due to the complexity of the root causes of poverty and hunger, fundamentally addressing these issues in a sustainable fashion would require significant time, commitment, and

resources beyond the reach of a doctoral study. However, I felt I could make an impact. The core lessons that I took away from the literature review for community-based initiatives included, what I perceived as the need for:

- a commitment to an overarching vision,
- a plan of action,
- identifying and attracting like-minded individuals,
- reviewing results from actions taken with a critical eye,
- reflecting upon what actions were effective and what might have been done differently, and
- repeated cycles of inquiry, evaluation, reflection, and action.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

Synopsis

In Chapter Two, the literature upon which the research was based was summarized and synthesized. In Chapter Three, the study method, the appropriateness of the study approach and design, research instruments and processes, and the timeframe for the current study have been detailed, along with the specifics of the population and sample, ethics review, and plans for collecting the data and handling the resulting confidential information.

The current study occurred within three distinct cycles. The implementation of the first two cycles revealed commonly known practical challenges experienced during participatory action research, such as the dynamic nature of social networks (Rand et al., 2011), the need for funding, and administrative capacity for project oversight. Discussions in Chapter Three, therefore, illustrate planned vs. actual activities. Meaning, a mixed methods study was originally planned but revised study parameters were grounded in qualitative data (semi-structured interviews, observations, focus groups), with the addition of a closing survey at the end of Cycle 3. Critical theories and worldviews were explored and the concepts of advocacy, participation, and pragmatism were identified as relevant to the current study. Various strategies were identified to ensure credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the data and the data collection strategy, and how they were used to create meaning and authenticity in qualitative research was illustrated.

A Critical Theory Approach

In my review of the literature it appeared, by exploring phenomena, researchers typically sought to gain understanding and develop new knowledge. According to Stoecker (2013), researchers examined *what is* in order to explore *what could be* using the terminology of medical

diagnosis. Meaning, to diagnose *what is* going on in the community and prescribe *what could be* effective and facilitate change (p. 92). Although the original research question was embedded within a framework for social action and change, it seemed prudent to first examine critical theory, an "analytical critique comparing social reality and ideology, and to focus attention on the contradictions between them" (Dickson, 1997, p. 111). The purpose of critical theory was to address and reduce asymmetrical power relationships (p. 112) and to generate knowledge through the epistemological exploration of learning through dialogue engaging the participation of community members (p. 28).

Creswell (2008) suggested, while the philosophical ideas underpinning research remained largely hidden, it was important to identify the perspective, worldview, or paradigm from which researchers could approach a problem and their research question (p. 5). It was helpful to the current study to explore the underlying beliefs and assumptions behind theoretical approaches to participatory action research and, because of the change in strategy in Cycle 3, to action research. Participatory and action research strategies were compared and contrasted in this chapter.

Worldviews

> Paradigms are mental windows or lenses through which we view the world. They are composed of certain belief categories, principally our understanding of the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), and the philosophy of the research process (methodology) which includes the assumptions and values that serve as a rationale for research. (Dickson, 1997, p. 11)

The researcher in the current study sought to, first, deeply understand the foundations of the participatory action research approach, comparative and contrasting perspectives. Dickson (1997) differentiated between paradigms in three contexts: positivism, post-positivism and transformative (Table 1, p. 14). Dickson explored their associated purpose, ontological belief, epistemology, methodology, methods, knowledge produced, and the values reflected (p. 14) within those three contexts. The current study did not fit the positivist paradigm because the

methods were not intended to focus on quantitative research nor produce technical information related to predictable science. The transformative paradigm was not appropriate because the current study did not intend to deeply explore story narratives or operate on the stage of political power. However, insights were gained into praxis, "reflection-inquiry-reflection-action" (p. 14), wherein researcher-participants directed research design and were part of the reality being researched and the generation of findings. This facilitated the "empowerment of participants through process and outcomes" (p. 14). While the values reflected within the transformative paradigm were compelling (respect, equality, commitment, and connection) and somewhat characterized the relationships among participants in the current study, this was not a guiding factor and the knowledge produced, however personal, was a closer fit to post-positivism: interpretive and interactive. However, the purpose of post-positivism was an interpretive study, "understanding of patterns and meanings in lived experiences" (p. 14)0, and this did not fit the current research approach.

From Creswell's (2008) perspective, there were three worldviews from which researchers typically approached their inquiry: social construction, advocacy and participatory, and pragmatic (pp. 7-11). The current study was definitely approached from the perspective of advocacy and participation (p. 9) and from the perspective of pragmatism. Utilizing the advocacy and participatory approach, the current study was expected (by Creswell) to raise questions related to policy, empowerment, change, and collaboration (p. 6), which it did. In contrast, researchers from a post-positive world view were to be concerned with reductionism, theory verification, and empirical observation. The major tenets resonating for the current study were reflected in the pragmatic world view, including the need in constructivism to understand multiple meanings and the problem-centered focus of pragmatism and real-world practice (p. 6).

Therefore, as described herein, the current study sought to operate within advocacy, participatory, and pragmatic approaches.

Advocacy and Participation

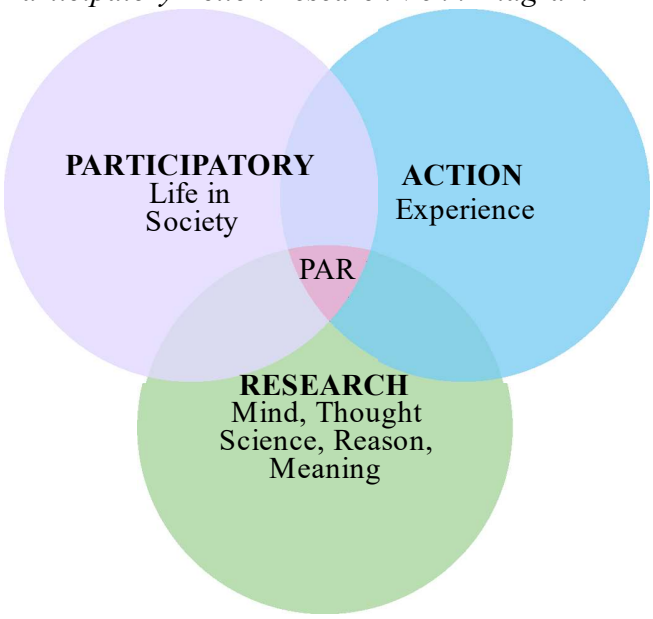
I chose to approach the current study from the perspective of advocacy and participation (Creswell, 2008) because the "advocacy/participatory worldview" was an approach that focused on action, empowerment, and collaboration; it was change-oriented, and was intertwined with a political agenda (p. 6). The advocacy and participation worldview contained an action agenda for reform which was well-aligned with participatory action research as an approach in several important contexts:

- the desire to create change and an inherent social justice component;
- to engage, involve and empower the people affected by the problem as collaborators and participants in the inquiry process as colleagues; and
- the iterative, recursive approach to planning and adjustment due to the nature of complicated and complex problems (p. 9).

A helpful way to conceptualize participatory action research, including the facet of advocacy, was to visualize it at the nexus of action (Figure 3) in terms of experimentation: research in terms of the generation of knowledge and collective participation in lived experiences in society (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013, p. 10). Chevalier and Buckles (2013) illustrated the concept, similar as shown in Figure 3, and defined participatory life in society to further include moral life, the world, communication and education (advocacy). Action and experience were then further defined to include sensations, emotions, practice, and the methods employed toward attaining research objectives. Participatory action research was aligned with "psycho-sociology" (p. 10).

Figure 3.

Participatory Action Research Venn Diagram



Note. Adapted and excerpted from *Participatory Action Research: Theory and Methods for Engaged Inquiry* (p. 10). Routledge. ©2013 J. Chevalier and D. Buckles.

Pragmatism

Mixed methods research was considered appropriate when "working primarily within the pragmatist paradigm and interested in both narrative and numeric data and their analyses" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, p.3). According to Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), in mixed methods research "the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study or program of inquiry" (p.4). The discussion on mixed methods was relevant to the proposed study. However, instead of identifying and tracking specific measures of progress, such as the flow of food delivered to the food bank as planned at the beginning of the current study, the researchers in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 proposed actions related to social network expansion, capacity-building, and sought opportunities for collaboration within the community. It was intended that, during Cycle 1-2, the team identify a collaborative opportunity to implement in Cycle 3 in order to

increase the flow of fresh food the food bank. However, due to changing priorities among the Salvation Army participants and within the Salvation Army management, partnerships with other organizations were neither realized nor developed in Cycle 2 beyond the initial exploratory phase. So, there was no project to implement in Cycle 3. I had felt a sense of failure initially, but retrospectively I thought about what Hall (2005) had stated as mentioned earlier, that "Doubt may be one of our most identifiable common denominators" and "As we know, intentions do not always produce desired results" (p. 16). In addition, Bell et al. (2004) had stated: that in participatory research, organizational participants and researchers "share control" (Participatory Action Research, para. 1) of the social process design. This meant, the researcher did not have complete control of the process or the ability of the process to facilitate change, even when change was supported or driven by employees as participants. Pragmatically, at the onset of COVID-19, I decided to take action on my own without sponsorship. As Bell et al. had stated, action research required "the most personal commitment and involvement" (Difference between Methods, para. 3) of the methods.

As described earlier, according to James et al. (2012), participatory and action research cycles were iterative in nature and reflection and reflexivity following each cycle before beginning the next phase of the research and change effort (p. 16). Throughout Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, as in Cycle 3, progress was evaluated using praxis (Dickson, 1997, p. 14), which related to reflection and reflexivity (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004; James et al., 2012; Nowell et al., 2017; Morgan & Nica, 2020). Thus, the current study embraced a qualitative methodology throughout, other than a small closing survey at the end of Cycle 3. Reflexivity meant to examine one's own beliefs, judgements and practices during research and how this may influence the process. The primary priority was to answer the research question in each Cycle of the current

study and use whatever type of data necessary to do so. In the current study, the research questions were:

- Cycle 1 and Cycle 2: Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?
- Cycle 3: Taking an active leadership role, to what extent could I create and empower a team of university students and an administrator to catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

The field research utilized a pragmatic, participatory, advocacy approach to answer the research questions, create new social networks, improve social capital and the value of existing social networks, discover collaborative opportunities, and move the community towards the development of sustainable policies regarding food security for food bank clients in Penticton. Building on concepts from the work of Chevalier and Buckles (2013), Clandinin (2006), Clandinin and Connelly (2004), Clandinin et al. (2007), Creswell (2008), Fetterman and Wandersman (2007), Procter (2004, 2006), and Stoecker (2013), a pragmatic approach was developed and put into action as previously iterated: investigation and planning → action and implementation → collection and analysis of data → followed by reflective and reflexive analysis experientially (James et al., 2012).

Appropriateness of Approach and Design

Eriksson (2011) discussed mobilizing social capital and concluded there was no "cookbook" (Abstract) model for success. Communities must examine models and theories that

may be useful in their own environments to support and sustain health promotion initiatives. This was a welcome insight to recall as the current study progressed, and supported the participatory and action research approaches. Participatory action research was typified by a number of central tenets and values. These tenets and values illustrated that participatory action research was problem focused (usually local), flexible, emancipatory, democratic, empowering, conscientizing, transactionally involves and recognized participants as experts and partners in research design, as well as agents of change.

Theoretical Perspective: Comparing Participatory and Action Research

Participatory and action research were compared both as appropriate designs for the current study and to differentiate between them as the nature of the current study changed between Cycle 1-2 and Cycle 3. Participatory and action research were not well differentiated as models in the literature reviewed, however, the current study was able to be defined as a participatory action research approach in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 (Glassman & Erdem, 2014), and an interventionist-oriented action research approach (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 40) in Cycle 3. The original research goal, improving food security, remained the same. A primary difference between participatory and action research seemed to be: during participatory action research community members engaged as researchers to develop strategies and create change.

Participatory action research viewed experiences from the perspective of "a shared process of discovery" (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 207). This was clearly true of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. In Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 a participatory team included organizational members and the researcher, all focused on developing collaborative opportunities and cooperation within the community as planned. In Cycle 3, I took a pragmatic, direct, action-oriented approach to launch and lead an intervention to produce healthy, fresh food for the Penticton food bank myself.

Bell et al. (2004) compared similarities and differences between three approaches: action research, participative research, and participatory action research. According to Bell et al., participative research was intended to create actionable "local theory" (Participative Research, para. 1) and was initiated by the organization of interest. All members of the organization could participate in a self-organized group process. This did not describe the current study at any point.

The purpose of action research was described as a means to improve "the capacity and subsequent practices of the researcher rather than to produce theoretical knowledge" (Elliott, 1991, as cited in Bell et al., 2004, Action Research, para. 1). In action research, the researcher was a co-learner (perhaps in concert with a team of colleagues) and influenced the awareness of the problem, drawing information from "clients" (para. 2), identifying gaps in understanding, jointly analyzing and specifying actions to take, then reflecting on the results before proposing new activities. The researcher led the group but did not necessarily engage in the project implementation (Boga, 2004, as cited in Bell et al., 2004, Action Research, para. 2). However, the researcher and clients engaged in a continuing process of reflection (para. 3), grounding the "resulting practical wisdom" in real-world experience. Collaborative reflection was considered imperative for both the researcher as an individual and in concert with the clients. (The term "clients" was not defined.) This did not precisely describe the activities undertaken during the current study as effectively as some other descriptions explored in this section of the dissertation. For example, the researcher not only led the group, but participated in activities. Intentional reflective activities were undertaken consistently by the researcher but intentional collaborative reflection with the research team was not undertaken as a specific process during all phases of the current study.

Bell et al. (2004) stated participatory action research combined "the goals of improved capacity and practice of researchers, as in AR, and of achieving practical objectives and changing social reality, as in PR, through group participation" (Participatory Action Research, para. 1). Although it was not true (in the current study) that the organization of interest initiated the method, this otherwise described the entire research process throughout the current study. Another exception: during Cycle 3, it was not true that "those affected by a problem participate in planning, carrying out, analyzing and applying the results of the research" (para. 1). In participatory action research, as in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, the approach was "jointly designed through discussions between professional researchers and active participation by some members of the organization" (para. 2). Although "PAR acknowledges that people affected by a problem are in the best position to understand and suggest solutions" (para. 2), food bank clients were not included in the current study. Cycle 3 was a researcher-led approach as described in action research. This clarified significant differences between the participatory and action research.

Bell et al. (2004) stated action research required the "most personal commitment and involvement" of the three methods (Differences between Methods, para. 3). It was a critical difference that, in participatory research, organizational participants and researchers shared control (Participatory Action Research, para. 1) of the social process design (as in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the current study), while action research was led and controlled by the researcher, as in Cycle 3. During Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, the researcher in the current study engaged with a participatory team of individuals working within the Salvation Army food bank in a shared process of discovery. In Cycle 3, the work was done on behalf of the food bank but without the direct engagement of organizational participants. Further definition was offered by Bell et al.

(2004) in their Appendix I (Conclusion section), partly summarized here in Table 4 (italicized statements did not occur in the current study).

Table 4.

Participatory and Action Research Comparison

Participatory Action Research (Cycles 1-2)	Action Research (Cycle 3)
Participants (and researcher) achieve learning within larger group	Researcher achieves learning, and larger group may also learn
Actions taken through process – action is incorporated into research itself	The researcher facilitates the process, and collaborates with clients to create or actualize change. *Researcher typically does not engage in change actions.*
Researcher works with "participants"	Researcher collaborates with "clients"
Participant issues, actions and learning highlighted	Researcher *and clients* engage in self-reflection
Wholistic	Subjective
Emergent property: creativity	Emergent property: improved capacity and wisdom

Note. Adapted and excerpted from "Comparative Similarities and Differences between Action Research, Participative Research, and Participatory Action Research". *Critical Inquiry.* (https://arlecchino.org/ildottore/mwsd/group2final-comparison.html) ©2004 J. Bell, G. Cheney, C. Hoots, E. Kohrman, J. Schubert, L. Stidham, S. Traynor.

Theoretical Perspective: History, Application, Distinctions between PAR and AR

This section of the chapter describes the historic roots and central values and tenets of participatory and action research.

History Through the 1970's. Glassman and colleagues wrote about participatory action research (Glassman & Erdem, 2014) and action research (Glassman et al., 2013) approximately a year apart for the *Adult Education Quarterly* journal. They traced the development of action research over about 50 years by Lindeman, Lewin, Dewey, and Piaget (Glassman et al. 2013, p. 272), and felt participatory action research was a bit more difficult to trace, having emerged about five years later guided by the sociological work of Whyte, Argyris, and Trist. Glassman and Erdem (2014) agreed that participatory action research developed throughout the social movements and sociopolitical context of the 20th century (p. 206), including the movements

inspired by Gandhi, for example, who "committed himself to the full lived experience of the populations he was attempting to change" (p. 210).

Hall (2005) stated participatory research was a term "first articulated in Tanzania in the early 1970's to describe a variety of community-based approaches to the creation of knowledge" (p. 5). Hall was a Research Officer involved in evaluation and research activities, including large scale education studies, at the Institute of Adult Education at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania from 1970-1974 (p. 6). Hall compiled a special issue of the journal *Convergence* based upon a theme he described as "participatory research" (p. 8); the journal sold out to a world-wide audience for the first time in its' history (p. 9).

Budd Hall was mentioned specifically by Glassman and Erdem (2014), along with Paulo Freire, with whom Hall worked in 1971 (Hall, 2005, p. 7), as being influential to the evolution of participatory research (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 208). Hall was involved in the developing the earliest participatory research entities, such as the International Participatory Research Network founded in 1976 under the umbrella of the International Council for Adult Education, where he held leadership roles in both institutions beginning in 1977. When he wrote *In from the Cold?* in 2005, Hall had also been working with the University of Victoria in British Columbia since 2001 (Hall, 2005, p. 6), and I was advised that Hall was affiliated with a network of practitioners at the University of Toronto. I am personally grateful to Dr. Budd Hall, presently Professor Emeritus with the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, for agreeing to act as external examiner for the current study and help to guide my work.

What differentiated both participatory and action research from traditional or scientific research, according to Glassman and Erdem (2014), was that democratization facilitated understanding of the subjectivity of relationships. In terms of democratization, Hall (2005)

described an early research network in the late 1970's which consisted of several nodes or networking groups in various parts of the world but no single group was in charge of community development, participatory research action, or reflection activities (p. 12). The position of coordinator was expected to rotate among groups wherever the majority of the work was taking place. Thus, the research groups appeared to be democratizing their own relationships even before participating in community engagement. "As Hall (1992) suggests, this is a revolutionary component of participatory research as opposed to conventional academic research, which portrays researchers as experts with knowledge and ultimate problem solvers through their objective research tools" (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 209).

History Through the 1980's-2010's. According to Hall (2005), participatory research grew in the 1980's and 1990's due to expanding networks of non-governmental organizations, and as the "research approach of choice" in social movements interventions in the last decades of the 20th Century (p. 5). In the context of social movements, Hall referenced Patricia Maguire's 1987 book, *Doing Participatory Research: A Feminist Approach*, which identified how the broad categories for community action (the marginalized, exploited, or the poor) inadvertently concealed issues of gender, race, and power. In particular, Hall (2005) wrote that Maguire's 1987 work advanced collective understanding of how "many of us, myself included, contributed to the silencing of women's perspectives through our own language and experiences" (p. 16), and the same could be said about race (p. 17). Hall also spoke of "co-constructing knowledge with the 'rest of nature'" (p. 21), a need to recognize the way our species supports a way of life that makes us sad, feeling alone, frightened or marginalized, as well as the damage our species has done and is doing to our planet. He advocated that participatory research was as "proposal for action" (p. 21) to construct knowledge from places outside the walls of power and dominance.

Hall asked whether nature could be a fully privileged "participant in the creation of new forms of knowledge that will draw our rogue species closer to our more silent partners with whom we share this planet" (p. 21). Hall took all of these ideas to the next level by exploring anti-racist, feminist and environmental adult education, "transforming human-Earth relations", in his 2013 collaboration *The Nature of Transformation.* Researchers must always work from a perspective that critiques epistemological assumptions, and Hall seemed a strong advocate for this as well as for actions in support of vulnerable populations planet-wide.

In North America, the movement toward community-based participatory and action research was strengthened during the 1980's and 1990's by a number of additional key moments:

- In 1979, the Service aux collectivités (SAC) of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) was established to address concerns brought by communities and build capacity for community-university partnerships (Hall et al., 2015, p. 104).
- The Centre of Community Based Research was formed in Canada in 1982 (p. 102).
- In 1996, Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation, created some of the early conceptual foundations for university-community engagement, an application of participatory research viewed as a mutually beneficial exchange (Hall, 2009, pp. 15-16). At the same time, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples of 1996 in Canada created a research division mandated to follow the principles of Indigenous participatory research in community-based research (Hall et al., 2015). As well, in 1996, the Centre for Community Based Research spread beyond its original focus on disability issues, and many university students became involved through their practicum.

- In 1998, the Community University Research Alliance grant was created in Canada and its wide success led to institutionalizing similar principles across funding programs, which was also available to international partnerships (Hall et al., 2015, p. 99).
- Then, in the United States, "In 1999, the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities (Kellogg Commission, 1999) proposed a shift from the terms *research*, *teaching* and *service* to the use of the words: *discovery*, *learning* and *engagement*" (Hall, 2009, p. 16).
- In 2003, the University of Saskatchewan called together the Community University Research Alliance grant recipients for the first CUExpo (Hall et al., 2015, p. 101). The CUExpo was so successful that subsequent gatherings were held every three years in 2005, 2008, 2011, and then every other year in 2013, 2015, and 2017. The (renamed) C^2UExpo for 2020 was cancelled, of course, due to COVID-19, but the conference is accepting proposals for 2022.
- In 2005, the Centre for Community Based Research created an alliance on mental health and cultural diversity, a five-year plan with over 40 partners (Hall et al., 2015, p. 103).
- In 2006, the University of Victoria established an Office of Community Based Research (p. 277), and Hall was named its Director in 2007 (p. 105).

Hall et al. (2015) explored academic research in terms of its structures for supporting community-based research and service learning with the purpose of serving the public good through transforming the health and well-being of communities. Public (tax) funding was unlikely to be available for grass-roots efforts at community transformation. In Canada, Hall

(2009) felt that higher education institutions, which existed (and still do) in tens of thousands of communities, should utilize their resources, "students, academic staff, facilities, research funding, knowledge, skills, and capacities to facilitate learning" as the "largest accessible" and underutilized resource for community change and sustainability (p. 13). However, according to Hall et al. (2015), Canada is a Federation of provinces and territories without a federal ministry of education or higher education. Funding comes from provincial governments. The authors point to Quebec as a leader in institutionalizing community-based research, leading to a favorable policy climate nationwide. In 2013-2014 the Association of Universities and colleges in Canada initiated a working group on community engagement which challenged the university and community.

> We are calling for a cultural shift in how we address community needs, how we prepare for the unexpected and how we pursue opportunities. Collaborations and partnerships must be standard operating procedure from the earliest stages of new ideas and initiatives for building community resiliency and prosperity. (Davidson & Bird, 2013, as cited in Hall et al., 2015, p. 99)

The 2015 book, *Strengthening Community-University Partnerships*, edited by Hall, Tandon, and Tremblay, also explored global trends and case studies around the world in 12 countries. In Canada, they said, the foundational years of community-based research were prior to 1998; the institutionalization period followed through 2012; and Canada was currently experiencing a "national engagement period" (p. 95). Thus, community-based research appeared to predate the participatory research approach. In May of 2012, "the Honourable David Johnson, Governor General of Canada, delivered the opening keynote address to the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences on the democratization of knowledge" (p. 95), the key concept that predicated the current period of national engagement. In 2013, David Johnson spoke at the CUexpo in Newfoundland:

> When it comes to bringing about positive change, this is where universities and communities can work together to great effect. Communities know what the needs are, and post-secondary institutions know the methods and possess the experience and the expertise to help determine how to go about meeting those needs—a wonderful combination of the what and the why. (Johnson, 2013, as cited in Hall et al., 2015, p. 99)

Over the years, four national networks were created to support community-based research in Canada, including those that engaged York University, the University of Victoria, Guelph University, and Carleton University. Community Based Research Canada had the broadest membership in 2015 (Hall et al., 2015, p. 100).

Yet, according to Glassman and Erdem (2014), Hall suggested that writing about participatory research was difficult because it was based on action at least as much as reflection and its dynamism was hard to capture in a static report (p. 210). Importantly, according to Glassman and Erdem (2014), participatory research tasks began "with some type of action, but in terms of "praxis of the immediate" (Lather, 1986), it must reach beyond abstract ideas about what you (must) do to improve your community and/or what you do to produce material goods" (as cited in Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 212).

The next two sections of this dissertation outline distinctions between participatory and action research. While both involved cyclical reflection and action steps (i.e., planning, reflecting and acting based on ongoing dialogue), participatory action research was distinguished by a level of organizational *participation*. In fact, participatory action combined many facets of action research. A shift in the research approach, from participatory to action research over the three stages of the current study, was explained in part by the researcher not having "... tight control or an agenda in terms of research topic or design, but [a need] to be in a situation where the problem is relevant and important to participants, and uses credible methods" (Bell et al., 2004,

Participatory Action Research section). Next, participatory and action research were explored as they might apply specifically to the current study.

PAR/AR Commonalities in Application to the Current Study. Hall (2005) stated that he "personally" used both participatory and action research terms "interchangeably" (p. 11). Glassman et al. (2013) described both participatory and action research as beginning with the problems of an organization, developing an action design, and then focusing on community members as agents of change. This was the conceptual process for the current study and these goals aligned well with the concepts of praxis (Dickson, 1997), reflection and reflexivity (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004; James et al., 2012; Nowell et al., 2017; Morgan & Nica, 2020), and Creswell's (2008) perspective on advocacy, participatory, and pragmatic worldviews.

The Penticton Salvation Army food bank could not provide sufficient quantities or quality of food for its clients. The current study was proposed to determine whether participatory action research could be utilized to facilitate improvement by grass-roots engagement of organizational and community members as participants in the study and as agents of change, to raise consciousness and initiate action. Glassman et al. (2013) cited Lippitt and Radke (1946) as saying change was "a spontaneous, voluntary acceptance of new values and behavioral patterns" (p. 172, as cited in Glassman et al., 2013, p. 275). Glassman et al. also described how participatory and action research could lead to a more "cohesive, sustainable" community (p. 285) and changes in organizational patterns of operation. This was a clear objective of the current study and the organizational context was embedded in the work undertaken during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2.

The attributes of participatory and action research included their cyclic, dynamic nature. "Contrary to the goal of traditional research as hypothesis testing" (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p.

219), participatory action research solved problems “with the community” (p. 219). This was foundational to the design of the current study. As became clear throughout the process of the current study, there was “no certain end point” (p. 215) to the study, as action and reflection lead to further action. In participatory and action research, completing the analysis of data was not considered the end of the research, but the point at which the researcher returned to the scene in order to redefine and revaluate relationships (p. 210). In the current study, this was illustrated not only by the movement from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 to Cycle 3, but in the strategic planning based on reflection between each cycle, particularly between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 and in terms planning for Cycle 4 at the end of the current study.

There were additional commonalities between the two strategies. For example, with regard to action research (AR), “rather than approaching change as an individual endeavor, AR recognizes the importance of recognizing groups as a web or field of human interactions collectively working toward shared goals within a general community framework” (Glassman et al., 2013, p. 272). This seemed true of participatory action research, too. Early in the history of action research, there was a perceived objective to "understand, examine and challenge the dynamics” among social groups (Lippitt & Radke, 1946, p. 167, as cited in Glassman et al., 2013, p 275). This later translated into an emphasis on “listening, seeking, and using feedback from each other as peers as member-leader relations” (p. 277). Action research suggested “the best way to change goal-driven activity is by changing community interactional patterns” towards “more democratic decision-making processes” (pp. 272-273). This enabled the development of new trajectories and action agendas for collaborative action (p. 273). These action research concepts seemed specifically aligned with participatory action research as well.

PAR/AR Contrasts in Application to the Current Study. Contrasts were more evident when considering the following statements with regard to participatory action research:

> The researchers work with members of the community to understand what occurs in the network of human relationships that either moves it toward or away from desired goals. Using this information, the community members develop a new and better realized plan of action. (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 214)

I was of the impression participatory strategies took an incremental and broad approach to facilitating change as compared to action research, such as expanding social networks and capacity-building within an organization, which was the strategy in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. In participatory action research, it appeared that the study design and implementation were the focus of a team effort, including the researcher and organizational participants. However, Bhattacherjee (2012) stated that action research took an interventionist and direct approach (p. 40) to challenge community dynamics or to implement change, such as was done in Cycle 3. According to Bell et al. (2004), action research required the researcher to take a leadership role and control of the intervention strategy and implementation, while participatory action included members of the organization or community in decision-making.

In fact, Bhattacherjee (2012) seemed to advocate for action research as an interpretive method (p. 35), stating complex social phenomena were "best understood by introducing interventions" (p. 40) then observing their effects as a consultant or member of an organization (p. 40) or another environment. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), as effects were observed, the researcher was expected to undertake problem-solving and generate insight while simultaneously learning from the action about the target problem and the efficacy of the intervention. This definitely represented the process undertaken in Cycle 3 of the current study. The learning taken from Cycle 3, the CoVic Garden Box Project, was intended to be utilized for similar engagements going forward.

Bhattacherjee (2012) also suggested that interpretive studies such as action research (p. 35) viewed the researcher as an instrument (p. 106) embedded within the social context as an observer, earning trust with participants. “Further, their personal insights, knowledge, and experiences of the social context are critical” (p. 106) to both extracting accurate information and to an accurate interpretation of a phenomenon over time. The current study was never intended to be longitudinal exploration of phenomena. The goal was to effect change in the community. The current study was a learning engagement. In that context, retrospectively, the Cycle 3 intervention aligned with these objectives.

As discussed during my investigation into social networks in the literature, I saw the current study as an intervention seeking a health-related outcome and concentrated on the literature in this context in order to narrow the inquiry. My intent was to focus on how social network analysis could be employed in health promotion and related social change interventions in society. Because relationships were dynamic rather than stable, they afforded the opportunity for intervention. However, as described by Bell et al. (2004) and Bhattacherjee (2012), Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 were really not interventions. As a consequence of the dynamic nature of participatory team engagement and those impacts during the current study in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, the approach was changed for Cycle 3 to action research, which was a more intervention-oriented strategy (p. 40) with myself in the role of the adaptive leader. Cycle 3 was a researcher-led approach as described in action research. This change facilitated an even more pragmatic approach and substantial progress towards study objectives of providing healthy food to food bank clients.

PAR/AR: Primary Distinctions, Reflection. A primary difference between participatory and action research seemed to be the participation or lack of participation of community

members in the research development and decision-making processes. Another difference seemed to be the collaborative approach to change as compared to an interventionist approach to change. A third difference between action research and participatory research was, in participatory research there was an emphasis on "at least as much" reflection as action (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 210), in addition to learning and knowledge production (p. 210), and the act of engaging, exercising, and practicing ideas, i.e., praxis (p. 212).

However, the current study involved reflective exercises throughout, even though Cycle 3 was action-oriented. Because the process of reflection was so informative during the participatory cycles and considered foundational to the research approach overall, it was continued as a learning strategy in Cycle 3. Participatory and action research in the context of the current study were aligned with the strategies proposed by Glassman and Erdem (2014), James et al. (2012), and Stoecker (2013):

- Glassman and Erdem (2014) suggested "Action → Research → Reflection → Action" (p. 214): self-reflection led to increasing self-awareness, which had the potential to influence individual actions.
- James et al. (2012) suggested investigation into the issues → planning and implementation → data collection and analysis → reflection and reflexivity following each cycle before beginning the next phase of the research and the change effort (p. 16).
- Stoecker's (2013) medical model (p. 3): diagnose → prescribe → implement → evaluate outcomes, then → diagnose newly emergent issues and continue the cycle to facilitate community change.

In the current study, the researcher intentionally undertook a significant level of reflection and reflexivity, which was defined as an evaluation of the experience and perspective of the researcher (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004; James et al., 2012), the researchers' preconceptions (Morgan & Nica, 2020), study logistics, rationales, values, interests, and insights into self (Nowell et al., 2017). By reflecting not only on the results of the study but upon the researchers' experience and perspective, the action researcher may grow throughout the research process.

According to Bell et al. (2004) collaborative reflection was expected during participatory action research, involving the researcher and clients (Conclusion section, Appendix I). Clearly there were collaborative self-reflective processes amongst team members during all three Cycles of the current study, but a reflective team strategy with client engagement was not specifically undertaken.

Practical Perspective: Participatory and Action Research

As described earlier, participatory action research was used to create systems and policy level changes for vulnerable populations around the world (Dickens & Watkins, 1999; Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007; Stoecker, 2013). To encompass health, community building, social change, and social justice, participatory action research appeared to be the most appropriate research approach for the current study (James et al., 2012). It was suggested as the most appropriate approach for both research and community action when there were multiple perspectives within a social problem and when social justice and sustainable change were desired outcomes (Stoecker, 2013). A systematic, participatory approach to inquiry enabled participants to extend their understanding of problems or issues and to formulate actions directed towards their resolution. It is worth noting that the researcher in the current study had been a long-time

resident of the community being studied with significant previous local involvement in supporting the health and well-being of the community in terms of food security. There were assumptions:

- there would be a group of people planning, taking action, and evaluating the outcomes of those actions;
- the purpose of the actions would be an agreed upon social improvement; and
- participatory action research evolved through iterative implementation cycles which included exploring the problem, investigation into its causes, planning, execution, and reflection on actions taken (James et al., 2012; Stoecker, 2013; Glassman & Erdem 2014).

These assumptions were presented earlier by Hall (2005), who identified a list of seven original defining statements for participatory research from the international perspective, summarized here. Participatory research:

1. involves a range of vulnerable groups of people;
2. involves the full and active participation of the community in the entire research process;
3. involves a problem defined, analyzed and solved by the community;
4. involves an ultimate goal of improving the lives of people in the community;
5. is a research process that generates awareness of local resources and mobilizes them for self-reliant development;
6. is a research process that facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality; and

7. involves a researcher as a committed participant and learner, "a militant rather than a detached observer" (Hall, 1978, p. 5, as cited in Hall, 2005, p. 12)

As stated earlier, participatory action research in the context of the current study was aligned with the strategies proposed by Glassman and Erdem (2014), James et al. (2012), and Stoecker's (2013) medical model. These models were selected to illustrate the research process in the current study because it was experiential and a simpler approach to data collection and analysis would not yield data as rich as these constructs illustrated. In retrospect, Stoecker's model was more specific to the current study because of the need, identified by the participatory team in Cycle 1, to diagnose the environment within which the problem existed prior to prescribing any action. Lived experiences provided both practical outcomes and ideas for further development. In this case, reflection included not only the actions of the team, but an evaluation of the experience and perceptions of the researcher, i.e., reflexivity (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004; James et al., 2012, Nowell et al, 2017; Morgan & Nica, 2020). In this context, I endeavored to ask myself what I had to do with generating the results of the study as the study progressed.

Stoecker's (2013) model for a project-based approach to community change was then integrated with other practical concepts from the literature. For example, elements of community development identified by Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) included identifying assets, defining what was missing in terms of social capital, and expanding social networks. The authors suggested two paths towards solutions, either focusing on community needs and problems, or discovering community assets and capacities, which they recommended. Kretzmann and McKnight felt the needs-based strategy could only "guarantee survival and never lead to serious

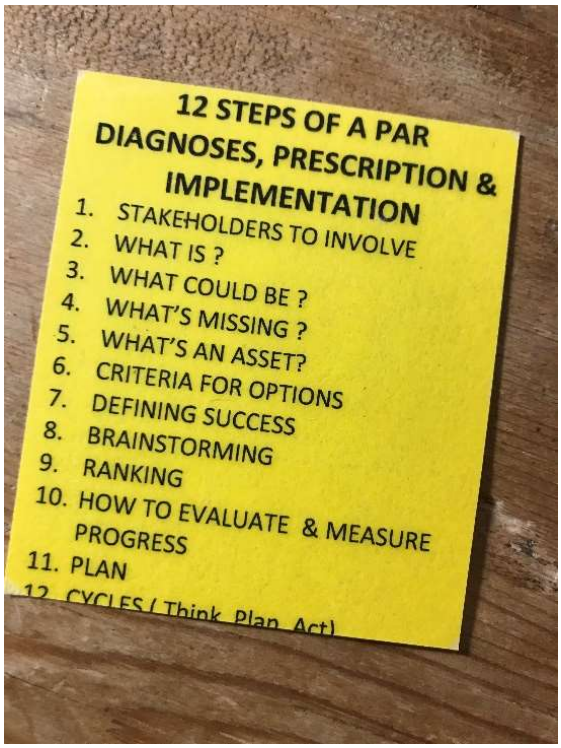
change or community development" (p. 24). In terms of the current study, this meant it was important to:

- work within the framework and practice of assets-based community development, making a clear commitment to investigating existing capacities and assets within the community of Penticton (as was done in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2); and
- build upon existing networks and social capital, e.g., the Salvation Army and other contacts and connections identified during the study (across all three Cycles), positioning the current study within the context of the community and an overarching coalition for change.

I integrated these concepts early in the design of the current study. To focus on the cyclic nature of participatory action research, I designed a yellow card (Figure 4) to help me focus on key questions during my engagement with community and organizational stakeholders.

Figure 4.

12 Steps of a PAR Diagnosis, Prescription & Implementation



The reflective process was one piece of my strategy that never changed throughout the study; reflection and reflexivity anchored my process. I always asked:

What worked?

What did not work?

What might I do differently if I could go back?

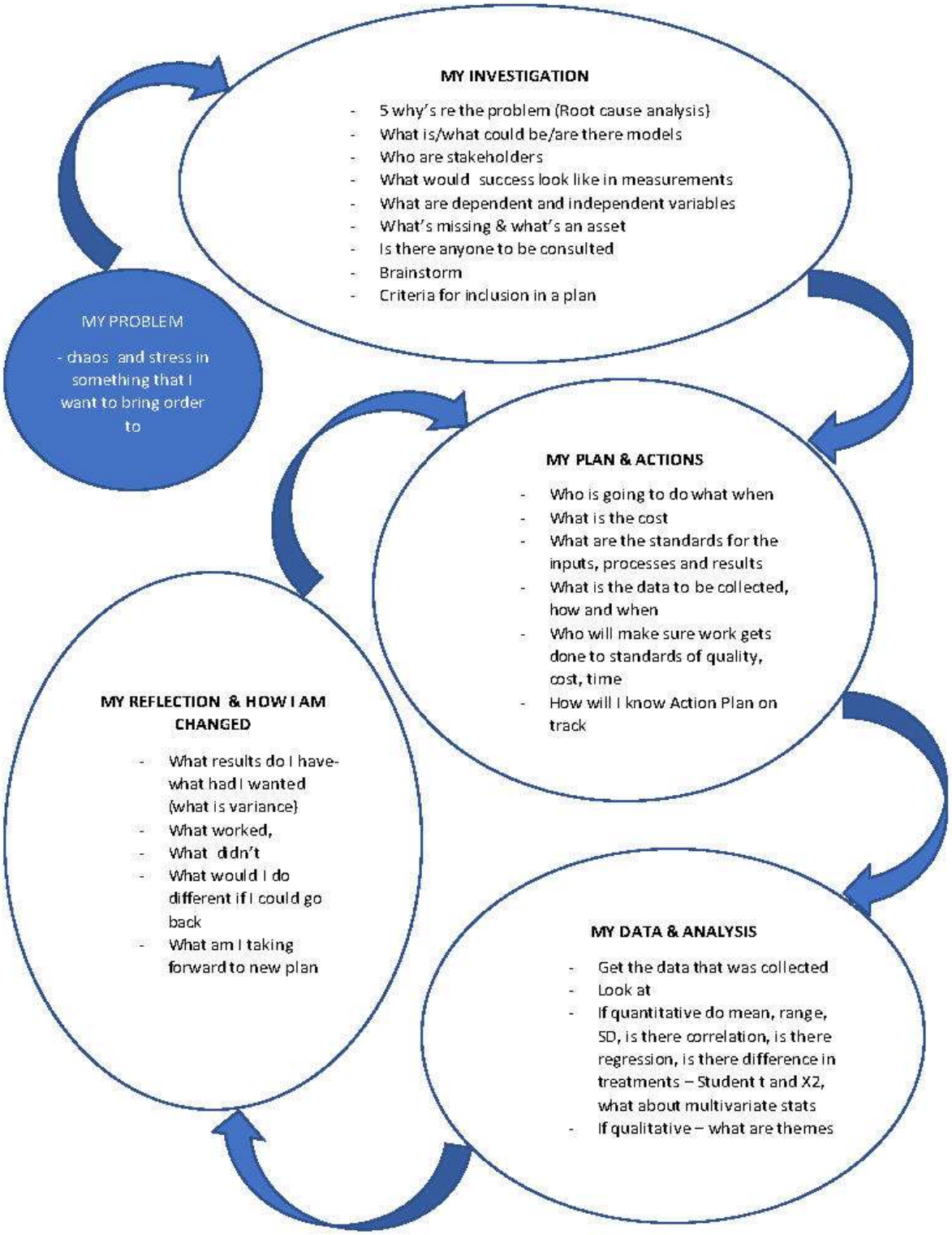
What are my next steps?

These questions are answered in the context of each of the three Cycles of the current study as described herein. At the end of each Cycle, the process returned to the investigational step, going forward and further to implement food security objectives in the community of Penticton.

In addition, I developed a graphical overview of the project for my own use (Figure 5) to summarize how I foresaw the study being implemented. In the dark circle (upper left) I illustrated the initial sense of chaos and stress I felt (my problem) and the recognition that I wanted a better sense of control as the study began. This was my personal outlook related to managing the research rather than the research problem itself, thus I began a process of deep reflection prior to beginning the current study. In Figure 5, I included key questions related to the process of investigation that I felt would define initial plans for action, gathering and analyzing data, and questions to use in the process of personal reflection and reflexion. Although the graphical project overview in Figure 5 was not intended to be all inclusive, this was a starting point as an overview of the project and helped to anchor my vision of my responsibilities (in terms of project management) as the research began.

Figure 5.

Graphical Project Overview



Practical Perspective: Qualitative vs. Mixed Methods

The current study intended to use a fully integrated mixed methods approach to employing participatory action research (Ivankova, 2014). Both quantitative and qualitative data were to be collected throughout the 16-week research time frame. Ivankova (2014) and Johnson (2017) described how mixed methods design was useful in a participatory action research approach and how examining data from qualitative and quantitative perspectives could provide insights that neither method could provide alone. I expected to be able to obtain a more complete understanding of the phenomena surrounding food bank activities by collecting and analyzing quantitative data (foodbank and community action statistics) as well as qualitative data collection methods from the community during participatory action cycles (semi-structured interviews, observations, focus groups). In addition, I intended to examine policies from other jurisdictions for relevance to the Penticton study, based on Madsen's (2014) work, using mental maps to help organizations create change, i.e., imagining the big picture possibilities.

Unfortunately, the ideas that emerged from the participatory team Focus Groups during Cycle 1, which included six participants from the Salvation Army, did not involve taking the very specific measurements initially planned (quantitative research objectives) for improving the quality and quantity of food at the food bank. During Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, we measured neither existing nor projected nor realized outcomes related to food quantity, quality, social structures, or policies, nor the sustainability of any new practices. We did not identify a specific innovative project for implementation from those introduced during the first Focus Group meeting in Cycle 1. Rather, it was determined that social networks and capacity for collaboration within the community would be of greater benefit to the Salvation Army food bank. Thereafter, perhaps a collaborative project could be identified and implemented in Cycle 3. However, the third cycle

did not occur in this context, i.e., the Salvation Army changed priorities and their participation in the study was withdrawn.

The research took an unintended direction and the mixed methods study did not take place as planned. The original plan to collect quantitative data from food donations was not implemented due to strategic emphasis placed on collaboration by the participatory team in Cycle 1. The data collected during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 was qualitative (including recorded and transcribed interviews, focus groups, and written notes).

Following my implementation of Cycle 3 as an intervention-oriented action research process, it appeared that there was an impact in the community of Penticton in terms of sustainability and improved policies (as described herein), and the realization of those outcomes could be tested in Cycle 4 after the end of the current study. The data collected during Cycle 3 included interviews, focus groups, and written notes, as well as a closing survey at the end of Cycle 3.

Academic Timeline

Although a 16-week study was planned, the actual study had an extended academic timeline due to circumstances beyond the researcher's control. The proposal for the current study was approved in April of 2017 with ethics approval granted May 16, 2017. The original timeline for completion of the field research was anticipated to be about 16 weeks. However, the core research team determined that we needed to investigate local assets rather than implementing a project or best practices utilized elsewhere. This rendered the timeline for the current study unknowable. Cycle 1, the first part of the investigative process, ended late in 2017. Cycle 2 began immediately thereafter and ended late in 2019. Cycle 3 began in spring of 2020 and the

study formally ended in October 2020. An overview of the Cycle 1-3 timeline may be helpful to the reader (Table 5).

Table 5.

Academic Timeline for the Current Study

Dates	Events
April 2017	Study approved (H15-02517)
May 2017	BREB Ethics approval (H15-02517)
May - October 2017	Cycle 1
Fall 2017	Committee supervisor on leave
November 2017 – February 2019	Cycle 2
January 2018	Ethics approval for study amendments (H15-02517-001)
April 2018	Salvation Army no longer participating
May 2018	Ethics approval (H15-02517-003)
September 2018	Ethics approval for study amendments (H15-02517-A004)
September 2018 – February 2020	grants and supervising agency sought
April 2019	Ethics approval (H15-02517-005)
September 2019	Committee supervisor leave
April 2020	Ethics approval, annual renewal with revised objectives (H15-02517-A006)
May - October 2020	Cycle 3
August 2020	Ethics approval for study amendments, paid students (H15-02517-A008)

The study progressed through Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 with all or most of the core research team, but did not progress further into Cycle 3 as originally planned due to changes with regard to both team membership and the Salvation Army partnership in late 2017 and early 2018. The dynamic nature of the participatory action research study was clearly defined by changing conditions throughout the current study. Dr. Budd Hall (2005) stated “As we know, intentions do not always produce desired results” (p. 18). Bell et al. (2004) had stated that in participatory research, organizational participants and researchers “share control” (Participatory Action Research, para. 1) of the social process design. This meant, it might be expected that the organizational presence and participation could supersede the ability of a researcher to facilitate change. A variety of events illustrated the influence of organizations and their actors on participatory and action research in the context of the current study, including permanent

departures by the Salvation Army team, temporary LOA's by committee members at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan), and emergency family leave that I needed during the current study:

1. In the fall of 2017, Salvation Army Participant #1 went back to school and Participant #4 traveled south before winter.
2. Participant #2, the Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army), advised the last day of engagement would be October 31, 2017. However, Participant #2 remained in the area and participated in the Cycle 2 focus groups through April 2018.
3. Between November 2017 and April 2018, the Salvation Army made major changes to their management structure in order to focus on their spiritual mission as a renewed objective, withdrawing from the study.
4. Participant #3 moved away in March of 2018.
5. The last two members of the core research team, Participant #5 and #6, moved away in May of 2018.
6. In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was both disruptive and inspirational. Cycle 3 of the current study launched in May of 2020 with the hiring of a Past Garden Coordinator through July of that year.
7. Disruptions related to the government work-study tuition rebate programs in June/July of 2020 (as discussed herein) required hiring university students directly, which required ethics approval that was granted in August 2020.

Planned Activities vs. Actual Activities

The initial research strategy emerged from the frameworks described herein and the literature on policy, social networks, community capacity-building, and social capital. Action

research initiated by Swords (2019) included food bank leadership, staff and clients, along with 48 college students (p. 854). Similarly, the current study (proposed in 2017) intended to include food bank leadership, staff, volunteers, up to 15 current donors, food producers, and local community members.

The current study did not involve those most directly affected (food bank clients), but involved the next proximate group (food bank staff and volunteers). This proxy group at the Salvation Army Food Bank in Penticton was utilized because, initially, it was expected that successful projects or best practices from elsewhere could be implemented by the Salvation Army Food Bank. Staff at the food bank (at that time) appeared confident that collaborative local projects could be implemented. In fact, once the focus group sessions began, the Salvation Army staff and volunteers participating in the current study brought their own ideas from elsewhere to the table for consideration, too.

For comparison, the major strategies for planned activities (in 2017) for Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 of the current study were:

Cycle 1

- Identify policy innovations from other jurisdictions that inspire and provide guidance for what could be implemented in the current study (completed);
- Identify the social networks and capacity-building activities that would be necessary to implement the selected policy change or project locally (completed); and
- Develop measures to track progress and identify successes (not completed).

Cycle 2

- Take action to establish implementation teams for selected projects using research cycles: reflect, plan, take action, measure, observe and repeat (not completed).

Cycle 3

- Implement selected projects using iterative participatory action research cycles of reflect, plan, take action, measure, observe and repeat (not completed).

The current study was intended to introduce participants to national and international commitments to the right to food and the work of national organizations, such as Food Secure Canada. I intended to brainstorm with the project team to identify invitees with the capacity for involvement in developing, implementing, and facilitating innovation during the initial planning sessions. Thus, community members were expected to be involved in preliminary deliberations, thinking through the problem, priority setting, and, ultimately, cooperating to develop or strengthen the social networks and social capital needed to develop and sustain new ideas.

After a review of international strategic interventions in policies, programs and systems, priority setting in the local context was intended to outline strategic directions for the study. However, no part of the current study was truly completed as planned because the study took unintended directions right from the start:

- Cycle 1 - The current study was approved to commence May 15, 2017. During the spring, summer, and fall of 2017, Cycle 1 was conducted with the original six-person core research team comprised of three Penticton Salvation Army staff members and three Penticton Salvation Army food bank garden volunteers. However, rather than implementing a preselected project, the team felt identifying cooperative opportunities within the local community would be more functional and appropriate for Penticton. This aligned well with what Eriksson (2011) had discussed, that communities must develop strategies useful in their own environments. Cycle 1 drew to a close in October 2017, and Cycle 2 began in the fall of 2017.

- Cycle 2 went as planned in terms of community outreach and engagement, and progress was made with regard to capacity-building and social network expansion. An agency for oversight and grants for funding were sought, but without the Salvation Army partnership and clear project outlines, collaborative agreements that might impact the health and well-being of the target population of food bank clients were not possible. In addition, the project lost university supervision during part of this time due to faculty leaves of absence, and I had to take emergency family leave. Participatory research clearly had a dynamic nature, and the timeframe for community development was longer than anticipated. Cycle 2 drew to a close in the fall of 2018. I continued to meet with potential collaborators and funding agencies during the next year, maintaining existing connections and exploring new ones, although there was no specific plan for Cycle 3.
- Cycle 3 – Approval was obtained for Cycle 3 of the current study on April 9, 2020. Cycle 3 was initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic and began with the hiring of the Past Garden Coordinator in May 2020. The Cycle 3 project was highly successful in the context of impacting the well being of the target population of food bank clients. Cycle 3 succeeded in developing cooperation among organizations, businesses, and members of the community. Cycle 3 was also a success in the context of political action, as a presentation was given at the Penticton City Hall on September 1, 2020. Penticton city councillors unanimously approved further engagement with staff toward inclusion in the 2021 Municipal Plan. Cycle 3 ended with a closing survey in October 2020. Outreach for future work continued without interruption as a connection was made with an international research organization

which assigned a committee to support the project in the future, and a small grant was received to assist continued progress in 2021.

An overview of the entire study as it occurred on-the-ground in each of the three Cycles is shown in Table 6 (Study Execution: Food Banks as Agents of Change).

Table 6.

Study Execution: Food Banks as Agents of Change

Element	Cycle 1: Internal exploratory	Cycle 2: Community engagement	Cycle 3: Action research
Primary focus	Review of problems in community, inspiring projects from elsewhere, selection of focus	Research potential collaborations in various sectors, explore assets and what was needed	Set up and implement on-ground activities; outreach to the community
Core team	Myself and six core research team members: three staff from salvation army food bank, three garden volunteers	Myself and six core research team members: three staff from Salvation Army food bank, three garden volunteers	Myself as team leader supported by a paid team of four university students, a coordinator, and a part time administrative assistant
Group process	Six interviews and seven focus groups with the core research team	Five focus groups and six interviews with potential community collaborators	Hierarchical, myself as lead project manager/team leader
Individual process	Weekly analysis, reflection, reflexivity	Weekly analysis, reflection, reflexivity	Weekly analysis, reflection, reflexivity
Research instruments	Interviews, focus groups, recordings, transcripts, field notes	Interviews, focus groups, recordings, transcripts, field notes	Closing survey, field notes, media reports (web portal, Facebook, newspapers)
Approach	Participatory Action Research	Participatory Action Research	Action Research
Key literature	Stoecker (2013)	Madsen (2014)	Heifetz et al. (2017)
Worldview	transformative, advocacy and participation	transformative, advocacy and participation	Pragmatic, advocacy and participation
Data analysis	Thematic coding, iterative review	Thematic coding around social networks, action steps and barriers	Reflection as to who needed to be involved and what processes might ensure sustainability

As shown in Table 6, variations to the plan were experienced as the study progressed. Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 were conducted via participatory action research, but activities were revised

based on the core research teams' suggestions. The context for engagement in the community changed prior to the third cycle from participatory action research to action research. The three Cycles then included:

- an internal exploratory cycle (the participatory action research team explored assets and what was needed);
- the community engagement cycle (outreach); and
- an action cycle engaging over two dozen families in producing food for the Salvation Army food bank.

This emergent action research strategy was approved April 9, 2020. The activities implemented included:

Cycle 1

- Identify policy innovations from other jurisdictions that inspire and provide guidance for what could be implemented in the current study;
- Identify the social networks and capacity-building activities that would be necessary to implement the selected policy change or project locally.

Cycle 2

- Take action to expand social networks and capacity-building through investigating the collaborative potential of assets identified in Cycle 1. This included outreach to schedule interviews and focus groups with potential collaborators in the community of Penticton and surrounding areas.

Cycle 3 as implemented in 2020

- Identify and implement an innovative local project that I can implement myself utilizing an action research cycle: plan, investigate, take action, reflection, reflexivity.

Research Instruments

Cycle 1-2 Interviews. Prior to Cycle 1, interviews were conducted with the six participants who were part of the core research team using a semi-structured Interview Guide (Appendix D). The original core research team was comprised of three Penticton Salvation Army staff members and three Penticton Salvation Army food bank garden volunteers. Interviews took approximately 15-45 minutes. As interviewer, I relied on a predetermined set of five general questions to try to guide the conversation while allowing participants latitude and freedom to talk about what was important to them. Cycle 2 included six unstructured exploratory interviews with representatives of community organizations in four sectors: education, media, agriculture, governance.

Cycle 1-2 Focus Groups. Focus groups are like small workshops. Clover et al. (2013) described the small group process as a place where "participants can delve more deeply into the issues, share their ideas and visions. It is also in this space that strategies can be identified and dreamed into being" (p. 39). Seven focus groups were conducted with the core team in Cycle 1. Prior to each session, agendas were structured based upon findings as the study progressed. As an example (Appendix E), during the seventh focus group of Cycle 1, dated October 12, 2017, the agenda topics included:

1. Catch up and review progress
    a. Internal changes and questions shifting to how could we and baby steps
    b. Creating friends in the community
        (1) Education
        (2) Media
        (3) Wineries

(4) Mental Health

(5) Chamber

(6) Agriculture and Urban Farming

(7) North Shore Table Matters

2. Barriers – to progress
    a. How could we work more effectively?
    b. How could we anchor the core identified success factors of awareness, connections to models, an ensure progress say a year from now?
3. Review Letter of Intent components

During Cycle 2, five focus groups were conducted. Each focus group session included myself, at least three members of the participatory action research team, and one or more potential community collaborators from four of the target sectors identified during Cycle 2. The Cycle 2 focus groups had no structured agenda other than investigating potential for collaboration with experts in the community.

Cycle 3 Survey. A confidential mixed methods online survey was conducted at the close of Cycle 3 (Appendix M). I knew the participants and, although their responses were anonymized, sometimes I could tell who was speaking due to a response; some participants told me they had responded; and other responses were anonymous. For example, one respondent stated in their response on the survey itself that they had been the project coordinator. Thus, I knew that answer came from Participant #11. The survey was sent to the Past Garden Coordinator, my administrative assistant (who had helped with vendor coordination and scheduling as needed), and the four university students. In all, two-thirds of the surveys were completed (results are detailed in Chapter Four).

Population

Cycle 1-2 Participatory Research Team

The core teams across all cycles were intended to interface with the broader community stakeholder network. They were to be charged with planning, activities, observations, and reflection on the data generated during iterative participatory action research cycles in lieu of revised priorities. Rather than aiming for full participation or assuming deep and wide participation throughout the community, I aimed for optimal participation, which meant finding an appropriate balance between depth and inclusion for the purpose and context (Swords, 2019, p 854).

The current study intended to make use of a non-probability, purposeful sample (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 80, 94) composed generally of the six types of people Kotter and Rathgeber (2005) described as having necessary roles: the leader, the emotionally intelligent second in charge, the politician and story teller, the professor, the social convener, and the worrier and first alerted (pp. 48-49). I hoped to capture those roles by seeking basic demographic data or utilizing evaluative processes. However, as typical for a student research project, a purposeful sample of participants were included based on their expertise, availability and interest in participating.

A cooperative proposal and agreement with the Salvation Army food bank was put in place prior to beginning the current study (Appendix A). The research team members were identified through the Salvation Army food bank to include three Penticton Salvation Army staff members and three Penticton Salvation Army Food bank garden volunteers. Therefore, the population was a purposeful sample with essential expertise and connections within the community as described herein. The members of the food bank, community garden, and Salvation Army agreed to become part of the current study by means of Informed Consent

(Appendix B). They all had been involved in community garden work and shared the perspective that food bank clients could be provided much better quality and quantity of food. In Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, the participants included:

1. Participant #1, a student, had worked on the Salvation Army community garden during the summer.
2. Participant #2 had extensive community relationships in education, senior centers, and with other aspects of community organization.
3. Participant #3 was a retired physician who owned a farm, knew the community, had a personal focus on health care, and volunteered at the Soupateria and a community garden.
4. Participant #4 was a handyman who was very involved and committed to political progress.
5. Participant #5 was a manager at the Salvation Army, and
6. Participant #6 was in charge of the Penticton Salvation Army facility.

Depending on the projects initiated out of the participatory action process, other key researcher/stakeholders were expected to join the team as formal participants. Although outreach took place, no one else joined the current study formally. I hoped to reach out to City Hall; the Ministry of Interior Health; Agriculture Canada; provincial and federal politicians, supermarkets; catering companies; restaurants, winery associations, chambers of commerce, schools and school boards. However, community members were unwilling to become study participants per se. They preferred to engage in exploratory meetings with regard to potential for collaboration. Therefore, five focus groups and six interviews were conducted with representatives in various sectors to

investigate collaborative possibilities during Cycle 2, but those sessions were neither recorded nor were Informed Consent forms signed.

All or most of the participatory action research team engaged through August of 2017. By September, the participatory research team included only Participants #2, #3, #5 and #6, as Participant #1 had gone back to school in the fall and Participant #4 had traveled south before winter. The Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) gave notice with a termination date at the Salvation Army of October 31, 2017, which formally ended the Cycle 1 (Internal Exploratory) sessions. In terms of research methods and activities, Cycle 2 (Community Engagement) began with the first focus group meeting in November 2017 and continued throughout 2018. The Coordinator continued to attend focus group sessions through April 2018. Participant #3 departed in March 2018, and Participants #5 and #6 departed in May of 2018. By May of 2018, there was no longer a participatory action research team and the project partner had also withdrawn: The Salvation Army food bank experienced significant changes in management priorities, excluding collaborative community action in the context of the current study. I continued to meet with potential collaborators and funding agencies during the next year, although there was no specific plan for Cycle 3.

Cycle 3 Action Research Team Participants

The strategy for Cycle 3 (Action Research) emerged as an imperative during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the need for social distancing, the termination of community gardening activities seemed likely and the need for healthy food in the community was exacerbated. In Cycle 3, the work was done on behalf of the food bank but without the direct engagement of organizational participants. Cycle 3 was initiated with a new team including a Past Garden Coordinator (who was hired by my company, a medical research firm) and four university

students who had volunteered through a work/study (tuition rebate) program. Hiring the experienced coordinator was purposeful but the students were a convenience sample who volunteered to participate. Unlike Cycle 1-2, this was not a participatory action research team per se. When the university student tuition rebate program fell through (as described herein), the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board approval was sought and granted to pay the university students directly. Specifically, the team included a Past Garden Coordinator (Participant #11) who had two years of experience at the food bank, and four university students (Participants #7-10) who had heard about the opportunity through the work-study/community service program at the Universities of British Columbia and Victoria. In addition to the Past Garden Coordinator and four university students, the administrative assistant at my medical research firm helped the team with regard to coordinating with the printing vendor, scheduling meetings, and various other administrative tasks as needed. My assistant and all participants in Cycle 3 were invited to complete the closing survey at the end of Cycle 3. Of the six individuals invited to participate in the closing survey, four returned responses.

Ethics Review

Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

The current study was pre-approved by the Salvation Army (Appendix A) as well as the University of British Columbia (Okanagan). The solicitation given to participants briefly described the study approach, objectives, and the expected timeframe required for the project and initial interview prior to Cycle 1. Participants were informed of the risks and benefits of participating in human subject research via a signed Informed Consent form (Appendix B). Benefits to participation were the same as for any leadership activity within a community. For example, participants may learn and practice new skills and may be able to contribute in a unique

way to their community. Risks were equivalent to the risks associated with speaking out in any community group meeting: that of being misunderstood or taken out of context. All participants had the right to withdraw at any time with no harm to their reputations or standing within the community. Participants #1-6 completed an interview prior to beginning Cycle 1.

During Cycle 2, five focus groups were conducted. Each focus group session included myself, at least three members of the participatory action research team, and potential collaborators from within various community sectors identified by the research team. Six interviews were also conducted by me with potential community collaborators under the auspices of the current study. Although potential community collaborators were interested in exploring ideas for engagement with the food bank, they did not wish to participate in the study formally, thus did not sign Informed Consent Forms.

Cycle 3

As described earlier, in May 2020, the researcher in the current study hired a Past Garden Coordinator with two years of food bank experience for the summer garden work in Cycle 3. Three students from the University of Victoria and one from University of British Columbia signed up to participate in Cycle 3 of the current study through a government sponsored work/study program funded due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the Behavioral participants requested to join the project expecting to be paid through a government sponsored tuition rebate program, Informed Consent was inferred and was not requested.

The change in the student tuition rebate program, previously mentioned, could be described as follows: "On June 25, the federal government announced that WE Charity would administer the Canada student service grant, a $912-million program previously promised by the Prime Minister as part of $9 billion in COVID-19 financial aid for post-secondary students."

(CBC, 2020a, para. 5). The WE Charity program would provide tens of thousands of students under age 30 (para. 10), without summer jobs, a chance to earn $10/hour (para. 9) from June 25 through October 31"while volunteering in national service activities related to fighting the pandemic" (para. 6). About 35,000 students and recent graduates applied for the grants the very first week (para. 11). University students expected to receive payment in the form of tuition rebates for volunteering to assist on community projects, such as the current study. However, there was a high-profile scandal and WE Charity withdrew from the program in July. Also, the Past Garden Coordinator needed to leave for a new teaching role at the end of July.

With the demise of the WE Charity program (CBC, 2020a), the students asked if they could be paid directly to engage in the current study. Since I wanted to capture opinions and experiences throughout Cycle 3, I submitted a request to the University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board describing the change from a volunteer to an employment relationship. Approval meant that up to two food bank community garden coordinators and four students could be paid through my professional business, a medical research firm. Board approval was received August 31, 2020 (Certificate #H15-0217-008). Once the coordinator left, all four students subsequently job shared the position and wages. At the end of Cycle 3, the Past Garden Coordinator (Participant #11), my administrative assistant, and four students (Participants #7-10) were asked to complete an anonymous online survey (Appendix M) about their experiences.

Data Storage

All records will be stored in a locked facility for at least five (5) years after publication. All data will be securely stored on the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) campus on an encrypted, password protected USB data stick. Content and personally identifying information

(data) will be stored on separate USB data sticks in a locked file cabinet on the university campus which is to be accessed only by the declared members of the research team. When necessary, a University of British Columbia hosted password protected email account will be used to transmit data.

Trustworthiness of the Research

Anney (2014) studied over 300 theses at a single university and determined that only 21 were trustworthy because the rest utilized incorrect trustworthiness criteria. According to Anney's paper, *Ensuring the Quality of Findings in Qualitative Research: Looking at Trustworthiness Criteria*, unlike quantitative studies, validity and reliability were not the key constructs for assuring the rigor and trustworthiness of qualitative research. Anney examined nearly 40 references and identified the key constructs for evaluating qualitative research as credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (p. 272). Nowell et al. (2017) also felt similar strategies were critical to trustworthiness in qualitative research. Koch and Kralik (2006) also discussed credibility, transferability, and dependability in participatory action research with regard to health care. Anney (2014) and Nowell et al. (2017) recommended that qualitative researchers adopt trustworthiness criteria and strategies to improve the believability of qualitative inquiry and offset criticism from quantitative researchers. Descriptions of appropriate criteria that were utilized in the current study follow. Although Anney (2014) defined the terms as shown, Nowell et al. (2017) and Koch and Kralik (2006) provided similar guidelines:

- **Credibility** was defined by Anney (2014, p. 276) as the confidence that can be placed in the truth (correct interpretation) of the research findings (original views of participants in interviews and focus groups). The researcher must assure that the

participants selected have prolonged and varied field immersion and experience on the topic. In the current study, the researcher was a long-time resident of the community being studied with significant previous local involvement in food security issues, the health and well-being of the community, and was therefore qualified to engage participants with relevant experience. Nowell et al. (2017) suggested prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation of data supported credibility (p. 3). Koch and Kralik (2006) felt participants in research were part of the validation process. “An inquiry is considered credible when multiple voices are heard” (p. 139) and reported, and interpretations of meaning are traceable in the data.

- **Transferability** was considered by Anney (2014) to be similar to generalizability in that it referred to “the degree to which the results of the qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents” (p. 277). Koch and Kralik (2006) presented a similar description: The researcher must describe the context including the setting and the profile of the participants even though actions or reforms initiated may not be transferable (p. 139). Nowell et al. (2017) suggested the researcher was responsible for providing “thick” descriptions so those who seek similar results can “judge transferability” (p. 3). The current study strategy for expanding social networks and capacity-building within a community through assembling a participatory action research team under the umbrella of a partner organization (Cycle 1-2), and implementing an action research project (Cycle 3), could potentially be transferred to other communities. However, the sectors identified in Cycle 1-2, where research team participants had access and influence, would most

likely vary and this could impact transferability to many settings. The project strategy overall as described seemed likely to transfer broadly.

- **Confirmability** referred to the degree that the findings could be corroborated by other researchers, and that they were clearly derived from the data. This was also supported by a clear audit trail (Anney, 2014, p. 279). Nowell et al. (2017) agreed that confirmability required the researcher to demonstrate "how conclusions and interpretations" had been reached (p. 3).
- **Dependability** was established by a clear audit trail (Anney, 2014, p. 278) showing how the data were collected, recorded, analyzed, cross checked, and confirmed. Nowell et al. (2017) suggested dependability could be demonstrated if the study process were audited (p. 3) and this description was also put forth by Koch and Kralik (2006, p. 139), who compared the audit of a research study to a business financial audit. A methodical record of decision-making was essential. In the current study, the processes and reports were continually audited by the doctoral committee.
- **Purposeful sampling** meant that the researcher would focus on key participants who were specifically knowledgeable of the issues under investigation (Anney, 2014, p. 278). This was true in Cycle 1 where the participatory action research team members were specifically knowledgeable about the Salvation Army food bank operations. This was also true of Cycle 2, wherein experts were sought for advice regarding strategic collaborative projects.
- **Persistent observation** was accomplished when the researcher conducted an in-depth study to seek detail through extended interaction leading to an understanding of the

participants' world view (Anney, 2014, p. 277). Participatory action research and action research were immersive approaches.

- The **integrity and authenticity** of participants was important in qualitative research to assure that the data provided by the participants was authentic and unbiased (Anney, 2014, p. 279). Bias can be offset through a prolonged engagement building rapport and trust according to Anney. Potential for bias in reporting could be minimized through oversight from a doctoral committee.
- **Peer debriefing, peer examination and scholarly guidance** such as that provided by a doctoral committee, improved the quality of the inquiry and the authenticity of the study (Anney, 2014, p. 276, 279).
- **An audit trail** provided evidence of a clear rationale for "decisions and choices made by the researcher regarding theoretical and methodological issues throughout the study" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). Keeping records of the raw data, files, notes, transcripts, and a reflexive journal, as was done during the current study, were means of creating an audit trail.
- **"Reflexivity is central to the audit trail"** according to Nowell et al. (2017, p. 3). The use of a reflexive journal was suggested and was utilized in the current study. The reflexive journal itself was auditable evidence that supported the trustworthiness of a study (p. 7).
- **Member checks** were described as testing interpretations of data as they were acquired from the population being solicited (Anney, 2014, p. 277). Semi-structured interviews lend themselves to this strategy, as the interviewer could request confirmation of the interpretation of information received during the interview, or

even thereafter. In addition, the significant level of engagement occurred day-to-day during the research, with members of both the participatory research team and the paid team, as well as via other forms of personal communication (emails, Microsoft Teams, telephone meetings, etc.), all of which helped to ensure appropriate interpretation of encounters and observations.

- **Negative case analysis** took place when the researcher expectations were contradicted (Anney, 2014). In the current study, the researcher had hopes but no prior expectations and no experience with the capacity-building, social network expansion, participatory research, or the collaborative partnership development processes.
- **Triangulation** was a means by which a researcher used multiple tools, methods, sources of inquiry to reduce bias and cross-examine the integrity of the data (Anney, 2014, p. 277). In the current study, interviews, a survey, focus groups, recordings, observations, and journal notes were all utilized and cross referenced to produce findings.

Data Collection

Rather than collecting data and presenting results followed by an analysis, as in a traditional study format, data were generated and findings presented chronologically using the cyclic steps of action research described by James et al. (2012), Glassman and Erdem (2014), and Stoecker (2013): identification of a problem; investigation; plan and implementation; data collection and analysis; reflection and reflexivity (James et al., 2012, p. 16). The concept of reflexivity drew upon the work of Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith (2004), James et al. (2012),

Nowell et al. (2017), and Morgan and Nica (2020). Through self-reflection, the action researcher grows throughout the research process.

This cyclic method was selected because participatory action research is experiential. A linear approach to data collection and analysis would not yield the rich data available in the context of participatory action research. Therefore, the description of findings related to each of the three project cycles provided herein were divided into sections as described in the preceding paragraph. At each stage of the research, I and my team reflected upon our endeavor so far and I considered how I influenced and experienced the study progress or lack of progress myself. All activities carried out during the research were documented. Qualitative data included:

- Reflective journaling/journal notes throughout the current study (Appendix Q);
- Pre-Cycle 1: six semi-structured interviews (Appendix D) recorded and transcribed;
- Cycle 1: observations, emails, minutes, recordings, weekly journal notes, and agenda (sample: Appendix E) for seven strategic focus groups with the participatory team;
- Cycle 2: emails regarding collaborative projects, weekly journal notes, notes taken during five unstructured investigational focus groups and six interviews;
- Cycle 3: Microsoft teaming notes, journal notes (Appendix Q); a video (Appendix K); a presentation at City Hall (Appendix L), and a closing survey (Appendix M).

For example, the initial qualitative interviews in Cycle 1 were conducted to gather preliminary data related to the views of the core team members with regard to project potential. As a preliminary assessment, it explored individual and team confidence levels and capacity to effect change during the study, as well as how team members felt about their collective and individual ability to become agents of change within the community. Another example of data collection, as the investigator, I maintained a weekly journal of observations, activities, thoughts,

and questions pertaining to the process, its successes and shortcomings. The objectives that changed in Cycle 1 and was implemented in Cycle 2 were based upon a design strategy the research team considered more actionable, rather than implementing a project from elsewhere as originally expected at the start of the current study. This was described earlier in this chapter in the section titled: *Planned Activities vs. Actual Activities*. Because of this change from my initial strategy to the research team strategy, the data collected was much different than initially planned with a focus on qualitative data (focus groups, interviews) rather than the quantity and quality of the food being delivered to Salvation Army food bank clients.

Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Research Question. Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

Participants. The core research team included six participants (Participants #1-6): three staff from the Penticton Salvation Army food bank and three volunteers from the food bank community garden that I hosted on my land. All were invited to participate in municipal and provincial discussions and information gathering groups around local food security issues.

Pre-Cycle 1 Data Collection. Six participants on the core research team (Participants #1-6) were interviewed prior to Cycle 1 using a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix D). Interviews were recorded digitally and Trint was used as a transcription tool prior to beginning the focus group sessions with the team in Cycle 1. Interviews were analyzed to identify emergent themes which are outlined in a later chapter of this dissertation.

Cycle 1 Data Collection. Data were collected from the seven focus groups in Cycle 1 (listed in Table 7). Each focus group had an ongoing agenda which emerged from prior sessions

(sample: Appendix E). All seven focus group sessions were recorded digitally and transcribed using the Trint transcription tool. Flip charts were used to focus on various data categories. My reflective field notes (journal) were guided by the questions:

- What results were achieved?
- What actions were taken?
- What worked?
- What did not work?
- What could we have done differently?
- What should be our next steps or actions?

Data from all of these activities were compiled on Excel spreadsheet matrixes and to collate information so that key themes could be identified. Table 7 summarizes the dates and general purpose of each Cycle 1 focus group evaluated for the purpose of the current study. Spontaneous meetings and personal communications were occurring from time to time which were not included in the formal study outlined herein.

Table 7.

Cycle 1: Participant Focus Groups

Focus Group	Date	Participants	Focus
Focus Group 1	June 15, 2017	Participants #1-6	Review of inspirational projects from elsewhere
Focus Group 2	June 29, 2017	Participants #1-6	Identification of sectors/projects.
Focus Group 3	August 5, 2017	Participants #1, #2, #3, #5, #6	Sector review, imagining what could be possible. Definition of success.
Focus Group 4	August 5, 2017	Participants #1, #2, #3, #5, #6	Review of data to date, refinement of action plan
Focus Group 5	August 17, 2017	Participants #1, #2, #3, #5, #6	Reviewed action plan and assign tasks, additional contacts, NGOs
Meeting	Sept. 7, 2017	Participants #2, #3, #5, #6	Progress and obstacles to date, organizational level oversight
Focus Group 6	Sept. 21, 2017	Participants #2, #3, #5, #6	Funding sources, education sector
Focus Group 7	Oct. 12, 2017	Participants #2, #3, #5, #6	Barriers, Letter of Intent, advisory board, finalize sectors

Cycle 2 Data Collection. The plan initiated by the Salvation Army team and I during Cycle 1 was to reach out to potential collaborators in the community, discover potential projects, expand social networks, and build capacity to enhance the ability of the food bank to better serve its clients. The brainstorming in Cycle 1, with regard to the assets (network connections) available to the team, lead to outreach in the government, education, agriculture, business and media sectors in order to explore opportunities for collaboration on behalf of the food bank.

After Cycle 1 ended October 31, 2017, the participatory research team included only Participants #2, #3, #5 and #6, as Participant #1 had gone back to school in the fall and Participant #4 had traveled south before winter. The research team had disbanded by May of 2018. During Cycle 2, five focus groups were formally held to engage key experts and explore potential and strategy for collaboration. The five focus groups and six interviews conducted during Cycle 2 for the purpose of the current study have been outlined in Table 8 in chronological order by the dates of each session.

At least three members of the core research team and I participated in each focus group in Cycle 2. When team members were unavailable, I conducted six interviews to continue building momentum. It is important to recognize that spontaneous meetings and personal communications were occurring from time to time that were not included in the current study formally. Although copious notes were taken during the focus group sessions and interviews, these meetings were neither recorded nor transcribed as members of the community felt these sessions were exploratory; they were not interested in becoming research participants and did not sign an Informed Consent Form. Table 8 identifies the participants who engaged in each session (both community representatives and the participatory team members), and provides a very brief description of the discussions that took place during each session.

Table 8.

Cycle 2: Five Focus Groups and Six Interviews

Focus Group/Interview	Chronology	Participants	Focus
Focus Group 1: Representative of the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association and agricultural sector	November 2, 2017	Myself and Participant #2, #5, #6	To learn of the potential to grow food in the Penticton area and what was needed to facilitate collaboration with the food bank
Interview 1: Representative from the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS)	November 6, 2017	Myself	To investigate farm schools and the process by which land use approval could be acquired, land use availability
Interview 2: City of Penticton councillor	November 6, 2017	Myself	To learn the process for creating a Food Charter for the community of Penticton
Focus Group 2: A teacher and administrator from Parkway Elementary School	February 19, 2018	Myself and Participant #2, #3, #5, and #6	To explore potential for collaboration
Focus Group 3: Two representatives from Arterra Winery and Hillside Winery	February 26, 2018	Myself and Participant #2, #3, #5, and #6	The wineries have land, workers, and equipment and Arterra had planted food for the food bank in the past.
Focus Group 4: Kwantlen Polytechnic University Director of the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems	April 23, 2018	Myself and Participant #2, #5, and #6	To discuss how they could work with our community in terms of establishing a farm school in the Okanagan.
Focus Group 5: Professor and four marketing students from the University of British Columbia, Okanagan	April 30, 2018	Myself and Participant #2, #5, and #6	To research the possibility of using the Smart Donate app to connect donors with what was needed at the food bank.
Interview 3: Penticton Herald Managing Editor	October 5, 2018	Myself (Participant #2 had met previously)	To discuss writing articles to inform the community about the project. The critical message was that the food bank accepted perishables.
Interview 4: Trustee of School District #67 (Okanagan Skaha) in Penticton (a school board member)	December 19, 2018	Myself	To discuss both Indigenous issues and collaboration with the School Board District #67
Interview 5: A School District Head "H"	December 20, 2018	Myself	To learn the process and timeline for including a new course in the primary and high school curricula.
Interview 6: A local restaurant owner	December 20, 2018	Myself	To discuss food waste donations.

A more detailed description of each interview and focus group is provided in the results section of Chapter Four. Participant information is anonymized herein, but as members of the community were not research participants, anonymity was neither suggested nor expected.

Milena et al. (2008) described and compared the differences between focus groups and in-depth interviews as they were intended to be used in qualitative research, specifically in terms of "cooperation between academic research and business environment" (p. 1280). The authors considered evidence that academic research benefits society and is not only important to the teaching process, but is actually "a confirmation of the market utility of universities" (p. 1280). Academic research was considered valuable particularly when it offered solutions to real-world problems. This discussion aligned very well with the exploratory process of engagement between myself, my core research teammates, and organizational representatives in Cycle 2.

Milena et al. (2008) described focus groups as "a group discussion in order to identify perceptions, thoughts and impressions of a selected group of people regarding a specific topic of investigation" (Kairuz, Crump & O'Brien, 2007, as cited in Milena et al., 2008, p. 1279). The authors stated "Focus groups generate valuable information, especially when the participants represent small groups of interest" (p. 1279). In contrast, the in-depth interview was described as follows: "During in-depth interviews, the person being interviewed is considered the expert and the interviewer is considered the student. The researcher's interviewing techniques are motivated by the desire to learn everything the participant can share about the research topic" (p. 1279).

The focus groups and interviews conducted during Cycle 2, along with their purpose, fit these descriptions perfectly. As an example, after Focused Interview #4, the next steps were immediately summarized in an email to the school board representative on December 19, 2018, as follows:

Thank you for meeting!

I just wanted to confirm as succinctly as possible, what may be collectively doable from your perspective, what may be the obstacles/challenges and what the specific next steps might be.

What is Doable

It would be possible to design a board authorized course for high school students in School District 67 where they could achieve specified learning objectives through involvement in community and school gardens. There could be an agriculture focus, a social science focus, a nutrition and health focus, or/and a biology/science focus.

The food would be intended for use by schools or food bank in the district, for whatever priorities where identified.

There would be a collaboration with the Salvation Army youth summer "Fresh from the Farm" program who could manage and care for gardens in July and August.

For Board approval, there would need to be a local teacher with the passion to design and deliver the course, a minimum of 20 students per school that would like to take the course for credit, and the funds and volunteers to set up the gardens. It was mentioned that there may already be courses developed that would need to be tailored to fit District 67 needs, and that the Salvation Army and volunteer teams have extensive experience in raising funds through grants.

Why

Having a course such as this, embedded within the curriculum, would truly contribute to sustainable food security initiatives being conceptualized by current governments at the municipal, provincial and national level. Courses could provide practical and theoretic learning, be fun AND build community.

Challenges

- Finding a course that may already be in the public domain
- Finding a teacher with the passion to undertake the development and teaching components
- Creating a funding strategy for long term sustainability
- Determining the number of students who would be interested in taking course
- Obtaining Board approval

Next Step

Confirm School Board 67 and the Penticton Salvation Army Food Bank's interest in addressing the above challenges, in order to contribute to municipal, provincial and national food security agendas*.

> *These common "food security " agendas are to improve the quality and quantity of food for all - with dignity, in a sustainable manner.
>
> I hope I've captured the current context we are in, and our conversation. Please let me how to refine or improve. I look forward to further discussions.
>
> Kind regards,
>
> Donna Benson

Cycle 3

I originated the idea for Cycle 3 based upon my own family history: My father had told me when he was a child, about 10 years-old, he earned money by helping neighbors dig space in their yards to plant Victory Gardens. The meaning of the Victory Gardens was relevant to the pandemic: During the First World War, "governments encouraged people to plant victory gardens - not only to supplement their rations but also to boost morale, hence 'Victory' Garden. The policy was revived during the Second World War for much the same reasons" (Caves, 2004, p. 751). My team called the Cycle 3 project the CoVic Garden Box Project as a play on the terms COVID-19 and the Victory Gardens.

Participants. Cycle 3 made use of a convenience sample (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 80, 94) of three students from the University of British Columbia and one from the University of Victoria (Participants #7-10), along with one individual (purposeful sample) with food bank experience (Participant #11) to whom I had been introduced, a Past Garden Coordinator. The four students were newly attracted to the work and were hired in May of 2020 through a government sponsored tuition rebate program. Each teammate had regular duties to perform. The Past Garden Coordinator, Participant #11, had two years prior experience with the food bank and was hired to oversee the project on the ground, but left to attend to teaching responsibilities (as planned) at the end of July 2020. Because the recruiting process was different than Cycle 1-2, the participants in Cycle 3 requested to join the project through a work/study program as paid

helpers, Informed Consent was inferred and was not requested. I also asked the administrative assistant at my medical research firm to assist on occasion. My assistant helped logistically with tasks related to Microsoft planning tools, setting up meetings, coordinating with vendors such as the printer, and basic administration.

Cycle 3 Data Collection and Analysis. Ongoing data collection continued via observations, journaling, and through the use of Microsoft Teams. During the project a video was made by the university students (Appendix K), discussed in Chapter Four. Data analysis proceeded much as in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, in that data were compiled on Excel spreadsheet matrixes. Journal notes (observations) were analyzed guided by the questions: What results were achieved? What actions were taken? What worked? What did not work? What could the researchers have done differently? What should be the next steps or actions? For example, after the 61 garden boxes were all planted during Cycle 3, my notes included:

- **What worked?** Outreach via newspaper ads to the community and to local suppliers.
- **Results achieved?** My team set up 61 CoVic Garden Boxes for 26 families and two local facilities, all of which presented an opportunity for further outreach.
- **Actions taken?** Collaborated with the Castanet, The Western, and The Penticton Herald, and with Superior Peat, BP Wood, Sandstone Landscaping, Grower Supply Co., Nesters Market, Dr. David Dutchman, Flowers on the Bench, Martins Flowers, Garden Works, Blaze King, Salvation Army, Gordon Bros Lumber, and Home Hardware.
- **What should we do next?** Help the participating community members care for their growing produce and plan to monitor what is sent to the food bank.

- **What did not work?** We needed more volunteers, particularly in terms of labor. We did not support the community members individually as much as we should have.
- **What could we have done differently?** We had to learn on the fly. Future projects should involve advance planning for day-to-day administrative tasks, utilize efficiency tools, individual talents, and accept those in the community who want to contribute more.

Cycle 3 Closing Survey. After a presentation at City Hall (Appendix L), a brief exit survey was conducted at the close of Cycle 3 (Appendix M). The Cycle 3 team, including my administrative assistant, were invited to take the survey. A 2/3 response rate was realized: Of six invitees, the survey was completed by all but two. Consent to doing the survey could be inferred by its' completion. The results are described in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

Synopsis

The method, the appropriateness of the study approach and design, and the study timeframe were detailed in Chapter Three, along with the specifics of the population and sample, research instruments and processes, ethics review, trustworthiness of the data and the data collection strategy. Critical theories and worldviews were explored and relevant concepts identified. Planned vs. actual activities were elucidated.

In Chapter Four, after a discussion of the data analysis strategy for each Cycle, the pre-launch interviews conducted with the core participatory team prior to the first Cycle 1 focus group session are explored. The organization of Chapter Four utilized the strategies proposed in Chapter Three, specifically James et al. (2012) suggested investigation, planning, implementation, data collection and analysis, followed by reflection and reflexivity prior to, as suggested by Stoecker (2013), diagnosing newly emergent issues and continuing to facilitate community change. The overview of each cycle presented in Chapter Four follows this defined sequence. Findings are presented in summary at the end of this chapter.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis Strategy

> To be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible. (Nowell et al., 2017, Abstract)

As discussed earlier, Anney (2014) recommended that qualitative researchers adopt trustworthiness criteria and strategies (p. 272). This recommendation was echoed by Nowell et al. (2017). The primary criteria for assuring trustworthiness in qualitative research were credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Anney, 2014, p. 272). Credibility

was achieved by ensuring that the original views of participants were interpreted consistent with their intention (p. 276). Nowell et al. (2017) suggested prolonged engagement and persistent observation supported credibility, and "thick" descriptions enabled those who sought similar results to "judge transferability" (p. 3). Demonstrating "how conclusions and interpretations" had been reached (p. 3) provided confirmability. Dependability was established by a clear audit trail (Anney, 2014, p. 278) showing how the data were collected, recorded, analyzed, cross checked, and confirmed. In Cycle 1, interviews and focus groups allowed for open and extended discourse. They were recorded and transcribed so there was little room for error. In Cycle 2, notes were taken and follow-up emails sent to confirm understandings. Cycle 1 and Cycle 3 included prolonged engagement and observation with the team and within the project context.

Procedures for data analysis are detailed herein. The current study utilized thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017) to interpret data such as interview and focus group transcripts. In addition, the strategies proposed by Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith (2004), James et al. (2012), Nowell et al. (2017), and Morgan and Nica (2020) with regard to reflection and reflexivity were utilized. Each of these processes have been demonstrated within the current study and this dissertation.

Thematic analysis was described by Nowell et al. (2017) who cited Braun and Clarke's (2006) method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). However, Nowell et al. stated there was no clear agreement regarding a rigorous application of thematic analysis: "There is insufficient literature that outlines the pragmatic process for conducting trustworthy thematic analysis" (p. 2). Importantly, thematic analysis was considered a highly flexible approach that could be modified to fit the needs of a study without requiring detailed theoretical or technological knowhow (p. 2).

In the dynamic context of participatory and action research, the researcher in the current study felt this approach would be useful for "examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights", as well as "for summarizing key features of a large data set, as it forces the researcher to take a well-structured approach to handling data" (Nowell et al, 2017, p. 2). The danger was that flexibility could lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes (p. 2). It was hoped that the use of other trustworthiness criteria, such as scholarly guidance from the doctoral committee and persistent observation as discussed by Anney (2014), would help to offset issues related to trustworthiness of research and data analysis conducted by a student.

Nowell et al. (2017) presented a six-step method for thematic data analysis in qualitative research, although they specified data collection, analysis, and report writing "are not always distinct steps; they are often interrelated and occur simultaneously throughout the research process" (Creswell, 2007, as cited in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 4). The process is actually iterative and reflective, developing over time (p. 4). This description perfectly fit researcher experiences during the current study. The objective of the six-step process was to help establish trustworthiness during each phase. In the reality of participatory and action research, the implementation of each phase was interrelated, simultaneous, and did not occur in distinct steps at all times. The process of evaluating actionable strategies in Cycle 1 was participatory throughout the seven focus group sessions and closely paralleled the six-phase process described herein both experientially and on paper. Not only were data gathered and analyzed on a spreadsheet matrix, the research team and I assessed assets, generated themes (sectors for engagement), added and distilled information repeatedly, and made decisions during our live engagements. During Cycle 2, outreach and collaborative strategies were continually refined as

contacts were initiated, thick and rich information was gathered regarding collaborative potential, and as new connections came to light. Cycle 3 was an intervention. Success was measured in terms of answering the research questions as well as visible impacts within the community setting. The six phases proposed by Nowell et al. (2017) for developing trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry were described as follows.

Phase 1. Become familiar with the data (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 4-5). Different sources of data identified by Nowell et al. were utilized during the current study such as journal entries (thoughts, interpretations, questions), recordings, transcriptions, observations, field notes, focus groups, multimedia, and public domain sources (p. 5). To become immersed in the data meant repeated reading and searching for meaning and patterns (p. 5).

Phase 2. Generate initial codes (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 5-6). Creswell (2014, as cited in Nowell et al., 2017) described a systematic process for coding data in which specific statements were analyzed and categorized into themes that represented the phenomenon of interest (p. 6). "Qualitative coding is a process of reflection" and "thinking about data" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 5), that enabled simplification and focus on specific characteristics of the data to create some sense of structure. In this context, coding meant attaching labels to index information (p. 6), such as was utilized in the current study during the development of spreadsheet matrices (samples are provided a little later in the Chapter). According to Nowell et al., codes should have specific boundaries and should not overlap (p. 6) and the process should be entirely flexible with regard to where content fit, perhaps among several codes, and how many levels of coding were created (p. 6).

During Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, ideas were generated as to the categories of information that were useful, particularly sectors to investigate for collaborative potential. Reflexive writing and

peer debriefing during coding was suggested (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 7) and this took place during the current study. For example, in Cycle 1, the research team constantly revisited and revised thematic categories for use in Cycle 2. Then in Cycle 2, the team analyzed the viability of engaging with potential collaborators. In addition, the reflexive journal itself was considered auditable evidence that supported the trustworthiness of the study (p. 7).

Phase 3. Seek themes in the data (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 8). This was expected to take place once the data has been initially coded as described in Phase 2. Themes captured something important and brought together "fragments of ideas or experiences", which would be meaningless alone (p. 8). Themes were identified within the interviews conducted prior to Cycle 1. Themes, in terms of operational sectors, were also captured during the Cycle 1 focus groups and refined in Cycle 2 focus groups and interviews (sample spreadsheets are shown later in this Chapter).

Phase 4. Review themes (Nowell et al., 2017) seeking patterns and to determine if they accurately reflect "meanings evident in the data set as a whole" (p.9). This was the point where the researcher could add to identified themes to target emergent issues; eliminate themes that were not substantially addressed, too diverse, or inorganic; or combine themes that need to be refined. This was interpreted to mean, in context of the current study during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, the sectors which were not productive could be eliminated as operational themes and that branches for further investigation could be added.

Phase 5. Define and name themes (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 10). Themes were to be finalized when there was no longer any relevant text left out. This occurred naturally and intentionally during the process of analysis as the data were revisited over and over to be sure nothing was missed. Nowell et al. (2017) described this phase in terms of content analysis, but

content analysis was not a strategy undertaken during the current study. However, this phase was where collaborative projects began to become more cohesively defined (p. 10) and a reflective narrative was produced that facilitated decision-making.

Phase 6. Produce the report (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 10). This dissertation is, itself, the final research report. It was suggested by Nowell et al. that raw data in the form of identified themes, short quotes from participants, as well as more extensively quoted passages should be included (p. 11). Those are provided herein as findings from each Cycle of the current study. It was suggested that the analysis (this document and other analytical documents) be submitted to participants periodically where possible to obtain feedback through the process of member checking. As participants were involved in all evaluative decisions to the extent possible during the current study, this strategy for producing trustworthiness appeared to have taken place, although not always on paper. This dissertation was not shared with the research team during the writing process. However, focus group highlights were captured and utilized to form the agenda for subsequent meetings during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. There was a clear relationship illustrated between the data (as described) and the decisions taken during the current study.

Cycle 1 Data Analysis Process

Transcripts of Cycle 1interviews were reviewed, followed by focus group transcripts and my journal notes (Appendix Q), which were utilized to determine the next steps toward furthering the research objective at each juncture. The snapshot in Figure 6 illustrates how, across the top of one spreadsheet community sectors to be investigated were listed. For example, these included health professionals and community sectors such as agriculture, government, NGOs, education, the media, and the general public. Notes from all sources were entered below each sector precisely as shown in the Figure 6 sample. The measures of success for Cycle 1 were

grounded in information gathering and organizing strategies in order to prepare for active engagement with community representatives in identified sectors during Cycle 2 for the purpose of defining opportunities for collaboration with the Salvation Army food bank.

Figure 6.

Cycle 1: Categorizing Data from Interview Transcripts and Focus Groups

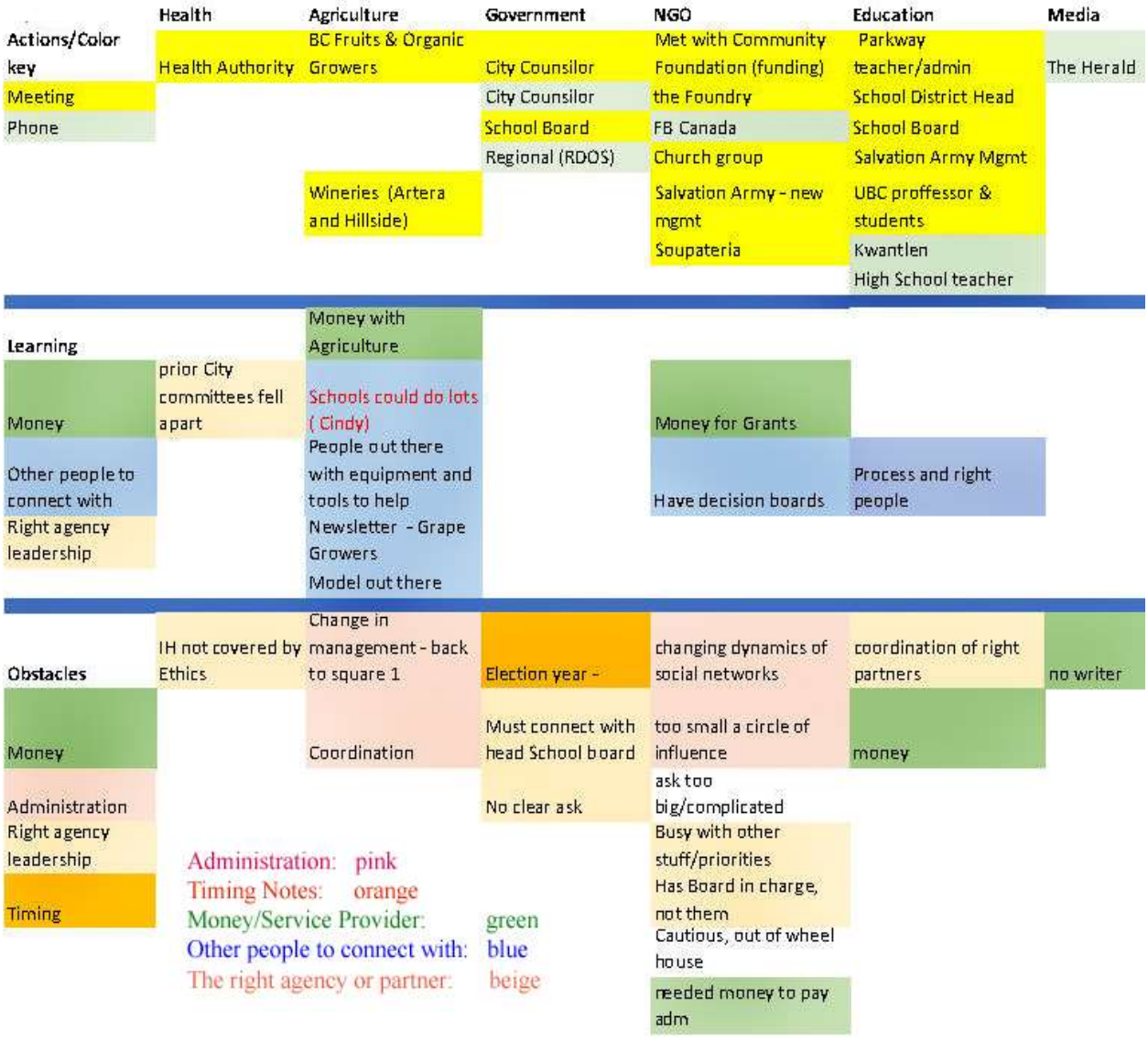
Education	Media	Us
schools and curriculum	Back to square one with new team at Herald	web site
Contact people at OK College	Get sleeve for Herald -	Dream team for the land donations
Develop new models with donated acres	Get out message/Article re perishables accepted	Develop standard for meetings - clear agenda
Have classes - maybe it can grow Amrit (pg 9) QUOTE	Get out ask - potatoes, carrots, Root vegies - send truck	Have kid bring parents for Family theme cooking nights, pizza party
Kids can make nutrional charts/kid friendly meals	Dispell Myth - We take perishables!	clients/stakeholders
Volunteer acreditation by volunteering (Ok college)	Get national media for Constellation model	Get all Health Regs so conforming with
youth	Monthly article in paper	find out about FB Matchmaking tool
students and projects (school credit)	Educate people about Good Sameratin Rule	food policy (like others have)
	Knowledge transfer	Get Good Samaritan Rules
	Media - give them 12 articles	educate people to grow their food
		what could they do in 4 hours
COLOR KEY		feasibility of co-op
Green:	policy or politics	Hamper changes - welf serve
Orange:	preparatory work	Get refridgerated storage
Yellow:	social networks	Need to track quality
Light Grey	a specific project	churches as distribution centers
Dark Grey:	funding	Monitoring of quality 1 to 5 scale
Blue:	Education	Connent to OK College
		Signage - we grow for ...
		Review North shore model
		Connect with BC Fruit Trees people, business collaborations

Cycle 2 Data Analysis Process

The Cycle 2 focus groups enabled participants to explore potential areas of collaboration within the wider community. The spreadsheet shown in Figure 7 demonstrated results part way through Cycle 2 (shown exactly as it was created, without consistent capitalization, etc.).

Figure 7.

Cycle 2: Sector Contact Coding Spreadsheet



	Health	Agriculture	Government	NGO	Education	Media
Actions/Color key	Health Authority	BC Fruits & Organic Growers	City Counsilor	Met with Community Foundation (funding)	Parkway teacher/admin	The Herald
Meeting			City Counsilor	the Foundry	School District Head	
Phone			School Board	FB Canada	School Board	
			Regional (RDOS)	Church group	Salvation Army Mgmt	
		Wineries (Artera and Hillside)		Salvation Army - new mgmt	UBC proffessor & students	
				Soupateria	Kwantlen	
					High School teacher	
Learning		Money with Agriculture				
Money	prior City committees fell apart	Schools could do lots (Cindy)		Money for Grants		
Other people to connect with		People out there with equipment and tools to help		Have decision boards	Process and right people	
Right agency leadership		Newsletter - Grape Growers				
		Model out there				
Obstacles	IH not covered by Ethics	Change in management - back to square 1	Election year -	changing dynamics of social networks	coordination of right partners	no writer
Money		Coordination	Must connect with head School board	too small a circle of influence	money	
Administration			No clear ask	ask too big/complicated		
Right agency leadership				Busy with other stuff/priorities		
Timing				Has Board in charge, not them		
				Cautious, out of wheel house		
				needed money to pay adm		

Administration: pink
Timing Notes: orange
Money/Service Provider: green
Other people to connect with: blue
The right agency or partner: beige

Data from five focus group meetings and six interviews were compiled on Excel spreadsheet matrixes listing the sectors as themes on the horizontal axis across the top of the spreadsheet. Meetings (yellow) and telephone calls (light green) that took place were highlighted in the top section. Other color codes are identified in the first column on the left in terms of *Learning* that took place and *Obstacles* to reaching objectives. Findings from those sessions were

color coded and illustrated what was learned and what obstacles existed with regard to collaborative potential. Measures of success included expanding the Salvation Army social network and enhancing capacity within the community via identification of, and connection with experts in the field who had an interest in food security issues and activities.

During and after each of the five focus groups and six interview sessions in Cycle 2, I reflected in my journal on what was working, where I saw roadblocks, and my next steps. These exercises helped target specific sectors, projects for potential collaboration, funding sources, outreach sources, and future discussions, etc. A few pages of my journal notes, as examples, are provided in Appendix Q.

Cycle 3 Data Analysis Process

Throughout Cycle 3, my observations and reflections were kept in my journal. The Past Garden Coordinator made notes on Excel spreadsheets, and Microsoft Teams was used to engage the four university students (examples: Appendix Q). I reflected on what was working, what was not working, what I would do if I could start over, and the next steps as reported herein.

Measures of success included positive feedback from the community participants and those engaged in the project. For example, positive feedback is evidenced in the university students' video (Appendix K) and the video shown on the Global News website (Matassa-Fung, 2020). Additional measures of success included the email responses from organizational contacts who provided information and offers to help further the project; approval to engage with staff at City Hall regarding inclusion in the Penticton Municipal Plan for 2021; and inclusion in the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) action-research agenda for 2021 (Appendix P). Additional measures of success included the number of community members who participated in Cycle 3, which illustrated network and capacity expansion; the amount of produce

donated to the Penticton Salvation Army food bank, and the number of clients served as reported by the Salvation Army (Appendix N).

Data Presentation

The findings are presented herein chronologically. The steps included: identifying the problem; investigation; plan and execution; reflection and reflexivity (James et al., 2012, p. 16). The concept of reflexivity drew upon the work of Cunliffe and Easterby-Smith (2004), Glassman and Erdem (2014), James et al. (2012), Nowell et al. (2017), and Morgan and Nica (2020) as a learning and decision-making process during research.

This cyclic method was selected because participatory action research is an experiential approach, an ongoing effort as knowledge and insights are gained. A linear approach to data collection and analysis would not yield the rich data available in the context of participatory or action research. Therefore, reflection and reflexivity are described sequentially at each phase of the evaluation process as findings related to each of the three project cycles. At each stage of the research, I and my team reflected upon our endeavor and I considered how I influenced and experienced the progress of the research myself.

Launching the Project

The original core research team was comprised of three Penticton Salvation Army staff members and three Penticton Salvation Army food bank garden volunteers. Prior to launching Cycle 1, preliminary interviews were conducted with six participants on the core research team using a semi-structured Interview Guide (Appendix D) in order to assess the potential for community capacity-building and to gather data in terms of the views of the core team members with regard to project potential. As a preliminary assessment, I explored individual and team confidence levels and capacity to effect change during the study, as well as how team members

felt about their collective and individual ability to become agents of change within the community. The interviews were conducted in person and recorded. Each interview lasted between 15 and 45 minutes and was later transcribed using Trint software. The semi-structured Interview Guide consisted of approximately five primary questions. The number of questions and phrasing varied with each interview and as the process evolved. Conversations were casual and a number of probing questions emerged spontaneously based on interviewee responses during most interviews. For example, the first question asked in each interview was:

Participant 1: *Do you feel that, in this kind of study, you can make a difference?*

Participant 2: *How do you see our community in respect to involvement in helping the Penticton food bank?*

Participant 3: *How do you see our community right now in respect to caring, doing things to help feed vulnerable people?*

Participant 4: *How do you see the community involved? Good, bad, really involved, not so much, or isolated?*

Participant 5: *How do you see the community right now? As a caring community, volunteers helping out, or individual members who donate food?*

Participant 6: *How do you see the community being involved currently in providing quality and quantities of food for the vulnerable people here?*

The first cycle of the current study was titled “Internal, Exploratory” because a core internal team was engaged as opposed to others in the community. Participant experiences and perspectives were explored during the interview process prior to Cycle 1. An attempt was made to explore what each participant hoped might be accomplished over the 16-week period allocated

for the current study. Later, when the team met for the first time, innovative projects from elsewhere were explored for potential implementation in Penticton.

For the purpose of confidentiality during analysis and discussion herein, participants in Cycle 1-2 were designated Participant #1-#6. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to identify emergent themes. Data were compiled on Excel spreadsheet matrixes. During the qualitative analysis of the interview transcript content, four themes emerged (described herein) related to a sense of hopefulness, community, appreciation for the volunteers in Penticton, and perspectives related to community potential for change.

Cycle 1: Internal, Exploratory

Problem

As mentioned earlier, Vital Signs was a program of the Community Foundation of South Okanagan (CFSO) which produced a report every two years beginning in 2011 on the quality of life in the community. I attended the Vital Signs meeting in 2011 where, as I recalled, an individual stood up and said, “You can’t be eating healthy at the food bank”. What was meant was that neither the quality nor the quantity of food was sufficient. This was one comment that stayed with me and eventually inspired the current study. This study endeavored to address the issue of healthy food as well as the issue of food insecurity through community action, advocacy, participation, pragmatism, and by building enhanced community networks and capacity.

Cycle 1 Research Question

The Cycle 1 research question was:

Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton Food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

Investigation

The United Nations Academic Impact report (2020) defined capacity-building as the "process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world" (para. 1). Capacity-building was further defined: “An essential ingredient in capacity-building was a transformation generated and sustained over time from within; transformation of this kind went beyond performing tasks to strategically changing mindsets and attitudes” (para. 1). Throughout the current study, core values were reiterated: I and my fellow researchers wanted to work within the right to food framework and commitments at the international level in force in Canada since 1976 (Rideout et al., 2007, p. 567). The right to food framework was juxtaposed to the charity approach, which was viewed as a providing a handout rather than lending a hand-up.

All or some of the individuals on the core research team met seven times in focus groups initially to select specific projects (best practices) for the 16-week timeframe allocated for the current study. During the later sessions, the team met to identify the connections and assets needed to manage tasks related to social network expansion and capacity-building, what data would be collected, and what community sectors had the greatest potential for collaboration. In addition, I met with the Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) individually after the fifth focus group session to discuss progress.

Plan and Execution Phase 1 of 2: Interviews

As mentioned previously, the first step prior to facilitating change was to conduct semi-structured interviews with the core research team to determine to what extent the participants saw the work as progressing towards viable solutions for food insecurity in the community. As noted earlier, the interview questions were not always posed in precisely the same manner to

each interviewee. In the following (edited) examples, the selected questions and responses were simplified and integrated. Participants were numbered in order to assure confidentiality.

- ***Do you feel this type of study can make a difference? Do you think people in our community will get involved in helping the food bank?***

  Participant #1 – "I do think so. It feels better than just typing something up, meeting, and just discussing only that, not doing anything. That action component, an unusual campaign, is very important."

  Participant #2 – "Oh, I see our community as very involved in the foodbank, more and more in the younger generations, thank goodness for that. Umm, traditionally it's been the seniors who play a huge volunteer role here. And now more and more youth, it is becoming diverse since the development of the kitchen and gardens, we are garnering a whole new set of volunteers, particularly the youth, who are interested in becoming part of the foodbank prevention, nutrition education programs rather than the packing of the hampers and the dating of the cans and… checking for dates and that."

  Participant #3 – "What are the biggest needs in this community? Is it mental health? Is it educating kids about food? I think educating kids about food is huge, but then again, I don't even know what goes on in the school system in terms of what they're teaching them or nutrition and so on and so forth. So, I guess it's just a matter of; who's got the overview. Who's got the drone flying over Penticton telling us where the biggest need is and the biggest bang for our buck. Cause I mean you can spend a lot of energy on something that spins your wheels and makes you feel good but is it really accomplishing sustainable change and is it something that is going to translate into long term. And one of the things that keeps coming up is, what does create that long term policy change."

  Participant #4 – "I think we're doing average compared to other communities. We all seem to do about the same. Well, my thoughts on participating in this research is, it's my time to give back. I'm retired and I've pegged to this organization to give my time to. So, I like to give it as much as I possibly can afford time wise and that's why I've participated. I think so if people -- if we all, people meeting, me as well, learn to listen better, talk less, and then do action. I'm doing action, I think, because of my participation. I go to work there and volunteer in the garden. So, I think I'm making a difference now. Probably small maybe, I hope it can be bigger. As a group we have a louder voice than individually. People will listen to us better, and city council. Sometimes, if I go down, I get mad at them by myself, it's doesn't do any good but we do it as a group, trying to collaborate with them it seems to get more results."

  Participant #5 – "Yes, that's why we're here. I think we can make a difference but I think, if you're looking at making a difference, it needs to work on different levels. We have quite a few businesses who are involved in providing food, those who have been asked to arsenal [store food] and those who spontaneously offered assistance. Then we have a number of individual farms from corporations assisting. So, if I compare that with

other areas, I think we have quite a bit of involvement from the community. In that. So. It was quite a strong involvement from the community. So, anything you can do to contribute to causes you believe in this good. We need to be able to show people to say this is a worthwhile cause because it's important. And people need to be made aware."

- ***What do you think the biggest obstacles might be?***

Participant #1- "When you've done something for so long it's hard to stop doing that… I mean, as other people have mentioned, you know, just time and focus."

Participant #2 – "Well for the farmers we just overcome a huge barrier - the new federal tax credit for farmers, so we anticipate that this year we are going to have a lot more donations from farmers. There is another barrier - our hours here to receive and help off load with our fork lift because we close at 4 o'clock. I mean they, farmers, need to get their days work done and then maybe they'll think about making the trip in with their extra bins you know after their working hours - after their own employees have gone home. So, the receiving part is a barrier and we've already experienced that with a group of university students. [They] pick and weed on the weekends and then they haven't got a place to store it - the food that they pick - and they don't have cars big enough, and they want to do the work on Saturdays and Sundays because they've got summer jobs but we're not open to receive. Or maybe we can just get a better working relationship with a lot of farmers who have cold storage on their property and are willing to hold it until you know we can reach a mutually agreed upon time and they can hold for a while in their old cold storage."

Participant #3 – "I think the problem is that we get very goal oriented and we have this idea of what we want to accomplish but the process itself generates energy and, I mean, you know it's never a quick fix. It's something that takes a very long time so raising awareness, educating, connecting, cause often people having similar ideas and they don't know what to do with it but when you put them all together there's some energy there to actually accomplish something. It is like you inspire other people to do things. I think even just the being in the process, I can't see what the long-term goal is; but being in the process is going to improve things."

Participant #4 – "Money. Obviously. And participation – volunteer participation and sometimes the efficiency of the organization running it. Apathy is probably the biggest one. There are so many people that - too many people that aren't touched in one way or another. Why not having enough food or shelter? That they don't, their attitude sometimes is, well just go get a job. And it's not always that easy and every person has a different story. And you have to have that empathy to realize that. Again, there's too many people that don't have that touch with what's happening."

Participant #5 – "Identification of unhealthy foods, what healthy foods should be made available. Because often we provide food as easy necessarily healthy and at the same time clients often don't really specifically request healthy food because who are we to say this is healthier for you. Is everybody really aware of what is required? I think this is a second."

Participant #6- [Barriers are] “Tradition.” “We've had this little role that we [Salvation Army] function in in the community for many years now. Umm, we also have the partnerships that we have, we have been very proprietary over and it's a little frightening to open the doors to other organizations, to our partnerships. Especially with funding. Especially with funding. Goods we can share. Funding is a different matter all-together. I guarantee, no one is going to share those kinds of contacts with each other. Umm, mind you - I think we can work around that issue. You know that's not an obstacle to working together - it doesn't have to be anyway. We can just leave that as a little elephant in the room.” “in our heads mostly… You know it’s the kind of thing where we have to get thrown together in a room, or in a boat….”

- ***What do we need to overcome those obstacles?***

Participant #2 – “When I saw what went into the foodbank hampers, I wanted to quit. That was about week 2 and I just wanted to leave the job - I just didn't want to be any part of it, if that's what kind of food that was being handed out to poor people who were most of them quite sick. But there's been such change with the community garden, with Constellation brands [winery] planting five acres on the perimeter of their vineyard, with the collaboration with the BC farmers market association - there's been such change in the quality of the food that goes into the hamper - it gives me hope every day.”

Participant #2- “The vision has to be stated very clearly, strongly, firm guidelines. The vision has to be embraced by all, that this is going to be our standard now and that maybe pallets of expired candy canes - it’s our policy here that they are rejected. That we don't accept them so we don't have to pay anyone to sort through them, we don't have to worry about disposing of them, that they just simply are not accepted because that doesn't meet our standards”

Participant #3 – “From my perspective it's about building an empowered population which has to start with a small group. so, when you think of empowerment personally or then organizationally, you have to have some successes.”

Participant #3 – “I mean somebody inspires somebody and then it inspires a whole bunch more … The strength of this community. The strength of this project it's like that’s our job is creating and strengthening this web and the infrastructure. I see it like tinker toys, you know we've got all of these little knobs around here. Let's connect the pieces and then build with them, build that strength.”

Participant #4 – “Well, proper funding, number one. Proper food because I have processed food in the food bank and it's a lot of sweets and salts, and not a lot of really healthy food. So, getting the right food to people will be better. Again, money is a big one and maybe better screening for people who are truly in need and help them a little more, and help the people who are taking advantage of the system a little bit less. If somehow you can make a decision, sometimes pretty hard. I think we could have more participation.”

Participant #5 – “I think education is one, providing information but also providing a means of getting that information out. …the simple fact that we don't have a website is just not a good thing.”

Participant #6 – “I think some facilitation might be valuable…there needs to be a mutual friend to come in and help pull us together. I think it is good to get together with a bunch of people and discover new avenues, so I’m excited about it.”

Participant #6 – “I think we [Salvation Army] need to have a strategy happening in the community that involves all stakeholders. Where at the moment you know you have sort of in this corner of town we have the foodbank and in another corner of town we have St. Vincent de Paul, who are the big ones, and then there's half a dozen other churches that have a bit of a pantry going on, and then we have the Soupateria that was wonderful - and I'm seeing that in many cities the foodbank becomes the major collector of food - the central depot - and we have agreements with these other organizations that they will get us much or more than they were able to get on their own … we work together as a team of organizations that are working toward a common goal. [for example] We have a pretty good engagement with local fruit growers and farmers but it could improve. Umm, we've had this marvelous gift from Constellation Brands of produce. There may be other people out in the agricultural community that would be willing to do this kind of thing. We've had an amazing gift from Okanagan Fruit Growers, I think, and they are giving us refrigerated space to store things and so now we are not just bombing out everything that we get in the summer time. We got 37,000 pounds of apples last year and with that refrigerated space we were able to give apples out until March or April.”

- ***If everything goes well, how do you envision things in 16 weeks, or this time next year, or in five years?***

Participant #1- “Maybe more schools have their own tiny garden… that would be nice to put on your resume.”

Participant #2- “That there's only high-quality food… People that need to use the foodbank typically have very complex physical and mental health and deserve the best quality food possible. I would ultimately dream … that the people come in and they have choices. One of the models is dignity for all - and choice gives dignity for all. So, I'd like to see people choose amongst all sorts of healthy choices.”

Participant #3- “I see it as a 5-10-year project. I don't just see it as a 16-week project.”

Participant #6- “I think in the short term - we could find some common ground with agencies that we may have seen as competitors in the past. I think in the long term, we can spark some really innovative thinking that will bring the kind of materials into our food bank that we really need.”

- ***Is there anything else you'd like to comment on? (Other ideas that emerged.)***

Participant #3- "I think a criterion is doing some things that seem obvious for example a food policy at city hall, I mean other cities have that. I mean that should be a no brainer just to do some pushing and getting things like that through. Looking at what some of the other communities are going like North Shore in Vancouver, uh, they have a waste program, i.e., reduce, redirect and again they're bringing in the whole community. They also have urban farming on the north shore now, being helped out by UBC. And there's the urban farmer guy that wrote the book in Kelowna. So, there's these kinds of models out there."

Participant #3- "There's lots of things that people aren't even aware of. Like, you know - so I'm a farmer. And you know food security for me is a huge issue for Canadians. I've read all the books, Jared Diamond, Collapse, the whole story about climate change and how civilization collapsed because people run out of food. As soon as they run out of food, they start killing each other and the whole thing just goes down the toilet. And things like soil fertility, water management, and all those things like managing the common good is huge and making sure that it doesn't get exploited by the 1% and everybody else suffers. I mean look at the chaos that's engendered when people in power only look at themselves and not the common good. So, agriculture food security is huge for me and it just blows me away that people don't open their eyes up and see what's going on."

Participant #4- "I think that governments download responsibilities where it shouldn't be. We don't look after our people very well. In general, all over Canada and I think that there should be a minimum income level set for vulnerable people. And so, food banks, in my opinion, shouldn't really be necessary if everything is done correctly."

Participant #6- "I saw something on television about how they're doing, they're raising fish and using the waste product from the fish to, I think they call it aquaponics, to supply nutrients for plants that they're growing inside and uh, it's producing literally tonnes of vegetables that they can hand out all year round. Now the fish, they can only harvest a couple times a year, and that's not a big major, although its delightful for the clients when they get the fish but they're getting all this vegetable product. I mean you need a lot of space for that but there are spaces around here, huge spaces, that aren't being used. I mean you go over to Naramata, there's that huge packing plant or cold storage plant sitting there that no one's using. You could be doing an operation like that in there if you could get someone to either pay the rent of donate the space and raise a few bucks for power."

Participant #6- "I think [a co-op] that's an absolutely brilliant idea that's really come up from the states where some food banks are encouraging the clients that are interested in to into joining together in a food purchasing co-op that may still be supplemented by the food bank but where the majority of the goods that they're taking home, they're actually just buying together at a wholesale price and uh, so they're able to save some money and they're buying in bulk and so they're able to get fresh fruits and vegetables maybe on a monthly basis or something from this food purchasing co-op. And it's something that with a little assistance at the front end, they can actually manage themselves and they

> don't need an outsider supervising them or anything, we just give them space and umm, maybe an umbrella to look after their finances and record keeping and that sort of thing and just let them do their thing. I think that's a great thing to give people back some ownership over their lives."

A subsequent review of the interview transcripts was completed using a thematic coding on a spreadsheet matrix. In practice, this meant that Excel spreadsheets were used to tabulate themes as they appeared in journal notes, interview transcripts, and all other data at hand. The material was reviewed several times to capture information and ideas. When I conducted a qualitative analysis of the interview transcript content, four themes emerged related to a sense of hopefulness, a sense of community and appreciation for the volunteers in Penticton, and perspectives related to potential for change:

Theme 1, Hopefulness. Participants were asked if they thought our team of researchers could make a difference. Findings in this theme were illustrated by:

> Participant #1- "I do think so just because, you know, we're not sitting around just talking."

> Participant #2- "I'm happy that it's coming together because I'm just a firm believer that unless something is written down it doesn't exist. And it's been such a hope and a dream of mine."

> Participant #5- "Yes that's why we're here. I think we can make a difference but I think if you're looking at making a difference it needs to work on different levels."

> Participant #6- "Definitely."

Themes 2-3, Community and appreciation for volunteers. Most participants felt a strong sense of community in Penticton with regard to the food bank effort, with caveats where there was room for improvement. For example:

> Participant #2- "Oh I see our community as very involved in the foodbank."

> Participant #3- "I've been very impressed with this particular community. I think it's very strong and I think the strength on this community is all the volunteers."

> Participant #5- “If I compare that with other areas, I think we have quite a bit of involvement from the community.”
>
> Participant #6- “…everybody wants to help the foodbank so that is a passion that people have in our community - we want to make sure that no one goes hungry.”

However, in contrast, Participant #6 also stated: “I'm not totally satisfied with the volunteer engagement we have. I think it's probably something that we need to work on its not because the community isn't responsive - it's because we're not really getting the word out there very well.” Participant #2 agreed, “I think more involvement in kind of a different type of volunteerism - kind of a higher level of volunteerism - that would assist in the re-education that is necessary”

Theme 4, Perspectives related to potential for change. Findings in this theme included perspectives regarding the potential of the project. Participant #2 focused on the need for better collaboration with partners. For example, since the food bank did not have staff available after hours to receive donations, perhaps farmers might be able to provide cold storage for produce temporarily:

> Participant #2- “I think it needs to be embraced by all in the organization, from the board members right down to the workers at the receiving end, and everybody in between. The vision has to be stated very clearly, strongly, with firm guidelines.”
>
> Participant #3- “The strength of this project, it's like our job is creating and strengthening this web and the infrastructure. I see it like tinker toys, you know we've got all of these little knobs around here. Let's connect the pieces and then build with them, build that strength. Life's a whole lot easier when you do it as a team, so I'm optimistic.”
>
> Participant #5- “We need to be able to show people this is a worthwhile cause because it's important. We should live in a community where our children don't go to bed hungry.”
>
> Participant #6- “Everybody wants to help the foodbank so that is a passion that people have in our community - we want to make sure that no one goes hungry. I think that we need to have a strategy happening in the community that involves all stakeholders [where] we work together as a team of organizations that are working toward a common goal [to] help us make better use of the resources that are here. I think in the long term, we can spark some really innovative thinking that will bring the kinds of materials into our food bank that we really need.”

During my analysis of the interview transcripts, it became clear that efforts to make a difference and to successfully facilitate change in food security in Penticton were defined in five ways by the participants:

1. First, improved advocacy and awareness of what was possible and what others were doing elsewhere to combat food insecurity;
2. Second, the ability to generate very innovative ideas locally;
3. Third, an expansion of social networks for building capacity in Penticton, those willing to combat local food insecurity;
4. Fourth, a proven ability to do the work and progress; and
5. Fifth, increased team knowledge and outreach in terms of how to connect with those who could contribute and facilitate change.

Plan and Execution Phase 2 of 2: Focus Groups

After the individual interviews with the research team participants, the core research team met in seven focus groups from June through October, 2017, during Cycle 1. The objective of the sessions was to discuss the work to date, reflect on progress, identify challenges and assets in the community, and select specific tasks to be completed and data to be collected. It was intended that the team develop the three elements described in the theoretical underpinnings of the research approach: the framework and practice of assets-based community development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996), which meant a clear commitment to investigating existing capacities and assets (p. 23); the intent to draw upon empowerment theory (Fetterman, & Wandersman, 2005, 2007) to build upon existing networks and social capital, and to increase social capital and the potential for community capacity-building. Community capacity-building referred to actions defined, planned, executed as processes that built "sustainable skills,

resources, and commitments to health promotion in (various) settings and sectors (in order to) prolong and multiply health gains many times over" (Hawe et al., 2000, p. 2, as cited in Labonte et al., 2002, p. 181).

The focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed, and notes were taken. As the discussions progressed, I and my fellow researchers became more organized. My team determined what social networks to develop, action steps to be taken, and who would do what and when. Discussion topics inevitably lead to subsequent meetings and communications. A summary of each focus group session follows.

Focus Group 1. Prior to Focus Group 1, my approach included sharing a variety of pre-selected models that had been implemented elsewhere (Table 9) for potential implementation in Penticton. Table 9 is excerpted from a paper authored by myself on July 31st, 2016, as the current study was in its early stages of preparation and justification. The full text of this paper was shared with participants and documented the thought process contributing to the selection of innovations for discussion.

Overviews of each project (Appendix F) were provided in a notebook to each participant on the core research team in advance of Focus Group 1. Each of those programs attempted to sustainably address issues around ensuring adequate healthy food for vulnerable populations within their communities.

During Focus Group 1, various team members who had experience with food insecurity policy and program innovations implemented in other communities, presented their ideas as well. I and my fellow researchers investigated the potential for these innovative models to build social networks and increase capacity for change in Penticton.

Table 9.

Cycle 1: Focus Group 1, Ten Model Innovations

Ten model innovations to inspire PAR study researchers		
Category	**Specific innovation**	**Brief description**
Improved quality of donations	United Nations International Theme: Year of Pulses (2016)	A 'pulse' is a legume seed promoted as a nutritious and less costly source of food and high-quality protein (Canadian Lentils, 2015, para. 1). Canada was a major supplier.
	Woodstock Food Voucher System	The food bank in Woodstock closed. Retail outlet cashiers asked customers to donate $.25 to a food bank voucher system for produce. Food bank clients received vouchers for shopping. (DeBono, 2014)
Mobilization of untapped resources	General Practitioner garden/urban farming	Eleven general practitioners in London established food gardens for their patients on clinic properties. The initiative grew to include a food co-op, providing healthy food to the local hospital. (Bawden, 2016)
Significant government involvement	British Columbia farmers food donation tax credit	Farmers donating food to the food bank in British Columbia were able to receive a tax credit for the retail value of their donations. (British Columbia, 2020a)
	Guaranteed Income - Dauphin, Manitoba Experiment	The Dauphin experiment to determine if people would stop working when provided a guaranteed income. The experiment closed before it concluded. (Lum, 2015)
	Food Bank of Western Australia, Healthy Food for All	The food bank had taken a broad 'systems' approach to the health of its clients. Community gardens, teaching kitchens and exercise programs were included in the holistic health endeavour. (Butcher et al., 2014)
	A law in France re-directed food waste from grocery stores to food banks	It became illegal for a restaurant to bin food and not re-direct it for use at shelters or food banks. (Chrisafis, 2016)
University involvement	The University of Toronto PROOF Policy Research Group	A right-to-food policy research group established to study food security trends and propose solutions for Canada. They sponsored conferences and prepared annual reports.
	Food and Agriculture Organization, World Research Center on Food Governance	As an outcome of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization work on food security, an international research centre was established in Spain.
	Table Matters - Community Food Systems Approach (UBC)	The North Shore of Vancouver embarked on a community wide initiative to tackle food security, including a food charter, community gardens, waste reduction programs and an urban farm. (Table Matters, 2013)

Note. Content was prepared in advance for use during the very first participatory team Focus Group in Cycle 1.
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In conclusion, the innovations implemented elsewhere were inspirational, but the participatory action research team did not feel these projects provided functional ideas for the current study. The idea emerged to explore the team's ability to access decision-makers in various community sectors, such as the education sector, the agriculture sector, the political sector, the media, and others. This may not be an uncommon phenomenon whereby a locality wants to develop their own ideas and this was well aligned with the objective of evaluating community assets and a key result of the first focus group. Rather than measuring produce for the purpose of documenting the progress of the study, the evaluation strategy included structuring information in terms of community sector contacts and related ideas and concerns on a spreadsheet matrix, and then adding to the data as our focus group sessions continued throughout Cycle 1.

Focus Group 2. The agenda for this focus group was to identify sectors for outreach and potential projects that could be undertaken in a collaborative context. The team explored collective and complementary assets and needs at the Salvation Army food bank. Possible collaborative opportunities in the community were identified, such as city councillors, school boards, the school district, Okanagan College, the media, local restaurants, supermarkets, the Health Authority, and other sector contacts. The core research team brainstormed sources of information and assets within the sector hierarchy, as well as who might be instrumental, in terms of decision-making authority, for leveraging change within the community. Two broad categories for further work emerged from this session, social networks and action items:

- **Social networks.** Participant #5 described the target for change succinctly, "who we need to connect with, who we need to meet with, and who would know someone that knows who would know." Social networks could be differentiated by their level of

potential influence including grass-roots level operatives, local decision makers, provincial nationals, and influencers. Sectors were narrowed and those targeted for outreach included politicians; educators; businesses; media; funders; and academics. Developing contacts within those groups and networks could be important to overcoming future barriers and advancing the project objectives. At the end of this session, I and my fellow researchers had identified specific contacts who would be included in the next outreach movement. The third session was scheduled with the intent that, in the meantime, each contact in each sector would be investigated to identify mutual interests and collaborative opportunities. From now on, research team focus group sessions led to further communication through telephone calls, face-to-face meetings and emails as noted in my field journal.

- **Action items.** The second category was a call to action, delineating what might be done to further the progress of the project. Exhaustive lists of action items led to four repeatedly mentioned: to collaborate with the elementary and high schools, to work with media to change perceptions, to encourage community involvement, and to let it be known broadly that the Food bank could accept perishables.

As an example of an action item, in order to collaborate with elementary and high schools, I and my fellow researchers selected an elementary school which was well known for setting up school gardens and where Participant #2 had contacts. Another example, in the higher education context, Participant #2 provided a 2014-2015 course overview for a full-term nutrition study implemented at the local post-secondary institution that could be utilized as a project outline going forward on behalf of the Penticton food bank.

We became more organized in terms of discussing each sector as it appeared that assets (contacts) were available and in terms of what would be needed to reach our objectives, such as developing curricula, farm schools, and developing media outreach strategies and potential. Thereafter, I and my fellow researchers delved into potential obstacles and suggested strategies to address them. We defined assets available and assets we were missing (Table 10), possibilities, potential obstacles, the strategies and the action steps needed to address them, as illustrated in Table 11.

Table 10.

Cycle 1: Example of Assets Available and Assets Missing

Sector	Social assets available	Assets needed
Politicians	Two city councilor members	Food policy charter for Penticton
Educators	An elementary school teacher, a school board member	School gardens, add course to curriculum; need to connect with high schools, engage district-wide
Businesses	Various, including two wineries	Planting ground, soil, lumber, plants, transport, labor
Media	Managing editor at a newspaper	Newspapers, radio, TV, web, need a writer
Funding	No connections	Find funding sources, develop Letters of Intent to describe project and needs, need grant writing assistance
Higher education	A university professor	Investigate projects – such as farm schools

Note. Sample brainstorming session results for development of Cycle 2 outreach strategy. ©2019 Donna Benson.

Table 11.

Cycle 1: Example Possibilities, Obstacles, Strategies, and Next Steps

Possibilities	Potential obstacles	Strategies to address	Action steps
Course development in elementary and high schools	Need a teacher to design the course, ensure enrollment	Communicate with others to identify connections for course development	Follow up and advocate to get a course designer
Farm school collaboration through the university	Acquiring land use, regional district funding (as stakeholder) for agricultural land use for this project specifically	Meet with representative of Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in terms of a RDOS grant	Follow up, create and submit the grant request
Outreach through the media, the Herald, Castanet, Western News, and Global TV	Need a writer to take the time to create articles	Asked the Past Garden Coordinator to send out press releases	Keep the news outlets informed

Note. Sample brainstorming session results for development of Cycle 2 outreach strategy. ©2019 Donna Benson.

Focus Group 3. The agenda for this session included an in-depth review of the sectors and contacts. The team brainstormed potential ideas for collaboration to present to sector representatives. During the third focus group, Participant #5 stated "I see a difference already, they were starting to ask higher level questions during internal meetings" at the Salvation Army. In this focus group, I and my fellow researchers explored potential for collaboration with health professionals such as social workers and their clients, mental health professionals, community facilities, health care workers, and nursing students (who might potentially volunteer). One goal was to define success, which was determined to be: *raising awareness in the community with regard to how the community garden could be a resource for health workers as a place to bring their clients (horticulture therapy).*

Focus Group 4. During this focus group, the objective was to review the data thus far and refine an action plan. The action plan included additional social networks to be pursued, networks to be expanded, and specific contacts to approach. At this point I and my fellow researchers focused identifying potential contacts and collaboration schemes related to the agriculture sector, such as farmers, green house growers, wineries, supermarkets, and other food sources. In addition, we discussed people who might have equipment and tools, refrigeration and storage space. We talked about utilizing the media: developing a newsletter, a Facebook page for gardeners, a website, and using social media. We sought to identify creative partners in those contexts, such as a printer and web developer. Not included in the formal study were spontaneous meetings and personal communications with potential collaborators that occurred from time to time throughout Cycle 1.

Focus Group 5. This session's agenda called for an initial review of the Focus Group 4 action plan and assigned tasks. I and my fellow researchers then focused on the government

sector including contacts and possibilities for involving individuals at the municipal level: The Mayor, councillors, and other politicians. The municipality might provide land for gardening in bins (which would be portable), and we could update City Hall with regard to the research progress. My team discussed possibly working with NGO's, like Food Banks Canada, and with churches as distribution centers. We also talked about the feasibility of a co-op venture with business collaborators.

Meeting. The sixth session was simply a meeting between myself and the Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) to discuss the progress and obstacles I and my fellow researchers had faced and were facing to date, as well as thoughts on potential for administration at the organizational level. Unfortunately, that level of oversight was not going to be possible as the food bank did not have the resources for, or a mission aligned with administrative oversight of collaborative community food security projects.

Focus Group 6. The agenda for this session focused on funding opportunities. I and my fellow researchers began to explore potential funding sources and needs via grant proposals and a Go Fund Me campaign, particularly for refrigerated storage. My team also focused on the education sector, particularly specific teachers at various levels in the community. Schools could have teaching gardens for a variety of purposes. We talked about how to encourage people to do their own gardening: Parents could bring kids to family themed cooking nights. We also talked about measuring quality on a 1-5 scale at the Salvation Army food bank.

Focus Group 7. The agenda for this session (Appendix E) included a review of progress to date with regard to identifying new social networks within the community and barriers to progress in terms of collaborative activities. Relevant strategies for overcoming potential barriers were considered. For example, one barrier was that relationships and agreements were made, but

individuals retired, changed jobs, transferred. When this happened at a local newspaper, for instance, Participant #2 said, “we are back to square one”. Strategies for overcoming this problem included ensuring we had written correspondence specifying the parameters of agreements and understandings so that later employees or organizational representatives could continue the conversation and assure follow-through. As well, there was a discussion in reference to a letter of intent for the Max Bell Foundation, a philanthropic organization that delivered programs and supported Canadian charities with grants. The following is a summary of reflections taken from my journal, meeting minutes, recordings, and coding sheet:

- **What worked?** At this point, there was a clear direction in terms of the community sectors to target for outreach in Cycle 2. The following questions were on our agenda:

  How could we work more effectively? Throughout the seven focus groups, an environment was created whereby ideas could emerge and be captured. In the language of adaptive leadership, people were looking at the big picture and, therefore, viewed the operation from a higher level. We were able to imagine high level solutions.

  How could we anchor the core identified success factors of awareness and connections to other models in order to an ensure progress say a year from now? It was helpful that the success measure of increased awareness was restated along with the need for a community advisory board to assure progress continued.

- **Results achieved?** Additional social networks were proposed including connecting with the British Columbia North Shore Vancouver Table Matters collaboration, the local public health authority, and the South Okanagan Community Foundation. The list of social networks to develop was reviewed and now included the education

sector, the media, wineries, mental health agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, the agriculture sector and other municipalities who seemed to be ahead of us in community wide collaborative activities. The Health Authority was added as an additional sector.

- **Actions taken?** The next actions were to set up focus interviews or meetings with representatives in the community sectors identified.
- **What should we do next?** Call, write or email potential sector representatives and establish times to meet. The letter of intent to the Max Bell Foundation was placed on hold until specific collaborative opportunities could be identified. We would reconvene in January.
- **What did not work?** During the meeting, there were several areas where barriers to progress had been identified or observed. Barriers to progress were attributed to people working in isolated silos, the necessity to have high level approvals for the pursuit of grants and for oversight in terms of organizational collaboration, and the reality that people come and go due to personal, professional, and organizational changes, which meant it was sometimes necessity to start over again with new people. For example, when the discussions turned to the letter of intent for the Max Bell Foundation, it was noted that anything beyond a letter of intent would require Salvation Army Board approvals and that that could be a lengthy process. This was a challenge when ideas were emerging and energy was high within the research team and the community. The authority to make progress resided at a higher level within the organization and approval procedures took time.

As well, the existence of silos of activity within the community, such as Women in Need, Men's Compass House, and the Boys and Girls Clubs, would need to be addressed if significant progress were to be made community-wide: there was a need for greater collaboration amongst entities working on food security. It was proposed that a Penticton community advisory board for the Salvation Army food bank be created to expand its networks. A comment was captured to the effect that feeding people in the community was a community responsibility and not just the responsibility of the food banks. It was proposed that a community advisory board might also be a method for building awareness of the challenges in this context.

This meeting was end of September, and the next two months were a busy time due to the drive to acquire and distribute food for the holidays. It was anticipated that making progress over the next few months could be difficult because of the intensity of work needed within the Salvation Army in November and December in terms of their regular Christmas campaigns and holiday hamper programs.

- **What could we have done differently?** In retrospect, it might have been helpful to prepare a formal presentation to Salvation Army decision makers in order to summarize the intent to meet with the various community sectors to explore potential for collaborative projects. With alignment created at a high level in the organization, there may have been more effective discussions with regard to the funding opportunities and the processes for approvals to be followed. As well, in hindsight, it might have been helpful to engage a larger team, or at least create a back-up plan in case team members had to leave.

Cycle 1 Results

It is important to realize that some personal communications took place spontaneously with community representatives during this time as well, such as outreach to a City Council member seeking contact with the Okanagan Similkameen Healthy Living Coalition (via a brief meeting with Participant #5 and myself, and email on July 27, 2017). However, due to time constraints and the need to assure documentation of progress, it was determined that the data to be analyzed in the context of the current study would be limited to the six semi-structured interviews and seven semi-structured focus groups as described.

Initial themes were condensed from the data generated in notes, observations, meeting minutes, and recordings during the focus groups. These were included as broad headings on a spreadsheet matrix related to answering the research question. For example, the data indicated where the current study might access social network assets and where barriers might exist. While reviewing transcripts from interviews, focus groups, meeting minutes, and my journal, I sorted information into those categories on an Excel spreadsheet as illustrated previously.

I reviewed and sorted all the data from these engagements to synthesize and distill information and to identify where social network expansion could be implemented as a capacity-building strategy. Captured in this analysis were specific activities and potential projects. The initial groups to contact included individuals in the following sectors: healthcare, agriculture, government, non-governmental organizations, education, the media, and the general public. Within these sectors, the themes analyzed were: actions proposed, actions taken, what was learned, and what obstacles there were to overcome. Included in this section are two examples taken from journal notes, meeting minutes, recordings, and coding sheets that demonstrate how captured information led to decision-making in terms of strategic planning.

In the Media sector:

- **Actions proposed?** We identified a lack of awareness in the community with regard to the capacity of the Penticton food bank to accept perishable foods, such as fresh fruit and vegetables. While additional storage capacity was desired, there was ample existing storage. This meant, for example, apples harvested in the Fall could be stored and offered to people as late as February or March, depending on inventory. It was proposed that there could be a regular feature in the newspaper highlighting a particular need at the food bank, providing a call to action from the community. The media were identified as a critical partner in the community with regard to raising awareness of intermittent needs, as well as the community responsibility to support the food bank and the action steps that community members could take to improve the quality and quantity of food for all residents. It was noted that past conversations with media staff had not developed traction due to priority changes, changes in personnel, and lack of alignment within the various levels of the organizational hierarchy. It was noted that, in addition to dispelling the myth that the food bank did not accept perishables, it was necessary to raise awareness of the Good Samaritan Rule by which donations could be received without a liability being placed on the donor. It was suggested that an awareness-building newspaper sleeve might be distributed through newspaper circulation. Of course, advertising required funding.
- **Actions taken?** The media sector was added to the list for further action in Cycle 2.
- **Learning?** The focus groups provided a positive environment within which ideas could emerge, problems and solutions could be illuminated.

- **Obstacles?** In order to pursue the media, a dedicated and experienced writer could be essential. As with other potential projects, a strategic plan, dedicated project manager, and funding were necessary.

In the Education sector:

- **Actions proposed?** Students in Penticton of varying ages (elementary school through college) were identified as crucial to drive long-term change. It was proposed that the research team explore opportunities for collaboration with elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities. There was a history of collaboration on projects with University of British Columbia marketing students, as well as at Okanagan College; this experience and those connections could be built upon. Specific projects would likely need to go through the school district office and school board members, so key staff would need to be identified. A major conceptual shift took place in terms of the desire to facilitate curriculum changes which could be introduced from kindergarten through university level to integrate food security issues and activities.
- **Actions taken?** Research team members began to schedule meetings with teachers within the community who were leading an effort to create school gardens; we planned to meet with school board representatives, school district staff, and with university level advocates for food security.
- **Learning?** During Cycle 1, the elementary, high school, college and university levels were identified as unique units within the education sector. Each of these units would need to be contacted individually because of their different needs and focus. It was hoped that, by integration with the youth programs administered by the Salvation

Army during the summer, school gardens could receive the necessary attention and care while schools were on holiday or out of session.

- **Obstacles?** At the conclusion of Cycle 1, major obstacles included a) finding the right people to connect with at the various education levels, and b) learning organizational processes and protocol for implementing change initiatives. Since there had been some history of collaboration with the University of British Columbia (Okanagan)'s marketing students and students at Okanagan College, those were the first connections we intended to pursue.

At this point I and my fellow researchers had encouraging results in terms of contacts within the community that could potentially facilitate sustainable solutions to food insecurity, although nothing concrete had yet emerged related to improving the quality and quantity of food available at the Salvation Army food bank. For example: in August 2017, we identified contacts at the Okanagan College, and in October, my team (on behalf of the Salvation Army food bank) was invited to participate in a working group at Food Banks British Columbia that included seven other food banks. Further activities and meetings took place during Cycle 2, which followed immediately thereafter.

As described previously, the focus groups in Cycle 1 were recorded, transcribed, and the content was analyzed using a spreadsheet matrix. Later, as I revisited the data to make sure nothing was overlooked, I was provided the opportunity to upload the transcribed Microsoft Word documents to MAXQDO software to examine the word frequency (content analysis) while removing redundancies and unrelated content (such as Participant #) prior to submitting the data for analysis. I repeated this process several times using the content from three sequential Focus Group sessions in Cycle 1.

Obviously, with such as ‘focused’ group, as the participatory action research team was, I had an idea what the results of a word cloud might look like. The words ‘food’ and ‘people’ were bound to be primary throughout the conversations. In fact, they were as shown as primary content in the resulting word clouds (Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10). Another interesting result, the words “can” and “do” were clearly highlighted in all three images. If developed into action phrases, key words appeared to include: food; can do, know, get; people just think; could bank something; our community. The MAXQDO content analysis exercise was fun and interesting visually, and the word clouds illustrated how we were forward-looking and focused on the tasks at hand, but the content analysis exercise did not really reveal any new or useful information.

Figure 8.

Cycle 1: Focus Group 1- Word Cloud

Note. MAXQDO cloud developed from transcription of Cycle 1: Focus Group 1. ©2020 Donna Benson.

Figure 9.

Cycle 1: Focus Group 2- Word Cloud

Note. MAXQDO cloud developed from transcription of Cycle 1: Focus Group 2. ©2020 Donna Benson.

Figure 10.

Cycle 1: Focus Group 3- Word Cloud

Note. MAXQDO cloud developed from transcription of Cycle 1: Focus Group 3. ©2020 Donna Benson.

Reflection

I had thought the team would select one or two of the innovation projects to implement in Penticton. In fact, my team could not identify projects that might be completed within the original 16-week timeframe. The team determined it would be more productive to investigate and assess which sectors within the community with existing resources might collaborate with the Salvation Army food bank.

It became immediately clear there were no quick fixes to food insecurity. During the Cycle 1 timeframe, the research team identified a need to focus on building relationships and exploring the potential for collaboration. An objective had been to identify the people most likely to explore and develop paths for making progress in terms of food security in Penticton, such as school board relationships with district heads and politicians in office. Planning on the fly may be typical of action research, but more structure would have been immeasurably helpful. By the end of the seven focus group sessions, I realized there were criteria essential to a large-scale project such as we envisioned, namely: funding and stable administrative oversight with board commitment as a lead agency for the duration of the project. Developing collaborative projects in this grass-roots operation was highly complex, with lots of moving pieces. Institutions and individuals all had complicated agendas and priorities. My reflective field notes (journal), as usual, were guided by the following questions:

- **What results were achieved?** During the seven focus meetings (June 15 through October 12, 2017), we had reviewed inspiring projects from elsewhere. Rather than selecting a project or a few to focus on during the 16-week study; the team identified sectors and potential contacts with whom to meet and explore collaborative possibilities. The next official phase of the research, going out into the community for

further investigation, would be identified as Cycle 2. We had defined success for Cycle 2 in terms of planting ideas and empowering up to five key sectors to work toward policy change (Appendix Q: Cycle 1: July 25, 2017 Sample Journal Notes). During Cycle 2 it was expected that the most approachable potential contacts, those we felt most likely to engage with us, would be identified. Success was also defined as raising awareness in the community.

- **Actions taken?** During the seven focus groups, summaries were prepared listing targets such as health professionals and representatives in agriculture, government, NGO's, education, media, and potential agencies or individuals to reach out to. As well, some advance research had been done in reference to funding opportunities, and it was noted that anything beyond letters of intent would need to be reviewed and approved at a higher administrative level.
- **What worked?** It was stimulating to learn of projects implemented in other communities. The research team's desire to focus on sector work rather than specific projects was likely to be complex, however the possibilities were viewed at that time as potentially more effective – in terms of ways to move forward to create sustainable change. Connecting with one individual here and there meant opening the door to further connections, a classic snowball approach to finding resources. For example, one contact at the Mental Health Department led to referrals to other healthcare workers who might want to involve their clients in community garden activities as horticulture therapy.
- **What should we do next?** With the formal completion of Cycle 1, the next steps were to make contact with the key people identified within the specific sectors we had

targeted. Meetings would be set up and the Cycle 2 focus groups and interviews would explore potential for cross-sector collaboration as well as identifying specific projects to be implemented.

- **What did not work?** In retrospect, this might have been the opportune time to introduce what had been accomplished with the Board of Directors at the Salvation Army. As described earlier, prior to Focus Group 6, I met with the Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) to discuss the progress and obstacles. At the time, it was felt administrative oversight was not going to be possible as the food bank did not have the resources for, or mission aligned with administrative oversight of collaborative community food security projects. It would have been ideal to advocate for support and assure guidance at a higher level before approaching connections in the community.
- **What could we have done differently?** We could have focused on two or three sectors of the community to encourage collaboration, rather than approaching multiple sectors to see what fruit fell from the tree. A more targeted approach could have facilitated the use of our limited resources (team time, energy), a more focused project-oriented strategy, and facilitated quicker progress in selected areas. Then, small successes and strategies may have been realized from which to more quickly build capacity in other sectors later. Had we done so, we could have learned how to conduct cross-sector or collaborative projects and those lessons could have been transferrable to other sector initiatives. As well, research could be conducted to determine what funding might be available in advance of approaching a sector, including what criteria must be met and what agency would be the administrator for

the funds. It may have been helpful to draft a specific change initiative in collaboration with Salvation Army food bank management in advance of pursuing contacts in a sector. However, prior to connecting with individuals and organizations in a sector, I did not know what projects might emerge. The next step would be to have a ready list of potential organizational partners willing and able to make a long-term commitment and provide funding.

Reflexivity

If I had done more work in advance with my partner agency, the participatory team could have approached various sectors (politicians; educators; businesses; media; funders; and academics) with comprehensive proposals that already had administrative and financial support. As a doctoral student researcher, this was a bit of a catch-22.

When reflecting on my role in this outcome I believe I facilitated discussions, I listened and captured ideas and perspectives, and I tried to imagine a way forward. When I analyzed whether (and to what extent) I and my fellow researchers achieved capacity-building goals, I came to several realizations regarding the research question: Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for populations they serve?

The goal of capacity-building was to increase the ability of people to accomplish objectives within a community, to develop greater awareness of the source of problems, imagine solutions, and find ways to overcome obstacles. With an improved baseline capacity for advocacy and facilitating change, it was expected that the community would be better equipped

to leverage solutions. I believe this objective was met. The goals of advocacy and capacity-building were addressed in three contexts as follows:

1. First, develop awareness: I and my fellow researchers sought to improve awareness in the Salvation Army organization regarding what others were doing to combat food insecurity. As a result of the current study, a number of ideas were brought to the table. Each member of the research team was eager to share inspirational activities they had seen elsewhere, as was I. As a group, we advanced the team's knowledge with regard to successful models used elsewhere to facilitate change in a community and, as a result of the current study activities, we learned that improvement was possible, that we were capable of creating a thoughtful vision for sustainable change, and we learned strategies we might utilize to do so.
2. Second, imagine solutions: I and my fellow researchers explored whether developing the appropriate social networks and social capital through undertaking community capacity-building activities would lead to new innovations in food bank procedures and enhance the quantity and quality of food available. My team sought to expand the Salvation Army's social networks in Penticton, identifying those willing to combat food insecurity in the area. We brainstormed and developed worthwhile ideas. For example, when Participant #5 said "hunger is a community issue, not just the food bank problem", we considered establishing a community advisory board. We talked about creating a community survey to determine the needs of various population sectors and organizations concerned with food security, connecting with people working in mental health with regard to horticulture therapy, supporting programs to

encourage young farmers, creating a food policy for the region, and working with the media to raise awareness of community needs and opportunities to collaborate.

3. Third, build capacity for change: A sense of purpose and community emerged and evolved through capacity-building activities. I and my fellow researchers created the space and direction, we mobilized and empowered each other to act. We hoped this ongoing effort would improve access to healthy food for food bank recipients and vulnerable people in the community. As a result of Cycle 1, my team demonstrated that a like-minded team had the ability to make progress on a major societal issue such as food insecurity. We were beginning to develop connections in the community who were eager to facilitate food security.

Cycle 2: Community Engagement

Cycle 2 included focus groups and interviews with members of the education sector at several levels such as wineries, which had a history of using the perimeter of their property for growing food for the food bank, and government representatives at various levels. I and my fellow researchers explored collective and complementary assets and liabilities, the possibilities for collaborative action and obstacles in those contexts. This occurred under the objective of expanding social networks and capacity-building. In addition, research into funding sources was undertaken.

Problem

At this point the research vision had expanded beyond the original 16-week scope. Projects were no longer conceptualized within parameters for working within one organization and were envisioned at a more complex collaborative community level. Since I and my fellow researchers had explored possibilities for collaboration in Cycle 1, we now needed more in-depth

discussions with contacts in those sectors: government representatives at multiple levels; educators at multiple levels; businesses; the media; and funding sources.

Cycle 2 Research Question

Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

Investigation

During Cycle 1, several sectors of the community were identified including politicians, educators, businesses, media, funders, and academics and we had begun to identify potential assets in each sector and to ask questions. In Cycle 2 it was time to consider who to connect with in each sector to further objectives. I and my fellow researchers needed determine who would be willing to meet with us to explore concrete ideas to improve the quality and quantity of food for food bank clients in Penticton.

At the conclusion of Cycle 1, major obstacles included a) finding the right people to connect with at the various levels, and b) learning organizational processes and protocol for implementing change initiatives. I and my fellow researchers narrowed project objectives to outreach in specific sectors in order to explore opportunities for collaboration on behalf of the food bank. The sectors which appeared most accessible to the current team included political leaders: municipal, regional, provincial, national; elementary and high schools; universities, including the University of British Columbia; wineries and the agricultural sector; and local newspapers. The goal was, while we explored sector connections in Cycle 2, the five sectors most likely to engage would be determined in order to focus our time. This was later narrowed to four sectors.

Since there had been some history of collaboration in the food security sphere with the University of British Columbia (Okanagan)'s marketing students and students at Okanagan College, those were the some of the first connections we intended to pursue. In the media sector, my team identified key contacts, such as the lead editor at the Penticton Herald, and the approach most likely to be effective to engage. For example, after meeting with representatives from a public school, it was helpful to meet with a school board member to determine what the process would be to facilitate systemic change within the school district. My team hoped school representatives might meet with us to explore common areas of interest; opportunities for working together might be of value to the community.

Practical decisions included who might be the best person to arrange a meeting, the best way to approach the key contact, and the agenda items that might help us move forward. These decisions were resolved in four ways as follows:

1. First, within the research team various individuals had connections to certain key contacts. The person who had access could issue an invitation to meet with our group.
2. Second, after several attempts to schedule, it was determined that the noon hour, usually lunch time, might be the best time to meet. I and my fellow researchers viewed food is a critical component. Greek, Thai, Indian, pizza, and Chinese food were settled upon as options that might provide adequate quantities within my personal budget.
3. Third, the agenda included an introduction to the current study and the assets I and my fellow researchers were trying to identify. For example, local schools had gardens but, in the summer, the children were not there to tend to the garden or harvest its product. The Salvation Army had a summer program, called Fresh from the Farm,

and if there were a collaborative approach, the entire growing season could be covered. I and my fellow researchers apprised civic leaders of the vision and mandate of the current study, a framework that consistently elevated the conversation.

4. Fourth, my team sought information as to what might be accomplished within a year and what the obstacles might be in each context. For example, to accomplish the creation of a farm school, we would have to overcome obstacles such as the partners needed and work within regulatory requirements. To accomplish an alignment between the elementary and high schools with higher education institutions, we would have to overcome obstacles such as funding and finding the right people to do the ground work for project management. The overarching problem was food insecurity in general, but the bottom line was a problem of oversight and funding.

Plan and Execution: Interviews and Focus Groups

Cycle 2 included six in-depth interviews conducted by myself, and five focus group sessions which included three or more of my core research team along with sector representatives, as well as debriefings with the team following the focus group sessions. I and my fellow researchers had lists of people to contact, and we set up meetings where we had access or success with cold-calls. In one meeting with a representative from the agriculture sector, for example, my team learned of an important contact person working with the context of farm school programs and the potential for collaboration with them. As well, we learned that it could be helpful to directly approach the Minister of Education or Agriculture to identify social network connections. As it turned out, borrowing a tractor or specialized equipment for a short period of time was easy with the right connections. Eventually our initial contacts led to others, such as Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the Castanet, Western News, and Global TV.

In the original research proposal for the current study, community members were expected to commit to participating in a specific project. It was intended that Informed Consent forms were utilized and the focus groups were recorded. However, members of the community (outside of the core research team) felt they needed exploratory, information gathering sessions and did not want to commit to anything further. Therefore, field notes and post meeting reflections became the method of data collection. I and my fellow researchers also sought additional contacts, i.e., referrals, during exploratory sessions. In total six hour-long interviews and five focus groups took place which connected the team with individuals whose roles were considered critical to various collaborative projects. Some additional personal communications and spontaneous meetings took place that were not included formally in the current study.

At first it was difficult to set up the meetings, but we figured out that lunchtime was the best time. A note from my journal read: *how the heck am I supposed to get people to take time from their busy schedules – hey Procter has something to try –have food!* Procter's (2004, 2006) work enabled me to reflect upon how he conceptualized events as moments in time, moments of communion. He talked about the need for thoughtfully setting the stage for productive engagement. With this insight, I considered how to create an engaging and productive environment to stimulate discussions regarding future collaboration. My team determined what social networks to develop and who would do what and when. Discussion topics inevitably lead to subsequent meetings and communications by telephone and email. For example, a summary of each focus group and interview follows (in chronological order).

Focus Group 1. (November 2, 2017) Myself and Participants #2, #5, and #6 met with a representative of the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association and agricultural sector to learn about the potential of the community of Penticton to grow food. During this meeting we learned

about additional contacts which might be advantageous to pursue. For example, it was suggested a Kwantlen University professor had established farm schools in the past; a local teacher had set up enhanced food security programs in Santa Rosa, California; and another contact might be the elected representative at the local regional district level. It was suggested that the food banks could explore establishing relationships with different marketing boards to access the best pricing on agricultural produce.

Interview 1. (November 6, 2017) I met with a representative of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) to investigate farm school collaborations, the process by which land use approval could be acquired, and land use availability. During this meeting, I learned there was funding available and we (the Salvation Army) could apply. The RDOS might have land available for agricultural activities. At the Salvation Army, the issue was not so much about the availability of land, since the Salvation Army had frequently been offered land, but the issue was finding and leveraging volunteer time and dedicated staff towards effective planning and supervision. This was where an RDOS grant might be helpful in the future.

Interview 2. (November 6, 2017) I met with a councillor from the City of Penticton to learn the process for creating a food charter for the community. We discussed national support and funding for various projects as described herein. I sought to identify additional connections at the national level. During this meeting I learned that there had been several attempts to facilitate a community committee, but for various reasons traction was not achieved. It was suggested that I could visit City Hall to review the minutes of those meetings and the names of participants.

Focus Group 2. (February 19, 2018) Myself and Participants #2, #3, #5, and #6 met with a teacher and administrator from Parkway Elementary School to explore potential for

collaboration. We explained the research objectives and the problem of quality and quantity of food at the Salvation Army food bank. We described our wish to explore parameters for collaborative projects, such as educational sessions that we could present to the teachers within their professional development program. We explored a cooperative strategy with the Salvation Army for school garden care during the summer months. This led to discussion of advocacy efforts that could be undertaken to approach the Ministry of Education for school garden funding on behalf of each of the 100 schools in the district, and the potential for collaboration with the Parent Associations. Provincial curriculum changes had promoted the creation of learning environments, so the garden projects would be well-aligned with this imperative, providing an ideal environment for children to learn math, biology, social skills and nutrition. We sought to understand how quickly this type of project could be included in the curriculum and what the process of inclusion would require, such as a written proposal and a written course design. At this point it was clear that course design and teaching expertise would be needed.

Focus Group 3. (February 26, 2018) Myself and Participants #2, #3, #5, and #6 met with a representative of the Arterra winery and a representative of the Hillside winery. The wineries have land, workers, and equipment. Arterra's representative said they had planted and donated 20,000 pounds of food in just one season, according to my field notes. We hoped they would join us for lunch to connect with additional wineries so we could encourage partnerships. They could take advantage of the tax credit available to them, if they had not done so already. The credit was in effect through January 1, 2021, then extended to January 1, 2024, and allowed "25% of the eligible amount of qualifying gifts each tax year" (British Columbia, 2020a, para. 2). It was suggested we engage with the Grape Grower Association (800 growers) through their newsletter to reach out to other wineries.

Focus Group 4. (October 18, 2018) Myself and Participant #2, #5, and #6 met via conference call with the Kwantlen Polytechnic University Director of the ISFS (Institute for Sustainable Food Systems) to discuss how the University could work with our community. For example, the Institute had worked with First Nations and cities to develop and operate community farms and farm schools on a small scale. As well, at the time, the ISFS was collaborating with Metro Vancouver and the City of Langley to develop a 22-acre urban agriculture plan.

Focus Group 5. (April 30, 2018) Myself and Participant #2, #5, and #6 met with a University of British Columbia (Okanagan) professor and four undergraduate students to discuss collaborative potential for the Smart Donate mobile application and the University Enactus project Roots. During this meeting we learned about the university projects and related possibilities for collaboration (to be discussed in more detail).

[May- September was the time to prepare the community garden, plant, grow, and harvest so there were no focus groups formally scheduled.]

Focus Interview 3. (October 5, 2018) Participant #2 had previously met with the Managing Editor of the Penticton Herald and introduced me in order that we might discuss providing information to the news outlet. The goal was to advocate, educate, and inform the community regarding the project. One critical message was that the Salvation Army food bank accepted fresh produce. During this meeting I learned that the newspaper had economic constraints and could not assign someone to write about the food security effort. However, if the Salvation Army were able to provide the copy and photos, the newspaper would use the material.

Focus Interview 4. (December 19, 2018) I met with a Trustee (a school board member) of School District #67 (Okanagan Skaha) in Penticton to collaboration with the School Board on

developing and managing school gardens. We discussed collaboration at the district level. In addition, this individual had insights into the needs of the Indigenous population. During this meeting I learned the positive aspects of engaging children and teaching them about the sources of food, how to grow and prepare food. The garden had the potential to teach life skills related to health, teamwork, and project management, and to provide instructional content related to biology, ecology, and math. Further, the Trustee understood district processes and knew the right people to contact. I was advised to speak with staff at the school board, preferably the Head.

Focus Interview 5. (December 20, 2018) I met with a School District Head in person at an office at the school board facility to learn the process and timeline for including a new course in the primary and high school curricula. We discussed collaboration in terms of high school courses including experiential learning for students. I learned of a *Fresh from the Farm* initiative that picked apples for the food bank in local orchards each year. Collaboration with the *Fresh from the Farm* program was sought to care for school gardens the following July and August. Parameters and challenges were outlined for the partnership projects. During this meeting, I learned the requirements for the process of implementing a new course within the high school curriculum. This involved finding a teacher who would be interested in teaching, preparing the syllabus, securing advisory board approval, then surveying students to see if there was any interest in taking the class.

Focus Interview 6. (December 20, 2018) I met with a local restaurant owner to discuss food waste donations and discovered barriers such as scheduling collection of donations and their fear of liability despite the Good Samaritan Rule. I realized that, rather than working with one business, I should contact a restaurant association.

Cycle 2 Results

It is important to recognize that personal communications and spontaneous meetings occurred which were not included in the formal study. In addition to the above, for example, there were meetings by telephone with the Vancouver Foundation (regarding funding processes), several representatives of the British Columbia Fruit and Organic Growers Association, and others. Although I and my fellow researchers had obtained exciting results in terms of contacts within the community that could facilitate sustainable solutions to food insecurity, nothing concrete had yet emerged related to improving the quality and quantity of food available at the Salvation Army food bank. We had determined that the education and media sectors were critical to sustainable solutions to food insecurity. One contact could lead to others, and often led to multiple ideas for collaboration. There was a lot going on spontaneously in addition to the focus groups and interviews that were formally included in Cycle 2 data. For example,

- In October 2017, myself and Participant #2, the Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army), discussed ideas for working with various wineries and the Penticton School Board. Participant #2 also met with several individuals at the Salvation Army to announce her departure at the end of October and to update them regarding University of British Columbia (Okanagan) and Salvation Army partnership and sector collaborations. At the time it was expected that the Salvation Army would hire a new program coordinator. (Note: Participant #2 subsequently stayed involved with the project through April 2018.)
- In November 2017, rather than hiring a new Community Program Coordinator, the Salvation Army institutionalized a new position focused on business analysis and creating better efficiencies as measured by financial outputs. This had the effect of

eliminating the potential for a project budget. Specifically, the Salvation Army was responsible for submitting grant proposals and their future objectives did not include the continuation of, or expansion of, the community gardens or other collaborative food security initiatives. Thus, no one was available to either supervise collaborative large-scale activities such as ours, or to submit grants for funding, even though the food bank would be the direct beneficiary. At that time, the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at Kwantlen Polytechnic University offered to connect to discuss local food system initiatives such as setting up community farms and farm school plans, as they had significant experience in this context.

- In January 2018, I was informed about key faculty working in relevant programs at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) who had researched and proposed the design of what was later called the Smart Donate mobile application to tackle the problem of the disequilibrium between what was needed at the food bank and what was received from community donations. The Smart Donate application was intended to provide a food tracking system. A meeting was arranged a few months later.
- In February 2018, we learned the Langley School District had a unique collaboration, called *Nature's Classroom*, where 5th graders managed gardens that supported the Salvation Army's food bank. In summer, when the schools closed, the Salvation Army took over responsibility for the gardens. We learned of a *Feed the Valley* program sponsored by a local credit union, the *Vancouver Hill Community Garden*, the *Penticton Indian Band Community Garden*, *The Incredible Edible Garden*, and the Penticton Herald (newspaper) garden, as well as gardens at the First Baptist Church, Nanaimo Square, and Shatford Center.

- In March 2018, the Smart Donate mobile application team from the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) were invited to meet with our team (in April), first at the Salvation Army office to tour the food bank and then at a joint luncheon. The University of British Columbia Smart Donate program had received two grants for software development. In addition, our team was invited to a round table meeting with approximately 30 people to discuss homelessness and related issues. Those meetings were to include a Member of Parliament and the Leader of the federal National Democratic Party.
- In April 2018, the Salvation Army withdrew from the project due a decision to focus more of their time as an organization on their spiritual mission, finances and business strategies rather than on the food bank and food security locally. The Salvation Army had been responsible for submitting grant proposals to the Vancouver Foundation, New Horizons, and for summer youth jobs. Going forward, management objectives did not include the continuation or expansion of the community gardens or other food for all initiatives.
- In May 2018, two members of the core research team, Participant #5 and #6, left the project for various reasons. I put in a lot of work on Google Spreadsheets to support letters of intent and describe a solid plan of approach to potential collaborators, such as the school district, wineries, the media, and university programs.

[May through September were busy times for preparing the ground, planting, growing, and harvesting at the community garden.]

- In June and July of 2018, I drafted grant applications and thought through various strategies which might be employed to further the project.

- In August 2018, the University of British Columbia Smart Donate application program's lead professor provided me with a one-page summary of a food bank project in terms of multiple grant applications planned for the year, such as the Canadian Institute of Health Research application. The Penticton Salvation Army Food Bank was to be listed as a collaborator with regard to distribution of food to its' clients.
- In September 2018, I and the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) professor briefly discussed the possibilities for social marketing and educational campaigns utilizing the Smart Donate application and other digital platforms. The Salvation Army had sought a larger space, the "old Black Press" (personal communication via email dated September 19, 2018) to offer clients the self-hamper packing model, but the purchase had fallen through due to environmental assessment requirements.
- In October 2018, I met with the leadership of a men's shelter, Compass House, to learn more about their needs.
- In November 2018, I attended a Food Secure Conference in Montreal. Still hoping to facilitate change in the role of food banks, I wrote a first draft of an article: *A Place at the Table: Shifting perspectives on the acceptance and potential role food banks might play in the right to food movement.* This was a summary of insights gained during the conference and my thoughts regarding how I might utilize in Penticton what I had learned at the conference. I sent a copy of this article with a report (PAR Update) to the Salvation Army in January, 2019 (Appendix G).
- In February 2019, I met with the Executive Director of the Community Foundation of South Okanagan with regard to including experiential learning in high school courses.

I presented the outline given to School District #67 and learned about their priorities, position, and scope regarding social change in the community. I sought information regarding potential obstacles, possibilities and continuing conversations.

- In March 2019, I engaged with the Community Foundation of South Okanagan with regard to pursuing a $10,000 grant to support a farm school project in Okanagan with oversight from the University of British Columbia Smart Donate application program's lead professor, who had set up similar programs elsewhere. The Community Foundation, as a collective, has a keen overview of the needs and volunteer assets in the area and had influence in terms of social policy, as the Mayor of Penticton was part of the Foundation. I explored The Vancouver Foundation Systems Change Grant ($300,000CAD), which was too big to take on without a supporting infrastructure. There was a $10,000CAD grant available for planning to structure the $300,000CAD proposal. I wrote a preliminary grant draft proposal (Appendix H). However, I was unable to gather agency support.

[May through September was the time for preparing, planting, growing, and harvesting food at the community garden.]

- On June 28, 2019, I presented a poster (Figure 11) in Montreal at the 7th Annual Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) Conference at McGill University.
- In the fall of 2019, my committee supervisor had to take a leave of absence and the active stages of research stalled completely until spring 2020 as I could not locate another supervisor.

Figure 11.

Cycle 2: Poster Presentation: Creating Environments to Support Change

- However, throughout the rest of 2019 and into early 2020 outreach and conversations continued by email, telephone, and in person with potential collaborators. For example, new contacts were made, such as the Princess Margaret Secondary School, and I followed up with others at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen with regard to rural grants, and the Healthy Communities and Population Health Services at the Department of Interior Health with regard to funding during the 2020-2021 grant cycle. If nothing else, Cycle 2 was a great success in terms of advocacy and education both for myself and members of the community.

Reflection

Embarking on a collaborative action strategy within the community meant that I and my fellow researchers encountered obstacles we realized were typical: the need for funding, an agency to provide administrative structure, a government issued registered charity number, etcetera (Zuber-Skerritt & Fletcher, 2007, p. 428). In Cycle 1, seven internal exploratory focus group meetings helped determined which sectors (agriculture, education, media, etc.) within which our team wished to collaborate. During Cycle 2, which focused on community engagement, we had thought to narrow our target sectors to five, but it seemed four were the best targets including the education, governance, agricultural, and media sectors. Although a larger number of meetings were set up or happened spontaneously during Cycle 2, eleven were included over a period of about a year for the purpose of the current study. The community engagement process in Cycle 2 involved meetings, emails, and telephone calls beginning November 2, 2017, as illustrated herein.

During Cycle 2, my reflective field notes (journal) were guided by the questions: What results were achieved? What actions were taken? What worked? What did not work? What could

the researchers have done differently? What should be the next steps or actions? For example, from my notes in Cycle 2 entered on a spreadsheet following Focus Group #4 on April 23, 2018, with the University Director of the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at Kwantlen Polytechnic University:

- **What worked?** Myself and Participants #2, #5, and #6 met with an expert, both interested and willing, who had set up and operated farm schools in the area. Thus, we were connected with the knowledge and network to scale and include a similar project in the Okanagan. Penticton has a lot of fertile land, potential retirees as volunteers, a history of University of British Columbia and Okanagan College collaboration, and support from the agricultural community.
- **Results achieved?** We have a functional construct, a knowledgeable and credible 'champion', and we know what is needed to work with the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS), who we had met the previous November.
- **Actions taken?** A summary was drafted outlining what we knew about farm schools.
- **What should we do next?** We should connect with the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) again to prepare a planning grant application for the Vancouver Foundation. We should connect with the Penticton Indian Band office.
- **What did not work?** We did not have an agency to sponsor the Vancouver Foundation planning grant. We did not have the university connection to young farmers. We needed a collaboration-level commitment from higher level management. We needed land, equipment, and water. We needed a fully-fledged proposal with sponsorship in the spirit of supporting young farmers of tomorrow and

to develop a source of fresh produce for the food bank. We need a project manager to take the project from concept through funding to implementation.

- **What could we have done differently?** Nothing. A viable future plan is still possible.

For example, from my notes in Cycle 2 entered on a spreadsheet following Focus Group #5 (April 30, 2018) at the University of British Columbia:

- **What worked?** Myself, and Participants #2, #5, and #6 met with a professor on the Faculty of Management and his four undergraduate students at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) to discuss potential for collaboration.
- **Results achieved?** In 2016, this professor had received a grant, through the Partnership Engage program, to support a research project: Engaging Stakeholders in Co-Creating a Sustainable Community" A Study of Rural Communities in the B.C. Interior. This involved an initiative to create a Smart Donate mobile application. I and my fellow researchers thought the application might be used to tabulate and quantify achievements such as what was planted at a given partner site, what grew, what was harvested, and what went to the food bank. The Smart Donate mobile application was developed with several objectives, including the objective that food security become part of post-secondary education including summer student practicum experiences, a farm training program, and more. Through this connection, further connections were made by the research team to a partner at the University Enactus project Roots, which had the objective to encourage local farmers to donate their second-grade farm product to the food bank and utilize the Smart Donate application.

- **Actions taken?** Further connections were made by the research team to a partner at the University Enactus project Roots, which had the objective to encourage local farmers to donate their second-grade farm product to the food bank. The Smart Donate application was intended to connect existing projects in Penticton such as community kitchens, school food programs, and community gardens. The Smart Donate/Roots projects were intended to launch in Kelowna as a pilot test in the fall of 2018, with the Penticton launch in early 2019. A Letter of Intent was drafted for the Vancouver Foundation to fund potential projects under the auspices of the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) in early 2019.
- **What should we do next?** Continue to keep in touch and seek ways to finance a collaboration on behalf of the food bank.
- **What did not work?** I and my fellow researchers were unable to implement the ideas or gather the authority structure or funding needed for collaboration due to changing partner (individual and institutional) priorities during Cycle 2. The Salvation Army lacked time and staff to partner and take oversight of a collaboration. The food bank would only be a recipient and a referral source. The faith-based mission of the organization was a priority over the action-oriented food security mission.
- **What could we have done differently?** As a student researcher just developing new connections in the community, it was not possible to foresee how to further develop this opportunity at the time. Multi-level engagement was needed, along with funding, so this was the next priority.

In order to build sustainable solutions to food insecurity, my core research team had realized we also needed to engage with post-secondary students. Having been introduced to the

university level projects, we hoped this population would be consistently educated regarding food security, food banks and the needs they serve, the right to food and food security perspectives, and the issues around perishable and healthy foods needed at food banks. I and my fellow researchers had believed that, if students developed awareness, young people in our community might take responsibility for the food bank and facilitate public engagement with regard nutrition, community kitchens, and community gardens the same way that today's seniors had been doing according to contacts at the Salvation Army. Beyond funding and identifying numerous potential contacts to expand the social network and build capacity in Penticton and surrounding areas, participants also suggested a number of activities, such as student engagement.

Cycle 2 led to new ideas for outreach, such as marketing to people with food to donate or the capacity to grow food for the food bank, such as farmers, the public, stores, and restaurants. An urban/rural teaching farm in Penticton and the surrounding area included five satellites throughout the Okanagan. Meaning, we could envision setting up five farm schools across the valley from Vernon in the north to Oliver and Osoyoos in the south. A farm school typically obtained the land, hired instructors, and created a curriculum for students to learn farming skills through practical experience. As an example, the Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) partnered in 2010 to create a small-scale intensive, high-value working farm on six acres in Richmond. The university had a second partnership, the Tsawwassen First Nation Farm School, a 20-acre certified organic farm established in 2015 (KPU, 2021). I and my fellow researchers hoped the land, water, and machinery could be donated, that young farmers could be educated through a collaboration between Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the University of British

Columbia at Okanagan, and that the food grown could go straight to the local food banks and the Soupateria.

As mentioned earlier, additional ideas included communicating with the Ministry of Education and School District Heads regarding school gardens in collaboration with Parent Associations for developing curriculum learning environments; connecting with the Grape Growers Association 800 members and a restaurant association regarding the Good Samaritan Rule and tax credits; providing copy and photos to local news outlets; and pursuing an RDOS grant to fund dedicated administrative staff in appropriate contexts. Although these great suggestions were noted for future action, there was no capacity to pursue them during the current study, as members of the participatory team had begun to experience changing priorities and the Salvation Army partnership was lost. Cycle 2 also uncovered clear challenges to further research, including:

- finding key councillors who were supportive
- developing public support
- the administrative personnel to focus and follow up
- testing best practices
- securing funding
- persisting until a tipping point was reached

Reflexivity

After each session, I reflected on what worked, what did not, what I might have changed during the process, the next action steps, and my part in facilitating progress (or lack of progress) as I perceived it at the time:

- **What worked**? In the book, *Civic Communion*, Procter (2006) suggested food was always an important element in human gatherings. When I and my fellow researchers experienced difficulties finding a good meeting time with community leaders, we decided to provide lunch. Everyone expressed gratitude, and I always brought extra so leftovers were available. Ethnic foods from local restaurants added to general interest and created an atmosphere of informality and congeniality, leading to, I thought, more engaging conversations.

  I and my fellow researchers created an agenda or framework after each focus group to guide the subsequent conversation (sample: Appendix E). This added structure which was helpful to understanding shared interests, assets, the mission, and creating a foundation from which we could envision working together for the greater good. The questions asked were intended to be lighthearted, elicit smiles and provide permission to think idealistically. Using humor can be "politically intentional, like education, towards self and social critique" (Clover et al., 2013, p. 36). Then, the ideas generated were tailored toward what could be accomplished within a year. It was great to see the ideas pop up around anticipated obstacles and potential actions to take in the future. This information was helpful in creating a shared vision even when it was not obvious how the group might achieve those goals or overcome obstacles. As a result of the current study, as described previously, numerous connections were made with individuals and organizations as the research progressed. As an outcome of Cycle 2, there was clear evidence of significant capacity in Penticton and the surrounding areas to contribute to food security.

Social networks were built, strengthen and expanded. This was highly visible in the education sector. The farm school project, as conceptualized, had the potential for being an umbrella under which an integrated food security program might involve a number of schools such as the Okanagan College, the Penticton Indian Band, Kwantlen University, and the local governments. The Vancouver foundation was identified as a potential funding agency under their System Change Grant, which could provide $300,000 over a three-year period.

- **What did not work?** The exploratory inquiry was very helpful to generate ideas, concerns, and make realistic connections, yet additional engagements and firmer commitments were required. However, continuity within the research team became an issue due to people leaving the group, shifting organizational priorities at the Salvation Army, and budgetary reallocations. The Salvation Army business strategy changes lessened the priority for community engagement and eliminated relevant positions within the organizational framework. Several members of the core team retired or were transferred to other provinces. In addition, it was determined that the South Okanagan Community Foundation did not have the capacity to undertake a project of this scope at the time. Communication was, however, maintained. Importantly, the next step was to determine if the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) or the City of Penticton might be in position to act as the grant applicant and assign an administrator for oversight. A contact was secured with an individual who had the necessary experience and connections to implement a plan. If local government support could be obtained, this could lead to a path forward.

- **What was learned?** In summary, two major lessons were learned during Cycle 2: First, longer timelines were clearly necessary to develop sustainable relationships and projects. This kind of work was organic and could evolve in unpredictable ways. Second, we needed a stable funding agency with the capacity for long-term commitments. Importantly, each organization had a defined process and hierarchy with varying requirements and criteria for project evaluation for the purpose of funding. While it might appear to be putting the cart before the horse, it would probably be helpful to keep potential sponsors updated with regard to ideas and progress from the beginning of an investigation.

  In terms of the investigation process itself, to identify potential projects, Cycle 1 and 2 required lengthy exploratory and investigational periods during which vulnerabilities appeared. In any group, there is potential for changing dynamics in terms of relocation, illnesses, employment and other changes in priorities. Further, the research team included volunteers. Outside influences seriously impact a small team. In larger groups, or with agency support, some instability with regard to personnel on the research team might not be as critical, however the same dynamics exist in sponsor and partner organizations. The research team was impermanent. It did not have a strong infrastructure, authority figure, or leadership position. In the future, it would be important to be prepared to recruit backup assistance.
- **What I would do differently?** In retrospect, it would have been helpful to obtain a commitment from an agency to take ownership of the initiative and to get a grant to support a rigorous structure, deadline, and budget. Again, there was clear evidence of significant capacity in Penticton and the surrounding areas to contribute directly to

food security in a collaborative context. In effect, a business plan was needed to develop an organizing structure, timeline, and funding source. This would have provided the framework for funding and the staff to manage the work involved to organize a multi-directional approach - or even a project-based approach - to the issue of food insecurity.

- **Next steps?** Meetings should be scheduled with the Regional District government to determine whether our representative has ideas to move the project forward.

Revisiting Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

My experiences brought to mind the movie, Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events, which I had seen in 2004, but there was less mystery as to why the events in Cycle 2 occurred. My recollection of this film helped elucidate why barriers to food security could have been viewed as unsurmountable obstacles. In addition to Hall's (2005) statement, mentioned earlier, that "Doubt may be one of our most identifiable common denominators" (p. 16), at this point, I found the work of Dr. Carol Dweck to be insightful. In her *Teaching a Growth Mindset* address at Stanford University (November 3, 2015), she spoke in terms of reward for persistent effort in both the individual and group context, developing empowerment both at an incredibly young age and as adults. On a large scale, Dweck's program with Israelis and Palestinians revealed those groups appeared to become more interested in each other's perspective and willing to entertain compromises when taught the growth mindset. Dweck contrasted a view that failure was harmful vs. failure being helpful as a platform for learning (13:36). Dweck felt children would develop a growth mindset when taught to look at failures as opportunities, if they were able to practice this continually.

Clover et al. (2013) stated “Lessons can be learned from both negative and positive experiences”, that “a positive attitude around negative or unexpected occurrences” is important, and that reflection on these experiences “helps the facilitator to return to his or her own feelings about what took place and begin to understand them as learning continually in process and a way of strengthening future work” (p. 117), particularly when something is being tried for the first time. One section in Chapter 6 said, “You make the road by walking” (p. 120). Thanks to this inspiration and guidance, I stopped focusing on what had not been accomplished in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 as compared to the significant work we had done.

Again, I considered what Bell et al. (2004) had stated, that shared control in participatory research between organizational participants and researchers meant it was to be expected that the organizational presence and participation could significantly influence the ability of the researcher to facilitate change. To see how insights from the literature played out in action first hand was enlightening. Progress was made, insights were gathered, new actionable ideas were crafted, and a great deal of knowledge was obtained about participatory action research. Happily, the unfortunate circumstances and barriers encountered during Cycle 2 still led to the emergence of a strategy for concrete contribution to the food bank during Cycle 3.

The Problem with Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

First, with the attrition of the original participatory research team and agency support, concrete outcomes were unattainable as related to improving the quality and quantity of food at the local food bank. Cycle 1 (Internal Exploratory) had been completed, and Cycle 2 (Community Engagement) had been productive, but funding and organizational accountability at the Salvation Army food bank were out of reach. As a student with a passion for the current study, I felt that I could not leave the project at this point. Social networks had been established

and strengthened, and new connections had fantastic potential. I felt I had made headway and wanted to realize a more concrete contribution. However, at the time, I was unable to obtain the commitment of a supervising sponsor or an organization with the authority to establish project objectives, to substantiate letters of intent, to make progress on the concepts and ideas for finding funding, or for managing the vision the research group had embraced. Therefore, in order to move towards more concrete outcomes, I kept searching for another agency to provide organizational support and for grant submission (unsuccessfully at the time).

Investigation (Plan, Execution, Results)

Three other organizations were contacted in the context of furthering the current study. I arranged between one and three exploratory meetings with each:

1. The Soupateria in Penticton, which focused on providing food resources to the community, initially considered supporting a student grant. However, there was a need to go through a lengthy board approval process and the Soupateria lacked the capacity to supervise the operation.
2. The Foundry BC, an organization focused on supporting young people with health and wellness resources, required a lengthy advisory board approval process, too.
3. The Community Foundation of the South Okanagan was positioned in the community as an over-arching agency offering grants related to small scale community and neighborhood projects that built strength and resilience and fostered well-being. The CoVic Garden Box Project seemed to be a very good fit for this mission and the Foundation was interested in learning more about my research objectives. However, their priorities at the time related to a new initiative for supporting young people and they did not have the capacity for oversight of another project.

Reflection (Analysis)

Organizational interest seemed strong, but the leadership capacity for ongoing research or collaborative projects was not available. The lengthy times required for approval processes generated uncertainty about the alignment of the research and organizational priorities. Each organization would have been able to contribute in its own way and from within its own organizational agenda, but none were prepared at that time to take responsibility. As stated by Hall et al. (2015), "The non-profit sector does not have the capacity for research that universities enjoy. They do not necessarily want extensive capacity to do their own research…" (p. 108), yet they stated, the university was at the center of the research funding endeavor. Hall and colleagues also mentioned that "Only a few programs of [the] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council encourage and recognize university-community partnerships and evaluate differently the scientific production" (p. 109). This was food for thought going forward.

Reflexivity

Stories came to my mind, such as Jonah and the Whale, The Odyssey, Pinocchio, and Star Wars. These stories each included heroes up against seemingly insurmountable odds. The protagonist in each story had an objective but encountered great danger and had to overcome their fears. My role had been to facilitate, do the foot work, inform and negotiate, and to support others in positions of authority. It turned out that my fear was of taking charge. I needed to figure out how to move forward. I reviewed what had worked, what had not worked, and what I might do on my own instead of working with an agency such as the Salvation Army that had broad standing in the community in the context of food security efforts.

As described earlier, in November, 2018, I attended a Food Secure Conference in Montreal. Still hoping to facilitate change in the role of food banks, I wrote a summary of

insights gained during the conference. The article was included in a report to the Salvation Army in January, 2019 (Appendix G). I considered how I might utilize what I learned by creating a 'shopping list' of 23 items, which are still relevant today, that captured some areas of focus for food banks.

1. It is not just about food – it's about dignity and arranging space, products, support, and services to better meet holistic human needs
2. Fresh is best -- systems of requisitioning, storage, and distribution are shifting
3. Cash is best - for those wanting to make donations, cash was encouraged because of the leveraged buying power that can be realized. Typically, a $1.00 donation can transform into a $3.00 buying power - of the right foods
4. Networking with other organizations within the community is necessary to better address needs in a social and political advocacy manner. Working collaboratively with City Halls, schools, businesses, and provincial and federal governments
5. It was important to be aware of trends among other food bank, a shift toward creating a shopping experience instead of a traditional breadline, handout lineups
6. It was important to reach out to vulnerable people and shut-ins
7. Reforms should demonstrate sensitivity and respect for Indigenous cultures and foods, intergenerational needs, and educational needs
8. A shift towards membership of a food center, such as a co-op, where people might be engaged rather than seeing needy populations as clients or food bank users
9. A role in discussions with highest levels of government consultation efforts
10. Medical schools require students to learn more about food insecurity and provide opportunities to learn from practical experience with the food bank communities

11. Contributing towards helping people with job training in warehouse management work, kitchen and food handing, and customer service training
12. Re-purposing waste by using near expiry date foods for drying, soups, or other added value products
13. Having virtual food drives to attract cash donations rather than food donations
14. Eliminate the shame of refusing unhealthy or inappropriate foods - respect and healthy food policies developed and implemented
15. Investigative analysis and inquiry in order to prepare white papers, to share and guide new principles and best practices for food bank operations
16. New openness and willingness of boards to ask Why aren't we? when presented with *right to food* principles
17. Integration within food centers -- no more name tags to differentiate between staff and volunteers and clients
18. Experimental environment within which new practices can be tried, feedback data gathered and evaluated for making evidence-based decisions
19. Shift from a moralistic nutritional/dietician hierarchy to include a more holistic social work paradigm
20. Mapping within communities and provinces in an attempt to collaborate for more impact in change initiatives
21. Willingness to embrace the imperfections and contradictions and have crucial conversations within all stakeholders
22. A growing awareness of the big tent concept as illustrated by over 200 cities signing the Milan Urban Policy Pact of 2015 (Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, 2020) - a

commitment to using a common set of indicators of a healthy food system for a city: sustainable, inclusive, resilient, safe, diverse

23. Supporting a guaranteed living wage initiative

Turning point

After I presented the poster (Figure 11) in Montreal at the 7th Annual Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) Conference at McGill University, and while my dissertation supervisor was on leave, I expected to finish analyzing my data and write up my findings and conclusions. Then, I had lunch with the former Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) who had decided not to move out of town after all. It was suggested that a past community garden coordinator had just graduated (earning a degree in education) and might be available to help me move the project forward. Because I still wanted to facilitate sustainable change with regard to food insecurity in Penticton, I sought approval for Cycle 3.

Cycle 3: Action Research in the Community

To my thinking, Cycle 3 was happily dubbed *Taking the P out of PAR*. Within the setting of the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, this was no longer a participatory action research project; it was now an intervention-oriented action research project (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Re-energized and hoping to make a solid contribution, I took on the leadership role and managed the project exclusively through my own resources. The research question for Cycle 3 changed to reflect the new approach:

Taking an active leadership role, to what extent could I create and empower a team of university students and an administrator to catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

Problem(s)

As described earlier, the bottom line was a problem of oversight and funding. However, I was now prepared to take responsibility for that. The aforementioned luncheon with the former Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) resulted in conceptualization of an action research plan without the participatory nature of my original proposal (organizational inclusion). This would require moving forward and taking on the roles I now recognized as essential: the organizational role, the financing, and the adaptive leadership role. It also would require going back to the Behavioural Research Ethics Board for ethics review to allow this next cycle to be included in the current study. It was April of 2020, and not only was it time to plant the community gardens but the world had shut down due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. I was very excited when approval was given by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board to proceed (Certificate #H15-0217-0A006).

In May 2020, the Past Garden Coordinator was hired for the summer garden work through the end of July. At that point, the Past Garden Coordinator would have to depart due to a teaching commitment. For Cycle 3, our project was posted in a tuition rebate program so university students could select community service opportunities, such as the current study.

Investigation

With the completion of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, I had answered the research question of how could participatory action research help to catalyze and mobilize social networks and sustainably improve the quality and quantity of food for food bank clients. In fact, participatory action research definitely could help to mobilize social networks but that effort was not going to yield tangible results without significant organizational cooperation and support to implement collaborative projects.

The Cycle 1 research team's endeavors had culminated in ideas for relevant activities and contacts in the community within identified community sectors. In Cycle 2, expert advice and specific collaborative projects were sought as connections were made within and beyond the local community. The four most accessible/critical sectors targeted for outreach were: a) political leaders: municipal, regional, provincial, national; b) education: elementary and high schools, universities including the University of British Columbia; c) the agricultural sector including wineries; and d) the media. My team had sought expert advice in each sector to explore potential collaborative projects and processes for implementation. We identified key individuals, such as the Director of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security at Kwantlen Polytechnic University and many others, and discussed the approach most likely to be effective to engage.

Plan and Execution

By this time, as mentioned earlier, I realized criteria essential to a large-scale project such as we envisioned included funding and stable administrative oversight with board commitment, a lead agency for the duration of the project. Developing collaborative projects was highly complex with lots of moving pieces, complicated organizational agendas and priorities. I needed a grant. However, to get a large grant, I needed a partner and there was not one available.

Given the lack of agency support, I prepared to implement the concept of COVID Victory Gardens with the help of my colleague, the Past Garden Coordinator. As described previously, the idea for Cycle 3 was based upon my own family history: As a child my father helped neighbors dig space in their yards to plant Victory Gardens to supplement their rations and to boost morale during the second World War. We called the Cycle 3 project the CoVic Garden Box Project as a play on the terms COVID-19 and the Victory Gardens.

In May, in addition to planting the community garden together, the Past Garden Coordinator and I hoped to set up raised beds for community participants in their own yards. We sought agreement from community participants that one half of the produce generated would be donated to the food bank. Development was ongoing virtually on Microsoft Teams with a goal to engage 20 families, build up to 50 planter beds, provide seedlings, connect throughout the growing process, and help to deliver the food to the food bank. Outreach strategies included, for example:

- local radio stations CBC and SUN-FM told the public to contact us
- a webpage appended to my own company web site (Dirt Therapy: https://www.healthresearch.ca/dirt-therapy-projects/),
- the Past Community Garden Coordinator created a private Facebook group page (https://www.facebook.com/TheHealthyGardener).
- Volunteer solicitations by the Salvation Army, and
- articles in newspapers such as the Castanet, The Western, and The Penticton Herald

Figure 12 and Figure 13 illustrate a portion of the planning process in May (Figure 12) and in August (Figure 13) in the Past Garden Coordinator's own words as written in her notes at the time. Although the text was minimally edited to fit the space available in this document, her notes remain essentially unchanged as to the descriptive content and context within which they were written at that time. The "guys" referred to were the four university students hired for the summer to engage in the project, as she helped to manage their responsibilities during the CoVic Garden Box Project in Cycle 3.

Figure 12.

Cycle 3: Sample Past Garden Coordinator's Weekly Notes – May

Cycle 3 - Sample Coordinator Weekly Notes (May)

Action Research: Univ/High School Students	What Worked?	What didn't work?	What were three crucial results I needed to achieve this week?	What are 3 top crucial results I need to achieve next week?	What did I achieve? What progress did I make?	What are Lessons to take forward?	What 3 actions need to be scheduled for crucial results to happen
5/4/20	I have boosted traffic on my Facebook page by reaching out to local organizations and had them share my posts with their page. I found a few orgs interested in partnering with us.	Many businesses were not able to donate towards our project at this time. No responses on the GoFundMe yet.	1. Begin advertising CoVic project via social networking (ask for donations, connect with interested people and community partners). 2. Develop Facebook and GoFundMe page. 3. Write article about project send to Castanet and Herald.	1. Begin dearing the front garden of Research Ctr to prep for planting. 2. Continue social networking and seeking partnership in the Okanagan. 3. Find lumber, soil and seed sources for CoVic garden boxes.	Developed Facebook and GoFundMe pages. Began social networking with local orgs about partnering. Wrote an article to Herald, Castanet. Reached out to local buisnesses to see about charitble donations.	It is essential to develop relationships with local organizations and buisnesses es we ask for partnership in our projects. Keep reaching out and promoting our project trying new angels.	1. find out what to keep in the garden spend a little time each day weeding look at garden plans 2. connect with city, Okanagan Indian Band, local buisnesses: explain project, desire for partnership. 3. schedule interview with SunFM Connect with local construction companies, Valley Comfort about about lumber donation or discount.
5/11/20	Word is spreading about The CoVic Garden Box project and people are inquiring to receive as well as volunteer and donate.	reached out to local construction companies for lumber donations, only one returned my email stating that they didn't have any. GoFundMe no response. Castanet has not posted article yet.	1. Weeding at Research Center b4 planting 2. seek support in community for CoVic project (seek donations, interest, promote). 3. Research grants, online tools for analyzing and collecting qualitative data.	1. weeding, planting edible landscape 2. need prize donation for edible landscape competition (clarify expectations at meeting with Donna and team) 3. Purchase lumber, begin dev assembly and distribution plan/team.	Met with city re garden project. Researched social networking, NVivo qualitative analysis and Otter A.I.; Completed phone interview with SunFM. Cleared front garden weeds. Assisted Salvation Army with hydro garden towers.	Contacting people by phone may be more effective than email. I am finding that I am waiting for people to respond to my emails.	1. Inquire about Volunteer Center? purchase/collect materials to begin planting and landscaping 2. Brainstorm ideas with team Reach out to local companies and Create an ad to see about a possible prize donation 3. map out cost of beds (50) contact Valley Comfort re purchasing lumber see about developing a CoVic Garden Box assembly team

Note. This figure was minimally edited to better fit the space available in this document.

Figure 13.

Cycle 3: Sample Past Garden Coordinator's Weekly Notes - August

Cycle 3 - Sample Coordinator Weekly Notes (August)

Action Research: Univ/High School Students	What progress was made this past week?	What Worked?	What were three crucial results I needed to achieve this week?	What are 3 top crucial results I need to achieve next week?	What did I achieve? What progress did I make?	What are Lessons to take forward?	What are 3 actions to be scheduled for crucial results to happen
8/3/2020	Contact with RPKM Director at UVIC. Zoom call Aug 11	Getting organized with Teams. I set up all the tasks there so we could assign them to the Guys.	1. Familiarize myself with project. 2. Use Teams to organize tasks. 3. Meet with Guys and assign tasks.	1. Keep guys updating Teams. 2. Confirm how many hours they can work.	TEAMS!!!! I have a much better sense of what needs to be done and the steps to achieve it.	Communication, keep the Guys motivated.	1. Daily review of Teams 2. Confirm with Donna re: hours. 3. Weekly meetings with the Guys.
8/10/2020	Zoom call with Dr XX & Donna re Action Research connections and possibilities	Great contact for future possibilites with UBCO	1. Follow up with the Guys 2. Plan first draft of everything for Aug 21 3. Confirm capacity time and our $$	1. Presentation to Donna 2. Research grant opportunities 3. Prep for presentation to City	Kept the guys on task and accountable, and energized for the last 2 weeks of CoVic	This is an impossible task for one person, and we need keen support staff	1. Schedule time for Friday 21st 2. Go Fund Me sites 3. Mock presentation to the City.

Note. This figure was minimally edited to better fit the space available in this document.

As an example of the outreach process, the Penticton Herald article on May 26, 2020, (online) was titled "Grow your own for the food bank" (Lacey, 2020) and featured participants working at the community garden (including myself) on behalf of the Salvation Army Food Bank. Lacey asked "local residents to come forward to help grow food" (para. 1). The article asked those who did not have space to consider donating lumber, screws, soil, seeds, or cash to help build the garden beds.

> The goal is to have local property owners agree to grow vegetables in the coming weeks. Those who step forward will keep half the food they grow, while the other half will be donated to the food bank. "We will help them build the beds and then help with instructions and support," said Benson. (Lacey, 2020, para. 6-7)

The Castanet published videos and short articles in May, July, and in August, 2020, also reaching out to the community to seek participants for the garden box project, as well as supplies for building and seeding the gardens. The response was wonderful and encouraging for our team. Articles and videos included, for example:

May 22, 2020: Grow veggies for food bank (video, article by Chelsea Powrie)

> *Excerpt:* The group is actively seeking interested households who have the space to house two boxes, and a sincere interest in growing produce. They are also looking for donations toward their project like lumber, screws, soil, fertilizer, seeds or seedlings.

July 24, 2020: Co-Vic Garden Box Project going well (video, Castanet)

> *Caption:* Community gardens by Medical Arts Health Research Group has been going well for participants, harvesting vegetables now for themselves and the food bank.

July 25, 2020: Food bank garden a success (video, article by Casey Richardson)

> *Excerpts:* "Everyday after school, my daughter comes in and says 'lettuce snack?'" [said] one of the participants who opted in for two garden boxes to be planted in her backyard. [She] has wanted her garden for two years, but hasn't had the time to get the project started trying to balance work and a toddler.
>
> The Penticton food bank picks up half the harvest once the household has picked the ripe product themselves. “Originally, I got in from selfish reasons, but it just makes it that much sweeter to be able to know that not only am I providing for my own family, but another family in need.”
>
> “So far it's been great, I'm really shocked at how quickly things grew.” Her backyard has two different boxes, one she considers the salad box—holding tomatoes, romaine, cucumber and rock spinach—and one for a soup box—potatoes, beans and carrots. [She] added she would absolutely do it again, especially with “having the set up and the extra help to get it going.” “It’s been a great opportunity to put my hands in the soil and get back to earth.”

August 31, 2020: More free veggie boxes (video, article by Casey Richardson)

> *Excerpts:* After seeing 25 households receive garden boxes this spring, COVIC Garden Box Project is asking the City of Penticton to get the word out that they would like to plant more. The goal was to see Penticton households supplied with more fresh produce, while also giving away half of their harvest to the food bank

> for families in need. Many households were working on gardens for the first time and seeing success. “In order to expand this project, we need the city this project through their connection with Penticton residents, community workers and funding,” their proposal reads. Most of the materials were donated by local businesses to help give each household two planter boxes, stocked with soil and vegetables seeds. The organization worked with the new gardeners to help them learn the tools to see successful gardens. COVIC will be presenting to council on Tuesday.

Outreach efforts led a number of people in the community to contact us to take part in the project. The research team initially selected those who did not have access to a community garden. Then, the Facebook group facilitated conversations between participants during the pandemic due to requirements for social distancing and prohibitions against gathering in groups face-to-face.

As I kept an eye on the literature and news within the food security sphere during Cycle 3, I saw there was significant support for the concept of home grown produce as it related to food security. For example, an article by Lal (in June of 2020), titled *Home gardening and urban agriculture for advancing food and nutritional security in response to the COVID-19 pandemic* discussed the significantly increasing severity of food insecurity, particularly in urban centers and megacities, through 2030. Lal cited relevant references such as:

- Galhena et al. (2013) *Home gardens: a promising approach to enhance household food security and wellbeing,*
- McDougall et al. (2019) *Small-scale urban agriculture results in high yields but requires judicious management of inputs to achieve sustainability,* and
- *Community and home gardens increase vegetable intake and food security of residents in San Jose, California* (Algert et al., 2016) was a pilot a study with 50 low-income home gardeners that attempted to improve health through vegetable intake.

Lal (2020) stated “Enhancing availability at the household and community levels through home gardening and urban agriculture is an important strategy” and that “Home gardening can play an important role in advancing food and nutritional security during and after the COVD-19 pandemic” (Abstract).

Cycle 3 Results

Two raised beds, called CoVic Garden Boxes, were provided to participants in the community as shown in a video on the Global News website in May (Matassa-Fung, 2020), and in the video created by the participating university students (Appendix K) at the height of the growing season in Penticton. Each raised bed was approximately 4x4 feet square by 8 inches tall as illustrated in Figure 14. The garden boxes were also pictured on my company’s Dirt Therapy webpage (Appendix I) and on a private Facebook group page where community members could participate, ask for assistance if needed during cultivation, and share recipes and advice about utilizing the vegetables and fruits that they had harvested from their own garden boxes.

Figure 14.

Cycle 3: Garden Beds

On June 19th, 2020, I had written to the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) to request a meeting, as I had planned toward the end of Cycle 2. I advised we had used wood donated by Superior Peat; we had broad representation within the community contributing to the project, such as seniors, doctors, home schoolers, and university students; and that 61 raised beds were installed in 26 family households in addition to one senior facility and one community agency. The 26 households included one set of garden boxes at an Alzheimer's caregiver's home, which launched interest in horticultural therapy on a larger scale. A quick response included the future opportunity to apply for two grants, one regional (debated by the Board each winter), and the other a rural grant available earlier in the year.

The households in Penticton embraced the CoVic Garden Box Project in many contexts. They enjoyed the opportunity to have fun growing food. Parents were happy to teach their children where food came from and to share food with the food bank as a social responsibility. Others were facing job loss and isolation; the social isolation some seniors dealt with may have been offset to some degree by the garden project activities. Indeed, the video (Appendix K) created by the university students on their initiative seemed to indicate this was true. The video illustrated a high level of receptivity and enthusiasm in the community. It was stated in the video that the CoVic Garden Box Project collaborated with community partners to find ways to provide better food security in Penticton, promoting mental and physical health. Many organizations supported and participated in the project.

- The many organizations which *participated* in the project directly are shown in the video credits in Appendix K (including a summary and a link to the video).
- A broader list of organizations that *supported* the CoVic Garden Box Project is shown in Appendix J.

The initial idea was to use the student video for outreach on the web to demonstrate the success of the project and what it had meant to members of the community. The video could potentially be utilized as a presentation piece in garnering support at the municipal, regional, national or international levels, or at conferences focused on food security issues. The video project, initiated and created by the Cycle 3 university student team, not only illustrated the enthusiastic community response but the ongoing need for this type of engagement; for efforts focused on food security in Penticton and elsewhere; and the need for outreach, education and advocacy in the context of systemic policy change advancing the cause of healthy food and food security for all. The video (opening image shown in Figure 15) provided an inspiring view of the project's potential.

Figure 15.

Cycle 3: CoVic Garden Box Student Video Opening Image

The project was created to enhance food security within the community as food insecurity issues, which already existed, were incredibly exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. Recipients received both a raised garden bed to grow fresh

produce for their household and a second raised garden bed within which food was grown to support the Penticton food bank. In addition, toward the end of the current study, feedback to casual questions on participant experience included many positive comments, according to my journal notes:

- Comment A - Absolutely positive, it was great to grow food and contribute to the community. It provided a sense of purpose and was fun to see the sustainable growth for food. Always wanted to have raised beds but thought they were a lot of work, but by having all the materials provided and built for you made it a lot easier to handle.

- Comment B - I found the gardens incredibly inspirational and beneficial both in terms of social support. I was able to produce so much food from the small box I had, and found it exciting to do something so useful during COVID times.

A few comments transcribed from the video (names were provided by participants):

- Superior Peat (sponsor) – We were approached by two companies – we had worked with one before. This brought a community of companies together to work locally. At the end of the day the community grows in knowledge and in experience as everyone pools their resources together.

- K - I saw a message on Facebook… I thought this sounds awesome, I want to be a part of this. Every time I mention this project, people walking by, they say wow look at this garden, wow that's a program in our city? You guys will be surprised next year. It's really brought our family together, too. We come out as a family to work on the garden, we have a 14-year-old daughter, teaching her how to grow and harvest her own vegetables. Coming out to work in the garden as a family on a Saturday morning when its hot out, it's a beautiful thing. It doesn't get much better than that. This could be huge for Penticton. I would love to see this project grow.

- V - I thought to myself, why don't we try this out. They brought the boxes, the dirt, the plants. I think it is awesome, the knowledge that people are giving me to help me out.

- M - I wanted to be involved and help support the community with food insecurity, especially during this time of COVID and with grocery prices, which are absolutely increasing. We have been able to donate peas, beans, lettuce, basil, carrots, tomatoes. The webpage for gardeners that [a medical research firm] set up really helped form another sense of community. Perhaps in the schools they can use the produce, perhaps in the healthy lunch program.

In Cycle 3, after a brief presentation (Appendix L), Penticton city councillors unanimously approved further engagement with staff so that support for the CoVic Garden Box Project might be considered for inclusion in the 2021 Municipal Plan (City of Penticton, 2020). The CoVic Garden Box Project was agenda item 3.2 (p. 2) on September 1, 2020. Only two people could go due to COVID-19 restrictions, so two of the university students conducted the presentation. This proved very satisfying for the research team and helped to define the success of the Cycle 3 project. I and my team asked for the following six items in 2021 (Appendix O):

1. First, communications through City web-site and to households about the CoVic Garden opportunity,
2. Second, to work with the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) College and School Board to provide students opportunities in their course work to help implement United Nations and national food policy directives identified as municipal initiatives,
3. Third, we asked for trucks and soil delivery assistance,
4. Fourth, we sought advocacy through seminars and webinars to be provided by the recreation department for supporting new gardeners,
5. Fifth, we sought to partner in grant requests to acquire funding for a coordinator (COVID-19 funding for improving food security), and
6. Sixth, we sought support for cross-sector initiatives within the community to provide better access to local high-quality food for all.

The existing "Penticton OCP 2045" Official Community Plan (Penticton OCP, 2020) identified several areas where small urban projects such as the CoVic Garden Box Project might be included. The section on Agriculture and Food Systems included Subsection 4.5.3 Urban

Agriculture, with the stated goal to "Expand food production in urban and suburban areas of Penticton" (p. 82). The policies relating to this goal clearly allowed for the Garden Box Project as well as other collaborations we had envisioned in Cycle 2:

- 4.5.3.1 Review zoning and other relevant regulations and use existing land and infrastructure, where appropriate, to increase local food access and production.
- 4.5.3.2 Integrate urban agriculture opportunities into multi-family, mixed-use and commercial developments, available rights-of-way, boulevards, and civic facilities. These can include community gardens, intensive small-plot farming, edible landscaping, orchards, bee-keeping, pollinator gardens and rooftop gardens.
- 4.5.3.3 Encourage and facilitate urban agriculture on vacant and under-utilized lots throughout the city through lease agreements and in-kind supports to produce food, create vibrant places and build community.
- 4.5.3.4 Partner with the School District and community organizations on projects that provide education around the growing, processing and distribution of local food.
- 4.5.3.5 Incorporate appropriate native edible landscaping into public lands, parks and private developments. (Penticton OCP, 2020, p. 82)

At the end of Cycle 3, the Salvation Army reported to me, on request, the total donation from the 26 families and two facilities was 79 pounds of fresh vegetables with a dollar value of about $197. Although this was not a lot of donated food, objectives related to advocacy, awareness, social networking, and community capacity-building were certainly realized. In comparison, the Salvation Army stated in their email the "community garden produced about 1,500 pounds of fresh produce with an approximate value of $3,750.00" (Appendix N). They also advised that about 320-460 individuals and families benefitted from the produce, which was

an estimated 700 servings (Appendix N). Although not as significant as the donation from Alterra Winery (20,000 pounds in one season, according to the representative I met in 2018), the contribution was significant for a student research project and community garden. However, the cost of labor was approximately $3.17 per pound of food delivered. It was hoped that, between the oversight of the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) in the future and the potential for grants, the financial bottom line has potential to improve.

During this time, a small neighborhood grant application was submitted and $500 received for 2021 to engage with Alzheimer's Disease caregivers in Penticton in a similar project. Communication continued with members of the municipality and parliament. Shortly after this presentation, for example, an email was received from the constituency with several suggestions for funding via organizations such as Second Harvest, Community Food Centers of Canada, The Canadian Red Cross Granting Program for Non-Profits, United Way's Emergency Community Support Fund, Community Foundations of Canada, and the Agriculture and Agri-food Canada Local Food Infrastructure Fund, the latter being part of the National Food Policy. A Food Advisory Council was being established as well.

Survey Results

After the presentation at City Hall (Appendix L), a brief online closing survey (Appendix M) was conducted at the end of Cycle 3. The Past Garden Coordinator, my administrative assistant, and the four university students were invited to take the survey. The consent of paid participants could be inferred by survey completion. A 2/3 response rate was achieved: Of six people invited, four completed the survey including the coordinator, administrative assistant, and two of four of the university students. Although the results were anonymized, I could tell who some of the respondents were either due to their statements or because some participants had told

me they'd taken the survey. Average completion time was 17 minutes and 34 seconds. The most useful responses, for future planning purposes, included those shown herein:

Survey Response:

Can you describe <u>when</u> you became involved with the 'Food for All' project?

> Survey participants responses indicated 75% became involved in the project in June and July of 2020.

Can you please describe <u>how</u> you became involved?

> (The quote below represents findings from 50% of respondents. A third individual was hired directly. A fourth individual did not answer this question.)
>
> "I looked through various volunteer opportunity postings online based in the Okanagan, and I found the project and a brief description about the idea."

Can you explain what motivated you to become involved?

> 25% I am very interested in food security
> **75% I wanted to improve society**
> 25% I wanted to improve my skills
> **50% I wanted to improve my employability**
> 25% I thought service work would help out with school
> 75% Someone directly asked me to participate
> 25% I heard about this through media

What was done to market the project and activities to reach out in the community?

> Respondents identified varied activities: placing posters in the community to promote a gardening contest, creating a social media presence on Facebook and communicating with participants there, logo and brochure creation, engaging with doctors about dirt therapy for patients that doctors believed would benefit

How much new square footage of garden space:

> Respondents indicated up to 976 square feet of new garden space was created for food production.

How many new people have you connected with?

> Respondents indicated they made between zero and thirty new connections within the community in the process of setting up raised beds.

They made one to three connections with new people while helping in the food bank community garden, and made connections with one to four new organizations during these activities.

The project may have attracted some people beyond those targeted, as indicated by participant responses in this context:

> "I don't believe there are were more individuals or groups that became involved with our project that were originally targeted, but that could be a possibility in the future with the growth and expansion of the project."

> "Seniors centres, schools, immigrant society, youth programs, care aids, patients "

> "As the coordinator I did not have direct contact with any of the box recipients. I supervised the staff of 4 youth, and assisted them with the planning, organization and follow through as they reached out to community individuals and organizations."

From your perspective, would you say that COVID-19 changed how this project played out?

> "COVID-19 significantly impacted this project. Many community members who were previously unaware of food insecurity were quick to recognize the impact of COVID-19 on themselves, their friends and family, and the community at large. They embraced the CoVic project as a way to teach their children about where food comes from, the issues many people were facing with job losses, and isolation. The opportunity to have fun growing food, and sharing what they could with the Food Bank is a life skill many parents were happy to teach."

> "I think that it would have been a great project in any year, but with the pandemic and increasing food security, financial challenges with many people, and feelings of isolation and limited activity, this project was one that helped in those aspects even more and that's why the timing of the project was perfect."

> "[The pandemic] made us more wary of delivering to people's houses but also earned us more attention"

> "[The pandemic] made it more challenging to seek donations from some organizations, limited our interactions with recipients and volunteers."

To what degree would you say this project has empowered you as an individual who can contribute to social/community change?

> "[It] encouraged me to see what can be done when I connect with a wide range of locals and organizations in my community. "

"It was incredible how the 4 youth embraced this project. They worked as a team supporting each other, generating ideas and making it happen. I am so very proud to be watching youth in action, and feel certain our future will be in good hands with youth like these. "

"Although I have been involved with other community and local projects involving change and positive purposes, this one was the largest and I felt had the most overall impact. It taught me that change occurs with the young people in our world, and a small idea can turn into something big and amazing when you work with others to make a dream vision or project become successful.

"This project has taught me a great deal about the different aspects of a project of this size. Marketing, team management, delivery, communication, etc. It also informed me more about food insecurity as a national issue."

The original goal of my doctoral research was to ask to what extent the Penticton food bank could catalyze and mobilize local social networks. The goal was to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for the populations we serve here in the Penticton area.

Are there any other reflections you would like to add?

"I think that the Penticton's food banks willingness to work with us was reduced upon new management which unfortunately seems to favour the business side of things rather than helping the populous. "

"Projects like these are a first but vital step, and many positive impacts can occur after one team makes a step of change in a project or community campaign."

"The Penticton and Summerland Community Food Banks may be overwhelmed with creating their own social networks to address these issues. Other community organizations should create partnerships and programs that will improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for the Food Banks to distribute."

Please provide three recommendations - what you like to see this project do if it were run again next year?

"Funding to support youth in delivering this project."

"Expansion"
"Support the recipients more. Focus more on the quality of education and assistance to recipients than the quantity of people receiving (do it well and then expand from there) "

"I would like to see the city support as we requested in the delegation through the various ways, along with a calling for more young people to help out which can

> be a great opportunity, and an expansion of not just making garden beds, but other things to raise money and help out our own community right back with those funds. I would love to see all the potential opportunities and growth of where this project can go."

Survey Says!

The three major takeaways from the closing survey included insights with regard to recruiting volunteer workers; support for participants during the project; and the desire for high level municipal engagement. Follow up with participants was indicated, as well.

1. **Recruiting volunteer workers:** Where the project was advertised to volunteers and their reasons for joining will be useful going forward as this could inform future outreach to volunteers as helpers during the spring and summer months. In particular 50-75% of the respondents were motivated by the opportunity to improve society and their own employability. For example, one participant stated: "This project has taught me a great deal about the different aspects of a project of this size. Marketing, team management, delivery, communication, etc." The variety of outreach strategies that volunteers found worth mentioning will be useful to future efforts, particularly Facebook.
2. **Support for family participation, follow-up survey:** The number of new people that were engaged on the individual level may have been limited due to COVID-19. Not everyone on the team met the recipients of the garden boxes. As one participant indicated, we should "Support the recipients more. Focus more on the quality of education and assistance to recipients than the quantity of people receiving (do it well and then expand from there)". An email received from the Salvation Army (on December 29, 2020) in response to my request for feedback also stated: "Moving

forward, I think it would be important to start earlier, offer training and mentoring, and have someone hands on throughout the project" (Appendix N).

In retrospect, there should be more engagement on the client level. All members of the team, including the coordinator, should engage with community members and family households on a regular basis, as did I, in order to support those families. In addition, this would provide the opportunity to share in the experience more deeply and to be able to report comprehensively about the project from the recipient perspective. During the COVID-19 pandemic, of course, face-to-face engagement could not be required in any context.

Another good idea for the future would be a reflective survey of recipients in terms of what worked, what did not work, and what we could do better next time from their perspective as they are the primary stakeholders in the context of food security. Although they should have been surveyed immediately after the harvest so that their recollections were fresh, the Cycle 3 participants will be sent a survey in 2021 before the next planting season to be included as data in the Cycle 4 project, not the current study.

3. **High level and follow-up support for the project:** The university students hoped their presentation at City Hall influenced meaningful change as evidenced by the following remark: "I would like to see the city support [the CoVic Garden Box Project] as we requested in the delegation through the various ways, along with a calling for more young people to help." Thus, it seemed as though follow-up with participants to let them know of any further opportunities and successes would be

worthwhile, and could inspire them to become food security advocates both locally and where ever they go in the future.

Reflection

In Cycle 3, the planning was done in the context of the social disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. I wanted to support the hard work of the university students who needed tuition money for their studies when their original funding source collapsed. In addition, engaging students was a form of advocacy and capacity-building discussed in Cycle 2. While the initial concept of the CoVic Garden Box Project seemed very simple, the work was arduous. There might have been a way to plan ahead to collaborate with partners in the community better equipped for the heavy work, such as the requirement for trucks, tools, soil, lumber, and construction.

While I and my team learned about obstacles to implementation, it was illuminating to learn what might be helpful to future community change efforts in Penticton and, potentially, elsewhere in Canada and the rest of the world. We conquered the initial challenges that arose, such as how to structure the raised beds and where to source the materials through social networking and community capacity-building. I, my team, and the community participants planted peas, beans, lettuce, basil, carrots, and tomatoes. Kale is still growing in my own garden box as of this writing in December 2020.

Reflexivity

After Cycle 2, although great connections were made, I realized I needed inspiration. I needed a new action plan. Several authors inspired me to take a more empowered approach, in contrast to my efforts to just move things along without any authority or power. Four types of literature were particularly helpful:

1. First, the ancient literature of Homer and the Odyssey of Ulysses (Saïd, 2011), *The Hero's Journey* (Brown & Moffett, 1999) popularized by Joseph Campbell (Campbell, 2003), and by Jordan Peterson (Peterson, 1999). Brown and Moffett (1999) illustrated how important mythic stories were for personal growth and learning by demonstrating how archetypal stories enabled us to learn and gain insights from broader experiences than individuals could normally access on their own. By improving the world or making it safer, the hero improves himself. By improving himself, he sets an example for the world (p. 135). The behavioural pattern of the hero is to "eternally turn the unknown into something secure and beneficial" and the myth of the hero "has come to represent the essential nature of human possibility, manifested in adaptive behaviour, as a consequence of observation and re-representation of such behaviour, conducted cumulatively over the course of thousands of years" (p. 181). This body of literature inspired me to recognize my successes and take further action.
2. A second body of literature allowed me to overcome my inertia in terms of leadership capacity, predominantly from the psychological perspective of leading oneself (Chen et al., 2020; Dweck & Yaeger, 2019). I realized I must master and understand the amygdala and frontal cortex in my brain by practicing navigation between the two hemispheres, ostensibly between order and creative chaos. This solo practice could potentially enable me to become comfortable with the uncomfortable, to become willing to leave behind what was not working to go forward with an experimental mindset.

3. A third influential text informing this phase of reflexivity, was by Kotter and Rathgeber (2005). In particular, I was inspired by their discussion of the five capacities of personnel needed for change initiatives, including the researcher, social networker, the voice of experience, the practical administrator, and the high energy visionary (pp. 48-49). This provided an organizing structure, if it were possible to create it.
4. Fourth, I kept returning to Stoecker (2005, 2009, 2013) and the fact that Stoecker suggested the researcher is a critical leader: "people may not even define themselves as a community – until a good community organizer brings them together so they can discover their common issues and complementary resources" (2013, p. 63). I realized I had not taken ownership of my own research fully, but I could. Stoecker's work also emphasized how leaders needed to work with constituents who shared the problem at an early stage in the research process, even developing methodology (2009, p. 393). "In knowledge production, the affordability of a computer, an internet connection and a website means that ownership of the means of knowledge production can be widespread" (Stoecker, 2009, p. 397). Through working together and building capabilities and competency, I could build a team, engage a community, and develop social capital. This was precisely the perspective I needed at the time.

I also realized the group brainstorming and the network approach could only go so far and would not actually address food shortages in the area, so I searched the literature. I needed an agency, a full-time coordinator, money, a plan, an iterative review process, and a planning and supporting structure.

- **What worked?** Social distancing measures during COVID-19 forced me to move outside of my normal community garden venue. I hired the Past Garden Coordinator to assist with the family gardens. Informal meetings through Microsoft Teams and Zoom enabled engagement to continue during the pandemic lockdown. A better inventory tracking system was needed, one that captured food that had been grown and moved into food bank donations. The Smart Donate mobile application seemed a perfect contender for the future, even though it could not be implemented during Cycle 3. During Cycle 3, I and my team completed weekly check-ins to review progress, obstacles, new opportunities, and to determine what new actions items needed attention. We tracked progress from several angles. I personally met with members of all 26 family households including the (one) Alzheimer caregiver's home, one senior facility and one community agency, and summarized feedback in my journal notes. Three themes emerged:
    1. Interest was generated because people in the community had a model in their memory, i.e., their parents or grandparents had a garden and grew food. Creating these memories for future generations seemed inspirational.
    2. People in the community wanted to share. Many families gave more than just half of the food they grew to the Penticton Salvation Army food bank. Their contributions included other offers for the future as well: to create web pages and media promotions, to help with food deliveries, to provide land, etc. Due to limited administrative capacity at the time, these suggestions were captured for use during the 2021 project (after the completion of the current study).

3. The 26 families, senior facility and community agency had been thinking about setting up their own gardens to grow food due to the stress and uncertainty regarding food supply during COVID-19. In addition, due to the need to isolate, gardening (horticulture therapy) seemed an interesting, healthy, and fun thing to do, to get outdoors in spring and summer. The following anonymized quotes, taken from my journal notes, illustrate the high level of enthusiasm from the families participating in the CoVic Garden Box Project during Cycle 3:

   > "That's simple, easy to understand. I think doing this is a no brainer that it helps everyone."
   >
   > "I have lumber, plants, time, truck, soil, can I share it with you?"
   >
   > "I'm a politician. I can give you contacts that may help."
   >
   > "So cool to be able to help. Call me."

- **What did** not **work?** Once again staff changes inhibited sustainability. It was tough to keep the project moving forward when the government tuition rebate program shut down in June, and then when the Past Garden Coordinator had to depart at the end of July.
- **What I would do differently next time?** In retrospect, having an organizational partner to help manage the work was key. In addition, a structured plan could hold people accountable for reporting weekly and monthly metrics and assure consistent engagement in the community with those who volunteered to host the garden boxes. Most importantly, I would set up the social network framework beforehand, including the university, municipality, and media partnerships. I would use a pyramid-type organizational chart and illustrate cross hierarchy relationships.

When I practice reflexivity, I see that my role in Cycle 3 was to be the determined leader on the team, providing creative solutions to emergent problems. I feel fortunate that the Past Garden Coordinator offered expertise, that the university students were available to assist and were creative advocates for the work, and that I had the finances available to contribute. I had learned the political structure of the community and this knowledge facilitated a successful presentation to the city.

Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 in particular were very stressful endeavors because of wanting to make a difference and encountering the seemly impossible obstacles. However, overcoming those challenges became inspiration for Cycle 3. It was very exciting to realize the objective of contributing to Penticton food bank clients, the community at large, to the Alzheimer's Disease caregiver in Penticton, and to look forward to working with the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA), which set up a sub committee to study sustainable food initiatives. With regard to working with ARNA, I sent a proposal for a Sustainability ARC (Action Research Committee) in September 2020. On October 7, 2020, a response was received from the Executive Committee (Appendix P) unanimously approving their participation in the future effort. The committee representative stated in their email that this work represented "a vital strand of action research on a topic that is crucial for our planet and in the current context of global pandemic" (Appendix P, para. 1)

Chapter Summary

Overall, the findings also included:

1. New sources of food for the food bank clients: 26 families and two facilities participated in the CoVic Garden Box Project, all of whom present an opportunity for further outreach. There is the potential to work with others in the context of

horticultural therapy on behalf of the food bank, and the potential to collaborate in the use of the Smart Donate mobile application, school gardens, and teaching farms.

2. The Salvation Army reported there were 79 pounds of food produced by the CoVic Garden Box Project and 1,500 pounds of food produced by the community garden, a total of about 700 servings with a value of approximately $3,947CAD (Appendix N) following Cycle 3 of the current study. In future work, I would like to track planting and harvesting more specifically. The quantity and the quality of food from the new sources is intended to be measured in 2021 and, ideally, monitored in the Smart Donate inventory tracking and donation mobile application (described in Cycle 2). This application has the potential to be useful for any context, whether community gardens, garden boxes, balcony gardens, school gardens, or larger growers such as wineries or farm schools that contribute to the food bank.
3. Time and resources used in capacity-building activities were not tracked in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 as the project was supported by the Salvation Army, but the university students were paid in Cycle 3 by my medical research firm, a total cost of $12,526.50. Thus, the cost of labor was approximately $3.17 per pound of produce delivered to the food bank in Cycle 3; this finding may be useful for future grant requests. This month (December 2020), a $500 grant was promised, to be utilized in the CoVic Garden Box Project first quarter of 2021 to engage with Alzheimer's Disease caregivers in Penticton. In 2021 and going forward, it is hoped that grants will facilitate setting up garden beds for Alzheimer's Disease caregivers in Penticton, and those costs will be tracked.

4. Changes in the number of participants in the social network included an expanded social network:
    a. two facilities planted garden boxes in Cycle 3;
    b. Penticton city councillors unanimously approved engagement with staff at City Hall toward inclusion of the CoVic Garden Project in the 2021 Municipal Plan;
    c. individuals at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) and University of Victoria now have food bank collaboration on their radar for student tuition rebate programs;
    d. organizations such as the Penticton Community Foundation, The Foundry, the Penticton Church Consortium, and the Soupateria, local wineries, local restaurants, supermarkets, the Health Authority, the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association, and organic farmers, are now aware of the project are potentially willing to support it in 2021;
    e. elementary school teachers, school board members and leadership, and high school teachers are now aware of the project could be involved in 2021;
    f. the local media, such as Castanet, The Western, The Penticton Herald, and Global TV are likely to spread the word again in 2021.
    g. Local businesses (Appendix J) are likely to collaborate again in 2021.
    h. A number of connections with organizations were made in terms of potential collaboration and funding for the future. For example, work continues with regard to the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) professor's Smart Donate application; the Kwantlen Polytechnic University Director of the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems; the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen; the

Public Health Dietician for Healthy Communities and Population Health Services, Department of Interior Health.

I re-conceptualized food banks within the larger frame of food insecurity very early in the process of outlining the research proposal. Then food bank literature, the social network and capacity-building literature together with the concepts of pragmatism, participation and advocacy illustrated how food banks could be encouraged to operate within a larger social context. The expanded frame demonstrated that stakeholders included not only food bank clients, but academic institutions, other charity organizations, the agricultural sector (including local wineries), the education sector, the media, and governments at municipal, provincial, national and international levels. Many groups and individuals had the ability to contribute within the social network in terms of community capacity-building, to build community spirit, and to anchor and reinforce values in the spirit of civic communion. Bhattacherjee (2012) stated that action research took an interventionist approach (p. 40) to challenge community dynamics. The participatory and action research strategies could become catalysts for collaboration in this context within the visions of the right to food, food security, food justice and food sovereignty.

The coronavirus pandemic created many challenges, but also some opportunities to find better solutions to our local food insecurity problems. Small steps were taken by the community of Penticton to overcome food insecurity. The three cycles discussed herein illustrated a participatory group coming together to build social networks and community capacity, to improve awareness and advocacy, and to identify practical large-scale opportunities for impacting food security in Penticton and the surrounding areas.

Finally, myself and the Past Garden Coordinator conceptualized and implemented a food growing project based on family engagement that was broadly adopted and became an

inspiration within the community. After viewing a brief presentation (see Appendix L), councillors at Penticton City Hall unanimously approved further engagement with staff toward including the CoVic Garden Box Project in the 2021 Municipal Plan (City of Penticton, 2020). A Sustainability ARC (Action Research Committee) from the Action Research Network of the Americas will assist with the project in 2021.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

Synopsis

After data analysis strategies were discussed and the thematic distillation of data illustrated, Chapter Four was organized using the cyclic approach proposed by James et al. (2012): investigation, planning, implementation, data collection and analysis, followed by reflection and reflexivity. Findings from each of the three Cycles were detailed in this format and summarized at the end of the chapter.

In Chapter Five, the links to conceptual foundations in the literature have been discussed in detail to illustrate the study strengths, significance, and accomplishments. The research questions have been answered. The field research results and suggestions for improvement follow have been presented in terms of each Cycle. A summary of key strategies and objectives that were completed have been presented in Table 13 later in this chapter, followed by a reflection regarding the overall project, a discussion considering the future of food security in Canada, conclusions and recommendations regarding potential applications of a similar project and future research, and, last, my personal conclusions.

Research Questions

The goal of this dissertation was to explore how, using a participatory action research approach, the Salvation Army Food bank in Penticton, British Columbia could catalyze and mobilize social networks to develop sustainable initiatives for capacity-building and to improve the quality and quantity of food for food bank recipients. In addition, the current study was a learning process in terms of how to effectively facilitate community-based research and social change. To what extent the current study was had impact in terms of the research questions is illustrated herein through the description of each cycle's conclusions and suggestions for

improvement to overcome the handicaps and limitations experienced during the current study. The research questions were:

- Cycle 1 and Cycle 2: Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?
- Cycle 3: Taking an active leadership role, to what extent could I create and empower a team of university students and an administrator to catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

Integration of the Research and Literature

It seems important to demonstrate the practical application of the concepts and strategies explored and defined in the Literature Review (Chapter 2 of this dissertation). This section of the dissertation illustrates how those strategies and concepts were found to be relevant in practice, demonstrating how they were implemented within the context of the current study.

As mentioned earlier, Woolcock and Narayan (2000) suggested researchers should be aware that one institution or community or State alone would not have the resources to sustainably raise social capital across sectors (p. 236). Although Swords (2019) was successful in moving the food bank away from the concept of the charity model and increased funding and activities related to outreach and advocacy to engage the broader community, the current study seemed to confirm conclusions by researchers such as PROOF (2019): community organizations alone were ill equipped to effect significant change or to solve such large-scale complex social problems as food insecurity. The lack of ability to effect change appeared to be because small

and mid-sized organizations, such as food banks, inevitably faced shifting roles, people, resource issues and priorities.

Among other strategies described earlier, the current study employed three theoretical elements of community development within the participatory action research framework of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) recommended a focus on discovering community assets and capacities (p. 24) as described in the section of this dissertation focused on theoretical context. These were implemented as follows:

- As stated earlier, the first element was to work within the framework and practice of assets-based community development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996). Hall (2009) stated "Communities need to take an asset-based approach to increasing the sustainability of community health and economic development" (p. 13). I had stated this meant a clear commitment to investigating existing assets within the community of Penticton to further capacity-building. A clear commitment was made by the participatory action research team to investigate existing capacities and assets within the community of Penticton in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 as evidenced by the numerous efforts at outreach and the learning undertaken by the team as described in earlier chapters.
- The second element built upon existing networks and social capital of the Salvation Army, positioning the study within the context of the community and an overarching coalition for change. This was undertaken during all three Cycles as described in earlier chapters. In Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, there was clearly an effort to build upon existing networks and social capital of the Salvation Army. In Cycle 3, a past member of the Cycle 1-2 research team connected me with the Past Garden Coordinator, who

then collaborated with me to launch and manage the CoVic Garden Box Project initiative. This was, itself, an example of expanding social networks, social capital and capacity-building for the purpose of the current study.

- The third element drew upon empowerment theory (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005, 2007) to employ frameworks proven to provide guidance for facilitating and increasing social capital and community capacity-building. Empowerment evaluation was intended to foster self-determination and increase "the likelihood that programs would achieve results by increasing the capacity of program stakeholders to plan, implement, and evaluate their own programs" (Fetterman, 2009, p. 200). Community capacity-building referred to actions defined, planned, executed as processes that built "sustainable skills, resources, and commitments to health promotion in (various) settings and sectors (in order to) prolong and multiply health gains many times over" (Hawe et al., 2000, p. 2, as cited in Labonte et al., 2002, p. 181). This researcher attempted to guide the process of the current study from within (participatory action) during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, and utilized these elements during Cycle 3, as well, to provide a structure for the research enabling social action and change (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Burt, 2004; Chaskin, 2001; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013; Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005; Glassman et al., 2013; Glassman & Erdem, 2014; Heifetz et al., 2009; Ivankova, 2014; James et al., 2012; Johnson, 2017).

When defining participatory and action research in Chapter 2 of this dissertation (Literature Review), it was stated that Fetterman's (2009) refinement of the participatory action research strategy focused on evaluation and empowerment aspects of social change initiatives. In response to criticism of this research, Fetterman and colleagues defined ten principles of

empowerment evaluation (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005, pp. 2, 30; Fetterman et al., 2015, pp. 5-6). The ten principles were listed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Six were able to be implemented within the current study. The four that were not achieved included community ownership, social justice, evidence-based strategies, and accountability, although Cycle 3 activities did lead to a higher level of community accountability going forward. The six achievements generated a number of important observations, ideas, and related propositions that could be incorporated into a future plan:

1. **Principle 1: A focus on improvement** – during Cycle 1, organizational participants (both staff and volunteers) were engaged as a participatory team to identify assets and ties within the community (who could potentially become collaborators) in the effort to mitigate food insecurity in Penticton, BC, by providing high quality produce to the Salvation Army food bank and its' clients. During Cycle 2 social networks were expanded and capacities built for future endeavors in targeted community sectors, such as the media, education and agriculture sectors. During Cycle 3, high-quality produce (about 1580 pounds) was delivered to the food bank, a small grant was received and collaborative opportunities were secured under the umbrella of the municipality, the university, and an international action research association for 2021.
2. **Principle 3: Inclusion** – members of the Salvation Army food bank and the local community of Penticton were engaged during all three cycles, including various sectors such as the media, agriculture, elementary and post-secondary education and the political sector (municipal, provincial, federal). As the video from Cycle 3 showed (Appendix K), the people interviewed about their experiences as recipients of the raised garden beds were very pleased to be included, particularly those who were

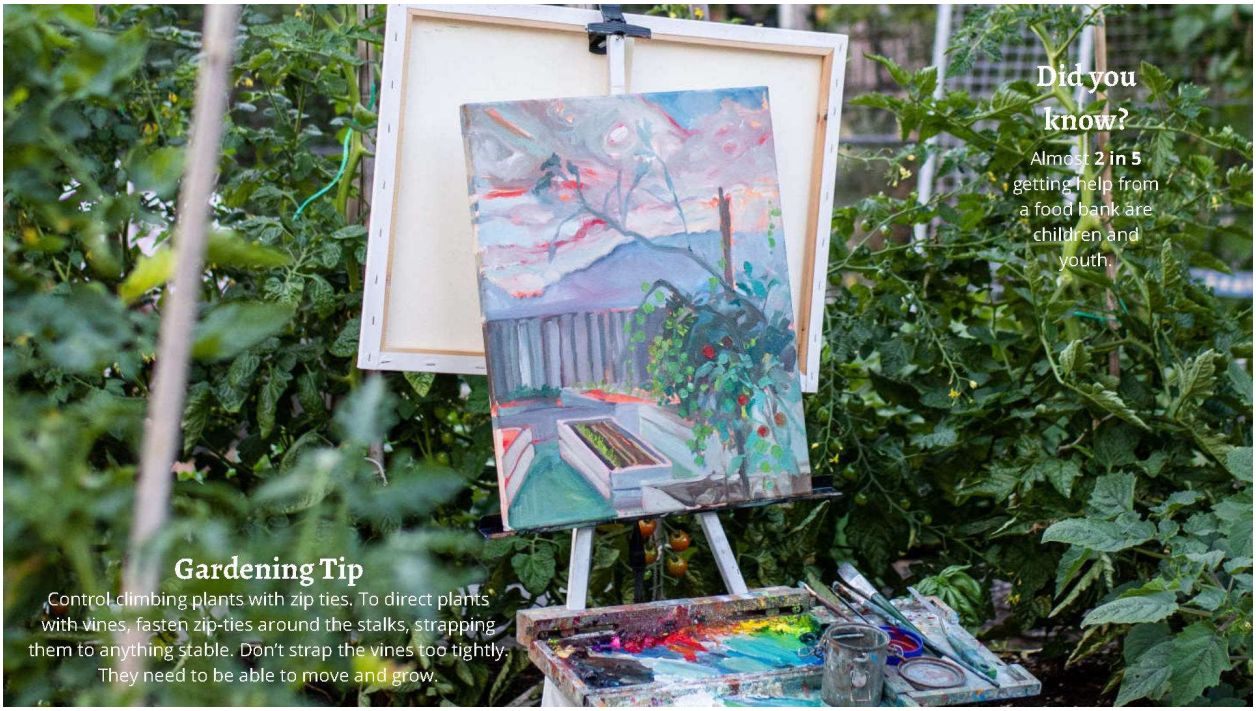
feeling isolated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We hoped the video could become an inspiring tool. It might be useful for presentations at organizational and governmental levels. It could be instrumental as a tool of advocacy for encouraging others to become involved and to be supportive of continuing and expanding the collective response to provide food security for all.

3. **Principle 4: Democratic participation** – The initial research team of six participants were engaged in developing the participatory action strategy during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Specifically, the research team developed the strategy to identify local assets (contacts) in the community, potential collaborative partners, and then to approach those potential collaborators to identify processes and projects that might be implemented. The Cycle 1-2 team engaged in frequent focus groups and meetings where all voices, actionable ideas, concerns, and observations were welcome.

    During Cycle 3, the Past Garden Coordinator partnered with me to develop the initial strategy for the CoVic Garden Box Project. The Coordinator, four university students, and my administrative assistant (as needed) helped to organize and coordinate the CoVic Garden Box Project. The community members who participated in Cycle 3 all engaged on a voluntary basis. The Cycle 3 team engaged using Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions, but also engaged on Facebook and outdoors in the community. As an example of how the teams' ideas were turned into action: Artists and the media were invited by the Past Garden Coordinator and university students to share their expertise during an 'Art Night' in the community. An invited photographer captured images which were later made into calendars (Figures 16).

Figure 16.

Cycle 3: Pages from the CoVic Gardens Calendar



The closing survey results from Cycle 3 were intended to be used to inform the planning for Cycle 4 after the end of the current study. The hope was that Cycle 4 could build upon and expand the work begun during Cycle 3 and focus more on helping and supporting new gardeners, possibly by collaborating with an expert gardening professional.

4. **Principle 6: Community knowledge** – increased awareness was generated through education, advocacy, and outreach:
    a. In Cycle 1, community knowledge, awareness, and education were advanced through engaging for many months with the initial research team which included members of and volunteers for the Salvation Army food bank;
    b. In Cycle 2, community knowledge, awareness, and education were realized by connecting with representatives of the City Council, Parkway Elementary School, members of the School Board and the head of the School District, a representative of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, professors at Kwantlen University and at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan), the British Columbia Organic Fruit Growers Association, Arterra Winery, local farmers and others as discussed in Chapter Four;
    c. In Cycle 3, community knowledge, awareness, and education were advanced via:
        A) press releases in the Castanet, The Western News, and The Penticton Herald, as well as broadcasts on CBC Radio and SUN-FM Radio;
        B) a video and article on the Global TV website (Matassa-Fung, 2020);
        C) a video created by the university students interviewing garden box recipients;
        D) a Facebook group for new gardeners that helped recruit and engage participants;

E) the engagement of local artists, and the 26 local families and two facilities which planted CoVic Garden Boxes as documented in prior Chapters;

F) through the many local organizations who supported that project: Superior Peat, BP Wood, Sandstone Landscaping, Grower Supply Co., Nesters Market, Dr. David Dutchman, Flowers on the Bench, Martins Flowers, Garden Works, Blaze King, Salvation Army, Gordon Brothers Lumber, and Home Hardware; and

F) engagement with municipal leadership, the Penticton Community Foundation, and the action research group ARNA.

5. **Principle 8: Capacity-building** – all of the factors described in this section appear to fit under the capacity-building umbrella. Capacity-building was defined in the Glossary of this dissertation in terms of increasing the capabilities of people to articulate and address community health issues and to overcome barriers to improved outcomes in the quality of their lives (LaBonte et al., 2002). The participatory team (Cycle 1 and Cycle 2), and the research team members (Cycle 3) all gained knowledge and abilities with regard to articulating and addressing food insecurity, as did municipal leadership (as demonstrated by the presentation to Penticton City Hall in Appendix L). The CoVic Garden Box Project participants in the community gained knowledge and abilities with regard to growing food (as seen in the student video in Appendix K). We all gained knowledge and awareness of resources in the community that could help overcome barriers to food security, and we recognized that this engagement improved outcomes in the quality of lives during the spring, summer and fall of 2020. As a very practical example of knowledge and skills gained, and capacity built in Cycle 3: I have a vivid recollection of taking my own power drill to a

local hardware store where a retail worker generously taught me how to use it, how to change the bits and select the correct screws for the intended project (building raised garden beds). With this new found expertise, I happily showed others on the team how to operate the power drill and witnessed their excitement and feeling of empowerment as shown in Figure 17. They also passed these newfound skills on to some of the garden bed recipients.

6. **Principle 9: Organizational Learning** – increased organizational learning in the community (and beyond) was evidenced by multiple factors. For example, during Cycle 1, the Salvation Army learned of many opportunities to collaborate in support of the food bank. During Cycle 2 the Salvation Army learned it had limited capacity for providing resources toward further community development. It could not provide support beyond a space and staffing for the food bank in the community of Penticton. However, numerous people at many types of organizations and institutions were contacted in Penticton and in nearby areas on behalf of the food bank. They were now aware of the need for supporting the Salvation Army food bank and access to healthy food in Penticton. During Cycle 3, a small grant was received from the Community Foundation to be used during first quarter of 2021 to further the work of the CoVic Garden Box Project with Alzheimer's patients in horticulture therapy. As well, the project was expected to be included in the Penticton City Hall Municipal Plan for 2021. The existing Penticton Official Community Plan 2045 included support for local food access and production, community gardens, intensive small-plot farming, edible landscaping, gardens, and school-based educational projects, among others. The Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) assigned a Sustainability

ARC (Action Research Committee) to the CoVic Garden Box Project for 2021. Further, a large number of local businesses and organizations learned about the potential for collaboration on behalf of the Salvation Army food bank, as well as the broader context of addressing food insecurity in Penticton.

Figure 17.

Cycle 3: Learning to Use a Drill and Build Garden Boxes

Community capacity-building was defined, along with other key terms, in Chapter 2 of this dissertation: Labonte et al. (2002) described three implications for integrating community capacity-building practices into health promotion programs. Although community capacity was

not specifically measured during the current study, and the partner institution was not accountable for enhancing community capacity, the ways in which the work of the current study added capacity in the community were reflected upon and monitored closely.

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, Burt's (2004) definition of social networks was determined to be relevant and was implemented as follows: Burt stated that people could be represented in two-dimensional space by nodes. The relationships between or among them were represented by lines referred to as ties. Those web-like constellations around a single individual, cluster of people, or around an organization were their social networks. The places in-between without existing linkages were what Burt referred to as structural holes, the places with the most potential for innovative ideas and non-redundant advice and information (p. 358). To generate new ideas (p. 350, 353), entrepreneurial leadership might bring together people outside of their normal routines and facilitate a flow of information (p. 353), as was done intentionally during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the current study in order to identify suggestions which could assist in propelling the work forward (p. 358). This was very practical advice. The researcher in the current study attempted to set the stage in Cycle 1 whereby structural holes and potential linkages could be identified. Cycle 2 involved bridging those structural holes to develop new ties with new assets in the community in order to further the objective for facilitating social change. This form of outreach was also implemented in Cycle 3, particularly in the media and municipal sectors. I believe those objectives were achieved.

Magrin et al. (2014) was also referenced in Chapter 2 of this dissertation with regard to defining social networks: The authors described protective effects that the social network provided in terms of material resources and psychological support. It was determined to be important to accurately assess the social networks in Penticton. As a result of the current study,

functional social ties were clearly identified and established in four operable sectors: education, agriculture, the political sector, and the media.

The discussion and definition of social networks (Burt,2004, and Magrin et al., 2014) was part of the conceptual framework within which the current study was implemented. As stated earlier, in their meta-analysis of studies on social supports of networks for a chronic health issue, Magrin et al. (2014) found it was functional rather than structural aspects of the relationships that were the most important to influence change. In the current study, this could be interpreted as the quality of the relationship and its ability to be productive, rather than the proximity or hierarchy of those involved. In all three cycles, efforts were made to facilitate quality relationships in which all voices were democratically engaged. Productivity was evidenced as ideas generated by participants were implemented in all three Cycles.

Defining participatory and action research for the purpose of the current study in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, Clandinin (2006) described a three-dimensional framework for analyses and inquiry (pp. 46-47): personal and social interaction, time (past, present and future in terms of continuity), and place (situation). I had previously interpreted this to mean there were links between examining experiences from an individual perspective as related to the broader social landscape in a particular setting in terms of continuity of investigation. Foundationally, I hoped to learn how empowerment and capacity-building may have been influenced in these contexts during the current study, as well as what aspects of the process influenced sustainable change. In retrospect, the functional relationships of existing social networks and the influence of empowerment appeared closely related:

- **In time** –The result of all three cycles, over the course of the past three years, was that there emerged significantly greater capacity for implementing change in the

quality and quantity of food received at the food bank and provided to food bank clients. In fact, the project was expected to continue as a component of the Penticton Municipal Plan in 2021 and with the support of the Penticton Community Foundation and the Action Research Network of the Americas. There are numerous opportunities for high level collaboration in Penticton to enhance food security locally.

- **In place** – the local network expanded beyond the Penticton area to include contacts in Kelowna. For example, the Smart Donate/Roots project was intended to launch in Kelowna as a pilot test in the fall of 2018, with the Penticton launch in early 2019. As well, contact was made at the national level with a member of Parliament.
- **Individually** - In community-based research, success was not defined as creation of new knowledge (Kasl & Yorks, 2010), but included the creation of learning or understanding, to grow ourselves as researchers, to create a higher platform for continued community change, and to seek change in ourselves and our practice (p. 38). The barriers encountered in Cycle 2 could have been viewed as insurmountable obstacles. The situation at the end of Cycle 2 was very stressful due to the desire to make a difference while encountering seemly impossible obstacles in terms of administrative oversight, partnership and funding. In hindsight, what was perceived initially as unfortunate, could also be viewed as fortuitous: "the lived experience of those attempting to transform" (Glassman & Erdem, 2014, p. 219) served to catapult the current study forward and enhanced my ability to facilitate change going forward. I became an adaptive leader (Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017).
- **Social connections** - The seven focus groups in Cycle 1 and the five focus groups and six interviews in Cycle 2 successfully expanded awareness and the Salvation

> Army social network. All of those who engaged were made aware of the Salvation Army food bank needs. Efforts were made to foster advocacy within all levels of the education sector, the agricultural community, and in local government. Concepts, such as the Smart Donate mobile application, and connections in that context, increased potential for collaboration between university faculty, students, and farmers in support of Salvation Army food bank clients. These new connections had the potential for developing a co-op and a community advisory board. During Cycle 3, capacity for future engagement and expansion was built within the political sector and within the neighborhoods of Penticton itself as demonstrated by the enthusiasm of the families involved and by the Penticton city councillors who approved further engagement with staff regarding inclusion in the 2021 Municipal Plan.

In defining social networks, the work of Rand et al. (2011) was also discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Rand et al. emphasized a dynamic dimension of social networks and the potential for functional ties to be unstable (p. 19193). This was a lesson experienced in the context of the current study. Strong ties among the research team and the Salvation Army partnership were developed in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, but those ties were lost toward the end of Cycle 2 due to changing individual and institutional priorities. Importantly, as stated earlier, Rand et al. (2011) demonstrated the important role that dynamic social networks played in interventions requiring large-scale human cooperation and how cooperation could be facilitated through an intervention resulting in the formation of new ties (p. 19193). The current study ramped up again in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic (Cycle 3). New ties were formed thanks to past connections and the Cycle 3 intervention resulted in the formation of numerous new connections and significantly more sustainable capacities.

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation a definition of social capital was established in that "social capital referred to the norms and networks which enable people to act collectively" (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 225). Social capital was defined as something to be leveraged and harnessed for collective action and change. It required features, such as trust and reciprocity, which could be developed in an iterative process. As stated earlier, Labonte et al. (2002) offered a practical framework for a deliberate attempt to build community capacity within health promotion programs. In Chapter 2 of this dissertation nine operational domains were identified. These domains were to be monitored to track capacity-building initiatives. Seven of the nine domains were implemented generally during the current study:

1. **Improved stakeholder participation**: In Cycle 2, the connections identified in Cycle 1 were directly engaged during Cycle 2 in five focus groups and six interviews which intentionally explored potential for future collaboration. In Cycle 3, a number of businesses were invited to participate, such as landscapers, nurseries, and hardware stores that might provide soil, plants, and lumber. University students were invited to help set up and deliver raised beds to community members. As well, community members were offered two raised beds for growing vegetables, half to be donated to the Salvation Army food bank. Local artists and a photographer were invited by the Past Garden Coordinator and university students to share their expertise on an 'Art Night' in the community, captured in photographs and made into calendars as shown previously in Figure 17. "The arts can provide both an environment and a practice of active engagement in creative experience, processes, and development" (Clover et al., 2013, p. 36). Creative activities can create a sense of empathy and a capacity for critical reflection (p. 36). Outreach, advocacy, and education through the media, such

as local newspapers, radio stations, and a TV news station, facilitated collective knowledge transfer, empathy, and reflection throughout the community and surrounding areas. I and my team also interfaced with the community directly and with representatives of all sectors including municipal government politicians at the provincial and national levels.

2. **Leadership development**: A great many adaptive problems were addressed, not only due to the nature of participatory and action research, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The entire process of engaging with the Salvation Army during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 required that the researcher take on a leadership role in order continually focus the group process on an actionable agenda in the context of participatory action research. In Cycle 3, the researcher was required to undertake an independent and adaptive leadership role inclusive of all administrative (hiring), directive, and research responsibilities. The researcher, volunteers, businesses in the community, and community participants all dealt with comparatively minor issues during the current study, such as bear, deer, and other wildlife visiting the gardens, equipment failures, scheduling conflicts, changing priorities and personnel, and etcetera.
3. **Improved problem assessment capacities**: During Cycle 1 in particular, the entire process of participatory action research moved from the textbooks into the real-world context. As identified earlier in this dissertation, the initial objective was to select one or more best practices or projects from those presented (which had been implemented elsewhere) as a model for implementation in Penticton. Although models were discussed, it became apparent that this strategy was not going to be functional in Penticton. A new strategy was devised by the participatory team, to identify local

partners for collaboration. During Cycle 2, it was necessary to problem-solve the issue of ensuring meetings could be easily scheduled with potential collaborators and partners. After the significant priority changes at the Salvation Army, as well as within the participatory action research team, Cycle 3 required an entirely new approach and new leadership. During Cycle 3, tuition rebate programs were delayed, which required a financial investment moving forward. At each phase, uncharted territory was explored, decisions and progress were made. These experiences demonstrated a continually improving capacity for problem assessment and resolution.

4. **Creation of empowering organizational structures**: The focus groups sessions in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 created a sense of empowerment among the Salvation Army team members as evidenced by the initiative they took to identify the potential for collaborative projects in the community and the actions taken in terms of outreach (email, telephone calls, focus groups and meetings) in this regard. The use of online teaming software (via Microsoft Teams) in Cycle 3 by the team, and a weekly reflection exercise utilized by the researcher created structure for the research project. In all three cycles, new ideas could be captured, scheduled, and followed up both asynchronously and in real time. Information and feedback on topics were quickly available to study participants each week, and lessons learned could be captured and digested. The organizing structures created empowering experiences for all participants. Trust and solidarity were enhanced as evidenced by the creativity and enthusiasm of the participants and their outputs in each Cycle as described earlier. For example, in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 there was great enthusiasm for making connections

in the community. In Cycle 3, the university students' interviews with the CoVic Garden Box Project recipients, and an Art Night they hosted, each document creative ideas, personal initiative, and community enthusiasm. The researchers and community participants across all three cycles learned new skills and encouraged each other.

5. **Improved resource mobilization**: Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 demonstrated significantly improved resource creation and mobilization in terms of developing and utilizing social network connections, the broad resources of established community businesses, and in terms of the community itself (local homeowners and two local facilities which planted garden boxes to share produce with the Salvation Army food bank). As the local media shared a call to action, people contacted my team, became involved, and offered to share additional skills and resources.
6. **Improved links with other local organizations**: During Cycle 2, numerous local organizations were engaged to discuss collaborative potential. During Cycle 3 connections were made with a community facility (which planted garden boxes), and with City Hall. The presentation at City Hall is now part of the permanent record and the foundation from which new collaborators will be able to engage. Looking forward to 2021, connections were made with a University of British Columbia professor and students working on a Smart Donate application and related projects such as farm schools. They expressed strong interest in collaborating with the municipality, sharing their expertise and networks with the project in 2021.
7. **Creation of equitable relationships with outside agents**: The Community Foundation of South Okanagan/Similkameen is a Canadian network charged with

funding worthwhile community initiatives. A $500 Neighborhood Small Grant was approved for 2021 to engage with Alzheimer's Disease caregivers in Penticton, and future grants will be considered each quarter. The Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) Executive Committee also approved a Sustainability ARC (Action Research Committee to facilitate project management in 2021.

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, six elements of social capital were described (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Although these elements were not directly measured during the current study, it seemed evident that these elements were implemented:

1. groups and networks involving all sectors and levels;
2. trust and solidarity in terms of building bridges between communities and social groups;
3. collective action and cooperation for a common good;
4. transparent information and communications using modern methods;
5. social cohesion and inclusion with a focus on creating interventions through the lens of social capital; and
6. empowerment and political action conceptualized within the larger context of development projects. (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, pp. 242-243)

During the current study: groups and networks were built; trust and solidarity were built; collective action and cooperation occurred; information was provided and outreach was conducted utilizing multiple forms of media; social cohesion and inclusion were built as evidenced by social networking, organizational engagement and enthusiasm in Cycle 2 and the participation of community volunteers and business sponsorship in Cycle 3; the Cycle 3 intervention was enacted through the lens of social capital and capacity-building; and

empowerment and political actions were developed in order to continue the work beyond the current research project. (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 242).

Many of the new relationships developed during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 snowballed into further recommendations for connection within the community, and even across national levels of government, different municipalities, and ideas for international collaboration. Significant challenges were that I had no demonstrable success to share; Canada did not have synchronicity within the various government levels; and, having only recently established a national food policy to frame and guide various policy makers, it was very difficult to get traction and collaboration during the current study. However, the current study did prove to be pragmatic and significant in terms of education and advocacy, social network expansion, and capacity-building.

A discussion of the literature and how it related to the current study would not be complete without mentioning the work of Randy Stoecker (2005, 2009, 2013, 2016). Stoecker provided a pragmatic perspective, a down to earth practical focus on creating change for and with a community. A theme that continually popped up was the need to reflect on what differences the work could make and the role of the academic in making research relevant in the real world. In early writings, Stoecker laid out a prescriptive, methodical strategy for setting up a participatory action research initiative requiring clarity with regard to objectives, measures of success, and planning ahead for brainstorming sessions. Later work by Stoecker resonated with me in terms of how the researcher owned the project and was in charge of the change initiative. This felt empowering, beyond gathering people together to articulate a common goal. In effect, it was more effective for the researcher to be organized and to take initiative than to wait for self-organizing teams to work out a strategy together. Self-organizing teams take a lot of time to get organized. However, the knowledge, experience, and the contacts that emerged from the

teamwork and brainstorming sessions, as well as the self-confidence gained from facilitating these efforts were invaluable learning opportunities.

It was enlightening to realize during Cycle 3 that it was incredibly exciting and rewarding to take the initiative to reach out to connect with people across sectors and communities who could be helpful in terms of supporting the research objectives with practical contributions. In fact, many of the team participants took initiative to reach out within the community during each cycle. For example, the university students wanted to create a video and host an art night at the community garden, so they did! These initiatives were empowering and helped to further an early goal, during Focus Group 3 in Cycle 1, of raising awareness in the community about the community garden as a resource. These initiatives connected the vision of the current study with participants through both common themes and higher objectives.

Strengths of the Research

Research in the current context did not fit neatly into standard categories for academic study. Data collection was time consuming, and the ideas and strategies generated may not be useful to any other population or community. In Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation in the section regarding debates on social capital and health promotion, and the section on the appropriateness of the approach to the current study, it was stated that there was no recipe for success when mobilizing social capital (Eriksson, 2011) and that each community would have to take guidance from theory and create their own environments to support and sustain health promotion initiatives. One might have thought this project could be conducted an ethnographic study (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 40), or perhaps a case study - an in-depth investigation of a problem in a real-life setting over an extended period of time (p. 40), but the focus in the current study was more on problem resolution rather than cultural immersion or exploring all facets of a

community problem context. Participatory and action research were not well differentiated as approaches in the literature reviewed. However, the current study was able to be defined as using a participatory action research approach in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 due to the participation of organization and community members in strategy and decision-making. It was defined as an intervention-oriented (Bhattacherjee, 2012) action research approach in Cycle 3.

One strength of the current study was the fact that the researchers were not neutral observers. Some or all of the research team members, in all Cycles, had previous food system experience, as well as the motivation to exert influence in the community in alignment with our personal values of social justice and our awareness that advocacy and participation could generate empowerment in the community.

A basic strength of the current study was the consistent journaling of observations and reflections throughout all three Cycles, and a rigorous method for analyzing data through the use of thematic coding in terms of interviews and focus groups in Cycle 1 and in Cycle 2. An attempt was made to minimize bias by enlisting the aid of the doctoral committee during various stages of dissertation writing and through prolonged engagement. An attempt was made to epistemologically consider preconceptions and prior assumptions of both the participants and the researcher and to implement specific strategies to aid in the trustworthiness of the findings (Anney, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017), as described previously.

Another strength of the current study was its entrepreneurial spirit, bringing people together outside of their normal routines to create synergistic connections, to access information and resources, and to facilitate a flow of information and innovative ideas to address the problem topic. What emerged from each cycle in the current study was an expanded social network with greater capacity for interaction. This effort utilized structural holes (Burt, 2004) as means for

creating new assets and generating new ideas (p. 350, 353), improving synergistic connections and access to information and resources. “Networks do not act; they are a context for action” (p. 354). As stated earlier, this concept grounded the current study.

Another strength of the current study was its ability to provide highly detailed information to explain the complex issue of mitigating food security in the community of Penticton. Multiple methods for collecting data were employed in the qualitative study including: semi-structured interviews, observations, focus groups, and a closing survey. Importantly, by using participatory and action research strategies, the study was able to provide answers to the research questions and formulate critical strategies in terms of *how to* proceed in the future. As the current study came to a close, these findings may be built upon for future action. Specifically, the study answered the research questions in terms of *how to* as follows:

- **The initial research question in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 was**: Using participatory action research, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

  The answer, in terms of the strength of the current study, was that I and my fellow researchers learned *how to* develop and mobilize local social networks using participatory action research. In terms of answering the research question, participatory action research was able to functionally operate for the first two cycles of the project, but my team was unable to move toward sustainable change due to changing participant and institutional priorities. We were able to generate a number of good ideas, as discussed in previous Chapters, and contribute to expanding social networks and community capacity-building.

- **The new research question in Cycle 3 was**: Taking an active leadership role, to what extent could I create and empower a team of university students and an administrator to catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

  The answer, in terms of the strength of the current study, was that I learned *how to* empower a team to catalyze and mobilize local social networks and *how to* move a team toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for clients at the Salvation Army food bank. I learned to take a leadership role. In terms of answering the research question, the objectives were accomplished. In addition, the CoVic Garden Box Project donated 79 pounds of fresh vegetables and the community garden donated about 1500 pounds of food with an approximate total combined value of about $3950.00CAD, enough to serve about 700 meals.

Significance of the Research

The current study uncovered potentially promising opportunities for impacting the problem of food insecurity and food quality locally. For example, the Smart Mobile application, collaboration with farm schools and elementary schools, furthering the CoVic Garden Box Project with municipal support, and for facilitating horticulture therapy. However, those were not quick fixes and could not be undertaken by any single individual. Each of the identified opportunities and strategies for reducing food insecurity required the efforts of multiple individuals with unique skills, passion, and resources. Those individuals needed to be based within or have influence within supportive organizations willing to be accountable for oversight

and the process of securing funding. To go to the next level, an appropriate leadership structure was required and the collaboration had to be embedded within multiple levels of government where policy change was possible. The work of the current study was significant:

1. First, the current study helped to confirm the position of many scholars that food banks had not resolved and were unlikely to significantly impact food security in Canada. For example, multiple sources indicated that only 20-21% of people who were food insecure accessed food banks (PROOF, 2019, pp. 1-2; Tarasuk et al., 2019, Abstract). Swords (2019) iterated that food banks provided insufficient food quantity, quality, were inaccessible to certain populations, and were unstable source providers (p. 852). Although the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that there may always need to be systems in place for emergency food supply, Riches (2011) warned against the proliferation of food banks. They cannot address the root causes of poverty.
2. Second, the research helped to illustrate why the charity sector alone is ill equipped to tackle large, complex social problems such as food insecurity. This has been explained in prior chapters.
3. Third, I and my fellow researchers learned to create a constituency. A community emerged and evolved through social networking and capacity-building activities. My team provided space and direction, we mobilized resources, we were empowered, advocated, educated, and we were positioned to influence policy. We believed this ongoing effort would improve access to healthy food for food bank recipients and vulnerable people in the community. However, it is worth noting that the dynamic nature of the any constituency meant that food policy a charter for Penticton, with the

North Shore of Vancouver food charter as a model (Table Matters, 2013), could be essential to assure sustainability.

4. Fourth, I and my fellow researchers raised broad awareness of the food insecurity issue and created practical experiences demonstrating the benefits of growing food and sharing produce with others. My team elevated the conversation to the community level and the policy level. The CoVic Garden Box Project was approved by Penticton city councillors for potential inclusion in the 2021 Municipal Plan.
5. Fifth, the research team increased their capacity for understanding what worked, what did not work, and what could have been done differently in retrospect to initiate and implement the effort. As stated previously, in community-based research, success includes creating learning or understanding, to grow ourselves as researchers, and to create a higher platform for continued community change (Kasl & Yorks, 2010, p. 315). Kasl and Yorks professed that a cooperative collaborative inquiry is a "powerful and robust way of facilitating adult learning experiences that are potentially transformative" (p. 316). At some point I and my fellow researchers began to accept the continuous learning cycle with grace rather than a "we aren't there yet" perspective. This was critical to continued motivation and this perspective can be shared in future efforts.

Discussion of Field Research Results

The field research was conducted in three cycles. The research question developed for this study sought to specifically explore what impact a small group of people could have on food insecurity in Penticton, BC, Canada. The core research team thought participatory action research could facilitate positive change.

Cycle 1 initiated the investigation by exploring what problems might be resolved. During Cycle 2, the group precipitated action by exploring opportunities face-to-face with potential collaborators. During Cycle 3, the objective was to improve the quality and quantity of food in Penticton food banks directly. The discussion with regard to each cycle in this Chapter concludes with suggestions to illustrate, chronologically, the lessons learned.

Pre-project motivation

I and my fellow researchers began the work and shared the frustrations that drew us to the project. There was a clear gap between quality and quantity of food at the Penticton food bank, and my team thought we could improve the situation. We engaged with an approach that was hopeful and appreciative of assets within the community, such as the youth, seniors, volunteers, and contributing business owners.

Cycle 1

The result of first cycle was the evolution of an action plan. I and my fellow researchers veered away from the idea that something from an exploratory list of inspiring best practices and projects implemented elsewhere might yield ideas to be utilized and completed within 16 weeks in Penticton. Instead, my team divided the community into sectors: politics, education, agriculture, food services, media, local food providing agencies, and a catch-all category. We sought to change the entire complex structure of food delivery one segment at a time.

My team was open to all types of creative ideas. I and my fellow researchers imagined what could be achieved in Penticton. Each individuals' unique position and viewpoint within the community inspired passion and ideas. These results directly supported my initial premise that, once a problem has been identified, brainstorming and investigation are helpful to discovering new approaches to the problem. During this Cycle, the core research team examined the current

situation, the solutions attempted elsewhere, and how we might define and monitor success. My team identified assets and realized what was missing. Upon reflection, I would recommend this structure for future work because it provides immediate results and an engaging platform for subsequent brainstorming.

As I and my fellow researchers learned what people had done elsewhere, my team was empowered to imagine what could be done locally, drawing upon each individual's passion, perspective, interests, and experiences in the community. The investigative and exploratory exercise provided a supportive environment for new ideas to emerge that were relevant to the Penticton community, such as university-community collaborations. Looking back, this provided me with a lesson in group facilitation. Additionally, while passion was essential, a participatory action researcher must keep an eye on human and financial resources, including potential partnerships, and assure that work can progress. In setting parameters for brainstorming, I included issues around cost and time, and how to approach partners. The result was that my team developed an action plan requiring different skills over time. For example, marketing skills were needed to work with the media to broadcast messages; project management skills were needed to coordinate activities; and technology skills were needed for keeping communication linkages effective in Microsoft Teams software.

The participants were able to revisit their own background and utilize their own connections in the community. For example, a person interested in political solutions wanted to involve politicians and showcase the community needs to this audience. Likewise, younger participants wanted to connect with each other and initiate greater involvement among their peers. They felt the experience would help build their resume. Staff at the Salvation Army wanted to remove barriers related to misinformation and the public perspective on food banks,

and they wanted to debunk the myth that perishables were unwelcome donations. Staff working in the warehouse had conflicting views with regard to applying quality standards to donations, but it seemed important to do so because quality was a major concern of food bank clients.

Suggestions for Cycle 1

In Cycle 1, the idea emerged to focus on community sectors rather than a project doable within 16-weeks. In retrospect, I would not recommend picking a project from elsewhere without an existing relationship to build upon. Projects must be grounded in the local environment.

Future participatory action researchers might be best served by developing an agenda and action plan template, or business plan to be undertaken over a short time frame. It became clear that some preparative training would have been helpful prior to beginning the current study, to understand key discussion and brainstorming points that would be needed to mobilize the community. In terms of training, I recommend participants are instructed to a) view obstacles and setbacks as learning opportunities to re-evaluate strategy; b) with regard to the participatory and social justice umbrella, and c) the elements described in Table 12 as an iterative way of executing a 12-week plan with an evidence-based mindset.

Table 12.

12-Week Project Outline

Activities	**Week**											
Week number	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**
Define problem	X											
Investigation		X										
Plan			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Launch and execute				X								
Collect data					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reflection					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Cycle 2

The results of Cycle 2 included foundational discussions for inter-organization collaboration which, if they came to fruition, I and my fellow researchers hoped would improve the quality and quantity of food for food bank clients. To recap, in Cycle 2 the core research team met with sector representatives from the school board, elementary school, high school, two universities, agricultural representatives, media representatives, politicians at the municipal and federal level. My team sometimes arranged lunchtime focus groups with several members of the research team, while other sessions included only three members of the team face-to-face. Other connections took place by telephone.

As the process unfolded in Cycle 2, I and my fellow researchers had no problem generating project ideas. However, challenges emerged as the group encountered barriers to progress such as funding requirements, planning resources, long-term approval processes, and the need for administrative oversight to manage a framework for action. My team felt it was exciting to explore the possibilities for facilitating change, yet making progress was complicated. Understanding and insights were gained in several contexts:

- **Funding**. Each initiative and idea that I and my fellow researchers generated required financial support to implement. My team hoped the need for financial support could be resolved in the form of a grant, which led to a draft of an application for a Vancouver Foundation Systems Change grant (Appendix H) during Cycle 2. The Systems Change grant program could provide funds to those working on a pressing social, environmental, or cultural issues affecting communities British Columbia. Up to $100,000 per year for up to three years was potentially available in this context.

- **Education sector.** Cycle 2 included interviews with participants who saw students of all ages as an important community to consider for targeted outreach. At this stage, I and my fellow researchers planted seeds for collaboration and learned more about acquiring resources in this sector. I and my fellow researchers learned that a key would be to connect with a teacher, a champion with a passion for community gardens and a desire to address food insecurity. The vision was that community gardens could be utilized during coursework to generate awareness of the food insecurity problem and train students to produce food for community use while learning relevant skills, such as nutrition and math. The next step was intended to connect with people who could develop courses tailored to this purpose.
- **Media sector.** The media sector was supportive and interested in promoting the needs of the food bank. For example, I and my fellow researchers wanted people to know that the food banks accepted perishables. Therefore, press releases were issued to the media from the food bank (articles in the Castanet described previously mentioned this). Relationships could be established, but then people moved on and my team needed to identify new connections with the media outlets.
- **Organizational support.** I and my fellow researchers hoped an agency could be identified that would be willing to take responsibility for the administration of a grant. However, the organizations contacted, although they were supportive, were unlikely to join in due to their own pre-existing agenda. They needed time to fit a new project into their programming at some future date, and for approval processes. I believe the seeds planted during Cycle 2, i.e., the development of new social networks, had the capacity for future growth in a subsequent cycle. In any future project, it would be

important to allow time just to learn about the power structures, the processes involved, to allow time for writing a proposal and obtaining organizational support, and for the project to fit in the organizational schedule so that staff could be assigned.

Suggestions for Cycle 2

In retrospect, developing collaborations between organizations was very complicated. There was a need to first identify decision makers and the processes for engaging in new initiatives. Suggestions include: explore the requirements of major organizations prior to outreach, and recognize the need for an administrative structure for the project to become actionable and sustainable on a large scale.

Practical recommendations for collaboration include lunchtime meetings to facilitate engagement with key collaborators with busy work schedules. If possible, focus groups could dovetail with sector conventions related to food security where groups with high recognition, such as Food Secure Canada, might deliver presentations on behalf of a food bank project to rally funding and participation. This strategy could help to attract people outside of current participant networks.

Once a new administrative agency took responsibility for governance, they would need to exercise patience throughout the self-organizing process. During this time, participants will investigate and explore possibilities, identify the right people to connect with in the community, learn the processes required to gain support for the various project tracks, identify the most viable tracks, and most important –ensure the initiative continually moves forward and is embedded within the vision of each organization.

It is recommended that a sponsoring agency anticipate the inevitable transience of individuals within the social network. To ensure capacity-building within the community,

backup partners should be engaged at the outset. In this context, it would be helpful if a sponsoring agency were either a municipality, agency, or a university that works closely within a municipality.

Although the study did not specifically focus on multisector collaborations, some ideas had implications for a pan-community initiative. Participants hoped collaborations, sustainability and policy change might be more easily achieved than it was. It appeared there could be an advantage to engaging government representatives early due to their high-level knowledge of government bureaucracy, timelines, guidelines and priorities.

Cycle 3

While each cycle was exciting in its own way, Cycle 3 was where an ability to make a difference to food security on-the-ground emerged, small as it was. This cycle utilized a renewed level of energy to expand and create new social networks, building capacity for change. The urgency presented by COVID -19 pandemic was a catalyst to push forward toward a new level of collaboration and community involvement.

Importantly, the results of Cycle 3 included almost 1,000 square feet of new gardening space for the community, 26 new and very enthusiastic advocates in the community, and over 15 supportive local businesses. During Cycle 3 new advocates also became active in specific sectors: media, businesses, government, academia, residents of the neighborhoods of Penticton, and an international action research organization. In addition, unexpected resources were tapped:

- A grant was approved to help Alzheimer's Disease patient caregivers with social prescriptions (horticulture therapy) for their patients to receive garden beds in collaboration with the food bank.

- People involved in the homeschooling sector indicated an interest in the future CoVic Garden Box Projects.
- Senior residences and community service groups could be expanded.

The university students in Cycle 3 invited the local art community to create works of art in the garden one summer evening. The invitation to "dirt therapy" and an 'Art Night' was posted on a webpage (Appendix I) and a photographer was invited to take pictures. The images were used for the production of a calendar, shown in Figure 17. The last page of the calendar included a call for continued action (below) and expressed appreciation to the individual artists (not identified herein) and organizations that assisted in Cycle 3: Superior Peat, The Salvation Army, Blaze King, Melissa Hartmann Photography, BP Wood, Flowers on the Bench, Home Hardware, Sandstone Landscaping, Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen, and my medical research firm.

> Through the success of the CoVic garden box campaign, we are looking to extend the project to caregivers in the local community as a way of social prescription and dirt therapy by creating a sense of community among others. Our goal is to improve the mental and physical well-being of caregivers by providing an outlet for relief stress and anxiety in addition to developing a sense of community among participants who are experiencing similar circumstances. (private organization, CoVic Garden Calendar, p. 14)

The university students who worked with the study during Cycle 3 proved that their eagerness to take action could be an invaluable asset. The young people who participated in Cycle 3 of the current study were able to envision and put into practice elements of the work which improved outreach and practical on-the-ground implementation of the project. Their contributions, such as a video production (Appendix K), connecting with local media for outreach, and creating a sense of community empowerment were pivotal in inspiring others to participate. The families in the community who engaged in Cycle 3 (growing food in raised beds) were truly inspired and spoke with their neighbors and passers-by as shown in the

students' video. This enthusiastic community base is expected to be foundational for Cycle 4 proposals following completion of the current study's dissertation research.

Due to a variety of outreach efforts, such as a Facebook page for gardeners, my company webpage, radio broadcasts, newspaper press releases, and online videos, people were able to connect with my research team, share inspiring pictures and stories, join the project and ask for help. A wide variety of people seemed to have something they wanted to share and contribute to relieve food insecurity in the community. For example, my team connected to people with a wood-working workshop, web development skills, and media representatives who were able to view those assets as a platform to reach out to their public audiences.

Politicians also offered their contacts at the provincial and national level, and those agency representatives were also happy to help further the current study where they could. For example, Richard Cannings, a local member of Parliament, reached out to Alistair McGregor, an NDP agricultural critic and his staff, and provided us with a list of organizations to follow up with. Suggestions included Second Harvest, Community Food Centres Canada, The Canadian Red Cross Granting Program for Non-profits, United Way's Emergency Community Support Fund, Community Foundations of Canada, a Local Food Infrastructure Fund through Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (part of the national food policy).

The University Director of the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at Kwantlen Polytechnic University was a knowledgeable and credible 'champion', and we know what is needed to work with the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS). We should also connect with the Penticton Indian Band office, physicians' groups, the Ministry of Education and parents' associations for school garden funding on behalf of each of the 100 schools in the

district, and we could engage with the Grape Grower Association (800 growers) through their newsletter.

The results of the current study illustrated something primal and contagious happened when one took action relating to growing food, such as a love of cultivation, being outdoors, and a shared comradery in the drama of learning, the construction of the raised garden boxes, and fending off deer, bear (Figure 18), bugs, and slugs (Figure 19) who were also attracted to the CoVic Garden Box Project as well.

Figure 18.

Cycle 3: Bear!

Figure 19.

Cycle 3: Slugs Love Beer

I believe the COVID -19 pandemic helped to fuel community readiness for change and engagement due to feelings of isolation and anticipation of potential shortages at the supermarkets. Throughout all three cycles, it became clear that this work was important but there was a great deal to do, and the work was complex. Participants commented on the need for hard work, marketing, fundraising, and social networking to make progress both in terms of capacity-building and food security in Penticton.

Suggestions for Cycle 3

In the future, by the time Cycle 3 is initiated, there must be funding, a dedicated full-time coordinator, and a core team with the skills related to marketing and promotion, relationship building, administrative management, and volunteer management. Although the study did not

specifically focus on the education sector initially, this would be a priority if someone were to repeat the study here in Penticton or elsewhere. There should be a long-term commitment with education providers so students (at all levels) could complete course work relative to learning cultivation skills. It seemed common knowledge that those skills are not always taught across generations. Students are also a strong source of advocacy. It is not necessary for individuals to own land for community gardens, as rooftop gardens, balcony gardens, and indoor gardens are all possibilities for growing produce and herbs, and support for all were included in the Penticton Official Community Plan 2045 goals (Penticton OCP, 2020). With regard to utilizing volunteers in Cycle 3, the following practical findings from the closing survey will be functionally useful in the future:

1. **First, with regard to recruiting volunteer workers:** Outreach to university students for help during the spring and summer months should integrate motivational strategies. In particular 50-75% of the respondents were motivated by the opportunity to improve society and employability. For example, one participant stated: "This project has taught me a great deal about the different aspects of a project of this size. Marketing, team management, delivery, communication, etc." The variety of outreach strategies that volunteers found worth mentioning will be useful going forward, particularly Facebook.
2. **Second, with regard to support for family participation:** Not everyone on the team met the recipients of the garden boxes. As one participant indicated, we should "Support the recipients more. Focus more on the quality of education and assistance to recipients than the quantity of people receiving (do it well and then expand from there)". In response to my request for feedback, an email received from the Salvation

Army on December 29, 2020 stated: “Moving forward, I think it would be important to start earlier, offer training and mentoring, and have someone hands on throughout the project” (Appendix N). An immediate closing survey with garden box recipients would be a good idea for future projects in terms of their reflections on what worked, what did not work, and what we could do better next time from their perspective, as they are the primary stakeholders in the context of food security. It seemed important to follow-up in 2021 with the university students, businesses, and others who shared their time and energy to let them know of our successes and any further opportunities, to keep them engaged. It could inspire them to become food security advocates or to help with similar projects in the future. Perhaps a newsletter and community advisory board would keep everyone engaged.

3. **Third, with regard to high level organizational support for the project:** It was hoped that, between the oversight of the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA, the potential for grants, inclusion at the Municipal level in Penticton, and collaboration with the education sector, the bottom-line production value added has the potential to improve, i.e., to supply the food bank with more fresh produce than ever before at a lower cost.

Summary

A summary of key food security change strategies derived from Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 have been illustrated in Table 13. A similar outline of the objectives for Cycle 4 (which is the next phase of the CoVic Garden Box Project planned for the spring of 2021) has been illustrated in Appendix R. Future plans are also described further in the upcoming section on Future Research.

Table 13.

Key Food Security Change Strategies Derived from Cycles 1, 2, and 3

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	COMPLETED
Research	**Research questions:** **Cycle 1 and 2:** *Using PAR, to what extent can the Penticton food bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?* **Cycle 3:** *Taking an active leadership role, to what extent could I create and empower a team of university students and an administrator to catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?*	Cycle 1-2 participatory action research, and Cycle 3-action research with BREB Ethics Approval. Developed and conducted semi-structured interviews. Assembled Core Research Team & reviewed inspiring sample projects. Cycle 1 – focus groups created a preliminary vision and established strategy to investigate local potential for collaboration. Identified community assets and targeted five sectors. Cycle 2 - Focus groups and interviews to establish collaborative potential, narrowed to four sectors. Cycle 3 - Initiated a community response to grow food and share with the Food Bank within COVID limitations (CoVic Garden Box Project); involving 26 families and 2 facilities. Evaluated the outcomes/processes. Learned to create and mobilize local social networks and build cooperative community capacity.
Volunteer	Cycle 1 focus groups established a community responsibility to feed local people, rather than a food bank responsibility.	Developed a network of 26 new family gardeners to be surveyed and invited to volunteer in 2021. Established relationships with the city staff who could become advocates of a community wide approach to food. Planned to follow up on the potential for inclusion in the 2021 Municipal Plan. Made a favourable impression on City elected officials and have their support for the continued work in creating the growing and sharing of more healthy food.
Media, social media, marketing	Raise awareness of food security issues. Attract, engage, empower volunteers Make people aware that perishables can be donated.	Media groups produced features: Global News TV (and online), Castanet, Penticton Western News, Penticton Herald, CBC radio, SUN-FM radio. Local artists and a photographer shared expertise on an Art Night, developed Facebook group, web page.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	COMPLETED
Fundraising	Attend to the significant resource issues related to enacting future plans, identify targets for funding and acquire resources.	Prepared draft application for a Vancouver Foundation Systems Change Grant (Appendix H). Received a Neighbourhood Small Grant from the Community Foundation of the S. Okanagan-Similkameen. Potential donors emerged: Go Fund Me, Max Bell foundation, federal opportunities under Canada's new Food Policy, Ministry of Education for food school garden funding, Vancouver Foundation, Healthy communities and Interior Health Authority program; Regional District of the Okanagan-Similkameen, Systems Change Grant, and more.
Social networking, capacity-building	Examine key lines of communication, relationships in our network and those essential for future work. Develop strategies for awareness building and knowledge transfer.	Expanded geographic focus to include Kelowna. Plan to affiliate with FoodShare Canada, Vancouver Table Matters, Chamber, Community Foundation of South Okanagan-Similkameen, Interior Health Authority (IHA), City Councillors, Foodshare in Ontario, Food Secure Canada, local Penticton Indian Band, UC San Francisco researchers, and researchers in new tech such as vertical gardens.
Innovation	We intended to create new practices which could increase the quality and quantity of food for Salvation Army food bank clients.	In Cycle 3 we offered community members the opportunity to grow in free raised beds with 50% of produce or more donated to the Food Bank. We grew 1579 pounds of food, about 700 servings according to the Salvation Army (Appendix N). Due to COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, we practiced social distancing. We developed a remote network using social media, including gardeners, students and businesses.
Education	Build curriculum and partnerships to support educational initiatives.	Connected with: School District #67 Superintendent Board Trustees Parkway Elementary Princess Margaret High School Professors and Instructors at UBC, Okanagan College, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (farm schools)

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	COMPLETED
Partnership	To seek partners and clarify roles so we optimize collaboration and minimize competition over resources.	Salvation Army engaged, along with individuals from four community sectors, and the City Council, municipal, provincial and national politicians. Created partnerships with local businesses for the Co-Vic Garden Box Project, such as landscapers, nurseries, hardware stores providing soil, plants and lumber. Engaged with two facilities and 26 families who planted garden boxes to share with the Food Bank. Began to engage with physicians re: working with medical caregivers and agencies re: horticulture therapy. Conceptualized coordinating between school gardens and the food bank during the summer. Meetings re the Smart Donation application and university Enactus Project-Roots.
Policy and advocacy	To contribute to policy development at provincial and federal levels and become aware of opportunities and funding.	Met with representatives of the BC Fruit and Organic Growers Association, and two wineries which were part of the BC Wine Growers Association. Reviewed food policies from other centers, and met with a city councillor to discuss. Presented a brief to the Penticton City Council on September 1, 2020. Approved to work with city staff to incorporate into 2021 Municipal Plan. Accepted for inclusion in ARNA's Sustainability Action Research Committee.

Reflection

Initially, I felt there was a romanticism to participatory action research, yet I hope to add a more disciplined, rigorous structure for future work in this context. Participatory action research is a dynamic approach to community-based capacity-building. I would encourage the use of its' democratic principles, recognizing that the researcher is not the expert in the context of the study. However, a strong element of coordination and administration is essential to ensure continuity of the overarching objectives over time, and to create a structure under which progress

can continue despite changes to structural ties among community and participatory research team membership.

In addition, I would focus on young people of all ages and their ability to engage through social media as well as the traditional media. I would hope to connect further with politicians at each level of government, with larger agencies that could be supportive of social justice initiatives, with key bureaucrats locally or their designees, and with educational institutions (all levels), physicians, representatives of the business and agricultural sectors.

In retrospect, the new knowledge and the learning gained did not translate into the changes I and my fellow researchers sought because of the obstacles to creating change in a community. For example, as individuals, I and my fellow researchers had changing life situations and priorities, local organizations had shifting budgets, and my team had no real authority or power to implement any sustainable policy change (although we had influence). As well, my team had neither funding for administrative work, nor any stable, common foundation to work from. While my team learned about obstacles to implementation, it was illuminating to learn what might be helpful to future community change efforts in Penticton and, potentially, elsewhere in Canada and the rest of the world. As stated earlier in this chapter (in the section on Integration of the Research and Literature), in community-based research, success was not defined as creation of new knowledge (Kasl & Yorks, 2010), but included the creation of learning or understanding, to grow ourselves as researchers, to create a higher platform for continued community change, and to seek change in ourselves and our practice (p.38). This was accomplished.

With regard to my own learning, working in this environment strengthened my ability to observe and be more detached with regard to particular outcomes while keeping an eye on the

big picture objective. I would not, in the future, recommend a graduate student undertake a community-scale study without a highly stable agency to guide and prepare a student-researcher. The student should gain a preliminary understanding of how a prospective project fits into various missions, agendas, and values throughout the hierarchy of organizations and agencies that could potentially be involved, i.e., placement within society. A business plan could be useful for a project of this type. Projects should be designed to fit university semesters and be aligned with national and global objectives, such as the right to food (FAO, 2004a, 2004b; Rideout et al., 2007) or zero hunger by 2030 (World Health Organization, 2020).

The Future of Food Security

COVID-19 increased the role of foodbanks in Canada due to exacerbated food insecurity. That this issue had reached the public discussion space was evidenced by a recent CBC Radio program on November 26, 2020 (CBC, 2020c). According to the radio program transcript, host Matt Galloway asked Valerie Tarasuk, a professor of nutritional sciences at the University of Toronto and founder of the PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research Team, what had happened over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic when it came to food insecurity. Tarasuk replied "There's been one survey done by Statistics Canada since the pandemic started, and it showed an absolutely startling rise in the rate of food insecurity in Canada" (para. 4 after the introduction).

Galloway asked about the network of organizations that feed those in need, those who would have difficulty getting food on the table? Tarasuk replied, in part:

> There's a gigantic disconnect in terms of the services such as they are … ad hoc voluntary operations … These are seat of the pants operations, for the most part, collecting charitable donations and redistributing them primarily through volunteer labour. … It's not a service in the way that you think of a hospital or a school or a library. (CBC, 2020c, para 6)

Tarasuk (CBC, 2020c) highlighted the compromises that people were making to cover rents, mortgages and prescriptions – noting that they were not just short on food. “there are many, many layers of financial compromise happening in these households” (para. 8). Tarasuk continued by stating her concern that Canadians were not addressing the real problem by relying on charity to manage it, acknowledging that there was an “abundance of evidence to suggest that’s not an effective response [charity]” (para. 10).

A more hopeful perspective was shared by Paul Taylor of Food Share Toronto. Taylor (CBC, 2020c) worked with local communities to develop food infrastructure, such as underutilized public land for market gardens and subsidized produce markets (para. 16). He acknowledged that “we are absolutely clear that this work and the infrastructure that gets developed will not solve poverty or food insecurity. Because as Valerie said, these are issues largely about income” (para. 16). Taylor stated organizations such as his can disrupt the narrative and advocate for government to create income security policies, such as a decent living wage.

Galloway (CBC, 2020c) stated there were 60,000 charities in Canada helping to feed those in need (para. 21, 32:54/1:14:29). For example, Second Harvest collected perishable food that would otherwise go to waste. A sound clip was played in which Second Harvest CEO Lori Nikkel stated there were two tractor trailer loads of eggs “close to code” (para. 23) being taken to food banks and charities that could accept large amounts of food, such as after school programs. According to Tarasuk, Christmas food drives may celebrate the generosity of Canadians but a ‘feel good’ response is a “toxic” way of thinking [about food insecurity] while waiting for legislative change (para. 25), “People have lost their jobs through no fault of their own; why is our best idea to try to get some old eggs to them?” Tarasuk felt charity could never address such

an important and complicated problem, and it may enable government to avoid providing a meaningful attention in terms of the underlying economic issues.

During the program (CBC, 2020c), a sound clip was played from Marie-Claude Bibeau, Federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, who conveyed that the government improved social security benefits, such as the Canada Child Benefit, so families that really needed federal assistance could get more support. Bibeau stated they had brought 350,000 kids out of poverty (para. 28), to which Taylor critically responded "there's a significant number of people who are in severe poverty who don't have children, who aren't being supported in the same kind of way" (para. 30)… we've got to be advancing a conversation around human rights". Taylor added:

> I think we have to have conversations about things like introducing a perhaps *[sic]* a basic income. But we've got to also look at the other things that people are spending money on. Housing costs are through the roof. And we know that that *[sic]* rise started, you know, pretty much in 1993 when the government stopped building affordable housing. So, we've got to get back to building affordable housing and really commit to guaranteeing public services again. (CBC, 2020c, para. 30)

The program ended with Galloway (CBC, 2020c) asking Tarasuk what she advised people to do with their Christmas foodbank donations. She responded "please communicate to the Canadian government that you are not OK with charity" (para. 32).

Meanwhile, my effort to address food security in Penticton continued. Rideout et al. (2007, pp. 566-573) stated the following barriers had to be addressed for future community food security initiatives to be successful. Included here are my suggestions for action in each context:

- Lack of consistent effort: silos of work with unique and overlapping agendas, focus, and interests.

  Action: Create necessary social networks at the front end of a project.

- Conflicting governmental departments: For example, local fruit and non-local fruit, such as Washington State apples, were all included in Buy Local campaigns.

Action: Explore the relevance to food security. Meaning, while buying local is preferable to assist local economies, access to sufficient quality and quantity of food may require a broader perspective.

- Lack of legislative/judiciary clout: There was no legal ground for ensuring the right to food (although there were unsuccessful attempts to create legislation). The right to food was more aspirational than reality in the Canadian context. Social litigation to promote access to more/better food is beyond the capacity of this locality, although we could, perhaps, be a partner in such a strategy.

  Action: Join local United Nations, Food Security, Food Sovereignty, and Food Center chapters and engage with the media to bring greater awareness to these groups with regard to Canadian obligations.

- Institutionalization of food banks was perceived as a charitable solution rather than as a municipal requirement, although the COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that emergency food sources, such as food banks, are still essential.

  Action: Pursue education through the media, university courses, social prescriptions, and other outreach and engagement efforts, including to and through governing agencies, to create greater awareness of the dangers of the charity model's role and responsibility in addressing food insecurity.

- Erosion of a safety net and growing gaps in meeting needs of those most vulnerable who were falling between the cracks, although new social benefits became available this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

  Action: Examine recent food systems literature and work to establish local food policy in the municipality.

Conclusions Regarding Future Implementation

Given the lessons learned, my prescription for maximizing the results of this type of participatory action research intervention follows:

1. Embed the specific change under the larger rubric of the United Nations, as well as national and provincial policy commitments and any other anchoring organizations.
2. Do a preliminary study to determine the specific change that is most logical.
3. Anchor future Cycles by collaborating with a learning institution and policy body (municipal government), particularly if the end goal is policy change in support of sustainably better quality and quantities of food for vulnerable populations.
4. Identify local advocacy groups that are not yet working on food security and engage them.
5. Obtain sufficient funding to pay for administrative oversight and key personnel.
6. Work with students of all ages from the beginning; implement the Smart Donate mobile application in all of its community engagement contexts.
7. Set a 12-week schedule with weekly reflections and commitments for planning ahead based on results and reflection.
8. In addition to the 12-week schedule, build in a four-week start-up timeframe for exploration and investigation. During this time conduct a thorough diagnosis of the local situation and assure ideas conceptualized are agreed upon.
9. Practice adaptive leadership, reflection, and reflexivity.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic impacts, I felt there could be greater readiness in the government to consider policy change, take responsibility for food security from the charity

sector and assign authority and accountability at the municipal and provincial levels. Achilich (2015) stated:

> To be clear, this study is not a community food security assessment, but an assessment of the readiness for change at the community level. Factors in a food security assessment could be considered a part of the readiness score for change and be influential in developing strategies to increase a community's readiness for change towards sustaining more healthy food access. Conversely, this tool could be included in a community food security assessment tool kit. (Achilich, 2015, pp. 2-3)

> As we heard from the CRM interviews, engaging and coaching a community liaison to conduct this process will likely increase the engagement of the larger community and sustain any work to move food access forward. The CRM holds potential for tool planners to assess current regional activities and gauge readiness for new initiatives to create sustainable regional food systems. (Achilich, 2015, p.70)

The acronym "CRM" (Achilich, 2015) referred to a Community Readiness Model tool that I felt would be useful to assess communities prior to expending the time and effort to engage. Community readiness was previously explored by Findholt (2007) and Oetting et al. (1995). If used along with interviews of key personnel, the result could be a means for identifying the connections and resources necessary and available for similar initiatives or research studies in other communities anywhere.

Between November 12-18, 2020, I attended a conference titled *Cultivating change: A just transition to a regenerative food system* hosted by Food Secure Canada, a series of online conversations and workshops (given the restrictions of COVID-19). The conference website (Food Secure Canada, 2020h) stated that the event was intended to "showcase the work of Indigenous, Black and racialized food leaders, and build consciousness and capacity for anti-racist and decolonized approaches and allyship within the food movement" (para. 1). During this conference, I learned the importance of food sovereignty issues from the perspective of marginalized groups, and that they must be integrated within any future plans for activism in the

food security context. To this end, I resolved to invite the Penticton Indian Band to participate as a partner in the future where possible.

Potential Applications and Recommendations

The current study might be considered significant to municipal mayors and councillors who accept accountability for implementing food security policies, and to academics interested in service learning, sustainable food solution advocates within a community, issuers of social prescriptions, and action research practitioners.

The progress I made by engaging university students was inspiring. When I shared my journey with others and shared news in various places, such as a webpage for "dirt therapy" on my company website (Appendix I), on the radio and elsewhere in the news media, I often received community support and contributions in response (Appendix J). The media was very willing to be a crucial partner and helped to raise awareness of what community members were doing and how others could join us. News outlets were informed of our progress, such as the Penticton Herald, the Castanet, and the Western News. The entire process of Cycle 3 was very empowering. If the research team had the necessary administrative oversight and adaptive leadership functional role, I believe we could influence and create demonstrable progress throughout the education, government, and civil society sectors.

The Smart Donate mobile application could be used with the CoVic Garden Box Project as well as in the greater agricultural community. Meaning, the application could tabulate and quantify achievements such as what was planted, what grew, what was harvested, and what went to the food bank, the remainder being available for individual family use in the CoVic Garden Box Projects, as well as other programs and initiatives identified at the time, such as school gardens and school farms. The application had implications for multiple sector engagements

such as students at the university who might participate in summer practical experiences, food bank management who could track inventory, and local farmers and wineries who could track donations of second-grade product for tax deduction purposes.

Funding agencies may be interested in how my fellow researchers and I built capacity through social network expansion. One of the things I found most critical was the need to anchor a project at various levels within the municipal, provincial, and national levels and across sectors. If I were to re-initiate a project of this scope, I would target agencies and individuals to share in the initial exploratory sessions in order to identify existing ties, or those with just a few degrees of separation within the social network. Funding agencies may find this protocol helpful in developing project support across jurisdictions.

Although the current study did not specifically focus on the education sector initially, I believe that this sector should be a key partner. In addition, the involvement of medical students could be further explored to facilitate social prescriptions for patients with medical conditions who might benefit from the experience of horticulture therapy. According to Edward Rosen, Project Director for the Lambeth "GP Food Co-op", garden communities "provide a space and a reason for people to socialise, learn and grow food together. People who participate are improving their own health and wellbeing" (NHS England, 2019, para. 6). Dr. Jonty Heaversege, London Regional Medical Director for Primary Care and Digital Transformation stated:

> As a part of the NHS Long Term Plan, social prescribing supports people to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them with activities in their own community. ... Gardens help people feel less isolated and improves the health of local people living with long term conditions. (NHS England, 2019, para. 9)

Future Research

The work is never finished and, therefore, I look ahead with the ongoing goal of improving food security in Penticton. During Cycle 3, I knew I would pursue further action in

the community (which I now call Cycle 4). To that end, in September 2020, I submitted a proposal to the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) for a Sustainability ARC (Action Research Committee). On October 7, 2020, a response was received from the ARNA Executive Committee approving their participation in the future effort. The committee representative stated in their email that this work represented "a vital strand of action research on a topic that is crucial for our planet and in the current context of global pandemic" (Appendix P, para. 1).

In addition, I pursued a Neighborhood Small Grant through the Community Foundation of South Okanagan/Similkameen for the CoVic Garden Box Project in 2021. I received approval for a $500 grant on November 30, 2020, and funds arrived in December for use during the first quarter of 2021. Hopefully I can recruit a team who can work more efficiently and effectively with the new community of gardeners for 2021 and develop measurable objectives.

Next, as a necessary and short-term follow-up to the existing project, I developed and planned to administer an online survey seeking critical feedback from the families who engaged in the Cycle 3 CoVic Garden Box Project. A request for ethics approval was submitted January 29, 2021, and approval was received February 10, 2021, Certificate # H15-02517-A010 (Amendments to Study). Categorically, the following information will be sought:

- how and where they learned about the project;
- their motivation for participating in the project;
- what did they expect to achieve with their participation;
- what worked well for them;
- what challenges, if any, did they encounter;
- what improvements or changes would they propose for subsequent interventions;

- if we had a chance to affiliate with a larger, global organization of fellow growers; what advice would they give those launching a similar project; and
- whether they have any ideas for further expanding the CoVic Garden Box Project.

Last, I developed a Summary of Key Food Security Change Strategies (Appendix R) and objectives for Cycle 4. Although the vision and objectives for Cycle 4 go far beyond the vision of the previous cycles, they have been informed by the capacity-building activities in the current study. This summary identifies opportunities to be sought out as a long-term blueprint for years of further engagement in terms of food security in Penticton, in British Columbia, and perhaps elsewhere in North America.

Personal Conclusions

There appear to be numerous avenues for achieving food security, food justice, and food sovereignty. However, to look at the nuances of all policies and practices and potential collaborations and populations who are impacted, all this affecting food security and food sovereignty just in Penticton, let alone Canada, seems to me simply beyond the scope of perhaps any one study, and far beyond the scope of a student project. So much was learned throughout the process and so much remains to be learned.

The participatory action research and action research processes for addressing social problems via a strategy that included exploratory investigation, planning, action, data collection, and reflection, were challenging but incredible learning experiences. Not only was completing this dissertation a challenge in the midst of this incredible community effort, but it was also a challenge to revamp my brain to view the work from the perspective of a researcher and an observer and then as an adaptable leader. This was extremely critical to my ability to facilitate change in the community context. I learned that I could not simply be a participant in the

process, I had to take an adaptive and leadership role. Although I learned a great deal from every step of the research process, my biggest personal insight was the knowledge that I can be a leader in the community and I can facilitate leadership growth in others. I can reach out the highest levels of government with confidence and make a difference. What was accomplished provided a blueprint for at least 10 years of future work.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Salvation Army Approval 2016

The Salvation Army

Canada & Bermuda
British Columbia

PENTICTON

2469 South Main Street Penticton
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October 2016

To Whom it May Concern:

We, at The Salvation Army, Penticton, have made a commitment within our Ministry Unit, a commitment endorsed by The Salvation Army Canada Bermuda Territory in their Fresh Produce Strategy, and also endorsed by Food Banks Canada, to seek long-term solutions to the lack of access to healthy food for our food bank clients. While our mandate in the past has been to provide what immediate and urgent help we can provide to food bank clients, we now know that we must work with clients, donors, health units, municipal governments and community partners to find long term and sustainable solutions to food insecurity and the resultant devastating long term health outcomes of people living in poverty. Our focus is now built around 'a hand up' in addition to a 'hand out' foundational theme. This hand up is through engagement in our nutrition education, community kitchen and community garden programs.

We are excited to have the opportunity to work in a formal and disciplined manner to find solutions, in collaboration with community partners and our clients through a participatory action study with university partners. We know that working on this research study provides the discipline, structure and knowledge to allow us to identify and implement changes of a sustainable nature, through participation with other key stakeholders in the community. The study also provides an evaluative framework to empower our local businesses and organizations and has contributed to building capacity to grow and contribute further. With the formal structure of a research study, we also feel that our experiences of success and failure have been shared and have been of value to our other food bank partners across Canada. Our local staff consult to national task forces to address hunger, and as such, this transfer of knowledge has been facilitated to the broader community and food bank networks.

Over that past four years our Program Coordinator has worked closely with Donna Benson and the Health Research Group and with our clients as partners we have developed:

- A community kitchen program
- A Fresh From the Farm youth gleaning program
- A community garden program

- Nutrition Education classes for food bank clients
- Diabetes Education classes in collaboration with the Canadian Diabetes Assc. Food Skills for Families and Food Skills for Seniors programs
- A collaboration with a local vineyard to plant five acres for the food bank as well as a collaboration with BC Tree Fruits to offer free cold storage for these vegetables
- A collaboration with the BC Farmer's Market Assc. to offer market coupons to attendees at kitchen and garden programs
- Two series of Food for All guide books to offer freely to food bank clients providing education on how to buy, store, preserve and cook with inexpensive and nutritious foods readily available
- A collaboration with Vancouver Foundation to educate food bank clients on how to grow a bit of food for themselves in balcony/container boxes
- In collaboration with UBCO a framework for beginning to change the donation patterns of local businesses to reflect the need for a healthier donation pattern

We would proudly be a key stakeholder and participate in the research study proposed.

This research study will commence _____ and for the period _____

With the goal of _____

We feel that we have taken a leadership role in these past four years, with our clients as partners, and we have shared our knowledge closely with Food Banks Canada and our local Health Authority towards the development of a Food Banks Canada community garden tool kit and most recently the development of a Food Banks Canada youth hunger strategy, and we are empowered to take on this role as a facilitator of collaboration action PAR study which will lead to sustainable and societal change.

Captain Miriam Leslie

Appendix B: Cycle 1, Core Research Team Informed Consent Form

Consent Form – Core Research Team

Informed Consent for Core Research Group
Food for All - The Food Bank as an Agent of Change: A Case Study of a Participatory Action Research (PAR) Intervention

Study Team

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Mary Ann Murphy, Associate Professor, Cross-Appointment on Aging, School of Social Work and Department of Sociology, UBC Okanagan
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Co-Investigator:
Donna Benson, doctoral student, UBC
Donnabenson59@yahoo.com, Phone 250 460-0984

Sponsor:
The study is being conducted under the auspices of UBC, where I, Donna Benson am a current doctoral candidate. The dissertation will be considered a public document which will be available on the internet via circle. There is no external funding agency for the study.

Invitation and Study Purpose

You are being invited to join this research study as both a focus group participant and a research collaborator. The purpose of this study is to determine how a participatory action (PAR) approach can help the Penticton food bank. Specially, I would like to investigate how the food bank can help expand local social networks to make sustainable changes to improve the quality and quantity of food available to food bank recipients in Penticton.

The main focus (as detailed in the Procedure) is to collectively select food system innovations that we wish to pursue and implement. As part of the process, we will regularly evaluate our progress and adjust our course as necessary.

Essentially, I am inviting you to join a community team in a process that may best be described as *think, plan, do*. We will choose action priorities, review where we are, prepare a plan, evaluate progress regularly and adjust activities and plans as deemed necessary.

Participants

You are being asked to participate as an organizational volunteer because staff at the Salvation Army recommended you because of your ability to work in a collaborative group intended to create sustainable change; and because of your valuable perspective and experience.

To be eligible to participate, you must be:

- at least 19 years of age
- able to participate in at least 80% of meetings
- willing to share your thoughts and ideas in meeting with others, and
- have permission from your organization.

PAR is an approach to research that is intended to create change and understanding of a social problem such as access to healthy food. It is particularly suited as a research method when people are tackling complex and complicated problems that involve many stakeholders and organizations. The purpose of the research is twofold; first, the collaborators wish to find sustainable solutions, and second, there is intent to advance and share knowledge with a broader community about the participants' experience in being involved in a PAR study. It is hoped that the lessons learned will also be able to help others across Canada make advances and changes in their own communities.

In this PAR study, you are invited to join the core planning team for the selection of projects to implement over a 16-week period. Subsequent to the selection of the projects to be implemented, you will be invited to participate in the planning, data collection, analysis and public presentation of the findings to all interested stakeholders.

This research unfolds in two stages. In the first stage, our core planning team, consisting of members representing the Salvation Army food bank staff and volunteers will carefully think through and select the food quality and quantity action priorities we want to pursue for Penticton over a 16-week period. Going into the second stage, we will enlarge the core planning group by inviting additional community members who represent organizations that will be important in making sure that the identified priorities can be achieved.

The additional community members who are identified as key to implementing the innovations, will be recruited to provide additional input or help, but will not be asked to make the same time commitment that you are.

Procedures

You will be asked to attend nine meetings, virtually or in person at the Penticton Salvation Army offices, the Community Food bank garden or another convenient location in Penticton. During these meetings, you will be asked to participate in discussions, and answer interview questions about your thoughts, beliefs and ideas related to food issues. You will also be asked to answer questions related to food quality and quantity issues related to your own ideas and your organizational opportunities to contribute to food system changes.

You may be asked to talk to people within your organization, keep simple notes on your progress, and take photographs or videos related to the food quality/quantity innovations we decide to work on.

We will use a collaborative process which will involve the following nine (9) meetings. We may need 2 hours for our startup meeting; however, remaining pre-planned meetings will be approximately one hour long. These meetings will occur over a 4-month period from May 1, 2017 to August 30, 2017. The pre-planned meetings may be attended virtually or in person. The total amount of time could take between 10 and 12 hours over the four-month period.

It is anticipated that you will do your best to commit to attending at least 80% of these meetings. Are you able to do so?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

This is what we will cover during those 9 meetings.

Meeting 1

1. Introductions
    - Revisit the original posed research questions
    - Review of the problem from various perspectives
    - Complete a visioning exercise in which we will describe an ideal scenario of what could be - if there were no limits
    - Review of innovations from other communities, and
    - Revisit and refine the research questions as necessary

2. After completion, of the above, we will proceed to a "Diagnosis Stage" in which we will:

    - Clearly define what success will look like from the various perspectives of the different stakeholders
    - Summarize what is missing from the ideal situation and what are current assets in the community, and
    - Determine the best means for communications across team

Note: I have prepared templates which can be used if deemed helpful. At each stage, I will revisit the academic literature to determine if there are any insights or lessons to be gained or gaps to be filled.

Meeting 2

During this meeting, the core and community team will proceed to a "Prescriptive Stage" where we will develop plans. After a brainstorming session, the various ideas for action will be ranked and a work plan framework will be developed.

We will identify what resources and supports we need to put the chosen priorities into action. The initial plan will be revisited and revised as necessary throughout the remainder of the study period.

Remaining 7 Meetings (will occur at weeks 4, 6, 8,10,12,14, and 16)

As we enter into an "Implementation Stage", at each meeting the results of the previous actions will be reviewed. The meetings will be organized around the themes of *Think, Plan and Do*. Each meeting will be organized around the following steps:

- *Think* about the results and the actions and thoughts that led to the results,
- *Plan* new strategies and tactics to achieve the desired result, and
- *Do*; carry out the actions that have been identified to achieve the measurable results.

Follow up Meeting

The results will be presented and discussed. Options for presenting data to others will be discussed and a team will be established to carry out the necessary communications plan.

Any inquiries concerning procedures should be directed to:
Dr. Mary Ann Murphy, Principal Investigator, or Co-Investigator, Donna Benson, as listed at the top of this form.

Interviews

At the beginning of the study, you will be asked questions about how you see our community in respect to involvement in helping the Penticton Food band provide healthy food to food bank clients. As well, you will be asked your thoughts on what could be done, what current barriers exist and what supports might be needed to overcome these barriers, if any.

At monthly intervals throughout the process, you will be asked "How is this for you?" or "How has this been for you participating like this?"

I will be asking you whether you feel you are making a difference, what is making you think that, or not, as well as what obstacles to change you face e.g., in improving food contribution.

Benefits of Participation

One of the claims of Participatory Action Research (PAR) is that it assists in developing greater personal and team leadership capacity to notice, think about, and formulate and evaluate options

towards achieving new results. With these enhanced skills, new measurable actions can be taken and the results can be reviewed critically so that plans can be refined or new plans can be developed to achieve desired results. To study whether this is or is not the case, you will be asked to keep notes to track your thoughts, behaviours and results as you participate in the process.

Another benefit of the PAR experience may be that you gain deeper insight into your organizational activities as we jointly reflect on our progress. It is hoped that the lessons learned will also be able to help others across Canada make advances and changes in their own communities related to access to higher quality and sufficient quantity of food for vulnerable populations. Feeling that you have contributed to this potential advancement of knowledge may be another personal benefit.

Risks and discomforts of participation

We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or be a risk for you. Some of the questions I ask may seem sensitive or personal. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to.

One risk is that you may learn about unsettling and uncomfortable aspects about your community and its services to vulnerable populations.

Compensation

No compensation will be provided to you for participating as a representative of your organization. You will participate as a volunteer.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or any part of the study without any harm to yourself or our relationship. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the study.

Ethics Approval

This study has the approval of the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus Behavioural Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or questions, before you decide on whether to participate, please contact me Donna Benson at 250 460-0984.

Confidentiality

In the study, since you will be participating in groups, you will have limited confidentiality and will not be anonymous. Each member will be requested to respect the confidentially of the group and not share information outside of the focus group without permission. All meetings, focus groups and interviews will be digitally recorded.

Permission

I understand that meetings, focus groups and interviews will be digitally recorded, and I hereby provide my consent for recording of these processes.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you have any concerns about the research

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics toll free at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 250-807-8832. It is also possible to contact the Research Complaint Line by email (RSIL@ors.ubc.ca).

Withdrawal

You may withdraw from the study at any time. If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the Principal Investigator, or Co-Investigator as listed on the top of this form.

If you choose to withdraw from the study, you will be asked if you wish your personal data to be destroyed or still used. If data is from meetings/focus group participation, it is generally not possible to delete your data; however, none of your direct quotes would be used.

I understand that if I withdraw, my data from group meetings will not be deleted.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Storage of Records

All records will be stored in a locked facility for at least 5 years after publication and all data will be securely stored on UBC O campus.

Final Reports

Data from this study are going to be used for my dissertation, and for related scholarly publications or at professional conferences or community presentations. The research team will have the opportunity to review and comment on major conclusions, especially those that reflect group consensus on major decisions, conclusions and priorities.

I will make a summary of the research results available to all participants.

Please indicate whether you would like to receive a copy:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Participant Consent

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 19 years of age. A copy of this signed and dated form has been given to me.

I consent for specific quotation or reproduction of material written, spoken or created by myself (if applicable) to be used in public presentation or publications.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Participant Name (Please print): _____

Investigator's Verification of Explanation

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of the research to _____ (participant name) in age-appropriate language. He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. The participant understands that this research is being conducted for my PhD dissertation. I have answered all his/her questions and she/he provided the affirmative (i.e., assent) to participate in this research.

Co-Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Cycle 1, Initial PAR Process

Diagnostic Stage	What is? What could be? Define success in measurable terms What's missing? What is an asset?
Prescriptive Stage	Brainstorming Criteria for ranking Ranking Plan
Implementation Stage	Execute action steps and measure results Reflect on results Re-plan Repeat cycle
Evaluative Stage	What have we learned? Do we have any successful failures to learn from? What do we have to share and how?

Appendix D: Cycle 1, Semi- Structured Interview Guide

DRAFT Social Capital Questionnaire Framework

1. On a scale from 1-5, describe as best you can how you see our community in respect to involvement in the helping the Penticton Food band provide healthy food to food bank clients. 1 being unconcerned and involved and 5 very committed to helping.
2. What are your thoughts on what could be what current barriers exist and the supports needed to overcome these barriers, if any?

Probing Question: Participation of groups and networks

2.) Trust and solidarity
3.) Problem assessment capacities, collective action and cooperation
4.) Information and communications
5.) Social cohesion and inclusion
6.) Personal empowerment, empowering organizational structures and political action
7.) Leadership development Week 4, 8, 12, 16

2. What are your thoughts on what could be what current barriers exist and the supports needed to overcome these barriers, if any?

1.) Expanded and improved participation of groups and networks
2.) Trust and solidarity
3.) Improved problem assessment capacities, collective action and cooperation
4.) Information and communications
5.) Social cohesion and inclusion
6.) Personal empowerment, the creation of empowering organizational structures and political action
7.) Leadership development

Draft Semi-Structured Interview Guide

- Researchers will be encouraged to share their experience as research team members, using the PAR approach. They will be prodded to share impressions over the time of the study, their experience as it may have transferability to other contexts of location and how there may also be any changes in their relationship to the wider community.
- The primary question will be "How is this for you?" or "How has this been for you?" (Interviewer will prod over three dimensions; first, temporal – over time; second, location – in this setting and in others; and third, social – the personal to other relationships). These questions will be themed around empowerment. Participants will be asked whether they feel they are making a difference, what is making them think that, or not, as well as what obstacles to change they face.
- As well, if there have been changes in the contributions to the food bank – to what do the participants attribute the change to.

Appendix E: Cycle 1, Sample Focus Group Agenda

AGENDA OUTLINE MEETNG #7
Oct 12, 2017

4. Catch up and review progress

   a) Internal changes and questions shifting to how could we and "baby steps"

   b) Creating friends in the community

   - Education
   - Media
   - Wineries
   - Mental Health
   - Chamber
   - Agriculture and Urban Farming
   - North Shore Table Matters

5. Barriers – to progress

   - How could we work more effectively?
   - How could we anchor the core identified success factors of awareness, connections to models, an ensure progress say a year from now?

6. Review Letter of Intent components

Highlights, unrecorded: Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) 9/7/17

The Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) introduced us to the activities at the school board level and shared contacts with the Wineries, the College, Seniors and municipality and the Health Living Coalition. The Coordinator offered to provide a path to connecting with these organizations. Of particular note was the concept that all the organizations were operating in silos in Penticton could perhaps be transformed to nodes in an effective social network addressing quality and quantity of food issues.

As well the Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army) introduced the concept of de-stigmatizing the need for food by some students in the schools. Food was being used more as a community builder and way to connect with the community, the PAC, and parents.

Highlights from meeting #5:

The Community Program Coordinator (Salvation Army), myself and Participant 1 met and reviewed the Action Plan and started to assign specific tasks for follow up.

Action Steps with follow up responsibilities were summarized and circulated.

Highlights from meeting # 4:

Participant 3, Participant 5 and myself met and reviewed data to date from the perspective of what ACTION STEPS could be proposed.

With success defined, and the Assets and Missing identified – an Action Plan framework can emerge.

Highlights from meeting # 3:

- We reviewed the sectors and imagined what success would be in of: Politics, Education, Agriculture, Quality Standards, Food services, and Media
- An additional theme/focus which emerged was the fragmentation within the sector addressing food issues in the community
- Success was defined for each area and common themes emerged:
    - Surveys to develop for awareness of issues, needs and potential linkages within the sector – "we need data", "we need greater understanding of problems and obstacles"
    - Increase awareness of issues within the sector – "we need more awareness"
    - Increase the network of "appropriate people"/ interests – "we need increased networks and coordination/communications" – "friends in other places who are perhaps ahead of us"
    - Increase in standards and guidelines for advocacy efforts (action)
        - A strategy, a framework for action and way to implement

Appendix F: Cycle 1, Focus Group 1, Innovation Projects

Innovations to Inspire and Provide Comparative Models. Ideas for change initiatives can be found in stories of what others seeking solutions have done and shared in some way (Kotter & Cohen, 2012). As such, this author anticipates that it will be important to seek out policy innovations from other communities and perhaps in other provinces and countries; stories of how others were able to catalyse and mobilize community action and sustainable change resulting in better access to healthy food in their communities.

There are three dimensions from which innovations were examined: First, when reviewing and selecting innovations which could have the most relevance for the Penticton study, it was found useful to review the work of Labonte et al. (2002) in which a practical framework for a deliberate attempt to build community capacity for health promotion programs was set forth. Labonte et al. (2002) devised nine operational domains of community capacity which can be monitored to track capacity building initiatives. These include:

1. Improved stakeholder participation
2. Leadership development
3. Improved problem assessment capacities
4. Creation of empowering organizational structures,
5. Improved resource mobilization,
6. Strengthened ability to ask "why",
7. Improved links with other organizations,
8. Creation of equitable relationships with outside agents,
9. Increased stakeholder control over program management (Labonte et al., 2002, p. 182).

Each innovation and story could be told and analysed as to how it purposefully or serendipitously added value, or as Labonte et al. (2002) describe, added social capital to the community. For the purpose of sharing these examples of others finding solutions, with the PAR research team, the stories will be re-told using Labonte et al.'s (2002) framework as an organizing template. Each of the nine domains can also be examined from a policy lens and for each domain, it will possible to ask what policies and systems reinforce status quo and what new policies and systems could create a more enabling environment.

A second dimension to employ for examining and analysing the selected innovations is the examination of various key themes that emerge for community action. In our PAR approach, the research team will be identifying and selecting actions to undertake during each research cycle. The four action-oriented themes which are included in the selected innovations are: 1) improving quality of current donations; 2) supporting professional group innovative projects to service their clients; 3) collaborating with governments, and 4) collaborating with university-based think tanks (Bawden, 2016, p. 1).

A third dimension, which could be used to examine each of the following innovations would be related to questions about the potential to build social networks and social capital; a) each could lead to adding a new contact and connection to create in an expanding social network and b) each new connection has the potential for building relationships for possible mutual benefit. This potential increase in the value of these new relationships will possibly create the social capital which could be used to leverage and accelerate improvements to the access to healthy food in Penticton.

Ten innovative projects have been selected as a base to begin learning about what has been achieved in other communities (See Appendix D for Twenty Model Innovations for Consideration as Alternate Policies for Penticton). These are grouped under the following categories: projects to improve the quality of donations; projects involving private collaborations to resourcefully employ untapped resources and create new sources for healthy food; project involving significant government involvement; and projects involving university commitments.

Ten Model Innovations to Inspire PAR Study Researchers

Category grouping	Specific innovation	Brief description
Improved quality of donations	UN International Theme Year and Publication - promotion of a healthy	The UN has declared 2016 as the "Year of Pulses" and is promoting pulses as nutritious and less costly sources of food and high-quality protein (Canadian Lentils, 2015, para. 1). Canada is a major supplier of pulses and the Penticton Food bank could facilitate increased donations and use in food hampers.
	Woodstock Food Voucher System	The food bank in Woodstock was closed and retail outlet cashiers ask customers if they would donate $.25 to produce a food bank voucher system. Clients of the food bank receive vouchers and can buy their own groceries.
Mobilization of untapped resources within community	GP's establish garden/urban farming for patients in South London	Eleven GPs in London established food gardens on their clinic properties for their patients. The initiative grew to include creating a food co-op and providing healthy food to the local hospital.

Ten Model Innovations to Inspire PAR Study Researchers (continued)		
Category grouping	Specific innovation	Brief description
Significant government involvement	B.C. farmers' food donation tax credit	Farmers donating food to the food bank in B.C. are now able to receive a tax credit for the retail value of their donations.
	Guaranteed Income - Dauphin, Manitoba Experiment	The Dauphin experiment was to determine whether people would stop wanting to work if provided a guaranteed income. The experiment was closed before the data was analysed. Data is now being reviewed.
	Food Bank of Western Australia Healthy Food for All	This food bank has taken a broad systems approach to health of its clients. Community gardens, teaching kitchens and exercise programs are included in their holistic health endeavour.
	France's new law re-directing food waste from supermarkets to food banks	It is now illegal for a restaurant to bin food and not re-direct it for use at shelters or food banks.
University involvement	The University of Toronto - PROOF Policy Research Group	A "right-to-food" policy research group has been established to study food security trends and propose solutions for Canada. They sponsor conference and prepare annual reports.
	Food and Agriculture Organization established World Research Center on Food Governance in Spain	As an outcome of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization work on food security, an international research centre has recently been established in Spain.
	Table Matters - Community Food Systems Approach and development of Urban farm (UBC)	The North Shore of Vancouver embarked on a community wide initiative to tackle food security including a food charter, community gardens, waste reduction programs and an urban farm.

In summary, these can be grouped into two innovations involving improvement of the quality of donations, one describing a private professional group initiative to help their clients, four innovations with government involvement, and three initiatives involving universities. Each of these will be further analysed in a future work along the following lines of analysis.

1. What is the relevance to the Penticton PAR study? What would be the relevance of the research to the community (Stoecker, 2012)?
2. What could be a possible outcome in 5 years, 3 years, 1 year, and in 12 weeks if everything worked out well (Madsen, 2014)?
3. How does this fit into the UN Rapporteur's recommendations (2012) and the FOA Rome Action Plan (2014)? What specific actions could be taken at a local level by the PAR research team during the PAR study?
4. What advice would Koc et al. (2008) have from their review of Canada's unique neoliberal development and the subsequent identification of opportunities where civil society could potentially affect policy change?

The purpose of sharing the stories with the research team will be to gather inspiration from these stories of innovation and to relate them back to the community as potential inspiring models which may trigger and spark innovating thinking about what might be possible. The analysis may identify opportunities for new relationship building and will point the way to actions which could be incorporated to the Penticton PAR study plan.

Innovation 1: International Theme Years and Publications: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has declared 2016 as the Year of the Pulses (Canadian Lentils, 2015). Within this promotion, there are collaborations with national pulse associations, promotions to the public, and popular awareness building activities through the internet. One high profile activity has been the publication of a coffee table book on pulses including recipes from ten passionate chefs from ten countries. This type of high quality and high-level promotion can be leveraged at the national, provincial, and community level (Canadian Lentils, 2015). With high quality promotional tools available, local media can be encouraged to support the theme and provide support to local initiatives which may have been invisible to the wider population (Canadian Lentils, 2015).

Pulses are a critical and crucial part of a diet which is less costly and of high nutritional value (Food and Agriculture, 2016b). Canada is a leading producer and exporter of pulses and many pulses can be grown by a small family farmer (Food and Agriculture, 2016b).

Relevant to the Penticton study, we could make contact with the Pulse Associations and assists to develop awareness of the year's theme within the local food environment (Food and Agriculture, 2016b).

Innovation 2: Food for Friends -- The Woodstock Experiment: Ten years ago, the head of the Woodstock, Ontario Food Bank, Stephen Giulian, came to the conclusion that a paradigm shift was needed in regards to foodbank operations (DeBono, 2014). DeBono felt that the food bank had become a poor program and came up with a better idea. Consequently, DeBono started shutting down the food bank and establishing an alternate system: supermarket staff were asked to ask customers if they would donate 25 cents to the new "Foods for Friends" program which would provide vouchers to the community's vulnerable ex-food bank clients (DeBono, 2014). The vouchers were only for non tax items and this removed the fear of people's

donations going to buy pop and chips.

Giulian wanted a model which provided dignity to clients, allowing them to shop for themselves, purchasing their own food and making food choices like a "normal" person. The program has grown to help people with making the best choices and stretching their food dollars (DeBono, 2014). The supermarket waste and overstocked inventory is sent to the soup kitchen or shelters where it can be still used (DeBono, 2014).

Clients report that they prefer this system but, in reading comments when the system was suggested for nearby London, Ontario, there was tremendous resistance and critique about experimenting further with the model (DeBono, 2014).

Four main themes emerged in the critique of this approach. First, much of the critique of the idea of closing the food bank comes from food bank directors and staff. This then triggers counter attacks directed at the need of key politicians and food bank staff to protect their high salaries and the status quo. A second area of concern was the prevalence of judgments that the card would just end up being traded for drugs and alcohol. A third critique was that the food bank or any public assistance program was just hiding the fact that government was shirking its responsibility and outsourcing a complicated problem to a community organization without the adequate resources to address the problem. Fourth, there was a critique that people needed help and other services were also provided by the food banks (DeBono, 2014).

It is also interesting the BC Food Bank launched a donation program about five years ago that was to solicit $2 donations from shoppers and the web site indicates key partners such as Save-On Foods and Cooper's grocery store. There was a comment on their web site that activities had stalled because of the need for marketing dollars to promote the program. (Food Banks B.C., n.d.).

Of relevance to the Penticton study, will be the suggestion to learn more about the work in Woodstock and the current status of the BC Food Bank initiative. Perhaps the $2 dollar donation threshold was too high, and perhaps having the supermarket staff just ask if someone would allow them to add 25 cents to their bill is less complicated and easier to implement.

Innovation 3: GP Garden Farm Co-op in South London, UK: Eleven GPs decided to start a garden co-op for their patients on unused land they had at their clinics. The project has grown to have over 200 members, primarily seniors (Bawden, 2016). The gardens are spreading over to other unused properties such as land near hospitals. Fresh food is now being supplied to the hospital kitchen staff who are attempting to provide healthier and fresher foods to their patients (Bawden, 2016). Patients who are lonely and isolated, or have chronic diseases are being referred to the gardens.

"The aim is to harness the physical and mental therapeutic benefits of gardening while growing more local produce," David Wickstead, a GP partner at another participating surgery, says. The scheme has clinical benefits too, "it's good for us [doctors], because the danger with mental health patients is that you stick to medication – changing it, changing the dosage, trying a new therapy, and so on. So, the fact that we have something else with a different approach is fantastic.

Jim Dickson, cabinet member for health at Lambeth council, believes the project will improve residents' physical and mental health. "The GP food co-op is an initiative aimed at delivering real, long-term and sustainable benefits to the health of Lambeth residents and our environment" (Bawden, 2016, para. 5, 8).

Unfortunately, while there is anecdotal evidence that all are benefiting, the physicians surmised that if there was hard evidence of the benefits, government funding may be forthcoming.

Interesting for the Penticton project is how a group of professionals in the health field took the initiative to start "therapeutic" gardens to provide healthier food and a healthier social environment for their patients. As well, they were able to convince the local hospital to join the experiment and improve the quality of food for their patients.

Innovation 4: B.C Farmers' Food Donation Tax Credit: Effective for the tax years of 2016 to 2018, agricultural donations farmers make to charitable organizations that provide free food to their clients will result in a 25% tax credit of the fair market value of the donation (Government of British Columbia, n.d.). The food must be minimally processed. Processed foods such as canned goods, pies or sausages are not considered under this program. Farmers must have a receipt from a registered charity and have five years to claim the credit from when the donation was made.

Innovation 5: The Guaranteed Annual Income Experiment -- Dauphin, Manitoba: For five years in the 1970's, an experiment took place in Dauphin, Manitoba. The intention was to determine if providing a guaranteed minimum income would remove people's incentive to work (Forget, 2011). The data has not been analysed and because of ethic board issues, requiring the original researchers only to contact the participants, the 1,800 boxes may forever hold their secrets. Evelyn Forget, a researcher at the University of Manitoba, has made a public call for people who may have been part of the experiment and after her interviews it has been able to make some conclusions.

The minimum income was associated with a decrease in health care costs; perhaps because of less stress and better care which might have prevented trips to the hospital (Forget, 2011).

The proposal of a guaranteed minimum income is intended to streamline social assistance services and is gaining interest in Canada and elsewhere (Forget, 2011). Ontario has recently proposed that they will be experimenting with the concept and Finland, Switzerland and Holland are exploring the option.

Innovation 6: Food Bank of Western Australia's Healthy Food for All: This case study purports to present best practices for food banks in that they are not merely re-distributing waste and surplus food, but they are taking what they refer to as a holistic view in which they are addressing food literacy and the need for exercise. The concept that poverty is the reason people do not have access to healthy food is seen as too simple in that it does not encourage the development of food literacy programs (Butcher, 2014).

While their program does not address any of the root causes of the poverty, it does acknowledge rising housing costs and greater division between the rich and poor in Western Australia (Butcher, 2014).

The focus of the program is to help to improve health outcomes for diabetics, people with cardiovascular disease, depression, and obesity (Butcher, 2014). Prolonged periods of food insecurity are viewed as exacerbating any of these health conditions and the intention is to promote healthier lifestyles in low socioeconomic and vulnerable groups (Butcher, 2014).

Technically, the program is very strategically thought through and professionally

constructed. To provide outreach to rural populations, webinars and the use of technology is employed. Partners in this comprehensive statewide initiative for food literacy and exercise include schools, government, and community organizations. Programs include breakfast programs, teaching about cooking, and preserving and exercise classes.

Innovation 7: France's New Law for Re-directing Food Waste from Supermarkets to Food Banks: A recent law has been passed in France banning supermarkets of over a minimum size from binning food waste rather than donating it to food banks and charities (Chrisafis, 2016). The law was the culmination of a process started by a city councillor with a petition. France is the first country to pass such a law and the intention is to stop the wastage and unnecessary destruction of food that could be used to feed France's growing hungry and vulnerable populations (Chrisafis, 2016). Supermarkets will be fined for violations.

The food banks will now need to find better ways of sorting, storing, and handling this new source of donations. This is the first step in an initiative to reduce waste in the food sector. Restaurants, hospitals, and schools are the next targets for waste reduction initiatives.

As well, French advocates of the law are encouraging other EU countries to follow France's lead in finding better solutions to the massive wastage of food (Chrisafis, 2016). Food wastage in France is estimated at 7.1 million tons each year and a food bank executive notes that if there is only a 15% increase in donations from supermarkets, this would mean over 10 million additional meals that would be available to people who could benefit (Chrisafis, 2016).

Innovation 8: The University of Toronto: The University of Toronto has established a policy research group (PROOF) which is an interdisciplinary research team to investigate household food insecurity in Canada. Their goal is to identify effective policy approaches to reduce household food insecurity. Membership includes researchers at the University of Toronto, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of Calgary, Memorial University, and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

In 2011, the PROOF team received a five-year grant from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) to execute a research program to identify viable and effective policy interventions to reduce household food insecurity in Canada. PROOF has been examining household food insecurity in Canada and is focusing on following areas: the cost of food insecurity, current policies and food insecurity, defining the material conditions necessary to prevent household food insecurity, modeling the impact of interventions on household food insecurity, and understanding how food insecurity is framed as a policy issue (PROOF, n.d.-a).

In addition to publishing annual reports using data from Statistics Canada, PROOF organizes conferences, publishes research findings, and reaches out to media (PROOF, n.d.-a). The reports (the first one was published in 2011) are monitoring trends with the intention of identifying priorities for interventions. These reports are raising the awareness and public understanding of food insecurity in Canada and the need for policy intervention (PROOF, n.d.-a).

A potential outcome of the Penticton study could be the inclusion of this group as a member of the expanded social network.

Innovation 9: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) -- Establishment of the World Research Center of Food Governance: In November of 2014, FAO members, parliamentarians, members from civil society, and private sector endorsed the *Rome*

Declaration on Nutrition and the *Framework of Action*. The *Rome Declaration on Nutrition* enshrines the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, and commits governments to prevent malnutrition in all its forms. The *Framework of Action* (2014) recognizes that governments have the primary role and responsibility for addressing nutrition issues and challenges and provides guidance for policy changes at all levels of society (Food and Agriculture, 2014a).

In addition to the Framework for Action, the FAO has publications, networking opportunities, conferences and toolkits, and A Research Center of World Food Governance has recently been established at the University of Oviedo (Food and Agriculture, 2016a). A primary aim is to "stimulate research on the physical and economic access to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food of vulnerable communities suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition" (Food and Agriculture, 2014, p.1). The relevance to the Penticton study could be that the Framework for Action could be used by the Penticton group as a foundation document, grounding all activities in a right-to-food perspective. In addition, as part of the expansion of the social networking with others doing pragmatic academic, connections could be made with the members of the new Research Center of World Food Governance. In fact, "achieving food security for all is at the heart of FAO's efforts – to make sure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives" (Food and Agriculture, 2016a). The FAO's three main goals are:

1. The eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. The elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all
3. The sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2016a, para. 2).

Innovation 10: Table Matters -- A Community Food Systems Approach: *The* North Shore of Vancouver has been the setting up for one of the more comprehensive food system development projects.

Table Matters began in 2005 on the North Shore of Vancouver and has been developing a network with the intention of building sustainable food systems and to make healthy food accessible to everyone living on the North Shore (The Edible Garden Project, n.d.). The network includes local governments, community groups with an interest in food security, urban agriculture, and other local food systems (The Edible Garden Project, n.d.).

Of particular interest is that they have prepared the *North Shore Community Food Charter* (2013) signed by municipal government, school boards, and Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation. There is a core steering committee of decision makers that is represented by representative of Vancouver Coastal Health, City of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, School District #44, and local non-profit organizations and members from the community.

The *North Shore Community Food Charter* is a high-level, policy tool to guide and implement food policy (Table Matters, 2013). The charter outlines a common vision and principles of the integrated food system the community wishes to see. Five principles create the foundation blocks: health access and equity, environmental responsibility, government leadership and collaboration, economic vitality, and food culture and education (Table Matters, 2013).

Progress has been made in establishing an urban farm, Loutet Farm, which includes a

food hub for selling produce at minimal amounts such as $1. This was a project in collaboration with UBC's School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture's Greenskin's Lab that was started in 2009. The intention was to develop a sustainable farm (revenue neutral) on city parkland. It is the first such model established in Canada and in 2012 the project earned the Sustainable City Award. In 2013, the Social Enterprise Heroes Award was received. Of particular note is the pride expressed with sustainable model of selling food at very low cost to those in need, and the revenue then being used to create "green-collar jobs" at the residential farm (The Edible Garden Project, n.d.).

As well as the urban farm, edible landscaping is being promoted throughout the area for businesses and the general public. There are contests, guidance, intergenerational teaching and celebrations. In addition to the gardening promotions, a program to scale up food rescue efforts has been implemented. This program includes all sectors involved with food that could be destined to landfill. The intention is that each organization and sector will benefit in symbiotic relationships (The Edible Garden Project, n.d.).

In reference to the Penticton study, it will be important to create networks with the Coordinator of the North Shore initiative, and explore where there may be opportunities to build capacity in Penticton based on knowledge gained. Of particular interest might be to network with the UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture and explore opportunities for urban and collective farming in the Okanagan.

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Appendix G: Cycle 2, PAR Update to Salvation Army

Penticton Salvation Army Foodbank
PAR UPDATE
Jan 28, 2019
DRAFT

Contents:

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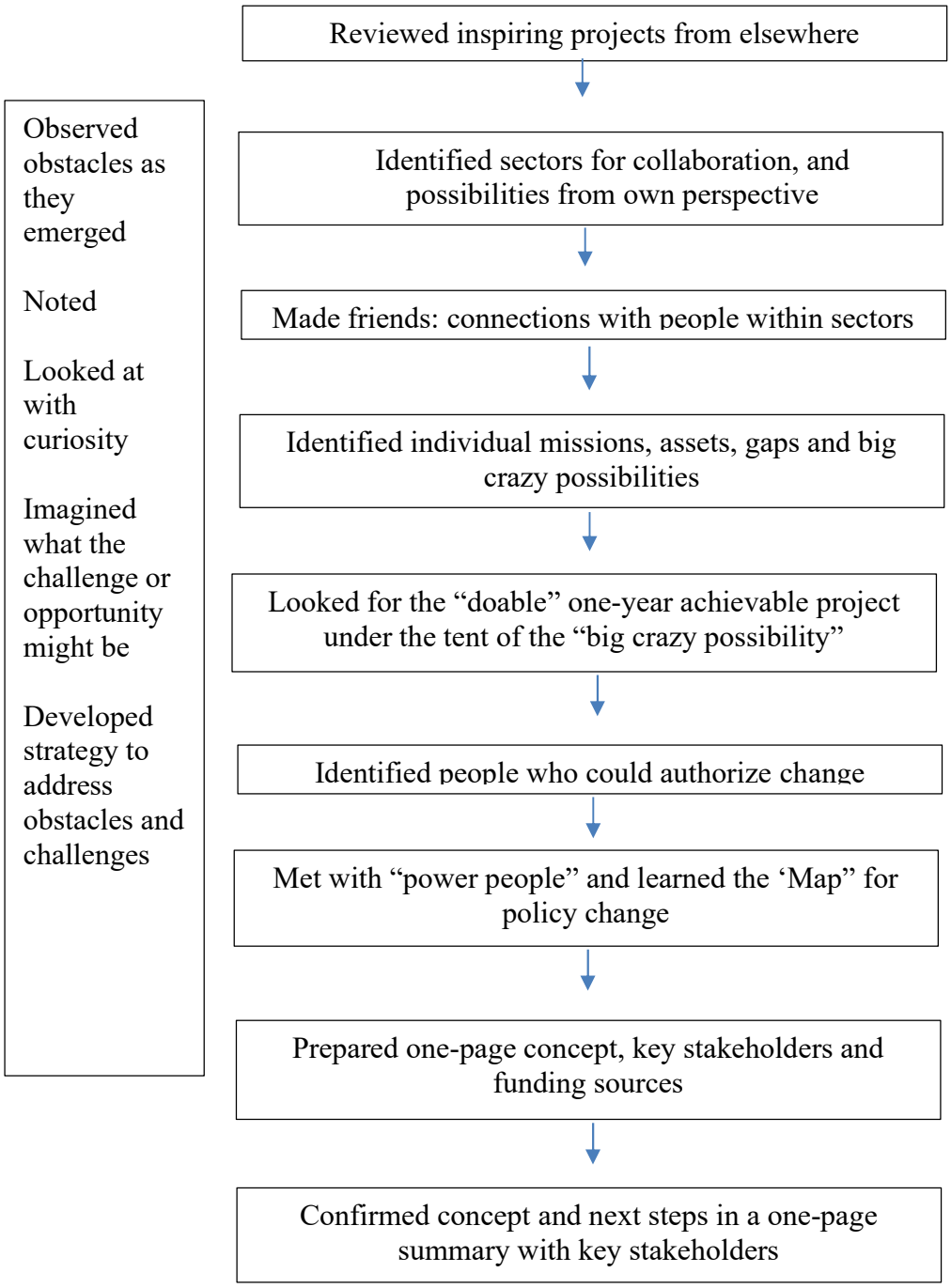
1. Research Question

Using PAR, to what extent can the Penticton Food Bank catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for food bank clients?

2. Process that created progress



3. Advances made

Sector	Progress
Education	High schools: Identified key leverage point – curriculum change in high school and the map to policy change, liaise with Valley First for leveraging with work they have done
	Identified mentor for the change who has a designed course
	Identified next key step – a champion teacher
	Elementary schools Pro 'D' days with the Community gardens, visits to the community garden built into school year, invites to students at key points in process (e.g., seeding, planting, weeding, harvesting)
	University: Farm School with Kwantlen U and Penticton Indian Band
	University: App development for donations of healthy food with community retail and organizations with excess food which could be used
Media and Communications	Discussions with Herald for Okanagan communications strategy
Food Bank Collaborations	Best Practices from Right to Food perspective, communication with Vancouver Food Bank for provincial distribution
	Mapping of agencies in community focused on food
	Collaboration invite to the faith-based community
	Pre-amble for food bank policy manual with Graham Riches in preparation
	Pre-amble for provincial anti-poverty legislature with Graham Riches
	Relationship with Montreal "Food Center" for lessons in service with dignity – shopping experience vs handouts
Municipality	Proposal to have "sister" city relationships with more advanced municipalities – e.g., Canmore, Banff Councillors met with and "friendly' City planning staff "friendly" for expansion of community gardens and "food" profiling in public space
Agriculture	Wineries - key stakeholder identified and inspired to scale foodbank contributions within their networks
Health	Friends made at the Division of Family Practice for scripts for community garden, expanded invitations to community service for scheduling with clients and workers to participate

4. Draft Article for Circulation re Best Practice Going Forward

A Place at the Table: shifting perspectives on the acceptance and potential role food banks might play in the right to food movement

Two years ago, in Toronto, scholars met at the University of Toronto PROOF conference to reflect on progress that had been made in identifying trends in hungry across Canada and the US, and to propose solutions to the escalating problem of increasing hunger in vulnerable, as well, as in newly emerging populations of foodbank users such as immigrants and the working poor.

The growth in number of food banks, in, not only Canada - but around the world was framed several times as part of the problem and as contributing to ineffective policies and strategies. The fragmented charity section was deemed as quite inadequate to deal with systemic problems of poverty and any suggestions to improve foodbank operations could invite blanket dismissals such as -- food banks are just well meaning but unaware people "just wanting to build a better foodbank"...which was part of the problem to start with.

Critiques of food banks have fallen under four major categories. First, there has been critique because food banks were viewed as masking the ineffectiveness and unwillingness of the government to address the problem from a higher vantage point where real progress might be possible. The second critique is that food banks merely redistributed waste from the food industry -- which was no way to care and feed vulnerable people. The third critique is about the delivery model. Foodbank users were served under humiliating environments where dignity and respect could not be maintained. This environment was indeed, a barrier to use for many that needed food support. The fourth area of criticism is that the widely accepted "feel good" donation campaigns, sometimes lead by major national media and celebrities. These were accused of, again, masking government inaction and diverting attention away from strategies that might be more effective in working upstream and addressing root causes of the problem.

Bringing this conversation forward to November 2018 at the Food Secure Canada conference in Montreal -- there was a very evident and fundamental shift in thinking. Food banks were showcased in a new frame, -- that of partners who had a place in the complicated and complex struggle to find and implement dignified and sustainable solutions to hunger. Foodbank leaders had been invited to share.

This new perspective may have been precipitated by a growing awareness across sectors of the extent of the hunger problem - in spite of foodbank growth; with this awareness, a legitimate "outrage" may be emerging; and a core group of people within the foodbank community are networking and committing to address root causes and incorporate "right to food and dignity " principles in their own organizations. And they are experimenting. Graham Riches has mused that maybe if the charity sector could "join up," they could, because of their social legitimacy and widespread networks become a catalyst and mobilizer for inter-organization collaboration for positive change.

The following "shopping list" captures some of what the "new thought" food banks are focusing on and sharing with colleagues, the public and government agencies:

1. It is not just about food – it's about dignity and arranging space, products, support and services to better meet holistic human needs
2. Fresh is best -- systems of requisitioning, storage and distribution are radically shifting
3. Cash is best - for those wanting to make donations, cash was encouraged because of the leveraged buying power that can be realized. Typically, a $1.00 donation can transform into a $3.00 buying power - of the right foods
4. Networking with other organizations within the community to better address needs in a social and political/advocacy manner. Working collaboratively with City Halls, schools, businesses and higher level provincial and federal governments
5. A shift to ensure a "shopping" experience instead of a traditional breadline, handout lineups
6. Outreach to vulnerable people and shut ins
7. A new sensitivity and respect for Indigenous cultures and foods, inter-generational needs, inter gender and inter educational needs
8. A shift towards re naming of clients, users to member of a food center
9. A role in discussions with highest levels of government consultation efforts
10. Medical Schools requirement students to learn more about food insecurity and providing opportunities to learn from practical experience with the food bank communities
11. Contributing towards helping people with job training in warehouse management work, kitchen and food handing, and customer service training.
12. Re-purposing waste by using near expiry date foods for drying, soups, or other added value products
13. Having "Virtual" food drives to attract cash donations rather than food donations
14. No more shame in refusing unhealthy or inappropriate foods - respect and healthy food policies developed and implemented
15. Doing investigative analysis and inquiry in order to prepare "White Papers" to share and guide new principles for Best Practices of operations
16. New openness and willingness of boards to ask "Why aren't we presented with "Right to Food" principles
17. Integration within Food Centers -- no more name tags to differentiate between staff and volunteers and clients
18. Experimental environment within which new practices can be tried, feedback data gathered and evaluated for making evidence-based decisions
19. Shift from a moralistic nutritional/dietician hierarchy to include a more holistic social work paradigm
20. Mapping within communities and provinces in an attempt to collaborate for more impact in change initiatives
21. Willingness to embrace the imperfections and contradictions and have crucial conversations within all stakeholders
22. A growing awareness of the big tent concept as illustrated with cities signing the Milan Accord - a commitment to using a common set of indicators of a healthy food system for a city
23. Supporting a guaranteed living wage initiative

As a next step, it may be of value to track and share "Emerging Best Practices in the Foodbank space." This could perhaps be facilitated by Food Banks Canada in providing a portal and platform for this voice. It is evident from the recent Montreal Conference that there is a

growing respect for the foodbank perspective on right to food-based solutions to food insecurity --- or as Graham Riches names it - domestic hunger.

5. Challenges of Process

People are very busy and to put additional responsibilities onto their plate and have them completed is extremely difficult
People change jobs, have different life priorities and challenges over the period
Change can take a long time yet requires the tenacity of one step in front of other
Building relationships takes time, and finding the right people that have the influence to create change – takes more time

6. Social Network Expansion

Sector	Position	Name	Capacity-Building Potential

7. Recommendations for future progress

Vancouver Foundation Convene Grant
Secure Funding for a PAR II Administrator

Appendix H: Cycle 2, Systems Change grant draft

Salvation Army Systems Change Grant Development

1. **Project summary**

2. **Challenge and Change we are working on**

(a) Systemic Issues and Root Causes (3000 characters)

What is pressing issue you are trying to address?

- **Describe issue at heart of proposal**

Food banks alone are not solving the problems and root causes of hunger in our community. Yet, we see examples provincially, nationally and globally of progress being made. Where we see progress being made, organizations have been inspired by other's accomplishments and have been then empowered to work collaboratively to implement sustainable new practices and policies which then improve access to sufficient healthy food for vulnerable populations in dignified ways.

Over the past 2 years the Penticton Salvation Army Food Bank, has participated in a UBC PhD Participatory Action Research (PAR) study with the purpose to address access to food from a human "Right to food" perspective instead of a charity model. We have examined the impact that as an organization within the community, we could have as a catalyst and mobilizer in building social networks within the community to improve the quality and quantity of food bank.

The next step is to now build capacity within the relationships created and co-develop a detailed, realistic and practical, monitorable actionable in putting into action the practical. It is now appropriate to create a detailed plan with the social network partners sectors to bring best Practices from a human "Right to Food" perspective.

Assess capacity for the various the social networks built and initiated.

Looking at the big picture, in Penticton alone there are now over 30 organizations, not including institutions, businesses and government agencies that have an interest in creating sustainable solutions to problems related to access to healthy food for all food. These organizations all have their own particular mission, assets and gaps they wish to fill. This situation has arisen, as each organization experiences and sees a particular problem, from its own vantage point and attempts to meet a pain point they think they can help with. With organizations not working in concert, ad hoc and unsustainable system change is not likely.

The outcome of "little systemic progress" has been attributed to the fragmentation of focus of the many organizations and the silos in which various organization are working within. Successful experiences from elsewhere have shown a common theme - sustainable significant change

depends on our ability to harness all the good will across organizations, focus on a big tent goal and then developed meaningful and synergistic relationship to change behaviours supporting the unacceptable status quo.

Continuing on this path of organizations independently trying to address components of the whole problem will keep the system stuck and unable to gain traction which could empower organization to tackle bigger and even more pressing community issues related to poverty.

- **Why are the outcomes showing up the way they are?**
- **How are system-level beliefs, behaviours, resource flows and or policies being expressed and contributing to pressing issue?**
- **When you peel back the layer behind the issue, where does it stay stuck?**

(b) Systemic Change (1500 characters)

Why will developing a plan to address this issue be meaningful?

Over the past two years, a core research team in Penticton, centered at the Penticton Salvation Army Foodbank and with community volunteers, has studied innovations from around the world which are addressing the growing problems of hunger in the midst of abundance of land, water and well-meaning and intentioned people and organizations. Drawing from this inspirational solutions, potential sectors in the community were identified as key collaborating partners in implementing change here. These sectors included agriculture education, government, medical, media and business ·

What ideas do you have about getting this issue unstuck?

In the work to date, meetings were had with sector representatives and individual missions, assets and gaps were shared. Big crazy possibilities were explored if they were to collaborate and find synergy with individual assets and gaps. The next steps were identifying key decisions makers within the sector and identifying practical 1-to-3-year goals that could be realized.

Where do you see the potential for disruption or change within the system?

With collaboration, and commitment to “a three-year plan” there is the potential of long-term sustainable change from a high-level policy perspective, which will then provide the environment and support to create change at mid and ground levels.

Obstacles

- **What is the potential for that change to be lasting as opposed to a quick fix?**

With policy change at the higher level, we will be able to influence long term solutions rather than quick fixes. Through collaboration at all levels within a sector and with inter sector collaboration a stronger matrix network with create a stronger infrastructure to support change.

- **Why will that change be transformative and meaningful?**

As an example of a sector collaboration - in education, we have done preliminary exploration for a plan involving curriculum, school gardens and parent and teachers initiatives. The collaboration stakeholders include elementary schools, middle schools and high school and college level integration.

What kind of community support already exists for change?

· **In what ways do you see the system, being ready for the kind of change you're thinking about**

Over the past two years we have met with school board trustees, the school board superintendent, city councillors, teachers, students, funders, university professors, agricultural group representatives, agri-business representatives and physicians -- who are interested in implementing sustainable solutions.

3. Questions about the process you will undertake to develop an action plan

· **Process (1500 characters)**

· **Where are you currently in the design and development process?**

- **Describe process that you will undertake to create a viable plan to address the pressing issue and systemic behaviours you have identified**

We currently have the big crazy possibility for collaboration and some ideas about what could be 1 to three-year doable activities. A one-page concept for each sector connection must be prepared and worked on so that there is a unified objective. With this three-year objective, 5 to 8 primary objectives/ deliverables need to be established and then the specific steps need to be put forth with a who, by when, estimated time and standards for evaluating whether we are on track - or off track, needing a course correction.

- **Tell us what you would like to do to transition your idea into reality**
- **How will you monitor and assess your progress as you are developing your project**

For each sector collaboration, we will take the time to define what success will look like from the various perspectives in measurable terms. These metrics will then become the checkpoints we examine at weekly or monthly checkpoints to assessing the plan is working or needs adjustments

- **How will you know if the actions you come up with are viable?**

· **What have you done to move your ideas forward?**

· **What activities do you still need to do?**

Develop a feasible, viable plan with milestones, checkpoints and a monitoring system.

(c) Collaborations (1500 character)

· **Who are you currently partnering with?**

- **Who else do you intend to include in the development process?**
- **How are people affected by the issue involved?**
  - **Focus groups?**
- **How has the community ‘s experience contributed to identifying the potential actions to take?**
- **Are there any system insiders involved?**
- **What roles will people who are affected by the issue have within the project**
- **What kind of influence will their involvement have?**

4. **Public Statement**
   (a) Project Description (700 characters)

- **What is pressing issue that your project is trying to address?**

The pressing issue that our project is trying to address is the lack of access to healthy food with dignity for vulnerable populations in the community. We wish to take all the assets we have within the community and catalyse and mobilize collaborative collective synergistic by harnesses and creating a big tent goal – and then work with the various sectors to take best practice which are addressing issues and tailor and implement here.

In doing this, we will develop a process for identifying key partners, doing intel on individual missions, assets and missing. Imagine the great big possibilities inspired from elsewhere, and bring to earth with practical, doable plan with monitor and course corrections. It is anticipated that this experience will build confidence in process which will fuel initiation and action in other areas. This is an intended to develop an empowering environment for change.

- **Why is addressing this meaningful?**

It will empower further change. It will catalyse and mobilize

- **How will you Develop process lead to a fully formed and viable project plan**

We have concepts, seeds of ideas and projects…need flushing out and details …and full 360 perspective. And buy in…

Parking lot

How do we foresee the community being able to influence or change the systemic behaviours behind the issue?

What systemic behaviours, attitudes, resource flows, and or policies have we identified that are holding issue in place?

Have an idea of what needs to be done to address issue of access in a systemization way …anchored in …emerging best practice from a human rights perspective and grounded in practical actionable and continuously evaluative and course correcting process.

Take action to address Root Causes pressing social, environmental, cultural

Influence behaviours (by catalysing and mobilizing) of populations, organizations, institutions

Purpose:
Generate ideas for actions to influence behavioural change
We are influencing system change

- Identifying stakeholders and current and potential role (could be gas or brakes)
- Change the odds that people are facing – removing the barriers by going to higher level thinking and analysis
- Making friends with people already doing
- Tackling root cause of complex issues
    - Good intentions but don't know what to do
    - No organizer
    - No focused plan and definitions of success to track and monitor
    - Things done of sides of desks
    - No collaboration across stakeholders so complementary and synergetic
    - Have potential to create lasting change
    - Want to rethink how we are currently doing things that are creating problems
    - Systems grow from beliefs – current beliefs ---nothing can be done, -> empowered community anchored in higher level moral high road and grounded in the day-to-day practicalities
    - Inconsistent policies to address access to healthy food across organizations and institutions
    - Adapting a Successful approaches from elsewhere - to local context with idea to scale through partnerships, alliances and knowledge transfer (publications/media partners)
    - Linear thinking rather than systems approach
    - Too big – while critical for creating common goal – not bitable
    - Complacency
    - Overwhelmed

Ideas that disrupt the way we think (so big problems get unstuck)

Populations, Organizations, Institutions

Create a plan: PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Timeline	Key Steps	Person Responsible

In doing this, we will develop a process for identifying key partners, doing intel on individual missions, assets and missing. Imagine the great big possibilities inspired from elsewhere, and bring to earth with practical, doable plan with monitor and course corrections. It is anticipated

that this experience will build confidence in process which will fuel initiation and action in other areas. This is an intended to develop an empowering environment for change.

- Why is addressing this meaningful?

  It will empower further change. It will catalyse and mobilize

- How will you Develop process lead to a fully formed and viable project plan

  We have concepts, seeds of ideas and projects…need flushing out and details …and full 360 perspective, and buy in.

PUBLIC STATEMENT (700 characters)

The pressing issue that our project intends to address is the **growing lack of access to sufficient healthy food, with dignity, for vulnerable populations within the community and the lack of coordinated efforts to address this problem.** An environmental scan has shown that we have the necessary assets across multiple sectors and political will in our community to implement best practices for food security pioneered in other communities. We believe that with financial resources to create a **collaborative plan we could catalyse and mobilize a practical, cross sector synergistic approach having the potential to create sustainable system solutions.**

2. a) **Describe issue at heart of proposal (3000 characters)**

Food banks alone are not solving the problems and root causes of hunger in our community. Yet, we see examples provincially, nationally and globally of progress being made. Where we see progress being made, organizations have been inspired by other's accomplishments and have been then empowered to work collaboratively to implement sustainable new practices and policies - which then improve access to sufficient healthy food for vulnerable populations in dignified ways.

Over the past 2 years the Penticton Salvation Army Food Bank, has participated in a UBC PhD Participatory Action Research (PAR) study with the purpose of addressing access to food from a human "Right to food" perspective. We have examined the impact that as an organization within the community, we could have as a catalyst and mobilizer in building social networks within the community to improve the quality and quantity of food bank.

The next step is to build capacity across the relationships created over the past two years and co-develop a detailed, collaborative, realistic, practical, monitorable and actionable plan.

Looking at Penticton alone there are now over 30 organizations, not including institutions, businesses and government agencies that have an interest in creating sustainable solutions to problems related to access to healthy food for all food. These organizations all have their own particular missions, assets and gaps they wish to fill. This situation has arisen, as each

organization experiences and sees a particular problem, from its own vantage point and attempts to meet a pain point they think they can help with. With organizations not working in concert, sustainable system change is not likely.

The current outcome of "little systemic progress" has been attributed to the fragmentation of focus of the many organizations and the silos in which various organization are working within. Successful experiences from elsewhere have shown a common theme - sustainable significant change depends on our ability to harness all the goodwill and assets across organizations, work under a big common and uniting goal and then developed meaningful and synergistic relationships and identify strategies to change behaviours which currently support the unacceptable status quo.

Without the funding for creating a common plan, it is unlikely that the various organizations within the community will be able harness our potential to significantly create sustainable policy changes. Organizations independently trying to address components of the whole problem will keep the system stuck and we will be unable to gain traction which could further empower organizations to tackle bigger and even more pressing community issues related to poverty.

2. (b) Systemic Change (1500 characters)

Over the past two years, a core research team in Penticton, centered at the Penticton Salvation Army Foodbank and with community volunteers, and UBC researcher has studied:

- Innovations from around the world which are sustainably addressing the growing problems of hunger in the midst of abundance of land, water, and well-meaning and intentioned people and organizations.
- Identified potential sectors in the community as key collaborating partners in implementing local change and shared inspirational achievements from others in this sector
- Met with sector representatives in agriculture, education, universities, government, medical, media and business.

During inter sector meetings individual missions, assets and gaps were shared. The potential synergy through collaboration was explored, giving birth to "*Big crazy possibilities.*" These big ideas were then operationalized into practical, doable one year to three-year goals. Each of these goals met the criteria for sustainability and incorporated a policy change component. The obstacles were also identified and strategies proposed.

One of the common obstacles identified was the necessary for funding and it was proposed that the strategy moving forward could be to work as a community unit and secure funding under a major grant supporting and encouraging system change. Working under a major grant structure and organization, it was imagined that progress would be possible.

Our foundation for collaboration has been laid over the past two years, the next steps involve creating a well detailed sector specific collaborative plan.

With collaboration, and commitment to "a three-year plan" there is the potential of long-term sustainable change from a high-level policy perspective, which will then provide the environment and support to create change at mid and ground levels.

With policy change at the higher level, we will be able to influence long term solutions rather than quick fixes. Through collaboration at **all** levels within a sector and with inter sector collaboration a stronger matrix network with create a stronger **infrastructure to support change.**

Change will be transformative and meaningful with a coordinated, collaborative approach - sector based approach.

Readiness there because ...

Over the past two years we have met with school board trustees, the school board superintendent, city councillors, teachers, students, funders, university professors, agricultural group representatives, agri-business representatives and physicians -- who are interested in implementing sustainable solutions.

OVERVIEW

Problem: Food banks are not addressing needs or creating solutions that might be possible with a system, community-based approach.

Opportunity:

To embark on a well-disciplined and coordinated multi-sector 3-year plan to:

- Engage our community assets collectively and synergistically
- Be inspired to transform obstacles to opportunities through studying work of those ahead of us
- Build from foundation laid over the past two years of inter-sector collaboration for system change

Next steps:

Obtain funding ($10 k) from the Vancouver Foundation to create a well-defined, detailed collaborative inter sector plan.

This planning grant also has a component (additional $10K) for consultation and collaborative planning with community sectors.

Identify most appropriate application for the planning grant.

Appendix I: Cycle 3, Dirt Therapy Webpage

Dirt Therapy Projects

CoVic Garden Box Project

The Research Group is collaborating with other community partners to look for ways to provide better food security in Penticton while promoting mental health. One way that we hope to do this is by helping people grow more local fresh produce for ourselves and the food bank. To do this we are working with others to develop Co-Vic gardening boxes. Co- Vic garden boxes are small raised garden beds that are approximately 4 feet long by 4 feet wide by 8 inches tall. Participants can receive a raised garden bed to grow fresh produce for their household. We will assist them in setting up the garden bed and supply them with a second garden bed which will be grown for the Penticton FoodBank.

We are looking for support and donations towards our project. Some ways that you can help the community:

- Provide monetary funding to support a family receiving a garden box.
  You can donate to our GoFundMe (https://www.gofundme.com/f/covic-garden)
- Companies can donate lumber, screws, soil, fertilizer, gardening tools (tomatocages, gloves, shovels) and seeds/seedlings.
- Volunteer with us to assist in the assembly and distribution of the Co-Vicboxes.

If you are a household in Penticton that doesn't currently have access to a garden, you have space for 2 raised beds, and you love fresh produce, please send an email to [deleted] explainingyour situation and willingness to grow. We will be selecting 25 of the requests from these households to receive our free Co-Vic garden boxes.

Please include in your email:

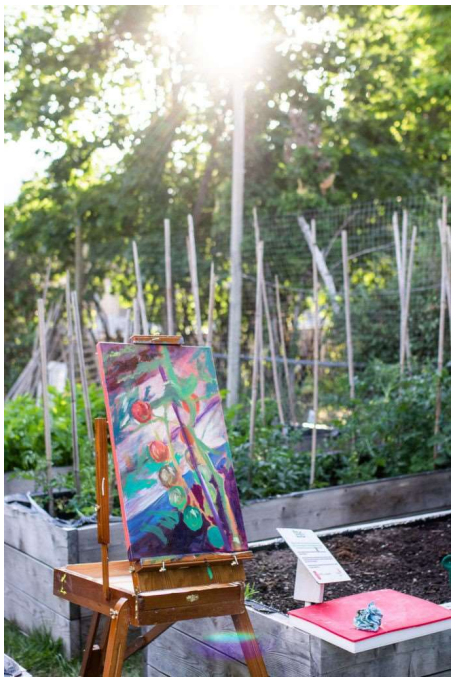
1. How many people in your household?
2. Your need or willingness to grow fresh produce
3. Why you would love to have a free raised bed
4. Your contact information.

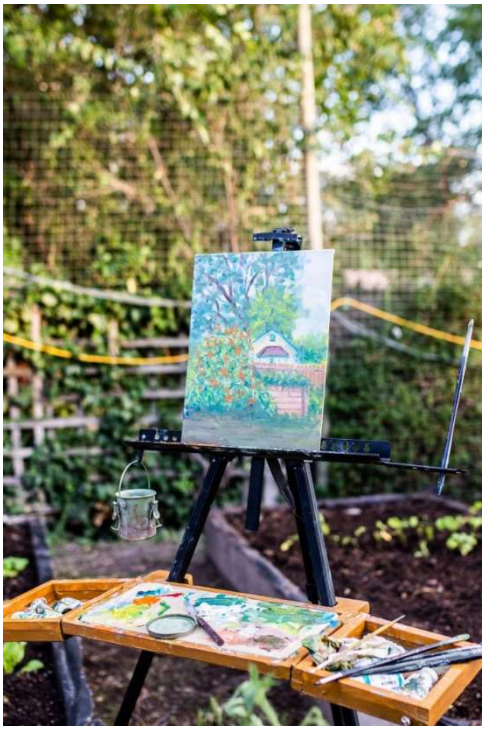
We have a limited number of garden boxes to give so please RSVP ASAP. If you're interested in collaborating with us, please contact: [deleted].

Follow us on our Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/TheHealthyGardener) to keep up- to-date with this program.

Plein-Aire in the Garden

Late in July, we invited 8 local artists to come and paint in our Martin street garden (growing for the Food Bank). The artists brought their own supplies and began painting the scenery with a photographer for the event. The photos taken of the garden and the paintings will be used in a 2021 calendar which we hope to sell to raise funds for next years' CoVic Garden Box Project which we hope to expand to reach more households. Thank you to the eight artists who came to the event to support our project.





Appendix J: Cycle 3, Community Support and Contributions

(no particular sequence)

CONTRIBUTOR	CONTRIBUTION
Global TV	Video, article
The Penticton Herald	articles
The Castanet	Videos, articles
Western News	articles
CBC Radio	Broadcast request for support
SUN-FM Radio	Broadcast request for support
The Penticton Community Foundation	$500
Superior Peat	Unlimited soil
Grower Supply Company	Deer repellant
Nesters Market	plants
Dr. David Dutchman	Information shared with 100 patients (social prescribing)
Flowers on the Beach	plants
Martins Flowers	plants
Garden Works	plants
Blaze King	Plaques for the garden boxes
Gordon Brothers Lumber	Lumber and related supplies
Home Hardware	Instruction on using a drill, lumber, screws
Salvation Army staff, volunteers	Advice, support, getting food to the needy, on-the-ground work in the community garden, collaborative activities and outreach
Farmers, agricultural organizations, wineries, and municipal councillors	Advice, encouragement
Local artists	Participated in Art Night, shared their craft for the purpose of publicity and for our promotional calendar
University students	On-the-ground work, initiating and implementing their own creative ideas
Past Garden Coordinator, Administrative Assistant	Coordinating and project management skills

Appendix K: Cycle 3, University Student Video Production

CoVic Garden Box Project, Summer of 2020 (video summary)

Link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JU7W8ERApodwcwz9A99f0cEs-8pb6V5J/view
Time: 4m 51sec
Team in order of appearance: Nathan Clements, Gurshan Saran, Joshua Fitzpatrick, Lovelesh Anand, Sierra Hartmann

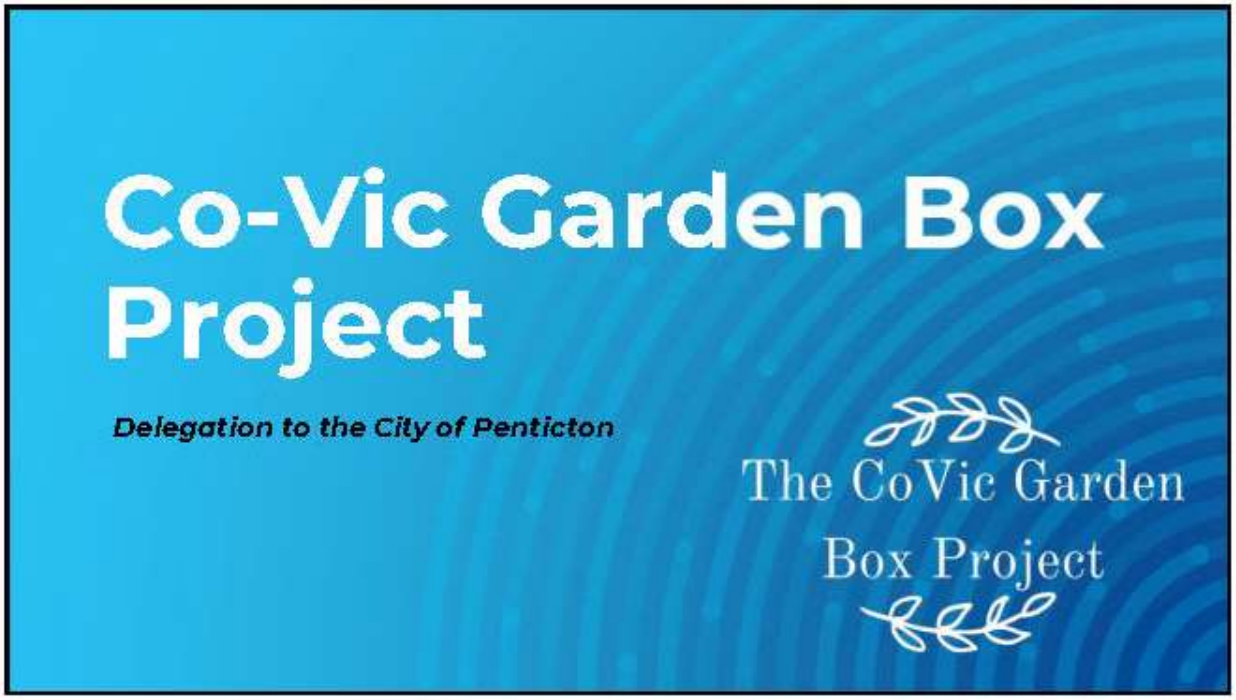
Sponsors: Superior Peat, BP Wood, Sandstone Landscaping, Grower Supply Co., Nesters Market, Dr. David Dutchman, Flowers on the Bench, Martins Flowers, Garden Works, Blaze King, Salvation Army, Gordon Bros Lumber, Home Hardware.

CoVic Garden 2020… inspired to help in any way we can

The CoVic Garden Box Project collaborated with other community partners to find ways to provide better food security in Penticton, promoting mental and physical health. This project was created to enhance food security within the community and was accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recipients received a raised garden bed to grow fresh produce for their household and supplied a second garden bed which was grown to support the Penticton food bank. Partial comments and feedback in the video:

> Superior Peat (sponsor) – "We were approached by two companies – we had worked with one before. This brought a community of companies together to work locally. At the end of the day the community grows in knowledge and in experience as everyone pools their resources together."
>
> Kyle– "I saw a message on Facebook… I thought this sounds awesome, I want to be a part of this. …Every time I mention this project, people walking by, they say wow look at this garden, wow that's a program in our city? You guys will be surprised next year…. It's really brought our family together, too. We come out as a family to work on the garden, we have a 14-year-old daughter, teaching her how to grow and harvest her own vegetables... Coming out to work in the garden as a family on a Saturday morning when its hot out, it's a beautiful thing… It doesn't get much better than that…. This could be huge for Penticton. I would love to see this project grow."
>
> Virginia– "I thought to myself, why don't we try this out. They brought the boxes, the dirt, the plants… I think it is awesome, and the knowledge that people are giving me to help me out."
>
> Michelle - "I wanted to be involved and help support the community with food insecurity, especially during this time of COVID and with grocery prices, which are absolutely increasing… We have been able to donate peas, beans, lettuce, basil, carrots, tomatoes… The webpage for gardeners that a medical research firm set up really helped form another sense of community… Perhaps in the schools they can use the produce, perhaps in the healthy lunch program…"

Appendix L: Cycle 3, Presentation to Penticton City Hall



Our Project

General Overview

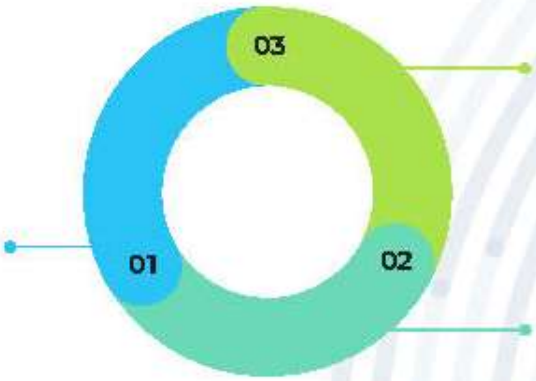
One garden box for the household, one to the local food bank

Our Team

Our Process

Step 1 : Request

Acommunity member interested in receiving **two garden boxes, one where the harvest goes to the household and one where the harvest goes to the food bank,** contacts us. If the household meets our criteria we then bring two assembled garden boxes to the house when it is convenient for the recipient.



Step 3 : Maintenance

The recipient is then responsible for maintaining the garden boxes as best as they can. When ready to harvest the recipient can collect the produce from their box for their household as well as the box for the food bank and then can transport the produce to the food bank whenever it is convenient

Step 2 : Setup

On a day that is convenient for multiple garden box recipients our team brings a truck (or two) with soil and fill the boxes and plant the seedlings at multiple households and can answer any questions the recipient might have

5

61 boxes built

In Summerland and Penticton

"This could be huge for the city, I would love to see this grow"
- Kyle Stewart SUNFM Radio

"Not only provides for my family, but other families in need"
- Fiona Hughes

"It's been an incredibly enriching experience...we all want to help our community"
- Michelle Samuelson

Our Impact

1. Food Security

By providing the community with an opportunity to grow their own food and contributing significantly to the local food banks, our project provides food security when everyone's ability to source food from elsewhere is unpredictable.

2. Building Community

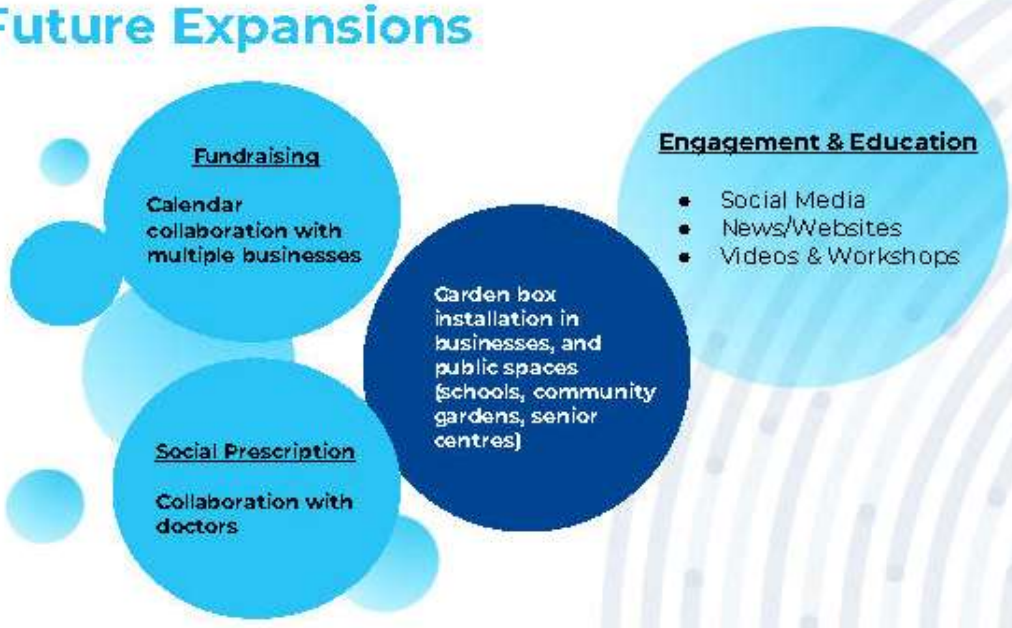
Cardening is an excellent opportunity for people to come together and share how their harvest is doing and what is working for them or not working. Our project has a Facebook page @TheHealthyCardener and a group of box recipients where we share advice and information, and encourage others to do the same.

Soft Benefits

- Volunteer hours for students
- Potential economic boost for city
- Collaboration between local businesses

7

Future Expansions



8

Our Ask - How the City of Penticton can help

→ **Communicating/Marketing through city resources**

→ **Transportation of materials**

→ **In kind Donations & support in community grant partnerships**

9

Community and Business Support

We have seen wonderful community outpour with the generous support of businesses

Businesses that have supported and continue to support our project include:

- Superior Peat
- BP Wood
- Sandstone Landscaping
- Grower Supply Co.
- Nesters Market
- Dr. David Dutchman
- Flowers on the Bench
- Martins Flowers
- Garden Works
- Blaze King
- Salvation Army
- Gordon Bros. Lumber
- Home Hardware

10

Thank You!
Any questions?

Appendix M: Cycle 3, Online Closing Survey

TEXT FOR ANONYMOUS ONLINE SURVEY: FOOD FOR ALL

DRAFT VERSION Aug 27, 2020.

Preamble. Please take 30 minutes to complete this online survey by DATE.

Can you describe when you became involved with the 'Food for All' project?

Can you please describe how you became involved?

Can you explain what motivated you to become involved?
(LIST IS AN ADAPTATED FROM VOLUNTEER CANADA) (Circle all that apply).

I am very interested in food security
I wanted to improve society
I wanted to improve my skills
I wanted to improve my employability
I thought service work would help out with school
Someone directly asked me to participate
I heard about this through media
Other: Explain: _____

STATISTICS ON FOOD PRODUCED THROUGH THE PROJECT

I am interested in understanding the impact of this project on the local supply of food.

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE SPECIFICS OF ANY ACTIVITIES YOU ENGAGED IN TO REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY, OR MARKET THIS PROJECT TO THE COMMUNITY:

How many new individuals (including family members individually) have you connected with through this project: (Circle One.)

In setting up raised beds _____
In helping in the Food Bank Garden _____

How many new community organizations have you connected with through this project?

In setting up raised beds _____
In helping in the Food Bank Garden _____

Were there any individuals or groups who became involved with you that were not originally targeted (e.g., immigrants/refugees/ seniors/etc.)?

YES ... please explain:
NO (Skip to Q. 8)

The next questions are asking about your experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can skip these questions if you prefer not to answer them.

From your perspective, would you say that COVID-19 changed how this project played out?
Prefer not to answer

YES ... please explain:
NO (Skip to Q. 9)

PERSONAL IMPACTS AND REFLECTIONS

To what degree would you say this project has empowered you as an individual who can contribute to social/community change? (Scale: 1-5). Please explain:
Prefer not to answer
Answer:

The original goal of my doctoral research was to ask to what extent the Penticton food bank could catalyze and mobilize local social networks to move toward sustainable social change in order to improve the quality and quantity of healthy food for the populations we serve here in the Penticton area. Are there any other reflections you would like to add on answering this question?

Prefer not to answer
YES ... please explain:
NO

What more would you like to see this project do if it were run again next year? Please provide 3 recommendations.

Prefer not to answer:
Answer:

Is there anything else you'd like to say about your work with 'Food for All?'

Prefer not to answer:
Answer:

Appendix N: Cycle 3, Feedback from Salvation Army

From John XXX <
To: Donna Benson <
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 03:55:23 PM PST
Subject: Re: Some information

Hi Donna,

Happy New Year to you as well!

I will have to give you estimates on the numbers since we weren't recording those details.

I think about 320 individuals/families were served. Approximately 450 individuals benefitted from the produce, and I estimate about 700 servings.

Also, I spoke to the Management, and they said that we don't have the resources to do the garden this year.

We would however be glad to support and be a resource for someone else.

I won't be applying for youth grants for the garden this year unless something changes.

Thanks again for all of your support over the years, and for all you do.

John

From John XXXX < >
To: Donna Benson < >
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2020, 09:07:45 AM PST
Subject: Feedback --- Community to be supported to grow a raised bed - for themselves and the Food Bank

Hi Donna,

I think that encouraging people to grow their own food, and also contribute to those in need is a great idea!

The end result on our end though, was a total donation of 79 pounds of fresh vegetables with a dollar value of about $197.00.

If each of the 25 individuals that participated made a donation, that would be just over 3 pounds each or $7.50.

Hopefully they produced much more for themselves.

The community garden produced about 1,500 pounds with an approximate value of $3,750.00.

I'm not sure why such low numbers for the raised beds, but it could have been because of a late start, lack of expertise, or lack of support during the project. Sierra would have much greater insight on this.

Moving forward, I think it would be important to start earlier, offer training and mentoring, and have someone hands on throughout the project.

Take Care,
John

From John XXXX < >
To: Donna Benson < >
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2020, 09:19:38 AM PST
Subject: Feedback --- Community to be supported to grow a raised bed - for themselves and the Food Bank

Hi Donna,

Forgot to mention that we so much appreciate the use of your back yard for the community gardens, and also your other initiatives to help people in need in this community!

Your kindness is greatly appreciated!

Appendix O: Cycle 3, The Ask – CoVic Gardens 2021

The Ask

1. Communications through City web-site and communications to households about the CoVic Garden opportunity.
2. Work with UBC, Okanagan College and School Board to provide students opportunities in their course work to work on projects to implement UN and National Food Policy directives which have been identified as municipal initiatives.
3. Trucks and soil delivery help
4. Seminars, webinars through Recreation Department for supporting new gardeners
5. Partner in grant requests for funding for a coordinator (COVID funding for improving Food Security)
6. Support intersectoral initiatives within the community to provide better access to local high-quality food for all.

Appendix P: Cycle 3, ARNA Approval for Action in 2021

Approval for future project from the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA)

----- Forwarded Message -----
From Shosh, Joe <shoshj@moravian.edu>
To: Suzy Thomas <sthomas@stmarys-ca.edu>
Cc: Donna Benson <donnabenson59@yahoo.com>; Aubrey Uresti <auresti@ucdavis.edu>; Rich McPherson <richcmcpherson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 08:29:23 AM PDT
Subject: Re: The brief proposal for considerationre

Hi Donna,

Please allow me to add my voice to Suzy's wonderful congratulatory note! It was such a pleasure to learn of your sustainability work several months ago and now to see that, as a result of your efforts, ARNA will have a community of action researchers to help move this crucial work forward. Please keep me abreast of your progress, and let me know how my colleagues on the Executive Committee and I may best support your work. With all best wishes,

Joe

Joseph M. Shosh, Ph.D.
Professor of Education, Retired
Chair, Executive Committee, Coordinating Group, ARNA
Associate Editor, *Palgrave International Handbook of Action Research*
Moravian College
1200 Main Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018
Ph.: 610-417-2055
Email: shoshj@moravian.edu
Web sites: www.moravian.edu; http://arnawebsite.org

On Wed, Oct 7, 2020 at 11:05 AM Suzy Thomas <sthomas@stmarys-ca.edu> wrote:

Hello Donna,

I am delighted to let you know that the ARNA Executive Committee has unanimously approved your proposal for a Sustainability ARC—congratulations! We were impressed with the work you have been doing and are excited about the proposal you developed, which represents a vital strand of action research on a topic that is crucial for our planet and in the current context of global pandemic. Thank you for your interest in continuing this work through an ARC.

I have cc'd Rich McPherson here, and he will help to add your ARC to the webpage on the ARNA website, and then you will be able to share news about the ARC and attract new members.

Aubrey and I will be sending out a doodle poll soon for a Zoom social for the ARCs, and we'd like to highlight our newest ARC in that meeting!

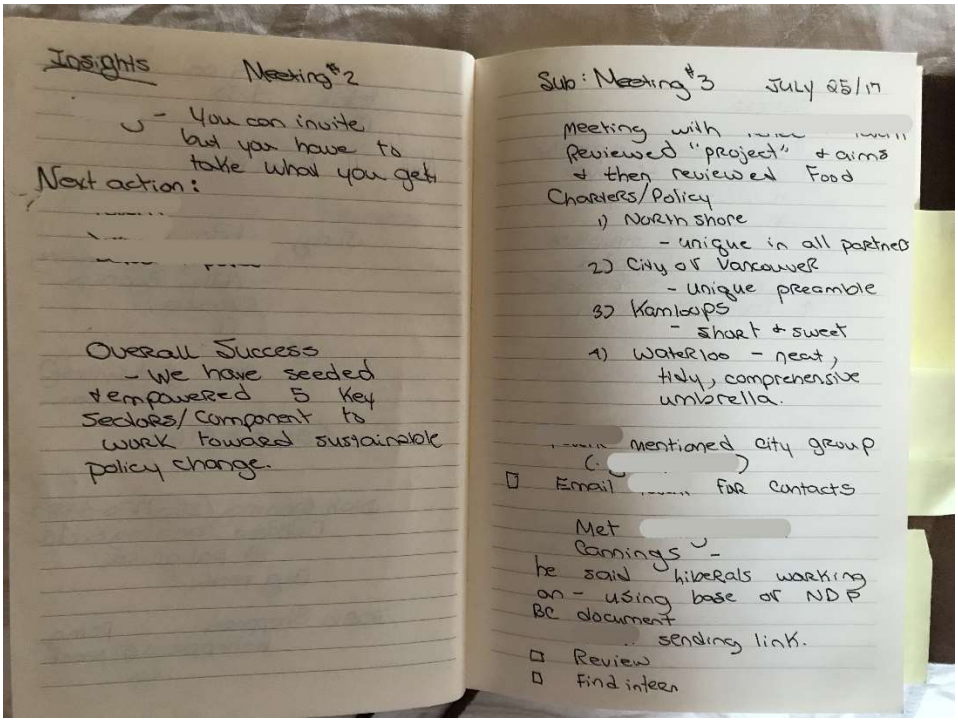
Welcome to the ARC community, and thank you for the fine work you have been doing. We look forward to supporting you!

Best,
Suzy

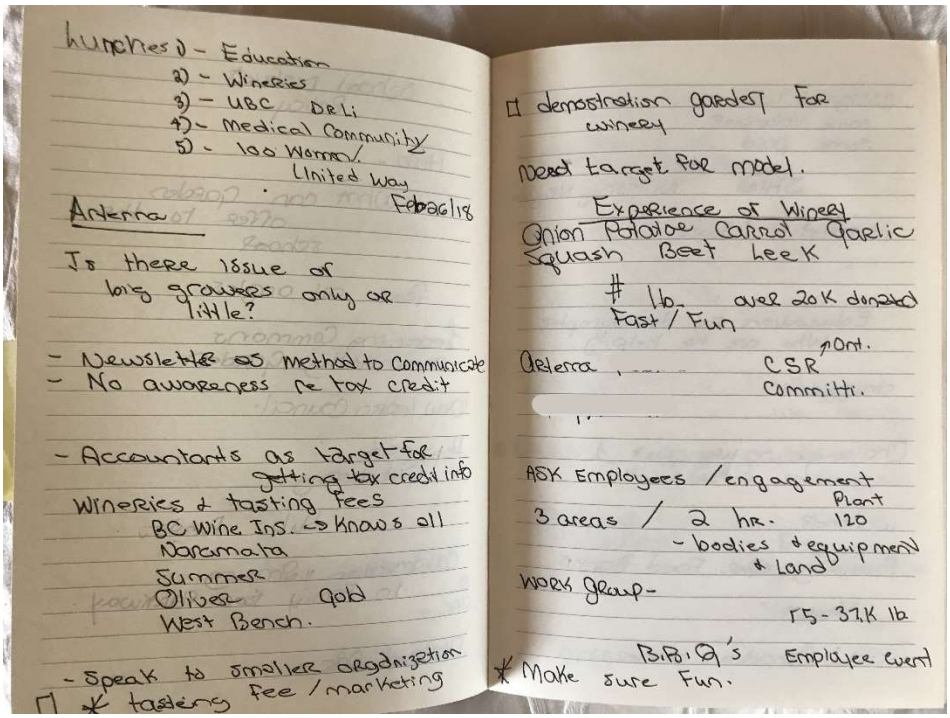
Suzy Thomas, Ph.D., LPCC, PPS-SC
Professor, Counseling Department
School Counseling Program Director
Kalmanovitz School of Education
Saint Mary's College of California
1928 St. Mary's Rd., PMB 4350
Moraga, CA 94575
(925) 631-4539
(Pronouns: she/her/hers)

Appendix Q: Cycle 1-3, Journal Notes, Microsoft Teaming

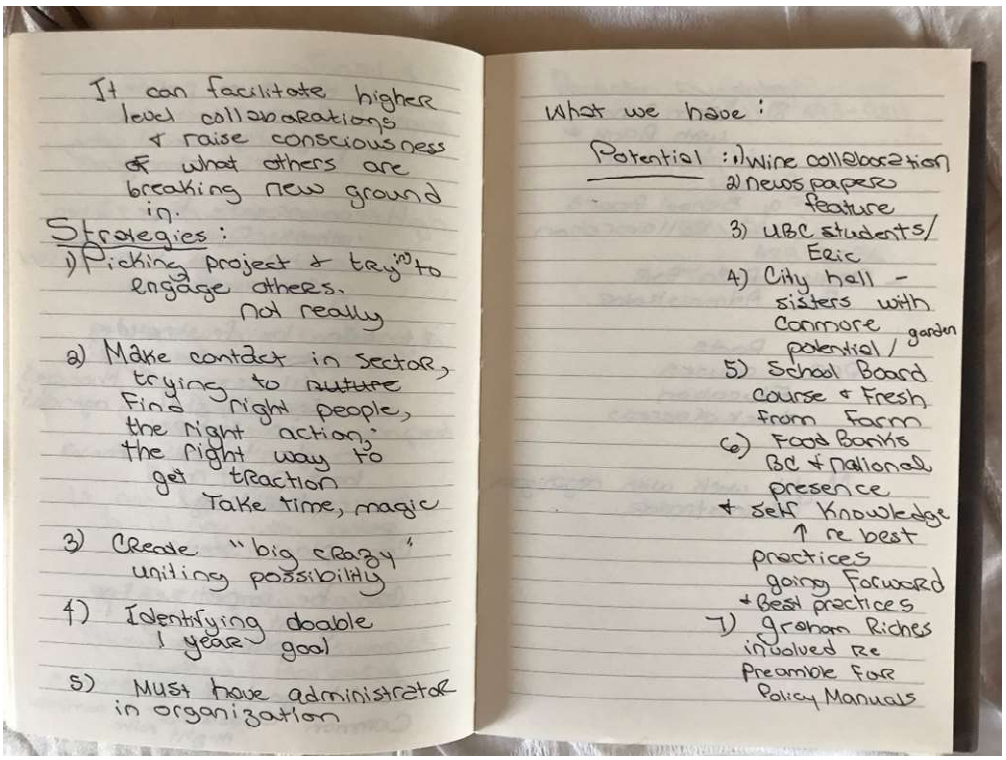
Cycle 1: July 25, 2017 Sample (names removed)



Cycle 2: February 26, 2018 Sample (names removed)



Cycle 2: January 21, 2019 Sample (6 pages, telephone numbers removed)



It can facilitate higher level collaborations & raise consciousness of what others are breaking new ground in.

Strategies:

1) Picking project & trying to engage others. not really

2) Make contact in sector, trying to nurture Find right people, the right action, the right way to get traction Take time, magic

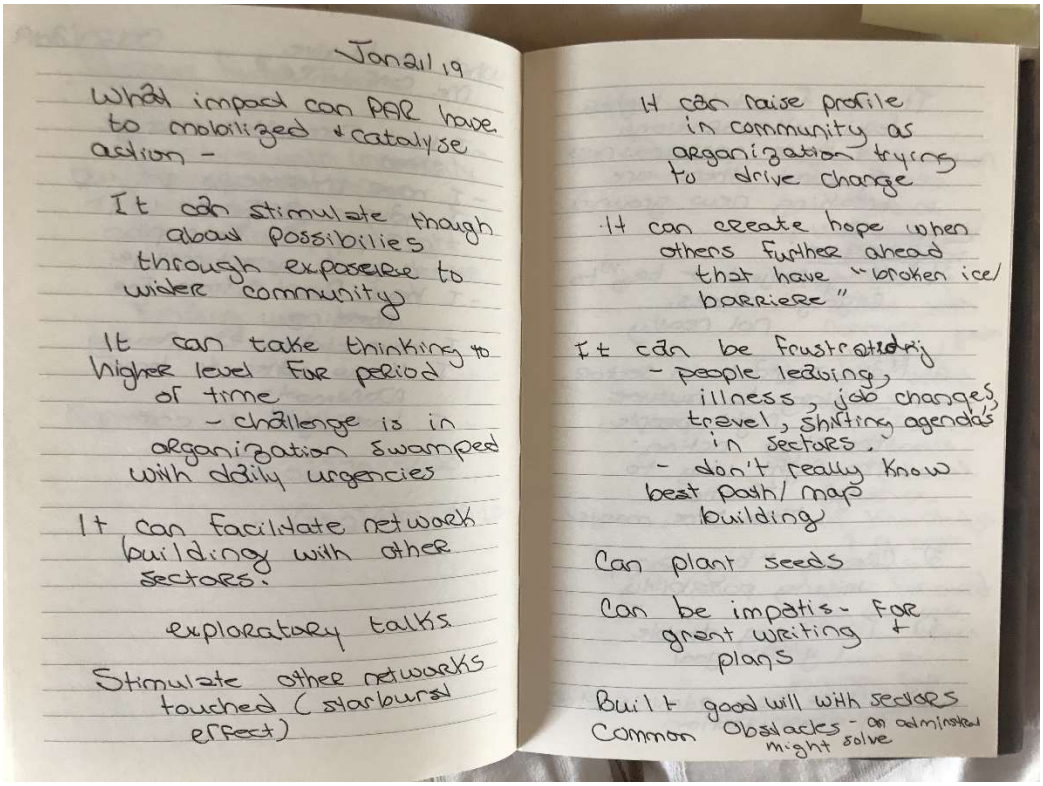
3) Create "big crazy" uniting possibility

4) Identifying doable 1 year goal

5) Must have administrator in organization

What we have:

Potential: 1) Wine collaboration
2) newspapers feature
3) UBC students/ Eric
4) City hall - sisters with Canmore garden potential /
5) School Board course + Fresh from Farm
6) Food Banks BC + National presence + self knowledge ↑ re best practices going Forward + Best practices
7) Graham Riches involved re Preamble For Policy Manuals



Jan 21, 19

What impact can PAR have to mobilized & catalyse action -

It can stimulate though about possibilies through exposeure to wider community

It can take thinking to higher level For period of time
- challenge is in organization swamped with daily urgencies

It can facilitate network building with other sectors.

exploratory talks

Stimulate other networks touched (starburst effect)

It can raise profile in community as organization trying to drive change

It can create hope when others further ahead that have "broken ice/ barriers"

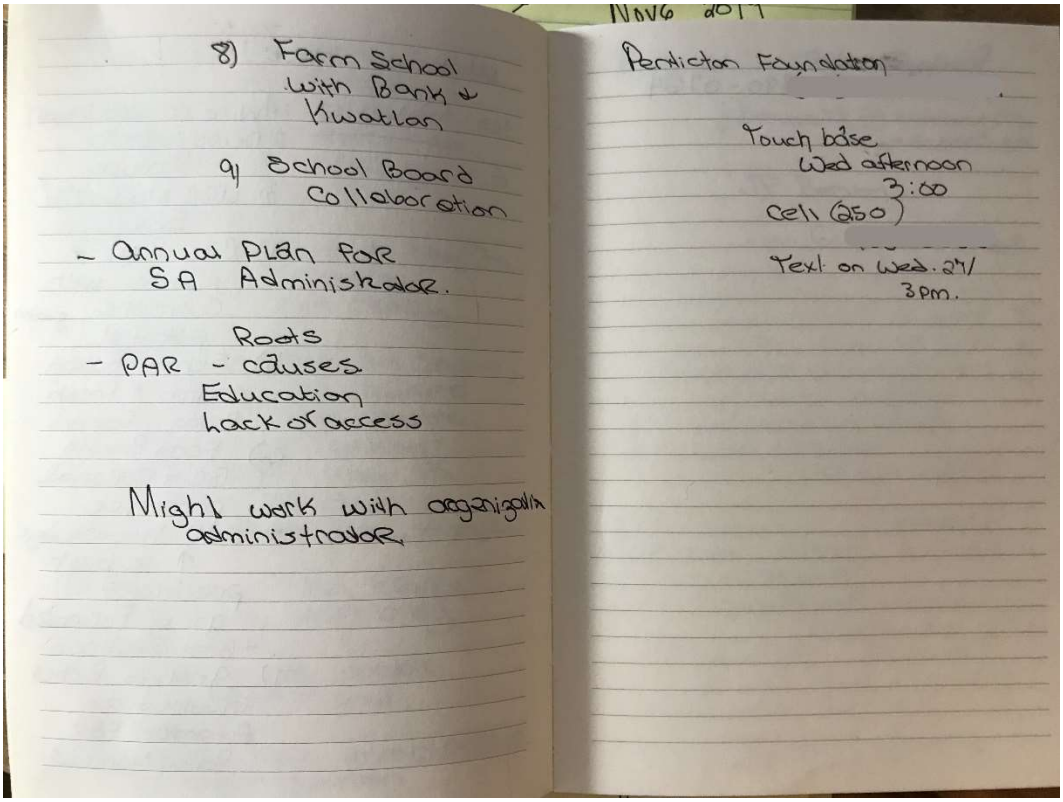
It can be frustrating
- people leaving, illness, job changes, travel, shifting agendas in sectors.
- don't really know best path/ map building

Can plant seeds

Can be impatis- For grant writing + plans

Built good will with sectors

Common obstacles - an administrator might solve



8) Farm School with Bank & Kwatlan

9) School Board Collaboration

- Annual Plan for SA Administrator.

Roots
- PAR - causes.
Education
Lack of access

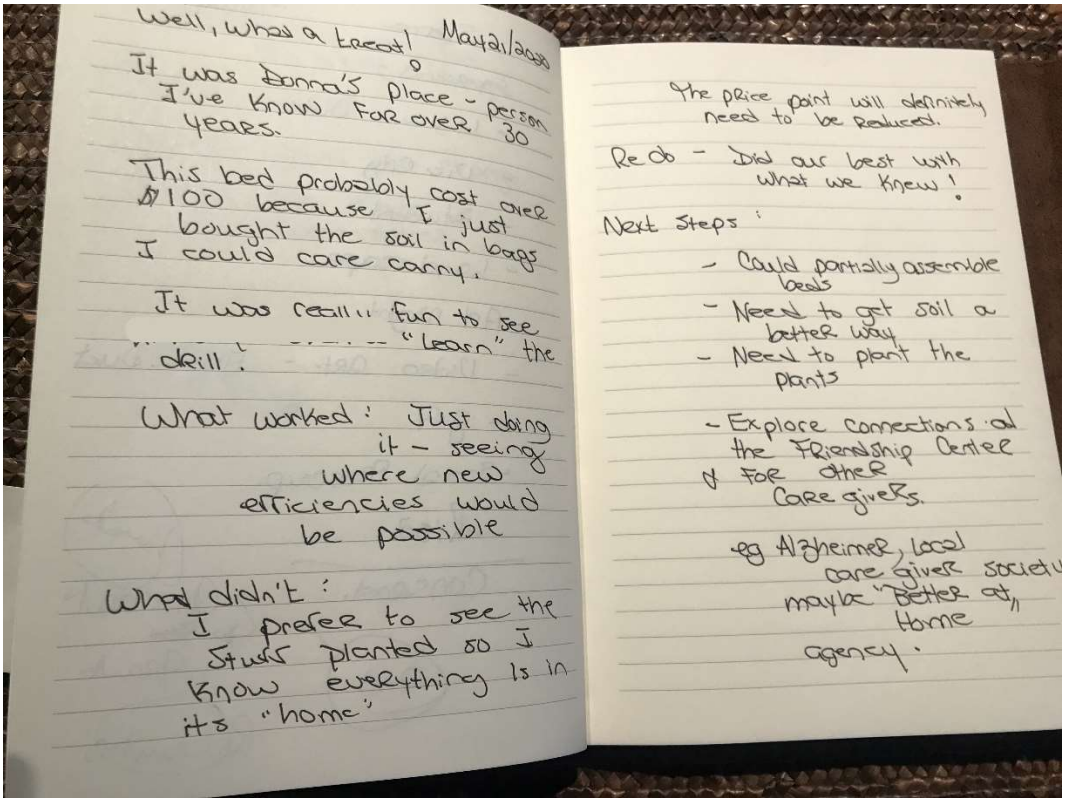
Might work with organization administrator.

Penticton Foundation

Touch base
Wed afternoon
3:00
Cell (250)

Text on Wed. 27/
3pm.

Cycle 3: May 21, 2020 Sample (names removed)



Well, what a treat! May 21/2020

It was Donna's place - person I've know for over 30 years.

This bed probably cost over $100 because I just bought the soil in bags I could care carry.

It was really fun to see ... -- "learn" the drill.

What worked: Just doing it - seeing where new efficiencies would be possible

What didn't:
I prefer to see the studs planted so I know everything is in its "home"

The price point will definitely need to be reduced.

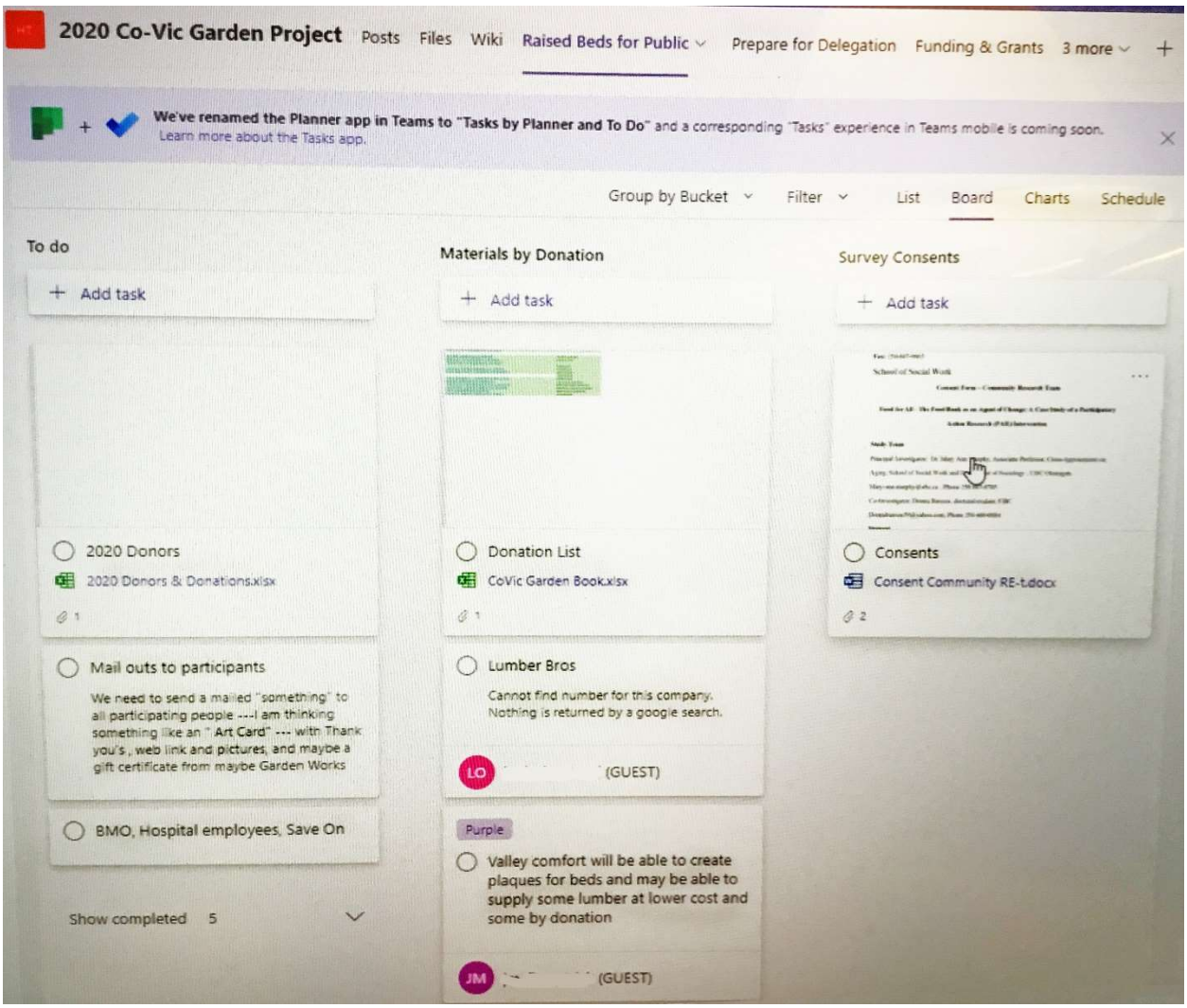
Re do - Did our best with what we knew!

Next steps:
- Could partially assemble beds
- Need to get soil a better way
- Need to plant the plants

- Explore connections at the Friendship Center & for other Care givers.

eg Alzheimer, Local care giver society maybe "Better at Home" agency.

Cycle 3: Sample Screenshot from Microsoft Teaming (names removed)



Appendix R: Cycle 4, Summary of Goals

A Summary of Key Food Security Change Strategies and Goals for Cycle 4

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	FUTURE WORK
Research	**Research question:**	***Vision***: take a local/regional approach respecting food security towards meeting the UN SDG Goal#2 (zero hunger by 2030).
	Cycle 4: *To what extent can a global action research approach catalyze and mobilize local, regional, provincial, national and global social networks to build capacity and social capital in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goal #2 of zero hunger by 2030?*	Select practical variables to document and/or benchmark food productivity. Consider having growers journal their own productivity. Smart Donate app? Prepare a chart of the desired vegetables, growing conditions required, amount needed, storage conditions. These variables will help in the planning to meet the food shortage. We could survey foodbank needs in the rest of the Okanagan Valley. Examine how approaches, such as Stoecker (2005, 2009, 2013, 2016) [what is, what could be, what is the service, who are the stakeholders, and the learning] in future research, and select a preferred model. Develop an agenda and action plan template on a 12-week recurring schedule. Plan to build on experience and create a purposeful social network to impact change re quality and quantity of food, promoting food security and reducing or ending hunger in my locality, and beyond. What can we do to influence the growth of local/regional social networks to mobilize the needed resources? Determine valid measures of awareness building. Select design/methods to draw in the users- the true democratic voice of users- into a final approach? Inclusion on committees, research surveys. Where/how is that voice to be included? Working with Action Research Network of the Americas, what impact can we make at any level to mutual benefit (create new P/AR vanguard networks? Find incentives to empower teams?) Consider creating a community strategy to determine the needs of various population sectors and organizations. Examine the impact of The BC farmers' Food Donation Tax Credit on food donations over the 3 years to the end of 2023. Examine the utility of a Global Action Research approach, combined with Fetterman's Empowerment Evaluation approach.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	FUTURE WORK
Fundraising	Attend to the significant resource issues related to enacting future plans, identify targets for funding and acquire resources.	Create a new non-profit entity that could apply for shared community grants, particularly to create and fund some administrative oversight. Determine how to take advantage of Canada's new federal Food Policy, related funding opportunities and new program developments (Local food infrastructure/ Buy Canadian/ Reduce waste/ school food programs/ etc.). Complete a comprehensive report on potential funds available, their requirements and procedures to apply, and which organizations or individuals are eligible to apply.
Media	Raise awareness of food security issues and attract general interest and volunteers. Make people aware that perishables could be donated. Engage and empower community via media.	Follow up on offers to share additional skills and resources. Have a communications person to develop an annual plan and strategy with monthly media releases. Expand media list to include all traditional and new social media as well as organization newsletters. Continue to work with the media partners established to refine messages - the UN SDG's and what we can do in Okanagan, available tax credits for food donors, what other communities are doing. Develop features to change the public perception of food security, hunger, food banks etc. Target national publications.
Social marketing and social media	Develop strategies for awareness building and knowledge transfer.	Consider the need to develop a website and Facebook group. Reach out to those who have equipment and tools to help. Implement strategies related to objectives.
Volunteer	Feeding people in a community was revealed in the Cycle 1 focus groups as a community responsibility rather than a food bank responsibility.	Feeding people as a "community responsibility" and not the foodbanks' responsibility - a paradigm shift - needs to be visualized, conceptualized and operationalized. A comprehensive communication plan is required. Engage the volunteer hub in Penticton community. Seek help from Volunteer Canada. Complete the research on what other municipalities best practices are without dictating what should be done here. Re-visit the UN list of municipal activities and draw out what volunteers could do to contribute. Prepare above list and share with media with a call to action for potential volunteers to come forth.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	FUTURE WORK
Social network	Examine key lines of communication and relationships in network connections already made, as well as identifying those needed links for the future.	Prepare a 2020 progress summary to send to all 2020 contributors – include a "thank-you" press release; set up interviews for the media. Create a webinar. Invite past collaborator to commit to action goals Use up to date Social Networking software to effectively map network connections and tie strength. Identify structural holes to bridge. Work with Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) to create draft press materials for use with a variety of sectors and in other communities on topics including food need, a call to action etc. Continue social networking with BC Organic Fruit Growers, BC Wine Growers Association, Arterra Winery, local farmers and their association. Find out history of previous city attempts to establish a related committee. Engage with the Grape Growers Association (800 growers) via their newsletter. Determine how we will involve dieticians. Identify practical measures for tracking quality and quantity of food. Smart Donate app. Potential collaborations include city councillors, school boards, school district, local university/college, media, local restaurants, markets, Interior Health Authority. Create an asset map of all organizations in region looking into food issues or that could be champions for local food and zero hunger SDG's. Design strategy to engage them. Encourage local links to Food Secure Canada. Expand the size of our network to allow for attrition of organizational partners.
Innovation	Create new practices to increase the quality of food for food bank clients.	Research into new methods of creating local food. For example, vertical gardens, using fish waste to grow hydroponics e.g., in the empty packing plant in Naramata may be possible. Another suggestion to be researched is creating a purchasing food co-op. We need the space and administration to establish new models.
Partnership	To seek partners and clarify roles so we optimize collaboration and minimize competition over resources.	Engage churches as distribution centers/ hamper changes/Co-Vic Garden boxes present an opportunity for further outreach. Create a community advisory board for the Foodbank. Establish relationships with local MD's regarding horticulture therapy. Design a visionary board targeting the partnerships needed going forward. This will be conceptualized as a pyramid with the UN Right to Food and Zero Hunger committees. Then create a plan to engage the potential board members and partners. Jointly develop a Food Charter for the municipality.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	FUTURE WORK
Education	Build curriculum and partnerships to support educational initiatives.	Connect with Food Banks Canada and Food Secure Canada. Meet with provincial Minister of Education. Involve new segments, such as home schools. Confirm School Board #67 interest (also via PACS) in addressing *food for all* challenges. Identify 'champion for change' teachers who want to initiate small projects that would teach skills and inspire the next generation of growers, while producing donations for the Food Bank. Follow up on community gardens at the elementary level. Consider the development of information for Food Bank users on what constitutes a healthy diet. Reach out to organizations with community kitchens (e.g., churches) with a food-center approach. Follow up with local Okanagan College to develop an interdisciplinary food security course, based on one offered in 2015. Follow up with local Okanagan College to develop Continuing Education container and balcony garden course (s). Collaborate with local supermarkets and dieticians to educate food donors on what is most useful. Work with local high school and post-secondary educators on incorporating models of University-community collaboration and service-learning opportunities (Budd Hall). Work with post-secondary Medical and Nursing students on social prescribing approach, diabetes management, etc. Investigate further service-learning opportunities with UBC. Examine inspiring non-local models: e.g., Incredible Edible UK Model, Natures Classroom in Langley, Feed the Valley, Penticton Indian Band community garden, etc.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	FUTURE WORK
Policy and advocacy	To contribute to policy development at provincial and federal levels and become aware of opportunities and funding. Overall strategy is to collaborate with 'policy constituency' makers.	Engage in the context that the municipality of Penticton will agree to being included as one of the 20 municipalities participating and collaborating with 20 international municipalities in a sustainable food initiative. Advocate for more sustainable initiatives that address the root causes of poverty and food insecurity such as Guaranteed Annual Income/programs to encourage young farmers. Maintain and further develop federal and provincial MP and MLA contacts with Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Education regarding food security policy developments that present local opportunities via available programs and resources. Meet with Marketing Boards and Restaurant Associations. Work with Food Banks Canada on developing national quality standards for food donations BC Center for Disease Control, 2019 Industry Food Guidelines. Connect with BC Union of Municipalities, feature food security topics at AGMs. Develop a food policy for the municipality/region (North Shore Food Policy). Work with Salvation Army on solutions to food donation barriers such as the issue that donations by farmers after 4 p.m. are not accepted. Solution would be a pick-up program or to assist farmers in increasing cold storage capacity.