

# From the Ground Up

A guide for food based community organizers working with people who are marginalized



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**LIFE CYCLES**  
*Cultivating Communities*

**S.O.L.I.D.**  
NE-X OUTREACH

**SOLID**

857 Caledonia Ave Victoria, BC, V8T-1E6  
[www.solidvictoria.org](http://www.solidvictoria.org)

**LifeCycles**

Unit #1A - 625 Hillside Ave. Victoria, BC,  
V8T 1Z1

[www.lifecyclesproject.ca](http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca)

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## How to Use this Document

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This guide has been created to help *Food Based Community Organizations (FBCO)* and communities be better equip to understand their role in community garden and food literacy projects while working with marginalized communities and to question and/or adapt towards best practices. Whatever the reason for reading this, I hope that it is helpful and that it stimulates your thinking about how to work with marginalized communities in a good way.

Throughout this guide there will be boxes that will provide you with additional things to think about. These include:

***A blue box, with italicized words, will indicate that an example or scenario will be provided***

**A green box encourages you to reflect and engage with the question provided**

## Acknowledgment of the Territories

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This work was done on unceded Coast Salish and Straits Salish First Nations territory including the traditional territories of the Esquimalt, Songhees, Malahat, Pacheedaht, Scia'new, T'Souke, WSA NEC, (Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout, and Tseycum) and Nuu-chah-Nulth First Nations (Pacheedaht). We know that settler societies have, and continue to, benefit through the processes of displacement and colonization that are ongoing realities for Indigenous people and their communities across Turtle Island. We would like to acknowledge that this work is implicated in colonial systems of being and knowing.

Thank-you for hosting many of us as uninvited guests.

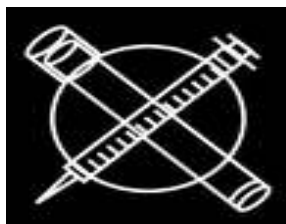
This collaborative project, between LifeCycles Project Society and The Society of Living Illicit Drug Users (SOLID), grew out of a need for community gardening and FBCO to be better informed about best practices in terms of access for people who are highly marginalized in the community. This guide will provide tools for combatting the stigma that marginalized communities face by providing suggestions on how to create meaningful participation and inclusion in community garden and food literacy projects. It is hoped that this guide will be used to inform social service agencies about how to better support the people who access their services in building and maintaining successful community gardens and food literacy programming. This project is informed by the diverse experiences of the Peer Leadership Team (PLT) who, while participating in education sessions, workshops, and skills training from Lifecycles, shared their experiences and stories.

Thank- you to the Peer Leadership Team; your participation made this project a success!

### **About LifeCycles and the Society of Living Illicit Drug Users (SOLID)**

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LifeCycles provides a wide range of programs for community members to connect with local food opportunities. This includes growing their skills and knowledge about accessing and growing food. LifeCycles runs many successful community programs including the Fruit Tree Project, PEPÁKĒNĒ HÁUTW, Growing Schools, Seed Library and Welland Legacy Community



[www.solidvictoria.org](http://www.solidvictoria.org)

SOLID is run by and for people who use illicit drugs ('peer-run' organization), and their focus is on outreach, education and advocacy. SOLID has worked on collaborative educational and outreach projects for people who use illicit drugs in Victoria BC. These programs include the Street College leadership-training program and Anti-stigma education courses.

### **About the Peer Leadership Team (PLT)**

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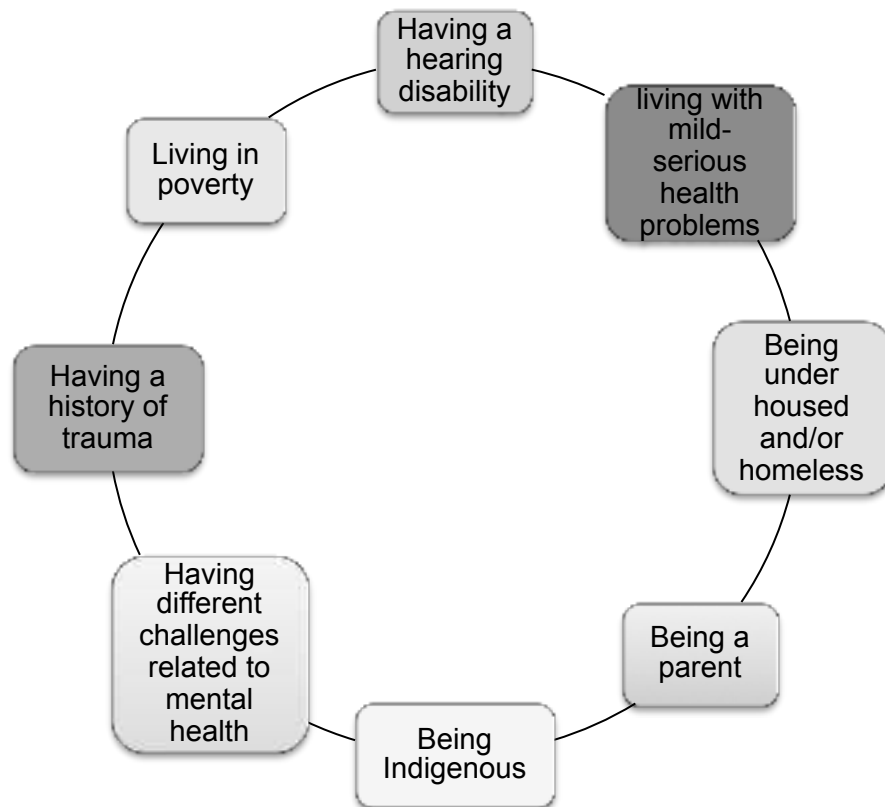
This project was guided by the experiential knowledge of the 10 members of the Peer Leadership Team (PLT). The Board of SOLID identified possible participants for the PLT based on their interest in being involved in a hands-on project, their membership with SOLID<sup>1</sup>, and their leadership skills. As a

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<sup>1</sup> Any person who does, or has, used illicit drugs is automatically a member of SOLID

result, 12 possible participants were introduced to the project through an information session. From there, the group narrowed down to 10 participants that would be part of the project over the next 4-5 months. The PLT met about once or twice every two weeks to either get hands-on experience at an orchard, food skills workshop, or a fruit pick, or to talk about their experiences with the group. Their identification of barriers, outside research, and our discussions as a group is what has informed this document.

The PLT is a group of individuals who, while all being members of SOLID, have varying capacities and barriers. Members of the PLT self-identified as coming from many different social locations related to race, class, gender, ability, family status, and life experiences. On the chart below I have listed *some* of the ways in which the PLT self-identified.



While many voices were heard, many voices were not included. As such, it is important to understand that while this document is a guide, it must be adapted and changed for your use to include feedback from other people, groups, and communities that are key to your experience/program.

**Who is not being represented and why? What are some ways of getting the word out so that there is more representation from different communities?**

The first hands-on experience of this project was during a tour of the Welland Legacy Park and Community Orchard where participants got the opportunity to see, and learn about, the various programs that Lifecycles runs. Participants experienced some of the ways to grow and take care of gardens and orchards. Many members of the PLT said that they found grafting trees the most interesting piece of information they learned that day. During the next two meetings, the PLT was asked to give feedback on their experiences at the orchard and discuss different models and practices. For the second hands-on meetings, the PLT participated in Lifecycles Fruit Tree Project where we picked apples off of a large apple tree of a local home owner and discussed the program with members of the LifeCycles team. Members of the PLT were pleased to learn that 1/4 of the produce that is picked through the Backyard Project goes directly to many local service agencies. The following meetings the PLT met at SOLID to review the best practices, answer questions about barriers and past experiences with community projects, and to fill out a satisfaction surveys. The final food skills workshop was a canning workshop that was held at Aids Vancouver Island (AVI) where participants got to make pear jam. Many participants were familiar with canning already while others were surprised at how easy it is to make jam! LifeCycles provided the participants with opportunities to increase their food literacy and gardening skills in various ways and the feedback from the PLT was very positive overall. The participants reported having great experiences learning new skills, meeting new people, and gaining new knowledge about gardening, food skills, and food literacy.

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# Best Practices for Community Gardening and Food Literacy Projects with Marginalized Communities

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*The following commitments shape all community gardening and/or food literacy projects:*

- 1. The gardening project, or food literacy project, originates from interest in the community. An issue is more relevant, and a project is more feasible, when the community identifies a need.**
- 2. The community participates actively and fully throughout the entire process from garden creation, planning, planting, nurturing, harvesting, and distributing –or through all of the steps of the food literacy programming.**
- 3. The beneficiaries of the project are the members of the community themselves**
- 4. The project encourages a greater awareness of participant’s capacities, and supports the building of skills necessary for sustaining the project over the long-term.**

Community gardens and food literacy programming have value in all communities because they promote social engagement, community mobilization, skill sharing, and may provide jobs and training for people in the community. Additionally, community gardens and food literacy programs were said to be important by members of the Peer Leadership Team (PLT) by giving them greater control over their food, a sense of accomplishment, a feeling of being a part of something bigger than one’s self, and an ability to connect with other community members who may be facing similar challenges (peer support). All of these factors, and those listed in the following sections, are reasons why community gardens and food literacy programs are socially and politically relevant to members of marginalized communities, as well as organizations who work with them.

While community gardens and food literacy programs offer many benefits to marginalized populations, these are not meant to replace existing frameworks or policies, which seek to benefit marginalized populations. In addition to these programs, efforts need to be directed at policy changes in order to address the underlying and broad issues that continue to marginalize people in the community. Lastly, the above best practices list can be difficult to follow through on when working with individuals and communities that are heavily marginalized as these communities often face barriers as a result of being oppressed and stigmatized. For example, individuals who might be identified as a community because of their shared use of particular social service (such as a needle exchange). The following 5 sections will provide examples of challenges, reflective questions, and practices to assist in your engagement with how you and your Food Based community Organization (FBCO) can meet the above best practices.

# Community Representation

## Challenge

Within marginalized communities it is more likely for certain community members to continuously act as representatives for their community, or for individuals or organizations outside this community to act as representatives. This makes it much more difficult to determine whether a project is responding faithfully to the diverse and changing needs and objectives of a given community.

## Opportunity for Reflection

### **How is the project being initiated?**

If it is your organization that is interested in initiating the project then it may be helpful to look at why this project has been chosen. Have members of the community who are intended to participate in, and benefit from, the project expressed an active interest or need for this project? If this project has not been chosen based off of the expressed need of the community then it is necessary to put in an active and consistent effort to seek out the guidance of local communities. A good way to access the needs of marginalized communities is through connecting with community committees that have active participation of a number of individuals, and where no single person serves as the sole spokesperson.

### **Are the representatives that you are seeking guidance from authorized by a particular community to speak on their behalf?**

Good indicators of this are community committees with active participation of a number of individuals, who can confirm that a representative has been selected. Representatives can never confirm their own authority. Seeking out peer-run organizations and committees are a good starting point for this.

### **Do representatives hold any economic, institutional or social power over those that they claim to represent?**

If so, how can a project ensure that individuals from relevant communities are able to speak openly and honestly in their own best interests? It may be useful for you or your organization to use multiple methods to engage with the community. For example, it may be helpful to gain ongoing input from a community committee in a meeting setting and also provide individuals with the opportunity to provide input outside of the group setting. While it is always best to ask those you are working with what method is most inclusive for them some examples of alternative communication methods may be through a peer leader, a survey option, a meeting, email, or a telephone call. It is important to provide people with multiple ways to communicate their interests for the project.

### **Do outside organizations have a good understanding of the communities' needs and desires for the project?**

Is there a consistent means of checking-in with the community about whether the outside organization is meeting the communities' objectives? In addition to providing multiple ways to contact you or your organization, scheduling future meetings with interested communities at the beginning of the project is a good way to continually provide opportunity for feedback. With deciding on meeting days it is necessary to consider how you will communicate with community members and vice-versa. Will you have a steering committee who is able to connect with the broader community? Will you post the calendar at local service providers? Do some folks have phone or email? How you stay in contact with the community is a fundamental aspect of ensuring that you are holding yourself and your organization accountable to the needs of the community.



*For this project the board of SOLID, which is made up of people who use/d drugs, discussed and decided on who the participants for the PLT would be. A large part of their decision process was identifying people who have shown interest in more "hands-on" opportunities and/ or gardening.*

## Practices

- People from marginalized communities are the experts of their own lives and should be directly involved in every aspect of planning and implementation of programming for their community (Nothing about us without us; A Manifesto by people who use illicit drugs, 2008). As an individual, group, or organization that intends on working with marginalized communities it is fundamental that you/ the organization make a commitment to working collaboratively with the community on gardening and food literacy projects that will impact them. A good way to stay accountable is by having the projects steered by a committee made up directly of those community members who the project is intended to benefit. These steering meetings can also be held at your organization if it is easily accessible or at a central location.
- Project coordinators will ensure community meetings are structured in a way that minimizes power imbalances and that creates space for as broad a range of voices as possible (ie. convening and facilitation of meetings by an individual who is not in a direct relation of economic, institutional or social power over others in the meeting; meetings promoted by members of the community; a meeting venue that is accessible to all interested participants). Interested food based community organizations (FBCO) can increase relevant facilitation skills by seeking out resources and information. A helpful online resource for this is the Anit-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA): <http://aorta.coop/resources/anti-oppressive-facilitation>.
- Members of FBCO have an important role in sharing skills, providing support, and bringing in specific expertise. Representatives from organizations may hold more economic, institutional, or social power than members of the community that they intend to work with. As such, it is important for members of outside organizations to understand, and be guided by, the communities' desires when working with them (or on project that may affect them).
- Peer support, as well as support from allies, was stated numerous times as a way to make participation more accessible and safe for participants. Members of the PLT stated that having a buddy in the program was a large part of their success in this project.

## Meaningful Participation

### **Challenge**

Consultation is too often mistakenly identified as participation. There are big differences between consultation, collaboration, and participation as community control (Wallace, 2005). There are also differences between forms of participation at each stage of the project, depending on what the goals of the project are.

*"Don't be offended if people aren't able to participate in the way you planned"*  
- Participant

Most of the participants in this project expressed that they were leading rather chaotic lives and that this might interfere with their ability to participate in this project in an ongoing way. Gardens or living systems are distinct from other types of projects in that neglecting them will increase the likelihood of them failing.

### **Questions to Ask**

**How much support is the project able to offer to address the participation barriers that a marginalized individual or group may face?** Participatory projects with community members should be grounded in reciprocity so that participation is meaningful to everyone involved. In order to facilitate a reciprocal relationship between the FBCO and the community project organizers should thoughtfully consider potential barriers for participants and possible solutions/options. An example of this could be recognizing that folks from the community may be coming to the project after having very challenging days, weeks, and lives and may not feel comfortable discussing this with project organizers. Providing an honorarium for a peer support worker to be present at meetings, events, or day-to-day functioning of the project could allow community members to participate and feels supported during this process.

**How thoughtful are you being in terms of accessibility considerations?** This is an important aspect of ensuring that participation is not only meaningful but is inclusive and respectful of difference. Are there supports in place for people with varying mobility challenges? Are washrooms and other spaces accessible to a wheelchair or walker? Are there considerations being made for people who have limited vision or who are blind? Are interpreters available for community members who are Deaf? How are you ensuring that these accessibility concerns, and a plenitude of others, can be brought forward and responded to? You and your organization can foster an inclusive environment by implementing practices such as check-ins that pay attention to ability, by incorporating within your own organization a dedication to inclusion, and/or creating a inclusion suggestion box. Be creative about your methods so that you are able to receive as much feedback as possible and ensure that this is an ongoing practice by committing to it within your own organization.

**What tools are being put in place so that community members can “provide meaningful input”?** (Worton, 2009, p.36). Is language and presentation style accessible or is it filled with jargon and acronyms? Members of the PLT stated that ease of participation was a big part of whether or not they found a project meaningful to them and was an important factor for long-term involvement (2015).

**Are all participants clear on the goals of project?**

For instance, does the project intend to achieve actual food security, community participation and engagement, and/or paid employment and training?

## Questions to Ask continued

### **How are decisions being made and why?**

Are project coordinators making most of the decisions because it is 'easiest' that way? If this is the thought process, how can you shift this perspective to include clear guidance and ongoing participation in decision-making by marginalized communities? It may be helpful to shift thinking towards long-term sustainability of the project. If folks from the community are empowered to guide the project from its early stage it is more likely that they will feel a sense of ownership over it and continue into the long term (PLT, 2015).

### **Is there someone who is knowledgeable about gardening and/or the food literacy program that can provide consistent and ongoing support to the community that is working on a specific food literacy project or community garden?**

### **Is shared learning held as an important goal of the project?**

Service users, community members, and front line staff have knowledge that is often grounded in experiences.

## Practices

- Community meetings and workshops should take place through every stage of the process, including initiating the project, planning the project, breaking ground, and maintaining the project (Wallace, 2005).
- Avoid false expectations by ensuring the goals and expectations of the project are discussed with all participants at each stage of the project. Plan to have an introductory meeting so that participants can become familiar with the project, including time commitments and expectations for participation. During this introductory meeting find out what days and times work best for people and try to create a schedule based off of this. Members of the PLT stated that having consistency with meetings was an important factor for their ability to participate in this project.
- When possible provide relevant training so that participants are able to build skills in the areas that they are learning about. A large part of why members of this PLT participated was because they wanted to be able to better support and educate their peers.
- It is particularly important when working with gardens or living systems to consider consistency of care, because without this the gardens are likely to fail. Employing a knowledgeable project manager could provide the community or group with ongoing support so that they feel empowered to nurture the garden.
- Working with marginalized groups requires that you are able to play a part in the community. Expect that issues could arise for individuals and communities that you are working with and be prepared to provide support.

*"Ongoing participation may require support that extends well beyond the definition of the...project"  
(Wallace, 2005, p.17)*

### Problem

Beautification plans, such as the project on the Pandora Green, have the explicit objective of making an area appear more attractive to the city, neighbours, and businesses (People's Plan for Pandora, 2011). A key component behind this objective is to remove the people who are living in poverty, homeless, and/ or using drugs (PPP, 2011). When working in areas where poverty is highly visible, community gardens risk contributing to beautification processes that ultimately displace people who live in poverty. <sup>2</sup>

### Questions to Ask

**Whose voices are heard in determining community garden locations?** Are these locations accessible and easy to get to for community members; is the location walking or scooting distance, accessible by bus, on a bike route?

**Whose interests are served by the selection of particular locations?** – are these selections in keeping with the interests of more marginalized community members whose voices may be less audible in discussions and forums?

**Are existing uses of these spaces (shelter, congregation, etc) put at risk because of a community gardening project?**

### Practices

- No community gardening project or food literacy program should be initiated if it threatens to displace already marginalized individuals. Relocation of individuals is insufficient to justify creating a garden in a space that is already being used, as the issue is not just about the individuals currently using the space but about all individuals who would use the space in the future as well.
- Encourage policies that work to address the ongoing discrimination that occurs in public spaces due to social profiling and racial profiling (CAP on Discrimination Steering Committee, 2013).

*This Best Practices report was initiated because of concerns that LifeCycles had about a certain garden project. Members of LifeCycles withdrew from the garden project because the garden project did not intend on including, or collaborating with, the community that could potentially be displaced by the project. LifeCycles decided to explore ways to increase the participation of marginalized communities before moving ahead with the garden project.*

<sup>2</sup> For more information about beautification and displacement that has already occurred in Victoria BC please see the People's Plan for Pandora research report and Remembering the Beautification of Pandora Green on VIPIRG's website.

## Relationships with Already-Existing Services

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### **Problem**

Marginalized communities are often over-researched and already the subject of multiple projects. This means that individuals may already be very short on time to contribute, even among individuals who are enthusiastic about a project, and that similar services could already exist in the community or be more effectively offered in partnership with existing social services.

### **Questions to Ask**

**How can community garden or food literacy project build on existing community capacity and not detract energy from other on-going projects?** How does this project support and connect to other initiatives and projects? If the project that you are working on is currently segregated from other projects or groups you might begin to explore how you and your organization can encourage wider involvement and/or partnerships with exiting community services, programs, and organizations.

**How is the community garden and/ or food literacy project integrated into the community's existing programs, priorities, and practices?**

**What resources does the community gardening project bring to the community that are not already being offered?**

**Are there organizations known to you, your organization, or the community members that you are working with who are a good fit to partner with?**

**How can you build or strengthen relationships with other organizations, groups, and people in the community?** Is your organization willing to commit an allotted amount of time towards connecting with outside organizations, groups, and individuals in order to enhance your programs?

### **Practices**

- A needs assessment, based on a strong knowledge of existing services in the region, is needed to ensure project design fits with, and contributes to, existing services and projects.
- The project design will highlight exactly what resources are intended to be developed within the community, and how these resources fit within existing constellations of services.

### Problem

People who are living on a low-income may need to stretch their money a long way in order to cover basic necessities. For example, having a limited income may require individuals to seek out free meals in the city in order to save money to cover the other costs of living that they have (such as housing, transportation, family, etc). Many participants may not have the financial resources available to pay for things that would enable them to participate in community gardening projects. Some financial barriers may mean that participants cannot afford bus fair, food for lunch, work gear, a telephone, an alarm clock, they may not have a bank account in order to cash a cheque, and may be unable to earn additional income while receiving welfare (Wallace, 2005).

### Questions to Ask

**Does this meeting interfere with free meals in the city?** Are you providing a meal or snack?

**Does everyone have the gear and equipment they may need to be safe and comfortable?** If not, is there a way for your organization to provide these materials?

**Is this location convenient and safe for people to get to by different methods such as walking, scooting, busing, or biking?**

**Have I asked people about what ways work to get in contact with them and am I prepared to use alternative methods that work for them?** It may be necessary to employ multiple methods of communication in order to coordinate activities related to the community garden or food literacy project. Is your organization willing and able to allocate time towards contacting community members through phone, email, flyering, and possibly face-to-face contact.

**Is compensation provided for childcare costs?** Alternately, are program spaces child/ family-friendly? Is childcare able to be provided on site?

### Practices

- In order to address some of the barriers associate with poverty you could consider providing honorariums, in cash, for participation. All meetings and workshops should offer compensation and other in-kind supports to community members (ie. \$10 stipends). This compensation should be agreed on by the participants and remain the same throughout the process.
- Always provide food at meetings and make sure that the food is easy to eat (as some people may have weak teeth or no teeth) and that it is something people would like to eat and can eat (consider allergies and dietary restrictions).
- Provide work gear for people to use if they will be working outside: have rain boots, rain coats, rain pants, and gloves in different sizes.
- Provide bus tickets at every meeting for everyone; some people may not need bus tickets but it is good practice to offer them anyways (Wallace, 2005).

- In order to be able to provide the above resources to participants it could be necessary for your organization to apply for funding and/or ask for donations.

***For this project many members of the PLT did not have a telephone for us to reach each other if we needed to. Solutions to this challenge included having a peer buddy in the program that could contact the member without a phone to relay a message and having one of the peer outreach members connect with participants during outreach.***

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## A bit about Anti-Oppression

This project was created because of a need for FBCO to work with marginalized communities in community gardening and food literacy projects. A first step to doing this work in a good way is having an understanding of the ways in which power operates to simultaneously privilege certain people while oppressing others. It is important to note that power operates on an individual level, an institutional level, and a cultural level and, that as a member of an organization that is working with groups that face oppression, it is important to address attitudes, practices, and procedures that may further oppress and marginalize the people who access services. This can include examining your own social location (gender, race, social class, age, ability, sexual orientation) in order to become more self-aware of the ways in which your values and beliefs affect how you think about, and behave in, the world. For example, if you stereotype a person or group that is different from you in some aspect of their identity then it will be beneficial for you to gain accurate knowledge of how people experience that aspect of their identity.

*"Everyone has got a story"*  
*-Participant*

Below is a list of terms with definitions taken directly from "An Integrated Anti-Oppression Framework for Reviewing and Developing Policy; A Toolkit for Community Service Organizations" by Alexander, M. (2008) that provides information about forms of oppression and some ways that they can be understood<sup>3</sup>.

Ableism:	Prejudice and discrimination against people living with mental, emotional and physical disabilities or differences. People living with disabilities experience this discrimination, segregation and isolation because of people's prejudices and institutional barriers, not because of the disability or difference itself. Deaf, Deafened and Hard of hearing people historically have experienced systemic ableist oppression as well. (Alexander, 2008, p.41)
Capitalism/ Classism	Any practices and beliefs that judge and value people according to their social class, or the social class that other people assume they belong to. Most workplaces use classist language that reflects and reinforces the social hierarchy. For example they undervalue the work of support staff, and decisions do not include the knowledge and opinions of these workers. (Alexander, 2008, p.41)
Colonialism	When a foreign power dominates and exploits an indigenous group by taking their land and resources and using them as cheap labor in order to make money. It also

<sup>3</sup> For a full glossary of Anti-oppressive terms please see "An Integrated Anti-Oppression Framework for Reviewing and Developing Policy; A Toolkit for Community Service Organizations" (2008, January 1). Additionally, this toolkit could be helpful for organizations that would like to ensure that their policies are conducive to anti-oppressive practice.



	means specific era, between the 1700s and 1900s, when European countries expanded into the Americas and countries of the global South. In Europe, people justified these practices using racial doctrines. These ideas about hierarchies of race are still widespread. Uncovering and challenging the ideas and ongoing practices of colonialism are important parts of anti-colonial work. (Alexander, 2008, p.41)
Gender binary/ Transphobia/ Heterosexism	All practices that convey the message that heterosexuals are better than other people, including the assumption that everyone is or must be heterosexual. It operates like other forms of prejudice and discrimination, giving privilege and rights to members of the dominant group—heterosexuals—and not to gay, lesbian, or trans people. (Alexander, 2008, p.42)
Patriarchy/ Sexism	Systemic and individual practices that give men privilege, make women subordinate and that shame values identified with women. (Alexander, 2008, p.44)
White Supremacy/ Racism	<p>Any aspect of society that explicitly or implicitly makes White people and Whiteness normal and valuable while making racialized communities invisible or devaluing, stereotyping and labeling people of colour as “others” who are different or inferior.</p> <p><b>Individual racism:</b> The beliefs, attitudes and actions of individuals that support or maintain racism. Individual racism can be conscious or unconscious. It can be active or passive.</p> <p><b>Institutional racism:</b> The network of structures, policies and practices in systems and institutions that give White people advantages and that discriminate, oppress and disadvantage racialized people.</p> <p><b>Systemic racism:</b> The conscious or unconscious policies, procedures and practices that exclude, marginalize and exploit racialized people. Systemic racism is supported by institutional power and by powerful ideas, often unexamined ones, which make racism look normal and justified. For example, institutions that do not have effective complaints procedures, or performance appraisal and promotion processes that use equity competencies, make it possible for individuals to be racist.</p> <p><b>Racialization/Racialized:</b> Racial identities are not fixed categories. They are shaped by history, nationality, gender, class and identity politics. Racial designations often differ from country to country. The term racialization or racialized makes explicit the ways in which we are socialized to differentiate groups of people on the basis of superficial physical characteristics where White is the norm. It emphasizes the active process of categorizing people while at the same time rejecting “race” as a scientific category. (Alexander, 2008, p.43-44)</p>

It is important to understand how different forms of oppression intersect in a given person's life and the ways in which this affects their experience of being in the world.

***Take for example the forms of discrimination a woman of color may experience at a job. She may be earning less than her white coworkers (which includes both white men and white women) and less than any male coworkers who are part of a racial minority. She faces both racism and sexism at the same time. As well, she cannot separate the ‘racialised’ part of her identity from the ‘gendered’ part of her identity***

## Summary and Next Steps

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### Summary

It is our hope that these recommendations and practices will be used and expanded upon by individuals and organizations working with marginalized populations on community gardens and food literacy programs. All of the findings in this report reflect the notion that members of a marginalized community should be directly involved in decisions that affect them. Challenges and needs are unlikely to be fully understood by an outside person or organization and as such organizations and community groups that are seeking to support food justice in the community must do so at the direct leadership of the community. Committing to having projects directed by the community necessitates accountable and diverse community representation. We also found that a community garden or food literacy project would need to be meaningful to participants in that they are building skills so that they are able to support the project, being supported by people or organizations that are knowledgeable about the project, and gaining a greater awareness of their own capacities. With living systems and gardens, meaningful participation is expanded to ensure that this project succeeds and is able to benefit the community in the way it was intended to. A community garden and or food literacy project will also need to be guided by the community in terms of the location so that such projects do not risk displacing people who are already using the space (relocation is unsatisfactory explanation for creating a garden in a space that is already being used). Additionally, other services in the community may already be doing work to address food security and individuals and/or organizations working on new food literacy and/or community gardening projects should connect with existing services in the community to get a sense of what is already available to build relationships, and seek out partnerships, with other organizations. The final practice is directed at encouraging food justice projects to make a substantial effort to provide financial compensation, in-kind support, food, and equipment to participants that may be experiencing poverty. This may mean that you and/or your organization will need to ask for donations, apply for additional funding, and or allocate existing funding towards removing the income related barriers that can, and do, prevent people from being able to participate in community projects and programming. Lastly, having an understanding of anti-oppressive practices and principles will support you and/or your organization to work across differences that may arise in the community and to be able to better support and understand the many different people that you work with.

### Next Steps

Locally, a needs assessment of local food services and food literacy services is needed to understand where the gaps are in service provision. Additionally, creating and distributing a local survey to assess community need would be beneficial so that food literacy organizations could begin collaboratively working with community members in responding directly to their needs.

This project was limited due to having a small sample of participants. A larger group would increase both the feedback and the amount of skills, opportunities, and knowledge that is being provided to the community. These Best Practices could also be improved upon by targeting a specific need in the community surrounding food security and working with community members to address it. All of these limitations were due, in part, to a lack of funding.

The following resources show some ways that organizations are working with communities to address issues related to food security that could give you or your organizations some ideas for ways that food literacy programs and/or community gardening could look. The Community Food Service model was one that the PLT endorsed as a model that they think would benefit their local community.

### Food Service Models

#### Community Food Centre (CFC)

The CFC model of Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC) provides people in need access emergency food that is healthy and given in a respectful manner through their Food Access Programs. They teach food literacy, gardening, and cooking through the Food Skills Programs. Finally, this model encourages and works with individuals and communities so that they are better able to speak out about their food and food security issues through the Education and Engagement Programs.

Community Food Centres Canada have the goal of developing five to nine new Community Food Centres between 2014 and 2017 through partnering with organizations that are already committed to working with low-income communities on increasing food security and food literacy. For more information about how to apply for partnership, requirements, and contacts please check out <http://cfccanada.ca/becoming-community-food-centre>

For more information on CFC please check out <http://cfccanada.ca>

#### Food Rescue and Re-Distribution

Another method for addressing food insecurity has been through collecting surplus food and using it to feed people that are hungry. Many organizations are focusing on food rescue and re-distribution by connecting with local grocery stores, markets, event planners, and restaurants (to name a few). These programs are often part of an organizations larger food service. Some organizations that have implemented this program include:

**Plentiful Harvest**, located in Windsor ONT, offers a mobile food bank, food rescue service, community kitchen and processing facility, and allotment gardens. For more information check out [www.plentifulharvest.ca](http://www.plentifulharvest.ca)

**Quest Food Exchange**, located on the lower mainland of BC (Vancouver, Surrey, and Burnaby-New Westminster. This is solely a food exchange program that offers food rescue and re-distribution. For more information check out [www.questoutreach.org](http://www.questoutreach.org)

**Winnipeg Harvest**, in Winnipeg, Manitoba offers a food bank, food rescue service, community kitchen, training facility, cafeteria, and "floral philanthropy" program. For more information check out [www.winnipeg Harvest.org](http://www.winnipeg Harvest.org)

**Second Harvest**, located in Toronto, Ontario, offers one of the largest food rescue programs in Canada, Harvest Kitchens, an annual turkey drive, and a food sharing program. For more information check out [www.secondharvest.ca](http://www.secondharvest.ca)

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