



THE OUR  Ecology Action Centre
FOOD PROJECT

2018 ANNUAL
REPORT

Our Food Project at the Ecology Action Centre is **transforming communities through food.**

Everyone eats. But access to good food isn't equal for all people and all communities. When communities play a role in shaping what their food systems looks like, they create food solutions that work for them.

That's where we come in. We help improve access to good food and connect people to policy. We work with community leaders and organizations to amplify local food efforts, through training, coaching, and network building. We work with communities and policy makers to make sure food access and good food systems are part of every policy decision.

We know that to create lasting change, relationships matter. We support and strengthen networks of people to mobilize action and build collective leadership. We make sure that the right people are at the table: diverse, ready, and motivated to work together on food initiatives and lasting change. From coordinating efforts at the local level, to building alliances at the provincial and federal level, the development of strong networks is central to our unique role in food action.

Funding for this project has been provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).



POLICY

Last year, **we met with 353 policy makers** at the federal, provincial, and regional level to talk about food. We illuminate connections between food and key issues like health, our environment and our economy, so that food is considered in every policy decision. We work with communities, helping them along their path to create a strong vision for food and a plan for making it happen. We capture diverse perspectives on food and ensure that these voices are included in regional and national discussions to make sure people are reflected in food policies at every level.



We met with MPs in Ottawa to discuss support for good food in schools across Canada. We've since joined the **national Coalition for Healthy School Food**, which advocates for a universal healthy school food program.



The **Island Food Network** in Cape Breton is bringing community together to create a shared food vision. This vision will capture values and priorities around food and will inform a future strategy for the region.

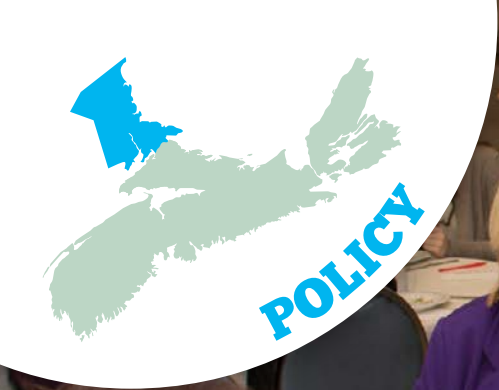




Through our work with the **Halifax Food Policy Alliance**, we played a leadership role in creating the first ever food charter for Halifax. It was drafted with community input and provides a common vision for food in the Halifax Region.



Communities in Nova Scotia had a say in the upcoming Food Policy for Canada. Ten of the 22 Food Policy for Canada community consultations held across Canada happened in Nova Scotia. With **Food Secure Canada**, we supported communities in bringing their recommendations forward to be considered as the federal-level policy is drafted.



South East New Brunswick launched a **Regional Food Pledge**. The pledge has received lots of support – more than 200 endorsements and 7 municipal endorsements or adoptions! It's being used to engage more people and communities in conversations about food, to help influence good food actions, and support policy decisions.



COMMUNITY ACTION

We make it easier for people to access **good, affordable food** by collaborating on programs and solutions that work for the unique needs of each community.



The **Mobile Food Market** increased access to affordable, fresh fruit and veggies in Halifax neighbourhoods that need it most. Since it launched two years ago, this award-winning project has expanded to serve 12 locations in seven communities.



Thirty families in Cumberland and 25 families in Cape Breton were able to access healthy, nutritious, fresh local food for the growing season through **cost-share local food box programs**.



We're working with partners to strengthen the sustainability and increase the number of **school food gardens** across Nova Scotia. These gardens facilitate student learning, provide healthy food for school communities, and help students understand how food choices impact our health, environment, and economy.



Community gardens in Cumberland expanded **local infrastructure projects**, adding fruit trees and picnic tables, and providing community programming and food skills workshops to garden participants and the community.



COMMUNITY CAPACITY

When communities play a role in shaping what their food systems looks like, they create food solutions that work for them. We help communities get where they want to be through **training, coaching and fostering community connections**. By increasing skills, knowledge, and opportunities, communities are better able to lead the change they want to see on the food issues that matter to them.



Thirty participants brought their community food project ideas to life through the **Community Food Leader program** in Cape Breton, Cumberland and Halifax. Final projects ranged from community gardens, to pop-up food markets, to cooking and food preservation initiatives. Graduates are now part of a regional network of food leaders, working to build food literacy, leadership skills, and food initiatives that improve food security in their communities.



The **Farmer-to-Farmer Retreat** brought Cape Breton farmers together to connect, learn and celebrate. Participants discussed new solutions, like youth programs and mentorship for new farmers.



PLANTS TO PLATES
ACTIVITY GUIDE

A FOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR KIDS

THE OUR FOOD PROJECT Ecology Action Centre
ecologyaction.ca/plantstoplastes
ourfood@ecologyaction.ca

Our **Plants to Plates** activity guide made it easier to teach kids about food with eight ready-to-go lesson plans. It was viewed more than 800 times online, and the lessons have been adapted into programming at some local libraries and family resource centers.



The **Up!Skilling Food Festival** in Cape Breton brings community together for a series of local food skills workshops taught by local experts. This grassroots initiative has been running for four years!





Our **Good Food Into Motion** workshop brought people in South East New Brunswick together to work on creating sustainability for grassroots initiatives and discuss ways to influence policies that can help support change.

THE OUR  Ecology Action Centre
FOOD PROJECT

ecologyaction.ca/ourfood