

Furthering Food Security in Ottawa:
Examining Partnership-based Policy between Local Government and Civil Society

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Background

Just Food, Ottawa's food security organization, develops programs and services to help make Ottawa a food secure city. The organization is geared toward rural and urban producers and consumers, low-income community members and community organizations (Just Food, 2010a). Just Food's most recent initiative, Food for All, seeks to engage the Ottawa community and make recommendations for Ottawa to incorporate food security into the municipal agenda. Food for All brings attention to issues related to health, physical access to food, food in schools, as well as rural and urban food production. Through collaboration with community members, the project will develop a food action plan for Ottawa (Just Food, 2010b). This report feeds into this process by documenting a profile of the operations of food programs in the city, and giving insight into the social and economic situation of people vulnerable to food insecurity. This is a discussion about increasing food security in Ottawa.

The Purpose of the Report

The focus of this report is on the history of food insecurity, social and economic challenges in Ottawa, as well as the potential role of the municipality in addressing these problems. In 2001, a significant report was released by the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Food Security Group entitled *Food Security in Ottawa: A Community Profile* (City of Ottawa People Services Department & Ottawa Food Security Group, 2001). The document estimated that 75, 000 residents could be affected by food insecurity (p.9). In a national context, in 2000-2001, 15 percent of the population or 3.7 million people were living in a food insecure household (Ledrou, 2005, p.1). Considering the rising price of food and poor economy since 2001, Ottawa would benefit greatly from further investigation into today's picture of food insecurity. The paper's research questions suggest one possible route toward finding solutions to barriers to food security. Since the situation of food insecurity was outlined in the 2001 Profile, how has the picture of food security in Ottawa changed in 2010? Considering the expectation of municipalities to tend to social issues, what does this mean for the city's involvement in partnership with civil society organizations¹ in food security matters?

This report examines several ways to address these research questions. Chapter 1 depicts the social and economic profile of Ottawa to create context for readers to understand the tendency for some Ottawa citizens to face food insecurity. Chapter Two is a scan that profiles various food resource organizations and programs currently

¹ Koc, MacRae, Desjardins, and Roberts (2008) describe the term civil society organization as one similar to the term non-governmental organization, which refers to community based and non-profit organizations working for the public interest independent from government and market place activity (p.125). This paper refers to civil society and civil society organizations interchangeably.

offered in the city and their strengths and challenges. Where possible, the health of these organizations will be discussed in light of the programs depicted in the 2001 Profile. Finally, the third chapter will examine how food security can be addressed in Ottawa and will use examples of successful municipal policy efforts in other jurisdictions. The research questions prompt discussion suggesting why municipal government and civil society organizations may need to work together to further address food insecurity. In sum, this paper argues that with the implementation of effective food policy and partnership between government and civil society organizations, it is possible to make stronger progress toward food security in Ottawa than has been achieved in the past nine years.

Research Paper Rationale

According to available literature related to food security and policy, several gaps exist. These generally deal with lack of specific suggestion for policy-based framework at the city-level in Ottawa, little attention to a collaborative food security approach with non-governmental organizations and the municipal government, and little attention is given to other successful cases of a partnership such as this. Along with addressing these gaps, this report provides an updated look at Ottawa citizens' social and economic situation and information regarding its food programs, as the previous report with this purpose is now outdated.

The Ottawa Food Security Group's (OFSG) 2002 Community Consultations Report (Frei and Fleming, 2008) indicates many very exciting and innovative ideas that would aid with achieving food security in the city. It is a brainstorm-type report, which includes many program and policy ideas regarding how to tackle food insecurity with an emphasis on access to food, and touches on how the City of Ottawa can participate more fully. While this group reported the potential value of incorporating the City of Ottawa into dialogue, its range of topics and ideas are vast. This report will add to Ottawa food security literature by focusing specifically on a direction the City and civil society can take, backed up by examples from other cities.

OFSG Report and the 2001 Report outline clearly the problem of food insecurity in Ottawa. Using a national and international human rights framework, Graham Riches (1999) explains Canada's discrepancies in meeting its promises regarding hunger alleviation and food security (p.204). This shortcoming is linked to a problematic "depoliticization of hunger" and the failure of the Canadian welfare state (p.207-208).

Riches notes the importance of a partnership between all three levels of government, as well as the role of social policy analysts, activists and civil society (p.209-210). While he provides a broad critique of food security in Canada, his work does not elaborate on the potential of city-based policy. To add to this literature, this report will focus specifically on potential municipal policy and partnership, rather than on a critique of the food situation Ottawa is in, or elaborating on a model that would suit the country.

The third main gap noted in relevant existing literature relates to case studies, models, and examples of successful food security initiatives that further localize the food system and further achieve citywide food security. This report will add to food security literature by writing a piece that focuses specifically on Ottawa. This should provide a useful resource to help develop effective policy, showing urgency for more food security in Ottawa. Case studies may help make it clear that citywide food security can be obtained.

Methodology

The purpose of writing this paper is to meet Food for All's need for an environmental scan of food security programs in Ottawa. The report will both satisfy the requirement of the Carleton University course PAPM 4908 and contribute to food security work. The report is inspired by the concept of community-based research (CBR). Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, and Donohue (2003), explain that CBR links knowledge with social inquiry, rather than keeping academic work separate from social movement and political work (p.2). Problems may be present within a neighbourhood or organization at the regional, national, or global level (p.3).

Principles of this type of research involve collaboration between researchers and community members. Further, it allows different sources of knowledge, such as local knowledge, to be valued equally (p.11). CBR also enhances a movement's capacity to create a more socially just city, through explaining community challenges, creating awareness of a problem, identifying important resources, designing strategies, and carrying out assessments of the impacts of actions (p.13). The community-based element of Food for All will likely meet the positive characteristics of CBR. Its policy recommendations will be formed through scheduled workshops composed of community members. It has also carried out stakeholder interviews, which sought to understand how these stakeholders frame food security. Workshops and interviews foster a power-sharing dynamic among this food security work, strengthen partnerships between the community and food security organizations such as Just Food, and leads to shared understandings (Just Food, 2010b). This report will tie into a CBR framework as it will help facilitate Food for All's community-based policy development process.

Approximately 50 organizations were contacted via phone or email, and correspondence took place with approximately 30 food security program staff and volunteers. Several issues were discussed, some which varied from organization to organization, depending on the interviewee's comments and employment term. Participants were asked to comment on any positive or negative program changes, difficulties and strengths in meeting their objectives, how the program is funded as well as details regarding the food and nutrition component of their program's activity. Also consulted were annual reports, Statistics Canada reports, online and journal literature to help understand food policy information and other municipalities that have notable histories of food security activity at the municipal level.

Chapter One

Food Security

Many people in Ottawa live with a low income. According to Statistics Canada, Ottawa's population was approximately 812, 000 in 2006. Among those living in private households, 12.3 percent of the population, and 15.2 percent of people under the age of 18 lived with a low income (Statistics Canada, 2008a). A lack of income in many Ottawa households leaves numerous families without adequate funds to access nutritious healthy foods. Some groups that already experience vulnerabilities in their daily lives are more prone to being food insecure. The following is Just Food's definition of food security, which is useful for this report purposes.

"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs, as well as to culturally acceptable food preferences for an active and healthy life. As well, foods are produced as locally as possible, and their production and distribution are environmentally, socially and economically just" (Just Food, 2010a).

Allen's (2004) perspective on food security and food system reconstruction is also useful. She argues that the basis of this process depends on two concepts: sustainable agriculture and community food security. Sustainable agriculture focuses on issues of production such as environmental degradation and the health of family farms, while community food security focuses on issues of distribution and consumption. Allen's concept of community food security includes community gardening, urban food production, the strengthening of food assistance, community food planning, marketing, farmland protection, food retailing strategies and community development. Principles of

community food security involve addressing food system issues related to farmland loss and pollution, the community's access to food sources and urban agriculture, self-reliance and empowerment for individuals to provide their own food needs. Also important are consumer-producer relationships and an understanding that community food security is a systems oriented principle (p.45-46).

Just Food and Allen both define food security in a multi-faceted manner, highlighting the connections between local agriculture and environmental, social and economic justice. Nevertheless, this paper concentrates on issues of food access over agriculture matters. Just Food's mandate includes programming such as the "Buy Local Guide", organizing Community Shared Agriculture, community gardening and farming matters. These areas are already well-covered in terms of available literature and programming and, as a result, are not a major focus of this report².

² Just Food's presence in Ottawa provided a background for interest in writing this report. Also, it provided helpful personal guidance in determining this report's focus and what qualities would be most useful to current food security activity.

Determinants of Food Security

Several factors affect an individual's degree of food security. These factors relate to cost, access, income, cultural acceptance, food quality, as well as knowledge and understanding of food and nutrition. Income is a very strong predictor of how food secure an individual or household is. A Health Canada report stated in 2006 that decline in income leads to an increase in food insecurity (Health Canada, 2007, p.20). Low-income affects a person's diet in several ways. Low-cost diets are the least healthy as they are often composed of refined grains, added sugar and fats. These diets are energy dense and nutrient poor (Darmon & Drewnowski, 2008, p.1107). Low-income groups often buy fewer servings of fruits and vegetables (Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2003, p.594) and have increased health risks. People also experience anxiety and other consequences as a result of belonging to a food insecure household (Breckwich Vásquez et al., 2007, p.343).

A food secure city ensures that the cost of food production, processing and distribution is reasonable, in terms of economic and environmental sustainability. Long-distance food transportation and unsustainable farming contribute to unnecessary economic and environmental damage. Food security also relates to the degree of quality foods available. People must have the opportunity to eat foods that are high quality and nutrient dense in order to be healthy (Campbell, Katamay & Connelly, 1998 as cited in MacRae, 1999).

Food secure individuals have proper access to food, which means they can easily use food services and grocery stores or food outlets. This relates to issues such as city design, the availability of food outlets and the physical ability to reach these

services. This pertains also to the efficiency of the city's transportation system (MacRae, 1999).

Freedom to choose which foods one wishes to eat also contributes to food security. A food secure person should have the opportunity to make food choices that are aligned with community and individual characteristics or preferences. Individuals, despite income level, are more likely to have a low risk of food insecurity when they are able to adhere to their cultural traditions and form strong networks. Having a choice of eating better quality foods relates to one's physical location in the city. Described by the term *food deserts*, many low-income households live in neighbourhoods that lack supermarkets. In neighbourhoods with food outlets selling healthier food, individuals increase consumption of healthy foods even when these stores are located in low-income neighbourhoods. This explains why one's physical location and the location of grocery stores are a factor in an individual's food options and degree of food security (Darmon & Drewnowski, p.1111).

Finally, one must have the ability to understand nutritional information. This relates to matters such as labelling, food promotion, as well as formal and informal education about food and nutrition (MacRae, 1999, p.193). Some households lack nutrition knowledge and cooking skills, and those with very few resources can lack the proper equipment to cook (Darmon & Drewnowski, 1111). Knowledge is a key factor in ensuring food security.

In 2001, Statistics Canada released a report saying 15 percent of Canada's population is food insecure, a figure that represented 3.7 million people. Of these, 40 percent were people in low or lower-middle-income households (Ledrou, 2005, p.1).

Health Canada's most recent study notes a reduced number of food insecure people in the country at 8.8 percent of the population. While this number appears to be cut down, it still represents almost 2.7 million people (Health Canada, 2007). While Health Canada's report of food insecurity suggests a reduction, an unprecedented rise in food bank use suggests the opposite. Between 2008 and 2009 Canada Food Bank use rose 18 percent, which is the largest one-year increase in recorded history (Food Banks Canada, 2010).

Groups Vulnerable to Food Insecurity

Low-income Households

Ottawa's population increased 4.9 percent between 2001 and 2006, and now lies at approximately 812,000 people. Of Ottawa's private households, 12.3 percent have a low-income (Statistics Canada, 2008a). This data suggests it is possible that this many people may be vulnerable to food insecurity. Women also represent the majority of low-wage earners, at 71.7 percent (Mascella and Thompson, 2009, p.376). Adults, especially women, compromise their own nutrition to care for their children (Health Canada, 2007, p.27).

According to the City of Ottawa's information on low-income living, a family of four living on minimum wage would have \$316 left over each month after paying rent and food bills (City of Ottawa, 2010a). The low-income cut-off (LICO³) for a family of four based on the 2008 figures in a city of Ottawa's size was \$34,738 (Statistics Canada, 2009). An individual supporting this family earning the 2008 minimum wage at \$9.50 would need to work 70 non-deducted hours per week, for 52 weeks to live at Statistics Canada's poverty line.

Minimum Wage Issues

While minimum wage will increase in March 2010, it does not necessarily mean that the quality of life of poor individuals and families will rise. Mascella and Thompson (2009) argue that of all low-wage earners, 80 percent do not live in a low-income household and will not actually see any benefit from a minimum wage rise (p.375). Despite the rise

³ The LICO is a Statistics Canada measure which describes an income threshold which identifies low-income. Those whose income falls below the cut-off are considered to earn a low-income. The cut that those who earn an income less than the LICO is categorized by number of people in a household (Statistics Canada, 2010b).

of minimum wage and participation in the work force, earning a low income is a long-term reality for many people.

Social Assistance Issues

A Health Canada report found that food insecurity is prevalent in households whose main source of income was social assistance (57.7 percent) or employment assistance (29.0 percent). Many households on social assistance were severely food insecure, at 30 percent. Forty-nine percent of people on pensions or seniors benefits experienced food insecurity (Health Canada, p.21). The report cites a National Council of Welfare Report, which notes that social assistance in 2005 fell below the poverty line, average incomes, and median household incomes for most household types (p.27).

Immigrants

There were 178, 545 immigrants living in Ottawa in 2006. This population has grown significantly; between 2001-2006 there were 29, 650 recent immigrants in the city (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2009a, p.1). Many recent immigrants live with a low income, with children under the age of six most affected. The low-income rate of recent immigrants in 2005 was 37 percent. This large group's unemployment rate in 2006 was almost three times higher than that of the general Ottawa population. Eight percent of the general immigrant population, most of whom were recent immigrants, were classified as working poor despite working for a full year (p.3).

People with Disabilities

In 2006, 17.7 percent of Ottawa residents had an activity limitation of some kind. This figure has gone up since 2001, and increases with age (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2009b, p.1). Forty percent of this group of people aged 15 and over work in the labour force, compared to 70 percent for people who are not classified as having a

disability (Social Planning Council of Ottawa & People with disABILITIES, 2006, p.17). People with disabilities earn on average 13 percent less than the general population (p.24).

First Nations

The First Nations population in Canada, including all identity groups was 12, 250 in 2006. The median earnings of the population is \$30, 019 with men earning \$32, 974 and women earning \$26, 669 (Statistics Canada, 2008b). The depth of poverty, according to Willows (2008), is much more prominent in First Nations families than non-First Nations families. In 2004, 12 million non-First Nations households in Canada were characterized as food insecure, with 3 percent being severely food insecure. Of 196, 000 off-reserve First Nations households, 33 percent were food insecure with 14 percent being severely insecure (p.1152). According to Health Canada's 2006 study, 67 percent of First Nations on social assistance were food insecure (Health Canada, 2006, p. 21).

Seniors

Between 1981 and 2005, the numbers of seniors in Canada increased from 2.4 million to 4.2 million. Statistics Canada expects the senior population to grow to 9.8 million in the next three decades (Schellenberg & Turcotte, 2006, p.12). In 2006, 12.4 percent of Ottawa's population were seniors (Social Planning Council, 2009c). The amount of obese seniors in Canada has increased drastically. In 1978 – 1979, 11 percent of individuals over age 75 were obese and in 2004 this figure rose to 24 percent (Schellenberg & Turcotte, 2006, p. 53). Statistics Canada's most recent data on this group's food insecurity notes that in 2000-2001, 7 percent of Canadian seniors 65 and

older were food insecure (p.98). As measured using the LICO after-taxes, the number of seniors living with low income in 2003 was 15.1 percent (p.68).

Children

In 2006, there were 197,345 children living in Ottawa, 15.2 percent of whom were from low-income households (Statistics Canada, 2008a). Children in families with a single parent, several siblings, and whose family's main income recipient was not working or was still in school are more vulnerable to low income. While lack of work by heads of households contributes to children's vulnerability to poverty, working parents do not guarantee an adequate income, benefits for the family, typical working hours or an acceptable number of hours of work (Fleury, 2008, p. 17).

Homeless People

In mid-2008 the homeless shelters in Ottawa ran out of beds every night and were used 386, 506 times. (Alliance, 2009). The Salvation Army has kept records of homeless people in Ottawa. They estimate that in 2007, 530 different people were living on the street. Of these, 45 percent were First Nations and 76 percent were male.

Approximately 24-36 individuals sleep outside all year (Dinning and Davis, 2008, p.6).

Housing Issues

Housing continues to be a big part of a household budget and can be difficult for some to afford. More than 50 percent of working poor in Canada spent 45 percent of their income on shelter (Kowbel, 2006, p.5) There were 4,738 applications received for subsidized housing in 2007. Those who do not own their housing had higher rates of food insecurity in 2006, at a rate of 20 percent, versus 3.9 percent who own dwellings (Health Canada, 2006, p.23). The number of affordable housing units in Ottawa rose by 143 units in 2008, a rate at which, according to the Alliance to End Homelessness,

would take 72 years to help the 9, 692 families currently on the Social Housing Registry's waiting list (Alliance, 2008).

Public policy has both shaped and tackled the sustained nature of economic inequality and food insecurity. There are many pressing questions to ask regarding what political, social and economic forces are behind these patterns. One may ask who should have the responsibility to correct the negative consequences this pattern of poverty and food insecurity for some individuals.

Social and Economic Policy and its Relationship to Municipal Activity and Food Security

Many individuals and households in Canada live with poor economic and social conditions. Power (1999) explains that Canadian Food Banks were established first in the 1980s and 1990s, and by 1997 they had 3 million users all across Canada (p.31). Power notes that neoconservative government deregulation and downsizing has led to communities stepping up to address hunger and food insecurity (p.33). This concept is brought home to Ottawa as communities are expected to be responsible for these social problems or gaps.

Riches (1999) notes there are barriers to ensuring the right to food and that it is problematic that hunger and food insecurity are considered non-political issues. Peoples' entitlements to social assistance and food security are directly linked to their capacity to work and ability to sell this labour in the marketplace. Riches notes that the right to food is not inherent in this regard. The injustice associated with this lack of social security provision and the expectation of the non-government sector to step up are embedded in Canada's political structure (p.205). There have also been several international gatherings for the purpose of addressing food matters.

Koc et al's (2008) analysis of the international food security framework brings to light that international commitments to food security do not fully enhance human rights to food. International political commitments related to food issues were signed by Canada including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1976 (p.130). There have been several international gatherings to address food matters. At the 1996 World Food

Summit, delegates from around the world met at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's headquarters in Rome to discuss the need for eradicating hunger. The Summit renewed the commitment to lessening world hunger. The goal of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015 was set to steer global efforts toward hunger and food insecurity alleviation (p.130).

Canada signed on to the World Food Summit's Rome Declaration and World Food Summit Action Plan as part of its commitment to this effort. According to Koc et al. (2008), the resulting Canada Action Plan for Food Security focused on domestic and international initiatives to address food security. It emphasized the role of civil society organizations in achieving its goals, and planned for collaboration between these organizations, federal and territorial governments as well as private institutions. It defined the right to food and discussed how to realize this right. The Canada Government then began to organize the Food Security Bureau, which was within the Global Affairs Branch at Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (p.130 – 131). Eventually, this initiative failed (p.139). One possible cause of this failure is the way agriculture-related responsibilities are distributed within various government departments, causing food security work to face difficulty navigating through the political system. This was exemplified as the location of the Food Security Bureau was located in a department with a global focus and disregarded a domestic mandate (p.130). Agriculture, food and nutrition matters span across 19 different federal departments (p.131). MacRae (2003) points out that those in favour of municipal or regional food policy councils feel that the existing responses at the federal, provincial and municipal levels are inadequate to address food security problems at the local level. He believes municipalities must take a

new approach to ensure long-lasting solutions are developed (p.192). These observations point out the inadequacy of the current food policy and food security paradigm, illustrating the need to modify or enhance the system.

Koc et al. (2008) have also observed that civil society has stepped up to cover up the inability of some governments to manage public programs (p.125). Power (1999) agrees, arguing that communities have picked up the work left off by the federal government in meeting the needs of its citizens (p.33). However, Koc et al. (2008) argue that civil society organizations have not been able to handle this heavy burden (p.125). Bradford (2003) discusses changes in governance in Ontario in the 1980s and 1990s by looking at the government's initiatives to enhance the province's economic situation. Approaches were taken to structure the design of policies, create public-private partnerships and modify the institutional level of some governing matters. Bradford explains the idea of a *governing paradigm*, which relates to the intellectual and institutional shape of policymaking. This paradigm represents the thoughts and challenges of state and society. The ideology shared ideas of policy knowledge and decision-making, which end up shaping the body and process of public policy (p.1006). Bradford explains that in the 1980s, changes to Ontario's economic stability put pressure on the Ontario manufacturing industry. By the late 1980s, politicians in Ontario became concerned with the federal government's trading and monetary policies, particularly the financing of social programming. These concerns intensified in the beginning of the 1990s, when the economy reached a period most difficult since the Great Depression, leading to new economic strategies at the provincial level (p.1008).

The Ontario government introduced the Common Sense Revolution, a new perspective on change in public policy and governance. Some characteristics of the new plans included a smaller emphasis on the provincial government and more dependence on market forces in managing public policy. Within this paradigm, the Conservative government restricted its policy discretion and civil society's participation in public issues. Initiatives under the Revolution included restructuring the local government system. It gave municipal governments the responsibility of managing the finances and administration of sectors such as social housing, social assistance, public health and childcare. Also, the tax burden shifted from provincial income tax to local property tax. There were modifications to labour relations, employment equity and social assistance legislation to cap the resources and extent of participation of unions, social equity movements and anti-poverty activists (p.1018). Under this paradigm, new initiatives encouraged municipal governments to facilitate strong economic gains through business growth. Public-private partnerships that privileged business interests characterized municipal-based economic development approaches. Local governments, developers, builders and business could play a large role in economic development (p.1020).

Implementing international strategies for food security issues at the national level proves to be challenging. These matters are difficult to coordinate within the current federal governing structure and still a need for food policy as well as a plan to adhere to international commitments. Public health and other food-security related issues such as income and housing were taken off the province's agenda, and economic growth through building the business sector took priority over social welfare. Responsibility for

social programming has settled upon Canada's communities and municipalities such as Ottawa have the responsibility of meeting its citizens' needs. This change has been encouraged by the federal and provincial political structure and municipalities such as Ottawa have extra high expectations and responsibilities. However, as noted by the statistics presented earlier in this report, it seems as though some Ottawa citizens have become lost within these shifts.

Many food security workers and volunteers have demonstrated inspiring commitment to food security work, benefitting many people. The City of Ottawa has also contributed to food and nutrition programming in various ways. From here, it is important to look at what is currently being done in Ottawa with respect to food security work, and as well as assess the capabilities of the City of Ottawa and civil society organizations in managing these issues within the context of the past decade when possible. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Scan of Available Food and Nutrition Programs Offered in Ottawa

The following scan outlines 28 of the many programs or centres in Ottawa that offer food, nutrition or meal programming. Listed alphabetically, the section describes a wide spectrum of organizations that support various groups. This chapter will update some of the information provided in the 2001 Profile, and offer insight into the work of organizations that respond to food insecurity. This research was done to help understand what activity is happening around food insecurity as well as these programs' abilities.

Abbotsford House

Abbotsford House (House) offers two programs for seniors. Its Abbotsford Club offers regular programming which includes cafeteria-style lunches on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Membership is required to be in the Abbotsford Club, and members provide their own transportation to the events. The House offers a separate program, Lunch Club, to any older senior twice per week, regardless of having an Abbotsford Club membership. Programming normally involves lunch at Abbotsford House on Tuesday and an outing on Friday. Approximately ten people come per day and the Club provides transportation. Lunches are served at the House, with food prepared by neighbouring Glebe Centre for a fee of \$5 per meal. Lunch Club participants pay \$7 per meal (Abbotsford House Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010). It is difficult at times for

organizers to encourage some seniors to participate. The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and the City of Ottawa provide funding for the Centre (ibid).

While the House's two lunch events are designed for older seniors that are cognitively aware, a separate program is offered Tuesday to Friday through the Abbotsford House that target clients with dementia and Alzheimer's Disease. Approximately 12 clients participate per day. For \$35 per day, individuals have a chance to socialize and provide a break for their caregivers. The House provides hot meals (ibid).

AIDS Committee of Ottawa

The AIDS Committee focuses on advocacy, education, prevention and outreach support services. Food related activity through the Committee involves a food bank service, a collective kitchen and the meal components of their programs and meetings involve a volunteer-cooked meal component. The AIDS Committee offers socials several times per week for various groups of its target population. Many of the AIDS Committee's community members receive ODSP or are on Ontario Works, and are more likely to participate in a meal-providing social when they are more reliant on outside help for food. The AIDS Committee receives funding from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (AIDS Committee Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010) and \$66, 000 from the City of Ottawa (Keayes, 2010).

Some program participants do not have access to nutrition due to low income, which is problematic for people living with HIV who may be prone to illness. The AIDS Committee also organize a community kitchen.

Tasks are delegated within the group. The collective kitchen helps people access food, learn new skills, and gain more understanding of how to cook food on a budget. In the past, the AIDS Committee used to serve meals five nights per week to its clients, though due to cut backs and lack of funding in 2008 it had to stop this service and serve meals only at their evening socials (AIDS Committee Staff Member, 2010).

Bethany Hope Centre for Young Parents – Salvation Army

The Bethany Hope Centre for Young or Single Parents (Centre) provides support in the areas of health, nutrition, early childhood development, education, counselling and financial security. The Centre also makes referrals to other Ottawa services based on client need (The Bethany Hope Centre, 2010). Throughout the day, snacks, breakfast and lunch are offered. A food bank is available which about twenty families access, a large majority of which are led by a lone-parent. Once per month, the Centre offers a community kitchen opportunity as well as nutrition and cooking classes. Its activities are funded through the Salvation Army, and the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services (Bethany Hope Centre Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

The Centre now has a Nutrition Services Coordinator, which has enhanced their work. They are able to further contribute to household nutrition as families learn about cooking, gain a better understanding of good food practices and have an opportunity to take food home after events like community kitchen gatherings. The new coordinator has improved nutrition activities at the Centre and has allowed for advancements such as fostering relationships with clients (ibid).

Britannia Clubhouse Boys and Girls Club

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Ottawa organizes after-school, weekend and summer programs to improve the lives of Ottawa citizens aged 6-18 (Boys and Girls Club of

Ottawa, 2010). The Britannia Clubhouse is one of the seven Boys and Girls Club program locations in Ottawa. The Clubhouse has recently moved away from food programming, though food is incorporated into some its activities for children. It offers a children's cooking club for and a large backyard garden, which has provided vegetables for their meals (Britannia Clubhouse Boys and Girls Club Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010). The Clubhouse helps teach children about food and cooking, gardening, healthy eating and lifestyle, food safety practices and cost-efficient food shopping. The Centre has also phased out the availability of junk food at its facilities. The Britannia Clubhouse makes an effort to provide appropriate resources for those who are in need of support in dealing with hunger, as some participants come without having eaten. The Clubhouse benefits from volunteer support to ensure they reach their programming needs and individual needs of some clients. It is challenging at times to accommodate some client allergies with specific diets (ibid).

Britannia Woods Community House

A Lunch Club and Ottawa Food Bank services are offered at Britannia Woods Community House. The Lunch Club offers bagged lunches for children and youth living in the area. Offered Monday, Wednesday and Friday, any child in the neighbourhood can pick up a lunch in the morning before going to school. Approximately 149 children and youth are registered in the program, and 120 participate each day (Britannia Woods Community House Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010). The City of Ottawa provides approximately \$100, 000 for their food programs and lunch program (Keays, 2010). Three local churches offer additional funding (Britannia Woods Community House Staff Member, 2010).

The program has been able to benefit many people and there has been an increase in the number of children participating. The number of lunches offered has gone up drastically from approximately 6,300 in 2007 to 11,700 in 2009. The program strengthens community, increases access to food and makes room in some household budgets to buy other necessary items (ibid).

The Lunch Club depends on volunteers and faces financial difficulties. Regarding the Ottawa Food Bank portion of its services, there is a similar problem of not having staff to oversee its operations. Due to the large geographic area and high demand Britannia Woods manages, it is difficult to provide services to all, and clients have shown frustration with these limitations (ibid).

Buns in the Oven

Buns in the Oven is supported by Ottawa Public Health, the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, and the large in-kind contributions from its partner agencies. Buns in the Oven offers prenatal nutrition support for pregnant women in Ottawa, and is offered at all of Ottawa's Community Health Centres. Program goals and objectives are generally the same at each site, with some elements varying in order to cater to a particular centre (Buns in the Oven Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010). Some programs have access to satellite food banks and baby supplies. The program focuses on the factors related to preventing low birth weight of newborns and pre-term deliveries as well as promoting healthy infant feeding practice (Young/Single Parent Support Network of Ottawa, 2010).

In 2001, Buns in the Oven had seven programs and served 74 clients per week (City of Ottawa, 2001, p.27). Today there are nine programs and approximately 90 clients are helped per week through 2 – 2.5 hour sessions. (Buns in the Oven Staff

Member, pers. comm. February 24, 2010). Buns in the Oven is happy to see that its clients have few rates of low birth weight and high numbers of mothers breastfeeding and forming significant relationships with other mothers. The 2001 Profile stated that women who attended school had difficulty accessing its services (p.27). Buns in the Oven now has two programs which run late in the afternoon or evening and have made their services more accessible. The funding for Buns in the Oven remains the same, causing some problems due to rising food and salary costs. Without increased funding, the program cannot expand (Buns in the Oven Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

Carleton University – Food Centre

The Food Centre is Carleton University's Ottawa Food Bank and Good Food Box site. It has an outdoor garden and organizes gardening workshops with groups like Carleton's Ontario Public Action Research Group. Its funding comes from the Carleton University Students Association. Food Bank and Good Food Box use varies, with about 40-60 students using the Food Bank per month, many of whom are international students. The Centre hopes to introduce a community garden at Carleton in the future (Food Centre Staff Members, pers. comm., March 3, 2010,).

The Centre's coordinators have found that many students are unaware of its services and find it difficult to promote them, especially considering the limited amount of space for student activities on campus. Another difficulty is its limited refrigeration storage space at the Centre. This storage prevents them from ordering fresh produce for their clients. While they are normally able to keep a supply of staple foods at their Food Bank, it is difficult at times to have the foods people request (ibid).

Christmas Exchange

Ottawa Christmas Exchange provides support to individuals and families in need during the holidays by delivering food and toys through churches, schools and social agencies (Christmas Exchange, 2010). It is funded by donations, approximately \$1, 800 from the City of Ottawa, and is supported by over 250 volunteers and two paid staff (Christmas Exchange Staff Member, pers. comm., February 24, 2010).

The Christmas Exchange notes some client and program challenges. There has been an increase in single people using their services. The program has seen problems in the ability for some people to sustain a decent income, particularly those who do not have benefits such as Long Term Disability. Because of pressure to meet demand, the value of its service to some households has reduced at times. However, it has been able to meet demand for the past decade (ibid).

In 2009, the program directly helped 24,393 people. Of these, 2,357 were seniors, and 10,414 were children (The Christmas Exchange, 2010). The Christmas Exchange also works to facilitate coordination between other agencies in Ottawa that assist families during the holiday season. The organization monitors which households in Ottawa receive assistance and ensures there is no overlap. While this initiative saves the community hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, it is challenging for Christmas Exchange to coordinate (ibid).

Community Food Advisor

Since 1992, Community Food Advisor (CFA) programs have shared nutrition and food knowledge in Ontario communities. In Ottawa there are 39 CFA trained volunteers that carry out demonstrations and presentations to a variety of community groups free of cost. The Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion provides funding, The Nutrition Resource

Centre provides provincial program coordination and administration (Community Food Advisor Staff Member, pers. comm., February 1, 2010), and Ottawa Public Health provides support (K. Keays, pers. comm., 2010).

CFA has incorporated several significant changes in 2009. In 2007, the organization noted that the program had been unable to train any new volunteers in the past ten years, and they could not meet several requests for CFA services (Community Food Advisor, 2008). A recent grant from the Nutrition Resource Centre provided funding to bring in 20 new volunteers and fix this past problem. Community Food Advisor has also offered two new pilot programs. The first involves partnership with the Ottawa Food Bank, which helped CFA volunteers receive sensitivity training to apply while working with Ottawa Food Bank clients. The group also developed recipes based on Food Bank hamper items in order to pass on to Food Bank clients along with tips on healthy food choices and cooking. A second initiative involves working in farmer's markets. For over ten years, CFA have had a presence in Ottawa's Byward Market to profile a particular vegetable, offer recipes or discuss food safety matters. As of 2009, CFA was able to expand its activities to include other farmer's markets, two of which are in Carp and Lansdowne (Community Food Advisor Staff Member, 2010).

The Debra Dynes Family House

The Debra Dynes Family House (Family House) is a multipurpose community resource centre. It works toward improving the lives of diverse families, children and youth who live in poverty (Debra Dynes Family House, 2010). The Family House has ensured that all of its programming has a snack component. It is a Good Food Box and Food Bank site. The Family House also provides food through its snack handouts five days a week

for 25-45 children as well as about 30 boxed lunches each day during the school year. A breakfast program during the summer provides lunch for children participating in their summer programs (The Debra Dynes Centre Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

The Family House receives funding from grants and donations and approximately \$118,000 for meal and food programs from the City of Ottawa (Keays, 2010). The Family House has found it difficult to pay for the supplies they need. The organization recently benefitted from a grant from Ace Bakery for its collective kitchen, which has exhausted its funds. The Family House has seen that more people are in need of Food Bank services, as more people are making multiple requests for food each month (ibid).

Foster Farm Family House

Foster Farm Family House (Family House) coordinates a wide range of food programs. It is a Good Food Box and Ottawa Food Bank site, and provides meal programs and food handouts. It offers two collective kitchen programs once per week. Its International Lunch provides about 10-15 people per week a chance to interact and learn about one another's culture. The second is its Soup's On lunch which attracts 15-18 people per session (Foster Farm Family House Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010a). The Family House receives bread and pastry donations from a local bakery, which they pass on to the clients through their Bread Basket program. About 30 families participate and take two loaves of bread at a time. A second program offers pastry handouts once per week. The Family House also gives away perishable foods donated from the Ottawa Food Bank, grocery stores and bakeries twice per week. Depending on the day, 16-28 families benefit (Foster Farm Family House Staff Member, 2010b). Additional

programming includes educational workshops on topics such as nutrition education, canning and cooking classes for children. The Family House offers up to 10 Good Food Box buyers a subsidy by paying for half the cost of their boxes. They also have a garden in which the community has demonstrated an interest (Foster Farm Family House Staff Member, 2010a).

The Family House is very understaffed. Its programs are run by one full-time staff member and one administrative support person who works five hours per week. Otherwise, volunteers support the programs. The Family House receives a grant from a local bakery to fund its Soups On collective kitchen and approximately \$100, 000 from the City of Ottawa. There is difficulty supervising and organizing at the Family House due to limited staff and funding constraints (ibid).

The Garden Spot

For seven years, the Garden Spot has served nutritious meals to the Carleton community with a focus on the principles of food security, environmental sustainability, skills sharing and anti-poverty. Eaters pay on a sliding scale payment system, which allows anyone to eat as much as they wish regardless of their financial situation. It serves approximately 50 – 80 multi-course lunches each day. In addition, the organization caters for events on- and off-campus for a small fee (Garden Spot Member, pers. comm., 2010).

Funding for the Garden Spot comes from a \$2 levy from each Carleton student, as well as returns from its lunches. It has approximately 40 – 50 active volunteers. The organization offers many students a nutritious alternative to the restricted food options at Carleton, as well as an opportunity for volunteers to gain a wide variety of skills and

experience in a non-profit setting. Garden Spot's food supplies generally come from donations from local businesses and farmers. It faces challenges in coordinating its service as its kitchen is off-campus and the group serves lunch on-campus. The group's budget is very limited due to expensive rent in two locations and the cost of transporting food and supplies to and from the school. The organization's complex nature, high volunteer turnover and low resources make it difficult for the organization to expand (ibid).

The Good Companions

The Good Companions is a non-profit multi-purpose seniors' centre that enhances quality of life for seniors and adults with disabilities in Ottawa (The Good Companions, 2009). The City of Ottawa provides approximately \$150, 000 in renewable funding for programming including its meal program (Keays, 2010) and many volunteers help support its work each day (The Good Companions Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

The Centre organizes dinner and dance evenings twice per month and the dinner component costs \$6.25. They also cook approximately 70 – 80 meals for Meals on Wheels five days per week, charging \$4.75 per entree. A third meal component is the organization's congregate lunch and dining programs. Lunch is offered three days per week, and is included in the Good Companion's day program. The lunch costs \$9, and the day program costs \$15. Approximately 15 – 25 people participate. The Good Companions offers their second congregate dining opportunity Monday – Saturday for \$4.60 to approximately 70 to 80 individuals (ibid).

Headstart Nursery Schools and Daycare Centres

Since 1969, Headstart programs have benefitted socially and economically disadvantaged children aged 2.5 to 5 years. Both Headstart's half-day Nursery School

Program and full-day Preschool Program help children and parents prepare for schooling. There are eleven Headstart programs offered throughout Ottawa (Ottawa-Carleton Headstart Association of Preschools, 2002, p.2). Benefits for families involved in Headstart include transportation services, goal-oriented curriculum, and nutritious food and meals for children (p.3).

A 2001 Ottawa Carleton Headstart Association for Preschools report outlines gaps in services related to the goals of Headstart programs. The report noted a need for improvement in the areas of childcare provision, early intervention matters, numbers of qualified and well-paid childhood educators and staff, services in under-serviced areas, and funding to Headstart programs (Ottawa-Carleton Association of Preschools, 2001).

In From the Cold Dinners

Parkdale United Church offers In from the Cold Dinners on Saturdays from November to March. A typical Saturday involves serving coffee and snacks starting at 2pm, offering some activities such as crafts or reading, followed by a dinner. In 2009 over the 19 weeks of service, an average of 107 people took part each week, ranging from 141-158 in one day (In From the Cold Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

A great deal of In from the Cold work depends on approximately 60 volunteers per week. Contributions that support the program come from monetary donations from the church, as well as food donations from restaurants and businesses in the area. A local vegetarian restaurant provides a meat-free alternative each week. Bakeries donate bread and muffins, and some individuals purchase bakery items and donate them. The rest of the dinners are cooked at the church. The organizers are happy with the amount of support from the community they receive (ibid).

Jewish Family Services

Jewish Family Services of Ottawa offers programs and services to children, youth, adults and seniors (Jewish Family Services, 2010). The organization receives funding from the Ontario and City of Ottawa government, and is a partner with various community centres in Ottawa. The organization offers two food programs to help those with low income. The organization offers kosher food distribution in a similar approach as the Ottawa Food Bank. They offer the service two Sundays per month, helping approximately thirty families each distribution day (Jewish Family Services Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

As a response to issues of poverty in the community and the lack of fresh foods offered by food assistance programs and food banks, the Jewish Family Services began a second food assistance program approximately 13 years ago. Titled Miriam's Well, the program offers produce on the last Monday of each month, keeping in mind the end of the social assistance pay period. Approximately 135 families benefit from this program each day, by taking home 3-4 bags of fresh fruit and vegetables that a local grocer donates (ibid). The organization faces instability, as it is dependent on donation. Economic uncertainty exacerbates the threat of shifting priorities affecting the ability for Jewish Family Services to meet its community's needs. It directly helps the community by offering culturally acceptable food access programs and increasing access to nutritious fresh food as well (ibid).

Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels is a volunteer-run meal delivery program that aims to provide nutritious food, companionship and comfort to its clients. Clients are generally seniors, ill or disabled adults (Meals on Wheels, 2010). The number of meals the organization

has served has gone up in the past years to just over 58, 200 hot and 58, 700 frozen meals. Part of their budget comes from government sources (approximately \$362, 000), \$33, 000 of which is from the City of Ottawa (Meals on Wheels, 2009). Staff organized some positive changes in how it carries out its work. It simplified its operations by going from cooking its food in 15 different kitchens down to 9. Meals on Wheels staff now have better contact with volunteers and those working in its kitchens. The organization has also started using bicycle deliveries for some of its routes all year (Meals on Wheels Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010). Staff are aware that some people cannot afford its service. This is especially difficult in scenarios where clients cannot afford a meal even at a subsidized price. The cost of each meal is \$4.75 (with subsidized meals at \$3), and unfortunately some interested seniors cannot afford the organization's services (ibid).

Miriam Centre

Miriam Centre aims toward giving confidential and free support to pregnant women who are facing a difficult pregnancy and their children. Independent from the Ottawa Food Bank, Miriam Centre offers an emergency food and baby supply service for its community. The service is set up on an individual basis, and serves about 100 families. The Centre's charity status leaves it vulnerable at times, as it is dependent upon fundraising to stay open and function. An accomplishment of the Centre is its ability to follow some women from the state of dependency to being independent (Miriam Centre Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

Mood Disorders Ottawa

Run completely by volunteers, Mood Disorders Ottawa provides programs and services for people with mood disorders and their families. Some services include confidential support programs, monthly information meetings and two annual dinners. The first is a

buffet dinner that is offered free to about 25 members. A Christmas dinner is also held each year for 70-80 people. Southminster United Church offers its facilities to the group free of charge, and about eight repeat volunteers cook the dinner. Funding for the meal events comes from Mood Disorders Ottawa's budget, which is subsidized by the Canadian Mental Health Association and member fees. The dinners are a chance for the association's members to socialize. Some clients have a very low income, and benefit from the Christmas and buffet dinners (Mood Disorders Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

Olde Forge Community Resource Centre

The Olde Forge Community Centre is located in Western Ottawa, an area with a very high percentage of seniors. At this time, the Centre offers lunches on Wednesdays, along with entertainment or a guest speaker for \$10. In order to cater to demand for the program, they place seniors in two groups of twenty people, and these groups rotate on alternate Wednesdays. About 16 people come to each lunch, and about five or six people are on the waiting list to participate (Olde Forge Community Centre Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010). The lunch program developed from a perceived need for people to socialize and have a healthy meal. It has shown to be a positive part of some seniors' lives, as it fosters a sense of community within the groups (ibid).

The Ontario Ministry of Health provides funds for Olde Forge programs. The City of Ottawa provides approximately \$90 000 (Keays, 2010), as well as some in-kind services. The Centre raises funds as well, and depends on agencies or companies to provide services such as transportation. Stirling Place Retirement Residence across the street from Olde Forge provides meals for the Wednesday lunches for a fee to cover its

costs. The program depends completely on volunteer drivers to help bring participants to and from Olde Forge. Although the Centre has a van, it cannot accommodate large mobility aid devices. Their space is small and sometimes difficult for some to move about, a challenge considering some participants have mobility impairments (ibid).

The Ottawa Food Bank

The Ottawa Food Bank's 2008 annual report describes some of its recent work. The organization distributed twelve tons of food each working day through 128 food programs located around the city. Approximately 43, 000 people received food assistance each month in Ottawa, 35 percent of whom were children. The Ottawa Food Bank's main endeavours involve supplying member agencies with food items to support initiatives such as hamper programs, soup kitchens, meal programs, shelters, the School Breakfast Program and other child nutrition programs. Along with its food supply work, the Ottawa Food Bank carries out additional programming some of which provides baby supplies or meal programs for families (The Ottawa Food Bank, 2008a).

The Ottawa Food Bank receives funding from a wide variety of sources including corporate donations and grants (The Ottawa Food Bank, 2008a), with approximately \$200, 000 in renewable funding from the City of Ottawa (K. Keays, 2010). With less than 5 percent of its program funding coming from government sources, community partners play a huge role in the Ottawa Food Bank's accomplishments. In 2007-2008 over 2000 volunteers put in over 20, 000 hours of work (The Ottawa Food Bank, 2008a).

Some advances the Ottawa Food Bank has seen over the past decade include service provision and structural improvements. Largely due to a local software and

hardware donation, the Ottawa Food Bank was able to create a useful digital database. The “Food Bank Agency Lookup Tool” makes it possible to search by address for an Ottawa Food Bank Agency location in the city. This has reduced some of the work for Agency staff members in managing Ottawa Food Bank agency information, and logistics have improved. A second advancement involves collaborating with Community Food Advisor and Ottawa Public Health to further meet the needs of Ottawa Food Bank clients and increase volunteer capacity (Ottawa Food Bank Staff Member (a), pers. comm., 2010).

In 2005, the Ottawa Food Bank introduced the Agency Relations Coordinator position to allow more resources to be allocated toward creating partnerships with other programs in the city. At Ottawa Food Bank member agencies the Community Food Advisor Program carries out food skills demonstrations, introduces participants to food hamper-related recipes, and teaches general food skills. Collaboration with Ottawa Public Health involves Food Safety training for member agencies. Ottawa Food Bank agency staff gain food handling knowledge, as well as food safety and assessment skills. While increasing the safety of all those involved, the collaboration improves benefits their clients and volunteer capacity is increased (ibid).

The warehouse and storage logistics the Ottawa Food Bank have remained a consistent challenge since 2001. Currently, the organization is managing several food storage sites, an increase from the one warehouse it managed in 2001. Along with its 10,000 ft² warehouse the Ottawa Food Bank took on a second permanent space. As well, it uses an additional warehouse when needed, particularly around the holiday season. Increased demand for services and logistical difficulties with warehouse space

still complicates Ottawa Food Bank operations. With the work involved in organizing an extremely diverse geographic area and program type, the organization is resource-strapped (ibid).

Ottawa Good Food Box

The Ottawa Good Food Box is a non-profit, community-based program, which offers Ottawa residents the opportunity to buy boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables for \$10, \$15 or \$20. Similar to a buying club, it helps participants buy produce at wholesale prices and keep household food costs down. It increases the amount of fruits and vegetables in participants' diet and builds community (The Ottawa Good Food Box, 2010).

One part-time coordinator administers the program with support from 80 volunteers. Each of the 28 program sites has its own coordinator that volunteers to oversee that particular site. The program receives approximately \$50 000- \$60 000 from the City of Ottawa and funds from a two-year Community Foundation grant (Ottawa Good Food Box Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

The Community Foundation grant has helped the Ottawa Good Food Box carry out a series of workshops on nutrition and cooking in three food insecure neighbourhoods. Also, for five years it has worked with local growers to distribute a local and organic food box. In 2006, they introduced a \$5 fruit-only box through Carleton University's Food Centre (ibid). The Ottawa Good Food Box sees the challenges that some of its client population faces due to low-income. Some clients move frequently or have unstable housing, making it difficult to keep a strong connection with their local Good Food Box site. The limitations of minimum wage and social assistance income

make it difficult for some clients to afford healthy food. The program itself must deal with high gas costs associated with its delivery work, as well as volunteer burnout. While the program has expanded in the past decade, it cannot fully meet the demand due to financial constraints and limited staffing (ibid).

Ottawa Innerscity Ministries

Ottawa Innerscity Ministries (Ministries) serve vulnerable people on Ottawa's streets.

The organization offers breakfast, drop-in opportunities which include a snack component, food handouts to people on the street and several holiday meals. The Ministries' target group is homeless people who are mostly on some type of social assistance such as ODSP or Ontario Works. Because of this, the time of the month when cheques are sent out determines demand. The breakfast includes breads, muffins, croissants and other food items that are all donated. About 50 breakfasts are served and the group also prepares a hot lunch which serves 80 – 100 people per day (Ottawa Innerscity Ministries Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

Food is provided by the Ottawa Food Bank and local churches. Support in carrying out its activities comes from a modest sized staff and about 100 volunteers. The housing situation in Ottawa causes difficulties for some of the Ministries' clients. People on the ODSP or Ontario Works have difficulty paying for expensive housing and the wait time for subsidized housing complicates some peoples' ability to be in a comfortable situation. Additional problems arise due to some clients' loss of hope that they will not receive the support they need. Foods like fruits and vegetables are often not of best quality as they are usually donated when they are of low-grade. Buying fresh foods is a constraint on the organization's budget (ibid).

Ottawa University – Bon Appétit

The University of Ottawa is an Ottawa Food Bank member agency through its student food centre, Bon Appétit. It offers three days worth of food to any student, employee or alumni once per month. Bon Appétit is a Good Food Box site, which in September 2009 distributed 57 boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables. It also offers workshops on topics including budgeting and résumé writing. It promotes healthy eating through raising hunger awareness and food drives. Bon Appétit plans to serve breakfast to students every Thursday morning, through using a kitchen on-campus (Bon Appétit Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

The Centre receives funding from University of Ottawa at one dollar per student and receives food donations from local partners. City Hall counsellors have been invited this year to become involved in Bon Appétit activities by providing donations of some kind. With the need of more storage space and equipment and due to growing demand the Centre hopes to acquire support from outside partners (ibid).

School Breakfast Program

For twenty years through the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation, the School Breakfast Program has ensured that any student within its affiliate schools has access to food regardless of social or economic background. The program consists of one Program Coordinator and three Community Development Coordinators. The School Breakfast Program serves 146 elementary and high schools in Ottawa, serving 11, 000 students in the 2009-2010 school year (Program Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010). The program has increased since 2000, when it served 74 schools (City of Ottawa, 2001).

The School Breakfast Program receives financial aid and in kind contributions from four Ottawa school boards, City of Ottawa, Ottawa Public Health, the Ottawa Food Bank, St. Vincent de Paul, United Way, and has recently added the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services to this list. Ottawa Public Health provides a registered dietician on its steering committee and Safe Food Handling programming to volunteer and program workers. The City contributes funding of approximately \$73, 000 per year (School Breakfast Program Staff Member, 2010).

At this time, the program's ability to expand is at a halt as the program's resources have reached their maximum. There is a moratorium on new school involvement in the program and it has been two years since the program accepted a new school. Current difficult economic conditions have lead to a reduction in the amount of funding provided by its partners, as some partners have put off annual fundraising events (ibid), however some new donor relationships have formed. Despite the resources the School Breakfast Program is working with, it faces the same challenges as noted nine years ago (City of Ottawa, 2001). Additional schools in Ottawa could benefit greatly from participation in the program. The program experiences added pressure as is unable to take on new schools, has fewer resources for programming, and notably, demand in its currently active schools has increased (School Breakfast Program Staff Member, 2010).

Shepherds of Good Hope

The Shepherds of Good Hope is a multi-purpose centre which offers shelter and housing support. for those in need (The Shepherds of Good Hope, 2010). The Shepherds provides food to many people as part of its services, serving an estimated

800 to 1000 meals each day. This includes breakfast, lunch, dinner, drop-ins and take-away sandwiches. The Ottawa Food Bank gives the organization food supplies at times (Shepherds of Good Hope Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010). They receive funding from the City of Ottawa in the amount of approximately \$179, 000 (Keays, 2010). The Ontario's Local Health Integrated Network and City of Ottawa funding make up 41 percent of the organization's budget. The rest of its funds are covered by donation and income from rent. A diverse group of volunteers help put in over 64,000 hours in 2008 (Shepherds of Good Hope Staff Member, 2010).

St. Joe's Women's Centre

St. Joe's Women's Centre provides daytime shelter for 20 – 60 homeless women in Ottawa daily. It aims to provide a caring and safe place for women, as well as healthy programming and services. Meals offered each day at St. Joe's include a light self-serve breakfast in the morning, a lunch and an afternoon snack. St. Joe's is a member agency of the Ottawa Food Bank and provides a hamper program for clients every two weeks. Ottawa Food Bank items supply foods for its meal programs and funding is provided through private donors (St. Joe's Women's Centre Staff Member, pers., comm., 2010). The City of Ottawa's contribution is approximately \$291, 000 (Keays, 2010).

Food and nutrition is incorporated into St. Joe's programming. It offers a Get Fit program two to three times per year to promote health and healthy eating. Carried over a 12-week period, the program ties together physical activity and health education. Approximately ten to fifteen women participate in the program per weekly gathering, and each participant receives a bag of fresh fruits and vegetables to take home (St. Joe's Women's Centre Staff Member, 2010). St. Joe's is happy it has been able to go beyond

meeting the basic needs of its clients, and within the next year it will be implementing a bursary program for women from the centre interested in returning to school. While progress has been positive, they note that it is difficult to keep a healthy menu considering fruits, vegetables and other meal costs take up a great deal of its budget. With limited funding, it is difficult to adhere to healthy food choices (ibid).

The Well

The Well organizes a day program for women and women with children. They aim toward creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for women to become empowered. The Well is funded by the Anglican Church (The Well, 2010), and receives \$300, 000 in funds from the City of Ottawa (Keays, 2010). The Well has noted its growth in participation. It has also noted an increased need for services. Well-balanced meals which are prepared in-house, with breakfast put together by volunteers. Approximately 40-50 people use the breakfast program. Lunches are cooked by one kitchen staff member and additional volunteers. Approximately 150 people benefit from these free lunches per day (The Well Staff Member, pers. comm., 2010).

Progress Toward Food Security

The complexity of food security work at the international and national level along with the downloading of social welfare from the provincial agenda has created a new role for the city in managing food security issues. Ottawa's municipal government and civil society organizations have demonstrated through their actions that food insecurity is an important matter. This final chapter will expand upon food insecurity issues and discuss possible long-term solutions. Civil society and government working together is an option in order to organize resources, knowledge and energy to correct the missing progress toward food security. The goal of this analysis is to contribute to a discussion of these issues in Ottawa.

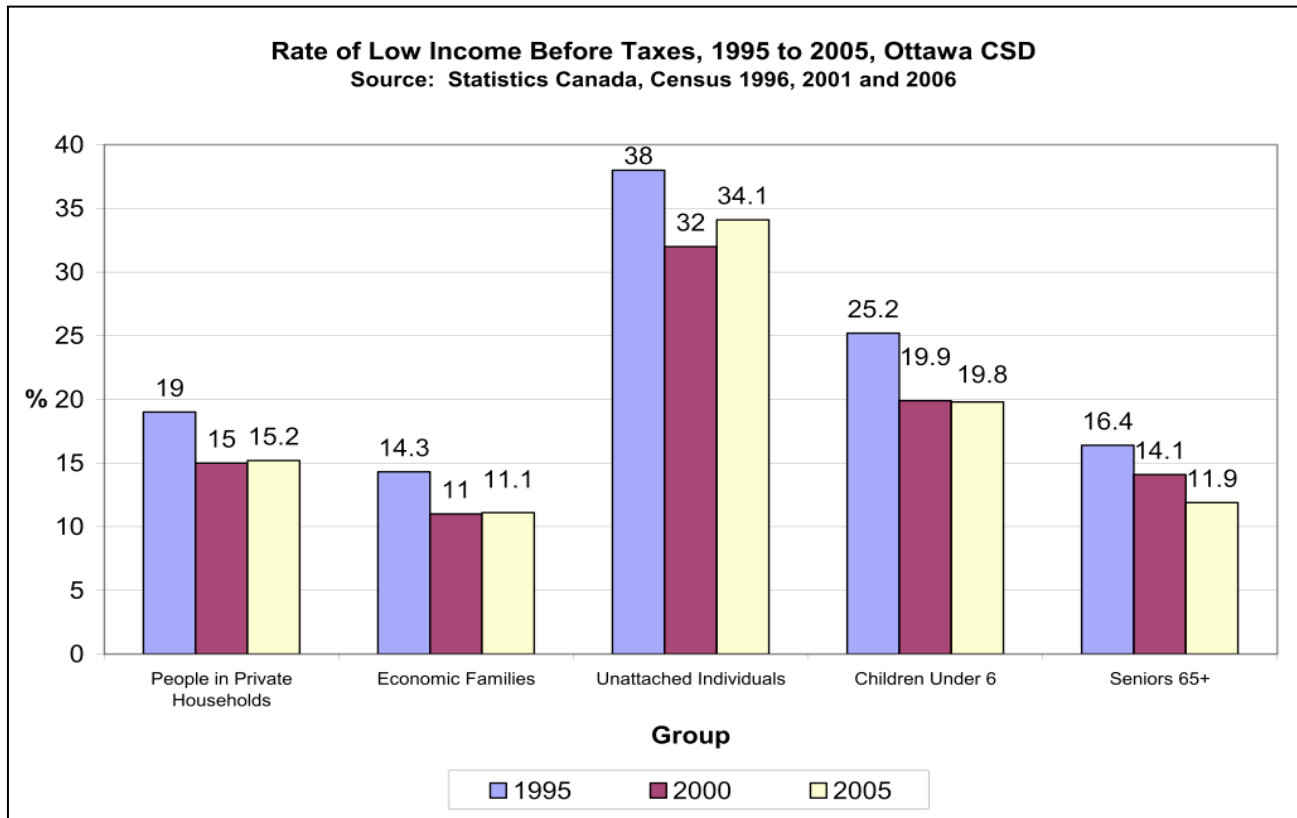
Need for an Alternative Approach to Ensure Food Security

Ottawa Citizens and Food Programming are Disadvantaged

Many people are disadvantaged and struggle to meet their basic needs. People living on minimum wage and social assistance are also affected. Since 2001, incidence of low income for people in private households, families, unattached individuals and children has risen. The low-income incidence for children under the age of 6 dropped 0.1 percent and the rate of seniors living with a low-income dropped 2.2 percent (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2009e). While these figures are better than those recorded in 1995, it seems as though there is no real progress toward poverty reduction in Ottawa since 2001, and there is little to suggest that there has been progress toward food security.

An alternative approach to addressing food security must be considered and allow more people the opportunity to become food secure. It is difficult to assess the strength of these initiatives. To fully assess the current ability of these programs to carry out their objectives, one would have to create a working definition of successful programs or organizations. Some possible contributing factors to the success or progress of a food security program's success or progress may be having a strong volunteer base or having seen recent growth. Progress may be an increase in the number of people reached, or a program's ability to bounce back from a significant disruption or loss of resources. Essentially, an organization's success depends on many factors, making it difficult to assess whether food programs in the city have improved over the past decade.

Table 1: Rate of Low Income Before Taxes, 1995 to 2005 (Social Planning Council, 2009e)



One factor in assessing an organization’s capability is to assess its ability to reach its clients. Of the 28 programs noted, 12 had either increased the number of people served or had expanded its programs or services. However, four of these organizations also reported they were unable to meet demand, showing that expansion is not always synonymous with meeting their objectives. In order to understand the context within which a program functions, understanding its history is important. The history of a program or service helps to understand the context of a program’s activity or strength. For example, the Community Food Advisor has recently been able to expand its program significantly and has initiated new pilot projects. However, one year ago it

could not meet demand and was unable to meet requests for its services. The program's recent expansion does not provide a complete picture of its sustainability.

Advancements in program logistics have positive benefits for program work, however do not fully describe a program's health. Meals on Wheels has improved its situation by reducing the number of kitchens it manages from fifteen to nine. Some programs like the Old Forge Community Centre have organized with the help of volunteers to pick seniors up at home to include them in their Lunch programming. Many thousands of meals are provided to seniors at a price, through programs such as the Good Companions, Meals on Wheels and Abbotsford House's Lunch Club. These activities are inspiring and contribute to the quality of life of many people in Ottawa. However, upon looking at these advancements critically, questions may be raised as to how acceptable these patterns are. Perhaps even fewer kitchens under Meals on Wheels' management would be helpful, if Old Forge has the resources to transport its clients or if some seniors in need were able to have a healthy meal regardless of their ability to pay for it. In this case, program work would advance and Ottawa would become more food secure.

Most programs experience some degree of instability or dependency characterized by programming resources that either fluctuate or are prone to fluctuation. For example, the Ottawa Good Food Box's clients have received benefits from participating in its new cooking and nutrition workshops, made possible through a grant. Other programs depend on volunteers, donations or partnerships with other organizations or partners in Ottawa. Of the organizations profiled, 15 out of 28 (54 percent) depend on grants or donations to carry out their work. Five organizations

mentioned that they benefit from private businesses or individual services, which are a very significant component of program activity. Nineteen of the programs profiled (68 percent) indicated that volunteers play a big role in their work. Community cooperation is a big part of food security work in Ottawa. These positive relationships, however, do not indicate whether a program is fully able to meet its objectives, and further, do not guarantee success in the future. The dependence of many programs on donations and volunteers raises the question of who is responsible for ensuring food insecure peoples' needs are met.

The extent of government support does not indicate that a program meets its objectives, sees improvement, or experiences stability. A tremendous amount of support is provided to food security programming from municipal, provincial and national levels. While it is important that further research is done to fully understand the extent of government support for food security, the following table depicts how the City of Ottawa has contributed to some food security activities monetarily. In addition to the figures below, the City of Ottawa allocates nearly \$700,000 in funding to emergency food programs other than those profiled here (Keays, 2010), while providing in-kind, coordination or service support to others.

Table 2: City of Ottawa Financial Contributions to Food Security Programming or Affiliated Organizations (Keays, 2010).

Community Food Advisors	Supported through Ottawa Public Health
Foster Farm Family House	\$98, 924 in renewable funding
Christmas Exchange	\$1,889 through Ontario Child Benefit (formerly National Child Benefit) funding

Ottawa Food Bank	\$239,052 in renewable funding
Buns in the Oven	Supported through Ottawa Public Health
Britannia Woods Community House	\$99,802 in renewable funding that includes support for food bank, food programs and lunch programs
The Shepherds of Good Hope	\$179,376 in renewable funding for day programs
Debra Dynes Family House	\$118,230 in renewable funding that includes meal programs and food bank
The School Breakfast Program	73,177 in renewable funding
Meals on Wheels	\$37761 in renewable funding
AIDS Committee of Ottawa	\$66,000 in renewable funding to the Living Room program
Britannia Clubhouse Boys and Girls Club	\$220,336 to support operations of the Britannia Clubhouse
Old Forge Community Centre	\$90,051 in renewable funding to support information/referral and Community support for Seniors, not specific to food/meal programs
Abbotsford House	\$52,251 in renewable funding to support the Elderly Persons Centre and Community Support for Seniors
The Well	\$300,472 in renewable funding that includes support for their food program (\$115,000)
St. Joe's Women`s Centre	\$290,854 in renewable funding that includes support directly for the food program (\$20,000)
Jewish Family Support Services	\$159,759 for counselling and community support for Seniors, not specific to food/meal programs.
The Good Companions	\$150,236 in renewable funding that includes congregate dining program

Table 2 suggests that over two million dollars from the City of Ottawa is put toward food programs or their affiliated organizations. This figure applies only to 18 of the 28 programs profiled here, and does not include the support from Ottawa Public Health, provincial and national governments, grants or donations. Large amounts of funding are put toward this type of work, which raises the question of what specifically it is that the food security system needs to improve and what role City of Ottawa funding and support plays in the success of these programs. Of the programs listed in Table 2, 12 said they cannot fully meet demand and have either coordination problems or funding problems.

In the 2001 Profile, some of the summarized food security programs included interviewee remarks about their inability to meet program goals. Funding, program administration and logistic problems were common (City of Ottawa, 2001). Today, some of the programs noted in the 2001 Profile deal with the same issues. The Ottawa Food Bank has logistical constraints regarding its warehouse and storage capacity, just as noted in 2001. The School Breakfast Program still faces the challenge of not being able to reach all of the schools that need its service and for two years has officially stopped accepting new schools due to inability to expand or meet demand. A great deal of food security work is disadvantaged, just as many food insecure individuals are. It is difficult to accept that despite many hours of volunteer contributions, staff work, private and business donations, grants, and government support contributions, many food programs face consistent challenges.

Conclusion

The high demand or popularity of the food programs profiled in 2010 demonstrates the public's interest. Both the City of Ottawa and civil society organizations are heavily involved in food security work to help alleviate these pressures. However, there is little reason to suggest that those organizations and programs that face instability, difficulty meeting demand and consistent constraints will have an improved situation if the food security system in Ottawa does not improve.

Imagine a scenario in which the city of Ottawa develops a food policy identical to the food security system described in this report. This policy would call for decentralized coordination, emphasize unpaid non-governmental work, and expect a large amount of business and individual donations. Organization of support and funding would be somewhat sporadic, coming from dozens of sources, whether from one or more of three levels of governmental or non-profit organizations in either renewable or limited terms. No accountability mechanisms will be applied to this work, despite civil society organizations lacking in this regard. Organizations or programs will simply help whomever they can when possible, and deal with any possible disruption independently should a problem arise.

Ottawa's current approach to food security does not need to resemble this policy of decentralized responsibility. Only in the case of exhausting all possible solutions to food insecurity could such an approach be appropriate. Considering the expectation for municipalities to care for its citizens, it is appropriate to suggest that the municipal government becomes more involved in food security matters. Through collaboration with civil society organizations, it is possible to examine the current situation in terms of

what can be reworked or reorganized. Considering that Ottawa's current food security system lacks a concrete policy, effective policy planning may be a significant direction to take.

Chapter Three

Municipal Food Policy

This chapter seeks to further the discussion of food program activity by bringing in food security policy as a valuable route to consider in strengthening Ottawa's food security network. The chapter provides a background of positive qualities of food policy and successful food policies in other jurisdictions. The partnership component as seen in all four cities profiled in this report is investigated further, eventually leading to commentary on how these cases can be brought home to Ottawa. MacRae (2003) argues for the development of national food policy which furthers nutrition, incorporates agricultural production and distribution, and supports a financially and group environmentally sustainable food system (p. 182). The author offers insight into what factors would represent an effective food policy. His list is related directly to this paper, in that these principles are flexible and can be applied to a local government as well:

- Everyone has enough food (quality and quantity) to be healthy
- Food production, processing, and consumption are suited to environmental, economic, technological and cultural needs, potentials, and limits of the various regions in Canada
- The food system is seen as providing an essential service, food supply and quality are dependable, and they are not threatened by social, political, economic, and environmental changes
- Food is safe for those who produce, work with, and eat it and it's safe for the environment
- Resources (energy, water, soil, genetic resources, forests, fish, wildlife) are used efficiently (in an ecological sense) and without waste
- The resources of the food system are distributed in a way that ensures that those who perform the most essential tasks have a decent income (in particular, people

in rural communities have enough work and income to maintain or improve their life and to care for the rural environment);

- The food system is flexible enough to allow people to improve and adapt it to changing conditions;
- Everyone who wants to be involved in determining how the food system works has a chance to participate;
- Opportunities are available in the food system for creative and fulfilling work and social interaction; and
- Our food system allows other countries to develop food systems that express similar values (p.187-188).

MacRae suggests possible ways to organize food policy. Changes to the functions of municipal governments can enhance food policy, in the form of local or regional food-policy councils. He speaks for those in favour of food policy councils, who believe that current three-tiered institutional plans cannot adequately address fundamental food policy problems seen at the local level (p.192).

MacRae's account of the important role that municipalities have in food security issues is supported by input from big players in municipal-level food policy work, such as the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), which he notes adopted arguably the most definitive food and nutrition policy (p.189). In Ottawa's case, a municipal food policy may perhaps help bring cohesiveness to the current food security network composed of support through various programs and services. In his discussion of federal food policy, MacRae notes that in Canada there is something in place that one may regard as a collective food policy, made of "odd bits of policy, programming, and regulations – but it's something policymakers have drifted into, not something people consciously and intelligently chose" (p.182). The same scenario has occurred in Ottawa. The city depends on a decentralized system only rooted in itself, with the same characteristics of this "collective food policy" MacRae describes.

Koc et al. also point out the difficulties of implementing food policy at the federal level demonstrated by the inadequate response to ideas such as the Canada Food Action Plan. The development of food policy councils at the municipal level offers a refreshing look into the ability of new organization to create change. In addition, the City Ottawa simply has the role of ensuring public health. Currently, Ottawa is without an overarching policy, and unable to correct the sustained food insecurity many people experience. City Hall is an avenue worth investigating. Several other cities have taken a progressive step toward creating municipal food policy. The following section describes some interesting initiatives at this level.

Food Security on Municipal Agendas

Detroit, USA

After forming in 2006, the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN) made significant effort in Detroit to influence public policy, promote urban agriculture, promote healthy eating, encourage careers in agriculture and provide support for Detroit's black community. It was able to incorporate food security policy into the Detroit government agenda (Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, 2010). The shared benefits of a food policy for both government and community and the lack of food security policy in Detroit formed the DBCFSN's mandate. The group spoke with the City of Detroit about its concerns and was appointed to act as a task force to develop a food security policy for the city. Less than two years later, the DBCFSN wrote the actual policy that was adopted by the City of Detroit. The policy includes issues such as access, nutrition, education, urban agriculture and emergency response matters, among others (ibid).

The DBCFSN's work led to the establishment of the Detroit Food Policy Council. The organization presented the idea to Detroit City Council and a resolution was passed which supported the creation of this new body (ibid). With Detroit's leadership, a seven-member DFP Convening Committee formed in 2009 to choose members for the council. Eventually, 21 seats were filled by people representing 12 different sectors, including members of the Mayor's office, the Director of Detroit Development of Health and Wellness Promotion, the DBCFSN and community members (Detroit Food Policy Council, 2010).

San Francisco, USA

A San Francisco neighbourhood recently created positive food security change through multi-level partnership. Through community organizing around health issues, forums by local environmental organizations, municipal efforts that addressed food security through environmental justice programs, a group of elderly people discussing their concerns and a dynamic leader allowed food insecurity to be addressed within an effective forum (Brekwich Vásquez et al., 2007, p.345).

Bayview Hunters Point neighbourhood (Bayview) carried out food security work in the name of healthy food availability in its community, to increase healthy food choices. By 1994, all food stores in Bayview had left the area and many people found it difficult to access nutritious food like fruit and vegetables. Research demonstrates that in poor, segregated neighbourhoods without supermarkets, intake of healthy foods decreases by a third, and an increase in fat occurs (p.343).

The youth organization, Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ), created a partnership with the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Tobacco Free Project in 2002. Public Health provided access to a research evaluator and helped with technical assistance. With collaboration between this group, food security related problems were addressed. This was developed into the Good Neighbour Program. LEJ staff, youth, community organizations, residents, city representatives and business owners worked together to define a policy that would work to achieve the group's goals. A voluntary policy was drafted to reduce unhealthy foods and tobacco advertising in the neighbourhood. Business owners received incentives for following the terms of the policy (p.348).

The results of Bayview's work affected both policy and programming. Awareness of food security issues were raised and policy makers mobilized to address these concerns. LEJ earned credibility for its quality evidence of food security in Bayview and was able to define the problem of food insecurity effectively to city politicians (p.348). The initiative also brought on state-level interest (p.347).

Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Belo Horizonte, the fourth largest city in Brazil, is a recognized leader in designing and implementing food security related policies within the framework of food security as a right. As documented by Rocha, the city's food security programs reach 800,000 people per day. Belo Horizonte's policies were a result of high levels of malnutrition and hunger in the early 1990s, a time when it was estimated 44 percent of the city's children lived in poverty (2001, p.36).

The Municipal Secretariat of Supplies (*Secretariat Municipal de Abastecimento – SMAB*) was created by the local government to administer three departments in order to address food security in the city (p.36). The Department for Promotion of Food Consumption and Nutrition aims its work toward vulnerable groups of people to reduce malnutrition and promote healthy eating habits. The Department for the Administration of Food Distribution develops and administers market-intervention mechanisms to control price and quality of available food. The Department for Incentives to Basic Food Production fosters connections between food producers and consumers, and promotes urban agriculture (p.37).

A wide range of community stakeholders play a part in the SMAB scheme. For example, the *Conselho Municipal de Abastecimento e Seguran ça Alimentar* is a 20-

member council which includes government workers, labour unions, food producers, consumers and non-governmental organizations (p.3). Further, the Department for the Promotion of Food Consumption's activities are monitored by civil society groups. Researchers at the Minas Gerais Federal University also play a valuable role in monitoring actions relating to price control and food quality supplied under the SMAB's initiatives (p.37).

Programs carried out to increase access to nutritious food include distribution of free enriched flour mixtures to women with young children and nursing women. Additional food promotion activities include school and day care meal programs and "Popular Restaurant", a cafeteria-style restaurant which offers thousands of meals per day to anyone at a minimal price (p.40). The SMAB offers a Popular Food Basket, which sells bundles of basic items to low-income neighbourhoods through a bus and disseminates lists of low-priced goods twice per week to help households find food savings around the city. Two food sale projects involve running 15 food outlets in low-income regions of the city, and operating a mobile food store, which sell produce at a price 23-50 percent lower than conventional grocery stores (p.40-41).

The municipal government of Belo Horizonte has met the needs of more of its citizens as well as small producers in surrounding areas. Belo Horizonte programs have increased physical and economic accessibility for all people including those with low-income by making fresh produce available at prices much lower than commercial stores (p.4). The SMAB's activities have shown a commitment to institutional buying relationships with local producers, which increased viability of local agriculture and quality of foods.

The municipal government has viewed food security matters as a human right that must be upheld by the government. It has also looked at individuals in the city as people and framed its work in terms of keeping food security a public good, rather than looking at food as a private good (2001, p.8). With effective planning, the SMAB has worked to keep its costs modest (2001, p.3). In Belo Horizonte's case, the initiative for a partnership-based food security regime came from the government itself. The programs are the responsibility of many groups in the city, who all play a part in ensuring SMAB food security work remains capable and strong (2001, p.10).

Toronto, Canada

In Toronto, connections have been made between civil society and local government to carry out food security work. The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) formed in 1990 as a subcommittee of City Council Board of Health Committee to seek long-term solutions to food issues, focusing on hunger, community development, health and urban agriculture (Wekerle, p.382). Wekerle considers one of the TFPC's most important achievements to be a part of City Hall's passing of the Toronto Food Charter in 2000. Written by the TFPC, this Charter signified a commitment by the City to respond to food insecurity with a human rights basis. The Charter outlined matters pertaining to the purchase of food, creation of partnerships to increase access to healthy foods, and the importance of addressing environmental issues such as waste (ibid).

In 1999, the TFPC saw an opportunity to include food issues into the City mandate as the new official plan was being drafted. It carried out attempts over a three-year period to collaborate with city planners, and eventually the council and city planners connected. The TFPCs food policy elements were weaved throughout the

official plan: 21 changes were adopted, and the TFPC endorsed the official plan. The plan included the Food and Hunger Action Plan and the Toronto Food Charter (p.383-384).

These efforts eventually led to a new political space being made for food issues in Toronto city politics. The City Plan eventually acknowledged barriers affecting some peoples' food security. Wekerle notes that it is possible to see a just city by incorporating important social issues into planning. She discusses the role of food justice movements as having a great deal of potential, including partnering with the state and acting politically through translocal networks (p.385). The TFPC is a well-recognized in this movement.

Partnership-based Food Policy

There are several possibilities for the design of Ottawa's future food policy. In formulating it, there are many big questions to investigate regarding which players will be the forerunners of policy design: federal, provincial, municipal or civil society parties, and whether jurisdiction over food policy should be shared or not. This paper argues that a policy-based partnership between City Hall and civil society to meet well-developed objectives offers hope for the considering and effective change. Rather than policy design to be simply the responsibility of City Hall, a partnership ensures incorporation of a well-rounded collection of suitable expertise and quality control mechanisms.

Organizations like Just Food have a wealth of resources and many years of experience to offer to the development of food policy in food access and production respects. Koc et al. feel that organizations and governments have a lot to offer one another. Civil society offers creativity, cutting-edge knowledge, on-the-ground success and political legitimacy. Government offers decision making power, financial resources, and scaling-up capacity (p.139).

The TFPC points out six principles that food policy organizations can benefit from adopting. These principles produce results that are less expensive and more efficient. According to MacRae (2003), no Canadian department of agriculture has embraced these types of ideas to include processes that resemble these:

1. The organization should have well-established intelligence networks that focus on key indicators of activity and change. Decisions have to be based on both technical and qualitative information from these key indicators, before all information is available. Such a system can be effective if intelligence networks are extensive and include many kinds of actors.

2. The organization should consist of open-ended networks of independent allies, inside and outside the organization, to build collaborative solutions.
3. Decision-making should be shifted to the people closest to the environment.
4. Lines of communication should be more horizontal, as supposed to vertical.
5. The organization should spread risk by investing in more than one approach to solving a problem. Structures should be disaggregated so that more operating units are created, each with a low cost associated with failure.
6. Teams should be created, disassembled, and reassembled for different tasks to respond quickly to changing conditions. Generalists of different backgrounds who can work in different teams should be hired. Problems should be approached by different teams, from different angles. This approach, known as redundancy of function, spreads risk and produces greater diversity of thought and action (TFPC, as cited in MacRae, 2003, p.190).

The TFPC's principles help ensure that various points of expertise are included in food policy work. Through civil society being a key player in policy design, the best practices and needs of Ottawa's food security programming can be brought to the table first hand. In Belo Horizonte, Toronto and Detroit, an authoritative body or policy council led food policy efforts. These three cities along with the San Francisco example attribute success to direct participation with local government.

Challenges of Government – Civil Society Partnership

While the benefits of a partnership are strong, this approach to policy is not without possible complications. As mentioned by Koc et al., food security issues are complex (p.131). As a result, there are many possible points at which conflict between interested groups may arise, especially considering that this paper supports multi-sector involvement. Rocha (2003) provides an example of conflict arising in food policy work. In Belo Horizonte a consulting body, COMASA, was developed to advise the SMAB on projects and program directions. This initiative was not able to function effectively due to politics and personality conflicts (p.42). According to Campbell (2004), forces such as local social relationships, power relations, and differing environmental management practices are sometimes negative. Some communities can pursue elitist or narrow

“defensive localization strategies” at the expense of some sectors and wishes of society (p.346). Campbell shares a table that depicts various stakeholders in the food system and outlines the values, approaches and interests of these groups with regards to various food system issues.

The “global industrialized food system” faction concerns the conventional corporate food system sectors such as conventional farming, seed and fertilizer companies who see food as a commodity. They value profit maximizing, and scientific research such as biotechnology. This group generally thinks in terms of short-term profit-making and long-term market dominance on the global, transnational or corporate scale. Power in this case is top-down, with an emphasis on the economic market and resource control. Opposing this type of view is the “alternative food system”, composed of community food security activists. Food is viewed not as a commodity but as an individual and community right. Economic viability, environmental sustainability, social equality, and social justice are key. This group views solutions in the long-term, and believes in food security work at the community scale. Power comes from the bottom-up and is based on social networks, and coalition building. Other groups with a distinct stance in food issues are those involved in the “emergency food movement”, which focuses on reducing social costs of hunger and the improvement of individual health, while the group of “food citizens” focus on creating rural and urban relationships and food safety (p.343-344).

On the topic of local economies and food systems complimenting municipalities, Perkins (2003) suggests that governments and civil society working together may be problematic. Public policy processes may be challenging for activists to work within, and

governments have at times tampered with grassroots initiatives (p.62). The TFPC-City of Toronto experience encountered difficulty when working together. The city's Official Plan left out the history of the TFPC, the food security networks that had initiated policy, including the Charter adoption process. On the grassroots side, the community food security network lacked understanding of planning processes. This limited the contributions of the network to this process, despite strong interest (Wekerle, p.384).

It is inevitable that tensions within food system work arise (p.347), due to the complex nature of these matters. The chances of conflict from alternate views diminish without a government–civil society partnership. Should food security policy development and implementation be put in the hands of the City of Ottawa alone or civil society, diverging views would avoid one another, in formal discussion. Despite this risk, the benefits of local government and civil society working together competently are stronger than any possible conflict. Wekerle notes that still, the Toronto process suggests that strategies can still be formed to make effective change, if Universities, community agencies and city staff are taken into account (p.384). Without views of those at the ground level bringing insight and experience to City Hall, and without City Hall's public health interests, resources and knowledge an incomplete perspective is applied to food security work.

Current Food Security Activity

The Ottawa community has accomplished a great deal of food security work in the city, which is commendable considering the aforementioned constraints these groups experience. The City of Ottawa has explained its stance on health and food security and has provided both in-kind, programming and financial contributions to food security work. The leaders of both parties deserve a great deal of credit. Civil society and government working together may help intensify the abilities of this movement. The following section suggests points at which civil society and government mandates intersect, several messages learned from other cities' experiences and some suggestions for framing policy development.

Role for City of Ottawa in Food Security Activity

Enhancement and Creation of Programs and Services

A strong majority of food security programs in Ottawa have formed significant partnerships with business, private donors or other food and nutrition programs. Some meal programs use Ottawa Food Bank foods in their cooking like Britannia Woods Community House's Lunch Club and St. Joe's Women's Centre. Old Forge Community Resource Centre has food cooked in a neighbouring a retirement residence which is then transported to its centre for its Lunch Club. Miriam's Well depends on a private business owner to provide produce for its fruit and vegetable program. These partnerships signify that many programs have found it necessary or beneficial to collaborate with outside organizations or individuals in order to meet their goals. Involvement from the City of Ottawa may perhaps help alleviate some of the challenges and shortcomings in these inter-program relationships.

As well as contributing to strengthening current food security activities, government-civil society relationships may help give food security work in Ottawa a new identity. The four profiled city policies demonstrate an element of innovative thinking. More support from the City of Ottawa may create an opportunity not only for organizations to work together more efficiently but branch out even more and put good ideas to work⁴. This may increase capacity for the creation of new innovative programs and systems to improve the food security situation in Ottawa.

Volunteer and Donor Dependency

A strong majority of food and meal programs depend on volunteer support to operate. Many individuals have shown their interest in food and nutrition issues and willingness to work, while other private partners have offered donations. Prior to 2009, the Community Food Advisors Program was unable to train any additional volunteers to help out with its work for over to ten years. This led to the program being unable to meet demand for its services. More involvement from the City of Ottawa could alleviate some of the pressure on volunteers and donors to ensure food security work is possible. This could provide consistency and ensure the work can continue being done despite any fluctuations in volunteer or donor activity⁵⁶.

⁴ Upon speaking with an Ottawa Food Bank coordinator, it was noted that due to adequate funding, a new coordinator position was created which allowed for partnerships with Community Food Advisors and Ottawa Public Health to be formed. These partnerships have proved very useful in carrying out program goals (Ottawa Food Bank Staff Member (a), pers. comm., 2010).

⁵ A Statistics Canada report noted that the amount of charitable giving in Ontario dropped from 90 percent to 86 percent (Hall, Lasby, Ayer & Gibbons, 2009, p.13). While there was a 5.7 percent increase in the number of volunteers in Canada, rising to 12.5 million, the rate of volunteering in Ontario dropped from 50 percent to 47 percent in 2007 (p. 35). The rate of Canadian volunteers decreases with age, while the number of hours volunteering increases (p.38).

While many sources of funding from private, provincial and federal levels are likely appreciated by beneficiaries, long-term funding would likely create much more stability for programs and services. Grant or funding applications and uncertainty regarding future budget matters take away from a program or service's ability to meet its potential. Further, it creates the idea that donors and volunteers are expected to do this work.

Role for Food Security Concepts in Ottawa's Activities and Goals

In-kind, programming and financial support exemplify support for food security.

Collaborating more directly with civil society such as NGOs may help extend Ottawa's interest in public health and create better results. Three areas of city activity as listed here demonstrate overlap with Ottawa's food security network.

Ottawa 20/20: Ottawa's Growth Management Strategy

Food security work is relevant to Ottawa's 20/20 Plans. Some items described within its Human Services Plan involve creating partnerships with other levels of government, the private sector and community-based organizations and valuing innovative ways of delivering services and using its infrastructure and resources adequately (City of Ottawa, 2010b). It cites a commitment to providing equal access to basic needs such as income, food, clothing, housing, transportation, health services and recreation (City of Ottawa, 2010b). Both civil society and the municipal government have demonstrated an understanding of the importance of these principles and collaboration to further these goals is a useful avenue to consider. Disadvantaged individuals and deprived

⁶ As suggested by an Ottawa Food Bank Staff Member, events of natural disaster, such as the recent Haiti earthquake also contribute to fluctuating support from donors (Ottawa Food Bank Staff Member (b), pers. comm., 2010).

programming could benefit along the way, and start to correct sustained poverty and food insecurity.

Community Development Framework

The Community Development Framework (CDF) was designed for the purpose of coordinating municipal community services and bringing various interested groups and stakeholders together to address the needs of Ottawa's neighbourhoods. To assess local problems, the program zeroed in on four neighbourhoods and assessed their vitality. The CDF noted various concerns, some of which related to food issues. In Bayshore neighbourhood, it found that residents had difficulty accessing grocery stores, 24 percent of the population was living under the LICO and many cannot afford healthy food. Researchers found similar findings in three additional neighbourhood studies (City of Ottawa, 2010c). Initiatives such as CDF have similar interests as food and nutrition workers, and organizations like Just Food.

Ottawa Public Health

Through health protection, promotion and surveillance, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) works to benefit the city's population. OPH aims to protect the community from communicable diseases and hazards. It works with individuals and communities, through encouraging healthy public policy, developing personal skills, creating supportive environments, strengthening community actions and re-orienting the health system (Ottawa Public Health, 2010). OPH keeps track of demographic profiles, behavioural risk factors and adverse health events. Its services include prevention, management and control of infectious and communicable diseases, immunizations, early detection of cancer, sexual health and support for optimum health choices for individuals, families and communities.

Food policy can offer sustained programming that is rooted in legislation and the City's mandate. Both municipal government and civil society may benefit from sharing knowledge, experience, resources and interests. Ottawa is at an advantage, in that both the government and civil society have a shared interest in the health, nutrition and the well-being of the population.

Lessons Learned

The municipalities profiled in this report exemplify the incorporation of food policy into government activity and demonstrate that organized efforts have the potential to increase the capacity of food security work to make significant improvement. In 2003, about 38 percent of Belo Horizonte's population benefitted from the SMAB programs. In 1998, 75 percent of children in Belo Horizonte who had been diagnosed with severe malnutrition showed an improvement as a result of the enriched flour program (Rocha, 2001, p.39). The TFPC's work has proliferated urban gardening and agriculture, and increased the number of schoolchildren who receive meals each day. Culturally unique solutions and frameworks can be provided through these activities as the DBCFSN and San Francisco examples show by ensuring marginalized groups were heard. The following section outlines lessons learned from these cities related to economic, community and agriculture matters.

In Belo Horizonte, Popular Restaurants run on trained staff labour. The Restaurants and other programs such as school breakfast programs provide more jobs to people in the community. Food security work can be cost effective. A municipal budget can keep food security on the government's agenda at a reasonable cost. In 1995, 46 percent of Belo Horizonte's total budget came from the federal government, 45 percent came from the municipality, and 9 percent was generated from its programs. In 1998, the SMAB programs accounted for only 0.95 percent of the city's budget and 11 percent of the budget was from revenue from programs including the Popular Restaurants and Popular Food Basket (Rocha, 2003, p.38).

Ottawa can count on health care costs easing with more emphasis on food security work. A TFPC document comments on the obvious link between poor nutrition and food access and long term costs of health care. Due to a changing food system and threat of disease, part of the TFPC's activities are focused on disease prevention such as nutritional risk factors associated with cancer prevention (TFPC, 2001, p.2). According to Perkins (2003), local economies can grow more easily with guaranteed income, health care, childcare and education (p.62). A serious commitment to food security from the Ottawa municipal government does not need to be at an overly high cost; from looking at other municipalities' work, it can be done in a cost effective manner.

Benefits also come in the form of education and support for food policy at higher levels. The efforts in Belo Horizonte allowed people to learn about health and gardening. The San Francisco example has also contributed to health promotion being a priority for City Hall. The TFPC provides youth with a venue to learn about food policy and contribute to the health of the food system through its Toronto Youth Policy Council (Rabinowicz, 2009).

The amount of education involved in this work is enormous. Other municipalities have demonstrated their capacity to lead, and represent their commitment to food security and health. As seen in the San Francisco work, the Good Neighbour Program was eventually endorsed at the California state level. The TFPC has also helped extend food security policy past its borders, by co-writing the Ontario Public Health Association's Food and Nutrition Strategy Statement (TFPC, 2001, p.2). All four profiled

municipalities have demonstrated their ability to move food policy upward, and to act as a model for other municipalities.

Regarding local agriculture, opportunities exist in the area of food access to enhance local agriculture. As demonstrated in Belo Horizonte, the mobile food stores and expanded produce markets contributed to the growth of local farmers. The SMAB in Brazil sources from local producers, also reducing transportation and distribution costs (2001 p.38). In 1999, there were 36 rural producers from 10 municipalities participating in SMAB programming. Products were closely regulated, and purchased directly from producers, eliminating middle people (p.41) The TFPC developed a “Buy Ontario” campaign, organized food education workshops, and promoted farmer’s markets, among other plans (TFPC, 2001, p.3).

Limitations of Research

The data collected in the first part of this report pertained to the status, strengths and challenges of various food security organizations. It is possible that an alternative way of collecting this information may have increased the relevance of the comments made by interviewers. First, organizations were chosen somewhat at random. While the profiled organizations offer a wide range of programming examples, the pool is not entirely representative of Ottawa's diverse communities. One interview took place with a First Nations organization. However, it was left out as the profile could not be approved by the organization's executive director, a process unique to this particular organization. A similar report pertaining to First Nations in particular or inclusion of First Nations programs and other distinct communities may improve the richness of a report of this nature.

Interviews with food program affiliates ranged from fifteen minutes to one hour. Interviews were entirely open-ended with a series of uniform questions asked to each participant. The interviews resembled casual conversation in many cases and helped gain insight into the workings of these groups. In future environmental scans, a survey type of correspondence with organizations may be useful to help provide better structure in outlining issues faced by these groups. With the use of a streamlined survey, additional significant information may have been uncovered. On the other hand, many food program coordinators are occupied with demands of their work and may have been less receptive to a survey or to additional steps involved in the study.

Next Steps

It is reasonable to suggest that Ottawa follows the trend seen in cities like Toronto, Belo Horizonte and Detroit that have a food security body or department incorporated into the municipal government agenda. While the adoption of a similar structure like this is recommended, the input of food security leaders and relevant officials' into how a policy should be structured is key. This said, one can suggest that Ottawa would likely benefit from a political body which is represented by those who are "close to the environment", as suggested by the TFPC. Ottawa may benefit from a centralized department or council that synthesizes objectives, manages program funds and enhances food policy work.

Practical and Realistic Thinking

Ottawa 20/20 and Ottawa's Official City Plan are examples of points at which the city can adopt food security principles. As Wekerle (2003) explains, the Toronto Food Policy Council worked diligently to have its plans incorporated into the City of Toronto Official Plan. Other information held by City Hall may help provide a starting point regarding where food security work can be carried out, such as the location of empty lots and buildings.

It is also important to keep in mind the abilities of individuals and organizations carrying out food security work. While the principles of an effective food security organization as proposed by the TFPC repeatedly make suggestions related to keeping food policy close to those affected by it, it must be kept in mind that many organizers and programs have limited time and resources. Should a food access program be implemented, the needs of people with distinctive pressures such as single parent

families must be kept in mind. People with personal or life situation constraints that may be less able to access a service must be considered. Due to the projected rise of the number of seniors in Canada, Ottawa can expect that the senior population will rise by a large number. It may be helpful to determine how programs can be arranged to ensure as many people as possible can benefit equally.

City Organization

Food insecurity policy may be regarded most feasibly at a municipal level, and food security programming may be organized successfully at the community or neighbourhood level. Upon a base line in terms of geographic division, developers may form effective systems. The city can be viewed in terms of its general regions, such as East, South, West and Central. The City of Ottawa's ward system is a second type of city organization. There are 23 wards, each supervised by a city councillor (City of Ottawa, 2010). At an even more detailed level, one can look at the neighbourhood organization method used by the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, which researches the physical and social determinants of health of Ottawa neighbourhoods. This study categorized the city into 97 areas (Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, 2010).

Information dissemination, food delivery programming, and food outlets may be organized by neighbourhood. Assessment and evaluation may also take place at these levels. It is possible to find or allocate leadership in each city sections, whether in Ottawa's 23 wards, or each of Ottawa's 97 neighbourhoods. Perhaps city councillors or individuals in neighbourhoods could carry out a leadership role in carrying out practical food security systems. A central food security network represented by activity organized

by neighbourhood or ward may help designate tasks and distribute information to ensure that municipal programming reaches all.

Useful City Systems and Service Plans

Many of the municipal level food policies described in this paper incorporated innovative and dynamic ideas. Program developers may benefit from looking into existing municipal systems in Ottawa and imagine how they could relate to the goals of an effective food security policy, which aims for a food secure city where all people have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. Ottawa has organized an extensive bus system, including several major stations throughout the city. Other effective systems are bylaw enforcement, restaurant inspection, as well as waste and recycling pick-up. It may be worth investigating these types of organization further, as some have developed routes and systems that include each household, all of Ottawa's neighbourhoods, or various points of congregation – qualities that may inspire dynamic program development. The entire city is involved in or aware of these systems, and many operate very regularly and efficiently.

Where People Come Together

Innovative plans may keep in mind points throughout the city where people come together regularly. Some of these include shopping malls, bus stations, elementary schools, high schools and universities. Some of the profiled cities incorporate gardening and food education into school activity. Schools may be a point at which food can be distributed to individuals and families. This possibility applies to work places as well. In addition, high-rise buildings house thousands of people. Especially in areas of the city with a high concentration of apartment buildings, distribution of food and information can reach many people with proper organization.

Conclusion

Wekerle's article includes a quotation from Debbie Field, Executive Director of Food Share, regarding community organizing. Field notes that change occurs at the grassroots level and eventually this action reaches the community level. Communities then become strong enough to force policy change at the government level (p.385). If this is the case, Ottawa is ready for a next step. Ottawa has demonstrated strong networks at the community level, with the establishment of partnerships between non-governmental groups and ensuring thousands of people are given easier access to food. Food for All's capacity to bring community members together to discuss food policy matters and is moving forward toward creating a Food Action Plan suggests the city is in a proper place to make change.

Should the activities of food security programs and services operate at their potential, there is no need to stop at this point. There is a good reason to believe that in the next decade or so, the food security situation in Ottawa will improve. Looking at the current food security network, one may ask what exactly is going on. Currently, many programs are completely autonomous; a part of an ad hoc food policy that is arbitrarily formed with responsibility and structure rooted only in itself. Ottawa may correct its missing progress toward food security with a new policy-based approach, keeping in mind it can learn from other successful municipal government-civil society partnerships as well as be an example for other municipalities someday as well, by demonstrating a commitment to food security.

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