EVALUATING OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY FOOD ACTIONS: **A GUIDE**

PROTECTING CANADIANS FROM ILLNESS

Public Health Agency of Canada
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Introduction

Across Canada, hundreds of communities are working together to discover grassroots solutions to improve 'food security'. There are many definitions of food security and many approaches to addressing food related issues in our communities. One definition that has been used worldwide, including in Canada, is the following: "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 and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 1998). More recently, many groups have added to the definition, introducing concepts of local self-reliance, protecting human dignity in food access, the need for food system reform, environmental sustainability, cultural considerations, and the importance of engaging communities in tackling these issues.

Food security has become a broad umbrella term that encompasses a range of food-focused issues. The goal of promoting food security has given rise to hundreds of "Community Food Actions" (CFAs). CFAs are diverse and many are quite innovative. Some CFAs, such as food cooperatives, are directly concerned with getting affordable food into the hands of individuals. Others try to build local community capacity to produce or prepare their own food, such as community gardens and kitchens. Still others are concerned with higher level policies related to poverty reduction and/or support for local food economies. Community Food Actions sometimes reflect divergent perspectives on the root cause of the problem of food insecurity and therefore where the solutions lie. Most, however, reflect a commitment to working collaboratively with communities to find solutions that will make a difference.

This guide is about just that – equipping people with practical tools and resources to evaluate *just what kind of difference their Community Food Action is making*. This is a how-to guide about evaluation; a CFA may be achieving important changes, but the time and resources are often lacking to demonstrate and document these changes.

In many sectors, evaluation is now an expectation of funding organizations. Beyond meeting such accountability requirements, evaluation provides a rich and strategic opportunity to:

- learn more about what works and how;
- inform improvements to a program or an approach;
- optimize the use of community assets and resources;
- enable the discovery and sharing of successes.

These accomplishments can sometimes be difficult to achieve, yet community organizations continue to achieve remarkable things with few resources. The hope is that this guide will provide some practical tools that make the undertaking more doable, more useful and maybe even fun.

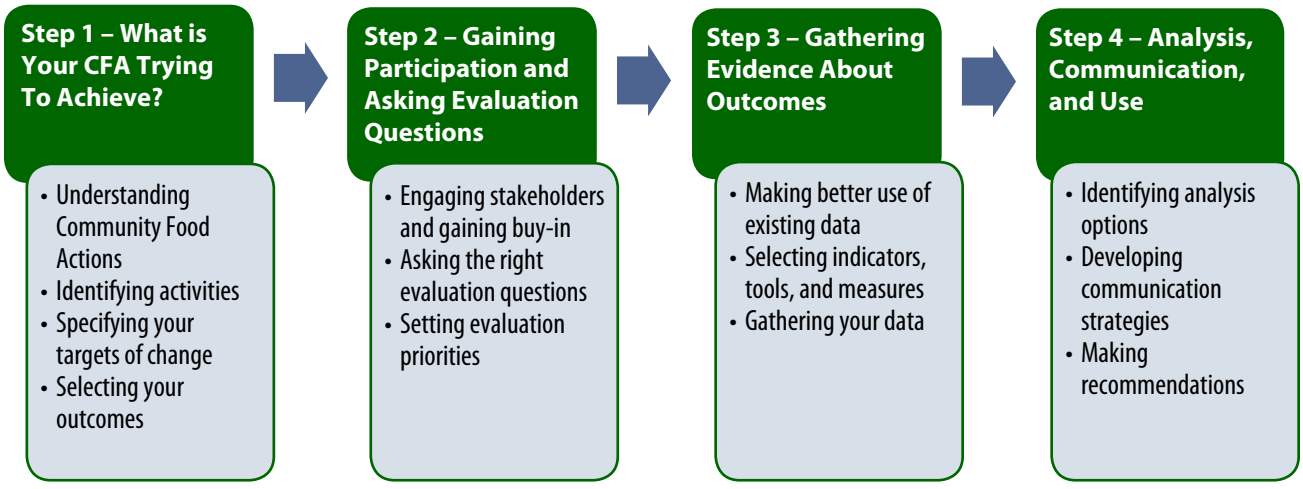
Who Will Benefit From This Guide?

First off – this is not a general evaluation primer. We are assuming that the user has a basic familiarity with the rationale and methods of evaluation. If not, there are excellent resources out there and we provide links to some of these. Rather, the purpose of this Guide is to provide people involved in *Community Food Actions*[1] (CFAs) with practical tools, resources, and strategies to evaluate outcomes.

More specifically this Guide is focused on Community Food Actions that are aiming to reduce barriers to food access (either through policy and systems change work and/or through addressing the needs of individuals). As such, it will have relevance to those who want to evaluate the extent to which their CFA is increasing the affordability, availability, access to, and consumption of nutritious food in their communities.

Contents of the Guide: The Four Major Steps in an Evaluation

This Guide covers *Four Major Steps in Evaluation*, as illustrated in the figure below. Step 1 will help you to answer the question *"What Is Your Community Food Action Trying to Achieve?"*. In the Step 1 chapter, we describe the variety of food actions that exist and the sorts of outcomes that are to be expected. This will help you to determine where your own CFA fits. An important step in building your evaluation is to name and define your own outcomes – the beneficial changes you expect will occur as a result of your work. The Step 2 chapter focuses on *Gaining Participation and Asking Evaluation Questions*. Step 2 provides strategies to promote collective efforts and input from different people connected to your organization. It's during this step that you and your partners can identify the key questions to be answered by the evaluation.



[1] We have elected to use the term "Community Food Actions", abbreviated as "CFAs" in this Guide in attempt to capture the full array of programs, services, initiatives, policy interventions, community events, capacity building, partnerships, and so on. "Program", the more common term in evaluation, seemed too narrow.

Step 3 is all about putting your evaluation into action. This chapter will review effective strategies to *Gather Evidence About Outcomes* and will help answer your evaluation questions, including the most important one: "Did your CFA make a difference?" Step 4 focuses on the *Analysis, Communication, and Use* of your evaluation information. This chapter is about generating meaning from information and putting it to good use – communicating your findings to community members and participants, reporting to funders, acting on results, and improving your work.

For users who wish to acquire more depth and detail regarding evaluation methodology, we recommend the following.

- *The Measurement and Analysis Companion Document,* available at http://cdpac.ca/admin/media.php?mid=1111. This document is designed to be used with the Guide if you need extra information about basic evaluation methods.
- *Program Development and Evaluation* at http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/index.html; An online educational clearinghouse of tools, resources, tips, and forums for developing and implementing program evaluations.
- *Splash and Ripple: Using Outcomes to Design & Manage Community Activities,* available at http://www.smartfund.ca/docs/smart_outcomes_guide.pdf. A similar guide that takes the reader through the steps of building an outcome evaluation framework in relation to community health outcomes.
- *Community Action Resources for Inuit, Métis, and First Nations – Evaluating* (http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/services/_adp-apd/evaluating-evaluation/index-eng.php) and *A Guide for First Nations on Evaluating Health Programs* (http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/finance/_agree-accord/guide_eval_prog/index-eng.php). These documents provide evaluation information specifically for Inuit, Métis, and/or First Nations, taking into consideration values and cultural practices.
- *Guide to Project Evaluation: A Participatory Approach*, available at http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/resources-ressources/guide/index-eng.php#contents. This guide provides an easy-to-use, comprehensive framework for project evaluation in the area of health promotion.

A Quick Primer On Evaluation Terms and Concepts Used in this Guide

Evaluation terminology can often be confusing. Some terms mean different things to different people. For clarity and consistency, we provide a quick overview of key evaluation terms that are used in this Guide and how we are defining them.

Activity: The day-to-day tasks and efforts of the CFA designed to produce benefits for participants, groups, communities, partners, etc. (Examples: "Providing nutritional cooking classes to community members", "Distributing fresh food boxes to neighbourhood drop-in centres", "Holding a policy forum on local food security issues").

Outputs: Expressed as quantities ("number of…."), outputs are "counts" of program delivery, activities, and participation (Examples: "Number of cooking classes", "Number of people using the mobile vegetable market", "Number of organizations represented on a Food Security Coalition"). Outputs help you understand if your CFA is being implemented as planned (see *Process Evaluation* below). In your analysis plan (see *Step 4 – Analysis, Communication, and Use*), it is helpful to specify what outputs are desired (e.g., "15 participants at each session").

Outcome: Meaningful, beneficial changes experienced by participants, groups or communities associated with your CFA. *Short-term outcomes* happen first and lead to *intermediate outcomes* and then to *long-term outcomes*. (Examples: "Increased access to fresh food", "Increased knowledge and skills regarding healthy food preparation", "Improved partnerships between non-profit food distributors and local farmers").

> **Short-term Outcomes:** The fairly immediate benefits or changes (under 6 months) that individuals or groups are anticipated to experience or display as a result of a CFA. CFAs will tend to have the most control or influence over short term outcomes. (Examples: "Increased knowledge and skills of health food preparation", "Greater awareness of municipal government on food access planning").
>
> **Intermediate Outcomes:** Intermediate outcomes are defined in relation to short- and long-term outcomes. They fall between them (6 months to 2 years) – they do not have that broad, "long time in the future" quality of long-term outcomes but neither do they follow directly from program activities. (Example: "Increased consumption of nutritious foods", "Creation of new funding for local community gardens").
>
> **Long-Term Outcomes:** The more distant benefits or changes (over 2 years) that are anticipated as a result of a CFA. Generally, long-term outcomes are the changes that result from successful achievement of short-term and intermediate outcomes over time. (Example: "Improved overall health and well-being of community members").

Indicators: Information that helps to determine the degree to which your outcomes have been achieved (e.g., "self-reports of coping with food insecurity"; "ratings of satisfaction with level of food access", "coalition members' ratings of new food policy coverage and balance", "number of food baskets distributed per neighbourhood"). Indicators are derived from data that have been collected with the specific purpose of assessing outcomes.

Data: A general term that refers to the concrete information that is collected for a range of different purposes. Data are numbers, averages, percentages, words, categories, stories, and so on.

Tools: The surveys, instruments, focus groups, checklists, etc., used to gather your indicators (Examples: a pre and post survey; the *Coping Strategies Index, The Whole Measures Evaluation Rubric*).

Process Evaluation: A set of methods and procedures to describe the extent to which a CFA was implemented as planned, and if not, why not? Process evaluation focuses on finding out if the CFA has all of its parts, if the parts are functional, and if it is operating as it was intended to.

Outcome Evaluation: A set of methods and procedures used to assess the extent to which a CFA leads to desired and expected outcomes. Outcome evaluation is also interested in understanding the details on how beneficial changes are achieved.

These key terms represent the main features of an evaluation. Activities (what you do) lead to outcomes (what you want to achieve). To understand if your CFA is being delivered as planned, it is helpful to collect outputs. To understand if you attained your outcomes, you need to collect indicators that measure them. Finally, your tools collect all this information. In general, most evaluations would like to answer some variation on the following questions:

1. **Did the activities of the CFA go as planned?** (Process evaluation)
2. **Did we achieve our expected outcomes?** (Outcome evaluation)
3. **What can we learn from this evaluation that will make future Community Food Actions more effective?** (Actions based on findings)

A Note on Process and Outcome Evaluation

The above questions represent the relationship between *Process Evaluation* (assessing the implementation of your CFA) and *Outcome Evaluation* (assessing the beneficial changes that follow from your CFA). It will be helpful for you to pay attention to the process of implementing your CFA. We discuss outputs in the guide as important sources of information about process (e.g., knowing how many people attended and who they were can give you confidence that your CFA is reaching enough of the right people). Other process information can also be gathered as well, such as community members' satisfaction with the CFA and potential barriers to their participation. It is worth remembering that without some process information, it may be hard to interpret your CFA's outcomes. What if you observe little or no benefits as a result of your CFA? You will need some process information to answer the question "what went wrong?"

Acknowledging the role of process evaluation, this guide focuses primarily on *assessing outcomes*. The resources listed on page 7 include additional information on how to incorporate process information into your CFA evaluation. In the next chapter we will talk in some detail about what CFAslook like and the central outcomes they are trying to achieve.

If you are at the stage where you are still figuring out who you are trying to serve, how to reach them, what their needs are, and how you will meet those needs, then you are probably not ready to do an outcome evaluation. Measuring outcomes only makes sense if you are clear about how your CFA is delivered and how it is supposed to benefit people. If you are not, it may be better to start with collecting additional information about community needs, generating ideas on how to reach out and respond, and reviewing the best practice literature regarding programs similar to your own.

The Uses and Audiences of Evaluation

Informal and ongoing evaluation of work is fairly common in CFAs. In the day-to-day work of any organization, staff and managers are constantly gathering and assessing information about how they are doing their work, while trying to figure out how to improve – how to make their work more impactful, how to reach more people, how to reach the target group, and how to be more efficient. The field of evaluation attempts to make such information collection and analysis more systematic and formalized.

While many CFAs incorporate basic information gathering as part of their day-to-day work, formal evaluations require additional financial and human resources. A lack of resources is a common complaint of community organizations hoping to undertake an evaluation. Ensuring that resources are freed up to do so is essential.

Evaluations are most *useful* when the purpose and intended use of evaluation information are clearly understood at the outset. Who is the evaluation for? What will be done with thefindings? Being clear about this is critical because it will help you decide what kind of evaluation you need to undertake. For example, if the evaluation purpose is primarily about improving what you do, the focus will be on understanding how the CFA is operating and how it can work better. Primary users will likely be participants and/or staff. On the other hand, if your purpose is more about determining the outcomes of what you do, you will want to use indicators and tools that help you assess the achievement of outcomes. In this case, funders, policy makers, and other decision-makers may be the more important users.

While the goals of different users may sometimes conflict, evaluation can in principle meet multiple needs. Accountability requirements may be met while simultaneously promoting outcome measurement, improvement, and knowledge generation. Attending to the goals of multiple users strengthens evaluations.

Participatory Evaluations

All evaluations are strengthened when the people who are connected to your CFA – staff, participants, community members, partners – have the opportunity to meaningfully participate, from setting the goals of the evaluation to providing input on data collection, interpreting data, and acting on the findings.

Continuum of Participation in Evaluations (Patton, 2008)

Level of participation	What participation looks like...
Inform	"We will keep informed of the evaluation's progress and findings"
Consult	"We will keep you informed, listen to you, and provide feedback on how your input influenced the evaluation"
Involve	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns are considered and reflected in the options considered, make sure you get to review and comment on options, and provide feedback on how your input is used in the evaluation"
Collaborate	"We will incorporate your advice and suggestions to the greatest extent possible, and give you meaningful opportunities to be part of the evaluation decision-making process"
Empower	"This is your evaluation. The knowledge generated will belong to you and is for your use. We will offer options to inform your decisions. You will decide and we will facilitate the implementation of what you decide."

Participatory evaluations strive for the levels of collaboration and empowerment. Ensuring meaningful participation is an important strategy to ensure that people actually care about CFAs and their effectiveness, and that they have some degree of "ownership" over the process and the results. Without a sense of engagement and ownership, it is often difficult to develop a credible process, gain consensus for improvements, and act on findings.

CFA Case Illustrations – Community Food Action Descriptions

Throughout this guide we will illustrate evaluation concepts, planning steps, and decisions using three CFA examples. These will appear at the end of each chapter. In our introductory chapter we will begin with a quick description of three hypothetical CFAs.

CFA #1 – *Traditional Food, Traditional Land (TFTL)*

Geographic Location: A small northern First Nation community.
Serves: School aged children, ranging from 12 to 17 years.
Description and Purpose: The Traditional Food, Traditional Land (TFTL) project provides First Nations youth with hands-on experience and knowledge regarding traditional practices in hunting, fishing, trapping, and harvesting. TFTL was built from a partnership of the local school, community elders, experienced First Nations hunters, and conservationists, as part of a community wide effort to improve traditional food security. It is funded by the local health authority. Youth accompany adults through 100 square kilometers of land to learn traditional hunting, food preparation techniques, nutrition, and the importance of spiritual and ancestral traditions.

CFA #2 – *Capital Urban Garden and Food Drop In (CUG)*

Geographic Location: Inner city, economically disadvantaged neighbourhood of large urban city.
Serves: Individuals and families in the local neighbourhood, especially those experiencing economic risk.
Description and Purpose: The Capital Urban Garden and Drop In runs two community gardens. Some members volunteer to tend and harvest the garden. Others buy shares in vegetable food boxes. Recently the organization expanded to produce subsidized food boxes for at-risk individuals in the neighbourhood who have been referred by the local food bank. Community members can also drop in for a variety of events, notably food preparation seminars based on the garden harvests.

CFA #3 – *The Regional Food Security Coalition (RFSC)*

Geographic Location: Regional area covering 400 square kilometers of farmland and forest, with several small villages and two small to mid-sized cities.
Serves: All residents in the region.
Description and Purpose: The RFSC started as a loose affiliation of 4 farmers markets – 2 in the cities, and 2 in the smaller towns. The Coalition formed in response to a regional needs assessment that demonstrated that many families in the region were working poor and/or isolated, with insufficient options to obtain healthy and balanced food. An inordinate percentage of these families were from First Nations communities. The suppliers and vendors of the markets have come together to begin developing policy and program responses to this need.

Now that we have introduced and defined some key evaluation concepts we will move to the four major steps in an evaluation, beginning with *Step 1: What Is Your Community Food Action Trying to Achieve?*

STEP 1

What Is Your Community Food Action Trying to Achieve?

In this chapter you will learn about:

- ✔ *Different types of Community Food Actions and how they work to produce outcomes*
- ✔ *A Food Security Framework for Evaluation that can help guide your own local evaluation*
- ✔ *Where your program fits in the Framework, by identifying your activities, targets of change, and outcomes*

Step 1 – What is Your CFA Trying To Achieve?

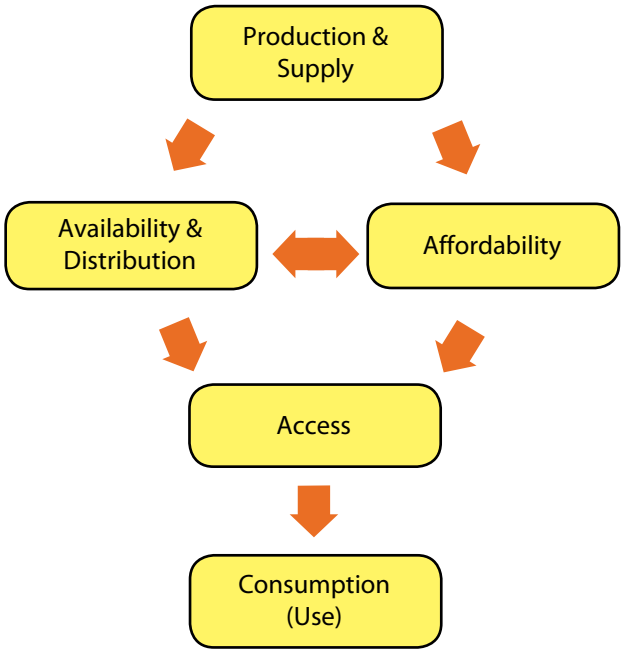
- Understanding Community Food Actions
- Identifying your activities
- Specifying your targets of change
- Selecting your outcomes

A Model of Food Security and the Role of Community Food Actions

> *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 and food preferences for an active and healthy life.*
>
> (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 1998)

Consider this definition. It is clear that a lot of things need to happen for people to experience food security. Healthy food must be produced, distributed, and accessed. It goes without saying that a range of healthy and desirable foods must be conveniently available from stores, markets, and farmers. For some ethnocultural groups, food security includes both traditional and market foods and as such, traditional food sources must be available and accessible. Food must also be affordable. People must know what constitutes a healthy and balanced diet, and have the skills to plan and prepare meals accordingly. Local, regional, and federal economic and social policies, as well as policies governing the food system and factors affecting it, must support these goals.

General Model of Food Security



The definition of food security represents a set of interrelated processes and outcomes. In general, food security may be understood as the flow of healthy and desired food throughout a system of 1) production and supply, 2) availability and distribution, 3) affordability, 4) access, and 5) consumption (use of food). The relationships between these elements of food security are represented in the diagram at left.

There is a healthy, and sometimes controversial, debate over which aspects of food security should be given greater detail and importance. Different aspects of food security may take on different qualities and levels of importance depending on the population under consideration (e.g., children in school, First Nations, Inuit, or Métis peoples, the elderly) and geographic location (e.g., urban, rural, northern). Underlying this model of food security is a host of contextual factors and influences that Community Food Actions need to consider.

The point of this Guide is not to suggest the BEST area to intervene. Rather, it is to acknowledge that there are many different ways that CFAs can contribute to greater food security, and to provide some tools that will achieve a better understanding of how. We are, however, making a few assumptions about the nature of change as a consequence of CFAs:

Four Assumptions about Community Food Actions
1. A "Community Food Action", by definition, should impact at least one or more areas of the general model of Food Security: *Production/Supply, Availability/Distribution, Affordability, Access, and Consumption. Access and Consumption* are the end-point of any CFA, even if these outcomes are fairly "distant" from how and when the CFA intervenes.
2. Community Food Actions often differ to the extent that they are designed to impact broad *organizations and systems* (e.g., changes in housing or minimum wage policies, policies so that local food is represented in grocery stores etc.) versus impacting *individual citizens* directly (e.g., such as when an individual participates in a community garden).
3. If multiple areas of the food security model are targeted by a CFA, there is a greater potential for positive change. However, many small local organizations are understandably limited in how much they can actually do on their own.
4. The more that Community Food Actions in a community work together strategically, the more opportunities there are for greater change.

Sensitivity to Context

Community Food Actions in First Nations and Inuit communities involve activities that help improve access to food that is not only healthy, but also consistent with cultural traditions. In this context, evaluations designed to measure changes in food security need to track changes in relation to cultural traditions and norms. For example, food security in First Nations and Inuit communities may rely, in part, on building and sharing knowledge and skills associated with hunting and fishing and access to traditional harvesting sites. The meaning of food security and the strategies to secure it in these contexts may be quite different from other contexts, such as urban settings. Similarly, there may be unique outcomes of your own initiatives that reflect your local context, which need to be considered in relation to broad food security concepts, such as access, availability, affordability and consumption.

What is critical in developing evaluations is to clearly articulate the different types of outcomes to be measured and to connect these to the range of activities that you are engaged in.

To help with this step, a general framework has been developed which lists different types of CFA activities and the outcomes that tend to follow from them. We are calling this the *Food Security Framework for Evaluation* (which we will now call "the Framework" for brevity's sake), which follows on the next page.

Components of the Food Security Framework for Evaluation

The Framework serves as a central tool in this Guide and we will refer to it often. In the sections that follow, we will provide guidance on how to take the content of the Framework and modify it to reflect your own activities and outcomes. From there we will talk about how to move toward the evaluation of your CFA. Let's first provide some more detail about the content of the Framework.

Direct Community Food Actions for Individuals and Groups

The right side of the framework provides the key steps in a Community Food Action that aims to increase food security of a specific group, often those most at risk. These food actions reach a limited number of people. They include activities such as providing education and resources on nutrition, access, and use; facilitating shared food production, preparation and use; creating affordable options for food access; and providing emergency food access.

Examples of Targeted Community Food Actions:

- Community Gardens
- Community Kitchens & Freezers
- Farms to Schools
- Farms to Cafeterias
- Food shares and boxes
- Farmers markets
- Coupon and incentive programs
- Food banks
- Country food programs
- Retail-based initiatives

The Food Security Framework for Evaluation

	Systems and Policy Change Initiatives		Direct Community Food Actions for Individuals & Groups	
Activities	• Undertake research, develop resources, convene stakeholders (government, private sector, NGOs, farmers) etc. to raise awareness about local food security issues. • Create partnerships with stakeholders • Engage in food security policy development, advocacy.		• Provide education & resources on food nutrition, access, & use. • Facilitate shared food production and use • Facilitate shared food preparation and use • Create affordable options for local food access • Provide emergency food provision	
Outputs	**Examples:** • # of organizations represented in partnership • # of committee meetings held & # of attendees • # of new resources created and distributed to partners, community members, other stakeholders. • # of community members attending events, forums, promotions, etc.		**Examples:** • # of groups, classes, sessions, activities offered to community members • # of people regularly attending a group, class, info session, program, etc. • Kilograms of food distributed to community members; # of food baskets delivered. • # of people accessing food provision activities (e.g., using coupons, visiting markets, events, etc.)	
Short-term Outcomes	**Awareness**	**Partnerships**	**Knowledge & Skills**	**Food Availability/ Affordability**
	• Greater awareness among decision-makers and opinion leaders of food security and social planning needs • Greater community awareness of local food security issues.	• Multi-sector partnerships are formed or strengthened between organizations in food and related systems: – Committees are formed with a clear agenda for action – Partners are more active, invested, & committed – Champions emerge & become active in the partnership – Plans for action are formed/promoted/ supported by the partnership – Actions are informed by evidence	• Increased knowledge and skills in: – food production – food preparation – food budgeting, management, and use. • Increased awareness of the local and global food system • Improved coping skills in managing food insecurity	• Increased production/ distribution of food • Increased affordability of food through participation in CFA. • Increased availability of food through participation in CFA.
Intermediate Outcomes	**Systems Changes:** • Development/enhancement of a broad range of policies, funding and initiatives that increase affordability, availability and access to food – particularly for vulnerable communities. • Expansion and improvement of existing CFAs • Development of new and innovative CFAs to meet local needs.		**Access & Consumption:** • Increased access to nutritious food • Increased consumption of nutritious food • Increased stability and regularity of healthy food use	
Long-term Outcomes	• Decreased family stress and life disruption due to food insecurity • Reduced stigma and greater dignity in relation to food access • Reduced vulnerability to chronic and other diseases • Improved overall health and well-being			

Following down the right side of the Framework is a list of short-term and intermediate outcomes. The short-term outcomes of direct CFAs for individuals and groups focus on improving the knowledge and skills of community members, and increasing food availability and affordability. The intermediate outcomes focus on food access and consumption. The long-term outcomes are likely shared by most CFAs and include decreased family stress and disruption to life due to food insecurity; reduced stigma and greater dignity; and improved overall health.

Systems and Policy Change Initiatives

The left side of the Framework provides the key steps for *Systems and Policy Change*. This refers to the work of food security councils, coalitions, and networks, including policy development and advocacy, partnership building, and raising community awareness. Systems and policy change initiatives seek to make change at the community, regional, or even national levels. Short-term and intermediate outcomes include greater awareness and improved partnerships followed by new and/or adapted policies and expansion/ introduction of CFAs – actions that ultimately improve affordability, availability and access to safe and nutritious food for individuals and families.

Systems and Policy Change Initiatives:
Food security councils, cooperatives, networks, coalitions, and community hubs that:

- Advocate for and develop new policies and practices
- Do research about food security
- Assess community needs and develop/expand programs
- Raise awareness about food security issues

The Role of Community Engagement in Community Food Actions:
Community engagement is a fundamental part of many Community Food Actions and often key to their success. While evaluating community engagement strategies is not the focus of this guide, the literature on community engagement, assessment, and development is extensive. We recommend you start with the *Community Food Assessment Guide* at http://www.phsa.ca/HealthProfessionals/Population-Public-Health/Food-Security/default.htm

A Note on Outputs

Outputs are counts of the things you do and produce in your CFA, such as the number and type of services delivered, participants or resources(e.g., the number of people attending a public event, the number of cooking classes delivered, or the number of pamphlets distributed in the community). Outputs are useful pieces of evaluation information. While they typically do not assess if individuals, groups, or systems benefitted from your intervention, they at least tell you if you are providing the right people with the planned level of services or products. In an important way, planning and measuring outputs will keep you realistic and grounded about what you are actually able to achieve. In addition, certain food security outcomes can actually be assessed (at least in part) by examining outputs. Counting the number of bags of food distributed to a number of food bank participants tells you about the outputs, but it also tells you how many people are accessing more food and how much food – outcomes!

Where Do You Fit? Identifying your Targets, Activities, and Outcomes

The next step is to identify how your own CFA fits into the Framework. This involves thinking critically and carefully about what it is you want to change, for whom, and how.

This exercise (including the following three worksheets) will be most meaningful when it is done collaboratively – involving staff, volunteers, CFA participants, and others. It is a way to build a shared and concrete vision of just what it is you are trying to create. To do this, you need to consider three categories of information:

1. Targets of Change: the individuals, groups, and/or systems that participate in or are affected by your CFA
2. Activities: the specific things your program does.
3. Outcomes: the short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes of your program.

Determining Your Targets of Change

Understanding how your CFA works can be improved once you have identified who the targets of change are. Think about your own work. What individuals or groups are likely to benefit from the initiative? Are you engaged in systems change work, community mobilization, or direct programs? Below are some common examples. Note that an important target of change is yourself and your team! Evaluation should include a degree of self-reflection on how your CFA has affected your own practices, as an individual and as a team or group.

Systems and Policy Change Initiatives	Direct Community Food Actions for Individuals and Groups
Possible targets of change include: • Decision makers who have the capacity to direct resources (e.g., funds, volunteers, space, or food) towards food security issues and/or change policies to advance a food security agenda • Opinion leaders or advocates who have the capacity to transmit information to other people, or to influence the attitudes and behaviour of other people • Front line partners who have the capacity to support the delivery of your CFA through shared space or staff, or access to community members • Citizens at large, who have the capacity to vote, to make donations, or to volunteer	**Possible targets of change include:** • Food insecure individuals or families, or those at risk • People living in remote communities in which food is scarce and/or very expensive • Participants in a CFA: for example regular participants in an ongoing program like a community kitchen; people who access a food bank or attend a farmers market. Participants may include the family members of the individual directly involved in the CFA • Some CFAs may have more than one category of participants (such as food vendors and food buyers/users)

Listing Your Activities

Your activities refer to the day-to-day tasks and efforts that are designed to produce the desired outcome or change in participants, policies, communities, partners, and so on. In Worksheet #1 below, we list types of activities from the Framework. These are quite general activities that capture the range of things that CFAs do. How would you make them more specific to your own program context? Appendix A contains an expanded blank Worksheet #1 for you to list your own program activities.

Worksheet #1 – The Activities of Your CFA

	Systems and Policy Change Initiatives	Direct Community Food Actions for Individuals and Groups
Activities from the Framework	• Undertake research, develop resources, convene stakeholders (government, private sector, NGOs, farmers), etc. to raise awareness about local food security issues. • Create partnerships with stakeholders • Engage in food security policy development, advocacy	• Provide education and resources on food, nutrition, access and use • Facilitate shared food production and use • Facilitate shared food preparation and use • Create affordable options for local food access • Provide emergency food access
List the Activities of your *own* program		

Identifying Your Outcomes

What change is your CFA trying to achieve? Worksheet #2 provides a set of tables that will help you to think about and organize the expected outcomes of your CFA. It can be found in Appendix A. An excerpt is also provided below as an example. The outcomes from the Framework are listed in the left hand column and are organized according to the short-term, intermediate, and long-term groupings. The second column provides more detail about what each outcome means. The third column describes the sorts of CFAs that tend to lead to the associated outcomes.

Go to Worksheet #2 in Appendix A and read each of the outcomes and the types of CFAs that are commonly associated with each outcome. Columns 1-3 have been prefilled for you. Your task is to fill in columns 4 and 5 by taking this general information about CFA outcomes and making it relevant and specific to your own CFA. Begin by placing a checkmark in column 4 next to each outcome that is shared by your own CFA. If your CFA is small and focused, you may only check off a few. Alternatively, you may be engaged in multiple activities that may lead to many different outcomes, in which case many of the outcomes in the Framework could apply.

Column 5 provides a blank space for you to write down your CFA's outcomes in your own words, as you will likely wish to make them more specific and referenced to your own context. For example, if you are interested in raising awareness about food security issues, you may rewrite the outcome so that it specifies the particular issues you are concerned with locally. Additionally, you may have outcomes that do not clearly align with those in the Framework, and you can add these as you see fit.

Remember that this is a form of brainstorming – at this point you are merely generating a list of the outcomes you think your CFA may affect. Later in the process we will go about determining what outcomes make sense for measurement.

An excerpt of Worksheet #2 – Identifying Your Outcomes

CFA Outcomes From the Framework	Additional Details About the Outcome	Some Examples of CFAs that Relate to these Outcomes	Applies to Us? ✓	How would you word this outcome for your own CFA?
Short-Term Outcomes: Food Availability and Affordability				
• Increased production and distribution of food	Food is increasingly produced, shared, and distributed to those in need in a range of community locales and contexts.	Entrepreneurial food and agriculture related activity, farmers markets, food boxes and baskets, food co-ops, and community gardens may fit here. Also, CFAs attempting to change the practices of grocery stores may choose these outcomes.		
• Increased affordability of food	Healthy food is more affordable – markets are competitive, prices are lower, consumer decisions are improved, people have greater purchasing power, etc.			
• Increased availability of food	More healthy food is made available to the local community. Food is not wasted or misused, but directed to those in need. Food availability is community-driven and generated.			

Putting It All Together: Creating a "Model of Your CFA"

You should now have a pretty good understanding of your CFA in relation to your core activities and the outcomes that you are trying to achieve. Worksheet #3 helps you to pull together the information from Worksheets #1 and #2 into one place. With this information in hand, you can now attempt to produce a "Model of Your CFA". This is often called a "logic model" and it will look similar to the Food Security Framework for Evaluation. It lays out what you do (your activities), how to assess if things are going as planned (outputs), and what changes you expect to see in the near future and in the long-term (short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes). The difference is that the content will be specific to your own CFA. We will call it your "model" to avoid confusing it with the Framework. Worksheet #3 appears below with some example content. Appendix A has a full size worksheet for you to complete.

Worksheet #3 – Creating a Model of Your CFA

	Systems and Policy Change Initiatives	Direct Community Food Actions for Individuals and Groups
Program Activities		– Provide information, resources, and training to community volunteers to develop and tend two community vegetable gardens – Harvest garden for food boxes for distribution to community members referred from food bank partner – Provide fresh food preparation seminars for community members
Outputs		– # of volunteers and hours committed to tending/ harvesting the community gardens – Pounds of fresh vegetables produced by gardens – # of food boxes distributed – # of seminars delivered and attendance
Short-Term Outcomes		– Improved knowledge of gardening and harvesting vegetables among garden volunteers – Increased affordability and availability of food among garden volunteers and community users – Improved feelings of social connections among volunteers and community users
Intermediate Outcomes		– Improved access and consumption of healthy food among volunteers and community users
Long-Term Outcomes (from Framework)	• Decreased family stress and life disruption due to food insecurity • Reduced stigma and greater dignity in relation to food access • Reduced vulnerability to chronic and other diseases/Improved overall health and well-being	
Long-Term Outcomes (add your own if necessary)		

Looking at Worksheet #3, you will notice that there is a row designated for outputs. You will also notice that the long-term outcomes have already been filled in. This is because almost all food security programs will share all or some of these long-term outcomes. You may have one or two other long-term outcomes that you feel are important to add and there is space at the bottom to do so. Remember that long-term outcomes are broader, more fundamental changes happening further along in the future. Remember that you may complete one or both sides of the model, depending on the focus of your Food Action.

Take the following steps to complete Worksheet #3:

1. Insert the **Activities** that you listed in **Worksheet #1**. Make sure they are clear statements that capture the *things you do in your CFA*. Avoid being so general that you miss the detail that is important to understanding outcomes. But also avoid being so specific that the model is crowded with too many activities that, while slightly different, pretty much accomplish the same thing.

2. Write in **outputs** that will help you judge if the initiative is doing what was planned and is reaching the intended number of people and groups. For example, if you are running a community kitchen, you may insert "number of people attending food preparation class" as an output, to prompt you to collect this information. You may also wish to specify the number that is desired (e.g., "at least 30 people attend the community forum") for the CFA activity to be considered successful.

3. Insert *your own* **short-term** and **intermediate outcomes** from **Worksheet #2**. These are the outcomes that you listed in your own words under column 5, "How would you word this outcome for your own CFA?".

Once you have completed Worksheet #3, a final step is to step back! Have a long critical look at your model and ask yourself the following questions:

1. **Does the model represent what *actually* happens in terms of the activities of your CFA, or what ideally you would *like* to happen?** If the activities reflect what you would ideally like to happen, and this is significantly different from what is currently happening in your CFA, you might not be ready to evaluate your outcomes. The reason is simple – you cannot expect to achieve your outcomes if the activities are not being implemented according to the plan. Time might be better spent focusing on how to improve your activities to come closer to your ideal. If what you wrote down seems to fairly reflect what's currently happening in your CFA, then it is worthwhile to evaluate your outcomes.

2. **Is it reasonable to expect that the outcomes you listed will follow from the activities?** Every CFA makes assumptions about its expected outcomes. Be critical. Does it make sense? Does your model represent a reasonable set of relationships between activities and outcomes? Are any activities or outcomes missing? There should usually be more activities than there are outcomes. Do you have enough activities (and the "right" activities) to achieve all the outcomes you have listed?

Your model can be strengthened by other information you have on hand, including:

- The research literature – Is there evidence to suggest the outcomes can be achieved by undertaking these activities?
- Knowledge of best practices in the field
- Personal and practical experience about what works and what does not work.
- Common sense and logic

Sensitivity to Context

A logic model is a very linear way to describe the thinking and assumptions behind a CFA. In some cultural contexts, this way of thinking may be less engaging for people. The basic ideas that are included in a model can be expressed in other ways. They can be mapped onto a medicine wheel, for example, or expressed as a narrative through time. Photos and videos are useful media, too. For example, First Nations in Northern Ontario have used photographs to deepen their understanding of their work. Photos, which may depict things like community barbeques, youth learning to clean a moose carcass, and elders working together in a communal kitchen, can be clustered according to CFA outcomes. Each photo can be accompanied by a short story explaining how it illustrates the outcome.

CFAI Case Illustrations – Identifying Key Outcomes

CFA #1 – *Traditional Food, Traditional Land (TFTL)*

The TFTL project focused primarily on knowledge based outcomes, writing them specifically to reflect the traditions of First Nations. One short-term outcome focused on attitudes regarding traditional foods. The project was also interested in the extent to which youth pursued traditional methods of obtaining food on their own, after completing the program.

Short-Term Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge and skills of hunting, fishing, trapping, and foraging on traditional lands
- Increased knowledge and skills of traditional food storage, preparation and use
- Increased knowledge of healthy nutrition and diets based on traditional foods
- Improved attitudes toward traditional food options

Intermediate Outcomes:

- Increased access and consumption of healthy traditional foods

The project also gathered demographic information from participating youth (age, grade, gender, family circumstances, etc.), information on barriers they may experience in participating in the project (e.g., being away from family responsibilities), and their current diet.

CFA #2 – *Capital Urban Garden and Food Drop In (CUG)*

The CUG found it challenging to sort out its outcomes because there are multiple users: gardener volunteers, food box members, subsidized food box members, and drop in participants. They decided that it would be important to understand these categories of users by collecting detailed outputs of each. In terms of outcome measurement, the CUG management group decided to focus first on the volunteers who tended the garden, since they were getting (presumably) the fullest benefits of the garden. The outcomes identified were:

Short-Term Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge of gardening and harvesting vegetables among garden volunteers
- Increased affordability and availability of fresh, garden grown vegetables among garden volunteers

Intermediate Outcomes:

- Increased access and consumption of healthy food.

CUG also added a short-term outcome regarding "Increased feelings of social connection" among users. While this is not a food security outcome per se, it was important to their stakeholders and their work to include it.

CFA #3 – *The Regional Food Security Coalition (RFSC)*

The RFSC felt that their current membership was limited and unrepresentative of the organizations and sectors important to food security. While food system stakeholders were represented, other NGOs in health, anti-poverty, and other areas were not part of the coalition. They opted for the following outcomes.

Short-Term Outcomes:

- Greater awareness among identified cross-sector partners regarding food security issues and needs in the region
- A cross-sector partnership is formed to address food security policy and programming in the region
- Opportunities for policy and program development are identified and pursued by the coalition

Intermediate Outcomes:

- Development of new social system policies, funding allocations, and initiatives that support improved food access for vulnerable communities

STEP 2

Gaining Participation and Asking Evaluation Questions

Step 2 – Gaining Participation and Asking Evaluation Questions

- Engaging stakeholders and gaining buy-in
- Asking the right evaluation questions
- Setting evaluation priorities

In this Chapter you will learn about:

- ✔ *Strategies to improve stakeholder participation and consensus*
- ✔ *Generating useful evaluation questions about the outcomes of your program*
- ✔ *Setting your evaluation priorities in the context of your information needs and your capacity to carry out an evaluation.*

The picture of evaluation as a technical, mechanical exercise that moves in a straightforward way from identifying outcomes to measuring them is a bit of a myth. Evaluation is a collaborative exercise, involving a range of people and having a range of implications for day-to-day organizational life. Evaluation has to be thoughtful, flexible, politically sensitive, and practical, as well as concerned with the details of methods and measurement. In this chapter, we discuss strategies for achieving participation and consensus in your evaluation and the central role of generating evaluation questions and priorities. We also discuss issues of evaluation readiness and capacity. These are all important facets of evaluation that require attention before moving to the measurement of your outcomes.

Gaining Participation and Building Consensus

One of the first steps in evaluation planning is to find out what the people involved with your CFA think about the idea. The board, staff, volunteers, clients, and funders of a CFA are ultimately the people who will act on the evaluation findings, so it is important in the early planning stages to make sure everyone is on board with the idea of evaluation. In theory, this should not be difficult. Most people enjoy reflecting on their experiences and learning from them. Evaluation prompts such reflection and contributes to the work of a CFA by providing useful, well-organized

and systematic information. Next steps are more likely to be based on solid evidence, and not just intuition and guesswork.

In reality, however, evaluation is often met with resistance or anxiety. Staff may be fearful that information will lack context and clarification, and be misused or misunderstood. They may be concerned that funding will be withdrawn or their CFA terminated. Others may be concerned that evaluation activities will be a huge drain on resources with little return – resources that could be better used for CFA delivery.

It is best to address these objections proactively and make sure that key stakeholders are meaningfully involved in guiding the evaluation from the start. This is easily the most effective way to address fears and worries. Doing this early increases the chances that the evaluation can be effectively carried out and that the findings will end up being used.

Think about who is involved

Front-line staff, volunteers, participants, board members, funders, partner organizations…

- What do they stand to gain from an evaluation of the CFA?
- What information would they want?
- What are they risking by getting involved? What concerns might they have? What do they stand to lose?

Some Tips on Getting People Involved in Evaluation Planning

- ✔ Start out with more informal, exploratory evaluation, then move to more structured evaluation as people become more engaged. Sometimes, holding a quick focus group or even a chat over coffee with front line staff or volunteers can be a way to get people thinking about how the CFA makes a difference in the world.
- ✔ Form an evaluation advisory committee that includes a few staff members, participants, board members, and representatives from other stakeholder groups. This committee may meet regularly throughout the course of the evaluation,or may just come together two or three times. Try to be clear about time commitments.
- ✔ Reframe complaints or grumbling as evaluation questions. Board members may feel that funders don't understand the local context. Current volunteers may feel that the agency isn't working hard enough to recruit new volunteers. Both of these complaints could be reframed as evaluation questions. People may be more interested if they feel the evaluation will help to address an issue they care about.
- ✔ Remember that time spent exploring the idea of evaluation is not time wasted. Often, the process of agreeing on outcomes or sorting out evaluation questions is challenging and time consuming. However, this effort often yields results even before evaluation data is collected. Stakeholders understand one another better, and feel affirmed. Great ideas about how to improve the CFA may start to emerge almost immediately.

Sometimes, you are required by a funder to undertake an evaluation process, and you have very little choice about what the focus will be. You may be required to answer certain questions and complete specific forms. In cases like this, it can be hard to engage local stakeholders in the process in a meaningful way. In this situation, you have two choices:

- Simply go ahead and fulfill funder requirements. If you take this path, it may not be necessary to seek input from your stakeholder groups or undertake an intensive process of evaluation planning. However, you may find that staff and clients come to resent an evaluation that they do not understand or support. Err on the side of including people in the process!

- Look for opportunities to adapt the funder's evaluation framework to suit your own needs. Work with your team to sort out how to meet funder requirements while also generating insights that will be useful locally. Treat the funder as a stakeholder that needs to be engaged with your evaluation plan, just like any other. Many funders may appreciate this type of engagement with evaluation.

Sensitivity to Context

Most contemporary organizations recognize that there are distinct challenges and amazing benefits to recognizing and capitalizing on diversity. The diversity of people and environments is expressed in many ways. Organizations must promote community participation and build consensus among people from diverse cultures, neighbourhoods, socioeconomic backgrounds, age groups, genders, and sexual orientations. Organizational cultures can also differ remarkably, evidenced by the different needs and expectations of corporations, governments, and NGOs. There can even be significant differences between divisions of the same organization. Recognition and respect for diversity is essential for a meaningful and useful evaluation. Listening carefully, repeatedly checking assumptions, and taking the time to make sure everyone is on-board and comfortable are key skill sets in this type of work.

Drafting Your Evaluation Purpose Statement

All evaluations should be undertaken with one or more specific purposes in mind. It is a good idea to take some time in the planning stages to ask these two key questions:

- Who do we expect to act on the basis of these evaluation findings?
- What actions do we expect?

Sometimes, it is helpful to ask these questions the other way around.

- What is it that is holding this CFA back right now?
- What information do we need to break through this obstacle?
- How can evaluation help us to get that information?

There are many reasons to do evaluation, but some of the most common uses are listed here. You may have others.

- **Ongoing improvement:** To create a stronger, more flexible and self-aware staff/team that understand the strengths and weaknesses of your CFA and will be able to respond effectively to challenges in the future.
- **Effective use of resources:** To make the best use of limited resources.
- **Promotion:** To position your agency as strong and innovative; to celebrate your successes; to make sure that existing funders continue to support your CFA; to attract new volunteers and new partners; a way of documenting and sharing the story of your CFA and organization.
- **Growth:** To get new funders interested in supporting your CFA and to expand it to new locations.
- **Redesign:** To rebuild a CFA that is out of date, not well-designed, improperly aligned to other agency priorities, or has been through challenges related to turnover, poor management, or conflict.
- **Accountability:** To demonstrate the impact and value of the CFA to funders and decision-makers.

You can often learn a great deal about your CFA by talking with key stakeholders about evaluation purposes. Rather than waiting until your evaluation is complete to share it with a funder, why not ask that funder at the design stage about what kind of evaluation they would find most useful?

An evaluation does not have to generate conclusive proof that your CFA has achieved all its outcomes in order to be useful. Most of the time, small evaluation projects are able to answer a few important questions, and generate partial answers to a few more. Often when you come to write up an evaluation report you will feel like the process has generated as many new questions as answers. This is quite normal. Even negative findings can be useful, as they demonstrate honesty and commitment to evaluation, while also offering ideas on how to improve.

Generating Evaluation Questions

> When you sense that you have a lot of control over an outcome – which means you think you can change it – you are identifying something central to your CFA and an area where you have invested time and resources. It is probably something worth evaluating.

In any evaluation you can ask many different types of questions. For instance, you may ask "process questions" about how the CFA was delivered, if people liked the CFA, and how many people participated. These are good questions to ask, as it is important to understand the details of your activities and how they were delivered. In addition to process information, it is particularly important for CFAs *to ask questions about the achievement of outcomes that are related to food security.* Ultimately, you will want to know how your initiative is contributing to improved food distribution, availability, affordability, access, and consumption.

Once the purpose of your evaluation is clear, it is often helpful to come up with a small number of questions to guide your design. *What are the three to five questions you really need to get answered through this evaluation?* For example, if you run a food buying cooperative, your evaluation purpose might be to show funders that the cooperative is making healthy food more affordable for participants. You might decide that your evaluation will generate systematic answers to the questions below:

> **Be clear about your limitations in doing an evaluation.**
> - Ask a small number of core evaluation questions
> - Use your program model as a resource to generate the most relevant questions
> - Be clear with stakeholders regarding what the evaluation can realistically cover and answer

- How important is the food cooperative to its members? How much of their food do they purchase from the co-op and how often?
- Is the food cooperative helping families in need access the food that they need?
- Is the food cooperative changing families' food buying habits in general? Is it changing their food preparation habits to make more healthy meals?
- What are participants' perspectives on the food cooperative? How could it be improved to better meet their needs?

It is usually best in a small evaluation to limit yourself to a manageable number of evaluation questions. It is always better to come away with solid, useful answers to two or three simple questions than vague, unconvincing or incomplete answers to ten complicated questions! One of the best ways to arrive at a concise set of evaluation questions is to brainstorm and then prioritize. Get people to come up with as many potential questions as possible before asking them to go through the list and pick the questions they feel are most important or useful. The advantage of this approach is that it forces people to slow down and consider the pros and cons of a number of different ways of focusing their evaluation. You should also use your CFA model (created in Worksheet #3) as a resource to help generate discussion, and to set some boundaries regarding what could be asked.

Checking In! Is Outcome Evaluation the Right Next Step for You?

Although outcome evaluation is an essential ingredient in managing a CFA well, there is a right time and a wrong time for evaluation. In creating your CFA model and/or meeting with a range of stakeholders, you may find that you are not ready for outcome measurement.

If any of the following conditions apply to you, you might want to spend some time and energy on other kinds of work before undertaking evaluation.

- ***You're having trouble naming the outcomes of your CFA clearly or agreeing on what the outcomes should be.*** This is often a sign that people involved with the CFA don't have a clear, consistent understanding of what the program is all about. It may make sense to work on this a bit more before undertaking evaluation.
- ***Your model makes sense but the CFA is not currently being implemented in the same way on the ground.*** You should only proceed with evaluation if your CFA is being delivered (for the most part) as intended.
- ***You're the only person in your organization who thinks evaluation is a good idea.*** If you do not have support of senior management, the board, and/or staff you may have trouble getting the resources and participation to complete the evaluation. You may need to spend more time convincing people of the value of evaluation before proceeding.
- ***The CFA in question is already in crisis.*** If everyone already knows that the CFA is not running smoothly, or doesn't have the right staff team, or has very poor attendance, it may be better to wait until you have put some new ideas into action before undertaking an outcome evaluation.

CFAI Case Illustrations – Asking Core Evaluation Questions

CFA #1 – *Traditional Food, Traditional Land (TFTL)*

After consulting with the Elder council, the Local Health Authority, family representatives, and the project's Hunting Guides, the evaluation working group agreed on asking the following three questions:

- Do youth gain the knowledge and skills necessary for successful access to and use of traditional foods?
- Do youth have a positive experience of the project and do their attitudes toward traditional food options change?
- Do youth pursue traditional food options after completing TFTL?

CFA #2 – *Capital Urban Garden and Food Drop In (CUG)*

The CUG management team invited three senior volunteers from the community gardens to help brainstorm questions. There was some debate because volunteers were primarily interested in the community connections and sense of affiliation and neighbourhood that they felt were achieved through garden participation. Management conceded that this was important, but asserted that information on food security was necessary for continued funding. Eventually, the group arrived at the following core questions:

- Are the people who regularly volunteer at the gardens in financial need?
- How do social connections relate to ongoing volunteerism?
- What is the level of benefit experienced by volunteers in reference to relevant *food security outcomes* (production, supply, affordability, availability, access, consumption)?

CFA #3 – *The Regional Food Security Coalition (RFSC)*

The RFSC felt that they needed to ask some simple questions about the partnership in order to start building it:

- What organizations should be represented on the coalition, but are currently not? Which individuals? Why?
- What sorts of funding, policy, and/or programming initiatives are the coalition members involved in that can be leveraged to improve food security in the region? How do these ideas inform the short-term agenda of the coalition?

Note that the RFSC wants to ultimately measure their outcomes listed in the previous step. But they recognized that to do this properly, they first needed to make sure their partnership is set up in the most effective way as possible and that their specific priorities are clear.

STEP 3

Gathering Evidence About Outcomes

In this Chapter you will learn about:

- ✔ *Indicators, tools and their importance to evaluation*
- ✔ *Major strategies and approaches to collecting your data*
- ✔ *Useful tools in the food security field*
- ✔ *Assessing what data you already collect or have available to you*
- ✔ *How to build your evaluation plan*

Step 3 – Gathering Evidence About Outcomes

- Making better use of existing data
- Selecting indicators, tools and measures
- Gathering your data

Effective evaluation requires the strategic collection, analysis, and interpretation of information that is useful in assessing *the extent to which desired changes are taking place*. Your evaluation is only as good – useful, relevant, informative, accurate, insightful – as the information you collect. Volumes have been written about what is meant by "good data" and the best methods to generate it. A detailed discussion of evaluation methodology is beyond the scope of this Guide. This Guide assumes that there is an awareness of basic evaluation and research methodology and therefore focuses more specifically on the measurement of the outcomes of Community Food Actions. An online *Measurement and Analysis Companion Document* that provides more detail on evaluation methodology, design, and analysis, as well as the strengths and limitations of different methods, is available for download at: http://cdpac.ca/admin/media.php?mid=1111

Recommended reading about the range of quantitative and qualitative methods and designs that are available, in addition to the *Companion Document*:

Cresswell, J.W. (2009). **Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed-Methods Approaches**. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M.Q. (2008). **Utilization-Focused Evaluation** (4th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M.Q. (1987). **How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation**. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wholey, J., Hatry, H.P., & Newcomer, K.E. (Eds.) (2010). **Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation** (3rd edition). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

For resources specific to Food Security Issues and Community Food Action Programs, also see:

National Research Centre (2006). **Community Food Project Evaluation Handbook**. Boulder, CO: Community Food Security Coalition.

We do wish, however, to make some introductory statements about evaluation methods and measurement before we jump into building your evaluation plan, starting with some definitions.

Indicators and the Tools to Collect Them

> Indicators are concrete pieces of information used to assess your outcomes. Indicators are collected using a variety of tools and methods, and can be quantitative or qualitative.

Indicators are types of information that help you determine the degree to which your outcomes have been achieved. Indicators include things like self-reports from people, scores from survey tools, systematic program observations, staff ratings, frequency of skipped meals, food bank use, counts and percentages of some behaviour or event, and so on.

To illustrate, if your community garden hopes to increase the access of garden users to nutritious vegetables, an indicator might be a simple *count of how many people* use the garden, with greater numbers (and consistency of use) over time suggesting a degree of success. An even better indicator might be *user perceptions of access* to a diverse selection of vegetables as a result of the CFA.

Tools are the things you use to collect your indicators. A household survey that collects how frequently people access nutritious food is an example of a tool that provides you with indicator information – such as average frequency of buying vegetables among sampled participants. Evaluation tools are used in a variety of ways and formats – surveys, focus groups, interviews, tracking sheets, observations, and so on.

> **Quantitative indicators** – Represent information through numbers and quantities (ratings, counts, sums, averages). Useful to summarize large groups of people and assess the *amount* of change.
> **Qualitative indicators** – Represent information through text (words, phrases, dialogue). Useful to summarize, in depth, the personal experiences and perceptions of small groups of people.

Indicators may be quantitative or qualitative. Focus groups, for example, most often are designed to generate qualitative indicators, (i.e., participants' self-reports). Many surveys, on the other hand, contain scale-based measures that yield quantitative indicators. Surveys completed by participants are still self-reports, but their opinions and perceptions are turned into numbers (e.g., average ratings, frequencies, etc.). Quantitative approaches are better at answering some types of questions while qualitative approaches are better at answering others. Indeed, evaluation is a discipline that embraces "mixed methods" and having multiple indicators for your outcomes is usually better than having only one.

What Information Do You Already Have?

All organizations, big and small and across all sectors, collect evaluation information. We are all concerned with things like productivity, satisfaction with service, effectiveness, and positive change. Organizations intuitively understand this and often collect information that is meant to make services more responsive, effective, and accountable. Using existing information to its full potential can be very helpful to an evaluation because it takes advantage of existing resources and tools, makes good use of time/tasks already engaged in by staff, and is an easier way to incorporate evaluation into the day-to-day life of the CFA.

An important first step of any evaluation is figuring out what information you already have and how it can be harnessed for future, systematic use. Go back to the model of your CFA and your core evaluation questions and think about how this information may contribute. It is also helpful to think about how existing periods or moments of information collection can be used. For example, a sign up or intake period may be an opportune time to collect pre-program indicators. Correspondingly, if there is a program-end meeting of some sort, this would be a good time to add some post-program indicators.

If you are engaged in systems and policy work, remember that systems work is a form of intervention. Your organization connects to people and attempts to influence them in some fashion and so there may be important information that has already been collected, such as the details of coalition activities and the actions and resources they produce.

Indicators and Tools for Use in Community Food Actions

There is no such thing as a standard list of specific food security indicators and tools that can be used across any given CFA. The most promising indicators and tools depend on the specific outcome that is being examined as well as the nature of the CFA. To give a quick and obvious example, household income is often a pretty good indicator of the extent to which an individual or family is food secure, even though it is indirect. However, most CFAs do not attempt to change income, so very little information about the influence of your CFA is gained by measuring it. The lesson is to select indicators that will be sensitive to change as consequence of your CFA.

What follows is a summary of some indicators and tools found in the food security literature that may be used or adapted for program evaluations. They are organized around the main short-term and intermediate outcomes in the Framework. The tools are collected together in a table at the end of this section for easy reference.

Short-Term Outcomes of Direct Community Food Actions

Knowledge and Skills

Evaluating knowledge and skills often requires some degree of custom tool development because most CFAs differ in the details of the content that they are teaching. This is why there are very few knowledge-focused tools available that can be readily used across multiple settings. Typically the aim is to assess "self-reported knowledge" and this can be collected in a variety of ways, either through scale-based measures or from focus groups and interviews.

Key indicators	Common Tools
• Self-reported Knowledge	• A range of customized tools for your initiative, using scales, true/false, written feedback, etc. • Focus groups and interviews that focus on their acquired knowledge, usefulness of the knowledge, how they use knowledge in practical contexts, etc.
	• The *Community Gardener Survey* measures specific knowledge and skills associated with community garden programs, but also contains good items about communication skills, teaching skills, skills in managing family dynamics that could be adapted for use with other kinds of CFAs.
• Self-reported coping skills	• The *Promising Practices Food Security Tool* assesses coping skills of families in relation to food insecurity. Some skills are less adaptive than others (e.g., buying food on credit versus seeking out community sources). A "coping strategy score" also reflects household food security status.

Food Availability and Affordability

Food availability and affordability are logically necessary if we expect greater access and consumption of desired and nutritious food. There are two major ways to think about indicators here. Individual/family focused indicators assess whether people can afford to buy food and their perceptions of food availability. Community level indicators assess the availability of local food options and prices in the community. Note that community indicators only make sense if your CFA expects to make changes in these areas and may make more sense for Systems and Policy Change Initiatives.

Another outcome under this category in the framework is increased production/distribution of food. Indicators of availability tend to be sufficient substitutes. However, food production/distribution resulting from your own initiative (such as community gardens, food baskets, etc.) can also be tracked by collecting outputs.

[2] This summary is based in part on reviews conducted by Glacken (2009, 2010a).

Key indicators	Common Tools
• Household reports of food affordability; financial ability to buy food.	• The *United States' Household Food Security Survey Module* focuses on self-reports of uncertain, insufficient or inadequate food access, availability and utilization due to limited financial resources, and the compromised eating patterns and food consumption that may result. A six item short form of the module is also available. • The *Community Gardener Survey* contains a few items regarding "spending less on food" as a result of participation. • The *Promising Practices Food Security Tool* includes a coping strategies index in relation to food shortage and income-related food insecurity.
• Customer reports of food availability	• The *Rural Grocery Store Customer Survey* allows customers to rate a variety of dimensions of their local stores, including a few items regarding food availability • *"Shape Up San Francisco"* Food Access Survey asks about food shopping habits of respondents, their priorities and concerns about shopping for food, the barriers they face in attempting to purchase healthy food.
• Grocer reports of their ability to make food available and affordable	• The *Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey* allows store owners to report the challenges they face, and self-ratings of their success in making food affordable, accessible, and healthy.
• Cost of individual food items • Cost of the NNFB or RNFB	• A checklist of items available to purchase using *Health Canada's National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB)*, which lists 66 nutritious food items based on Canada's Food Guide. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada also has a *Revised Northern Nutritious Food Basket (RNFB)* which is consistent with consumption patterns of northern residents.
• Number of missing food items (by store, market, etc.)	

• Food production/ distribution outputs:
  • number of food baskets
  • number of meals
  • kilograms or other amount of food generated, produced, donated, collected, distributed, or gleaned.
	• The *Common Output Tracking Form* tracks outputs of many types of CFAs in a consistent way, and includes outputs that may serve to measure access, especially when a CFA distributes food directly to participants or otherwise facilitates direct access.

There is a range of other useful tools relevant to the availability and affordability of healthy food. At https://riskfactor.cancer.gov/mfe/instruments you can link to instruments and inventories concerned with assessing different aspects of the "food environment" of stores, restaurants, schools, public facilities, and workplaces.

Intermediate Outcomes of Direct Community Food Actions

Access and Consumption

Access and consumption is only one part of the Framework, yet it is likely the most important. All CFAs, in some way or another, work towards these outcomes, which are also necessary for a range of life improvements (reduced stress and stigma, improved health) represented in the long-term outcomes. For this reason, most CFAs should be aiming for some form of measurement in these areas. Most tools rely on "household reports" which typically means the retrospective self-reports of adults in the household who are primarily responsible for food purchasing, preparation, and serving.

Key indicators	Common Tools
• Household reports of eating/meal frequency, food intake (general frequency) • Household reports of food depletion; running out of food	• The *United States' Household Food Security Survey Module* focuses on self-reports of uncertain, insufficient or inadequate food access, availability and utilization due to limited financial resources, and the compromised eating patterns and food consumption that may result. A six item short form of the module is also available • The *Coping Strategies Index* contains 6 items that ask about reduced consumption of food in the household. • The *Promising Practices Food Security Tool* includes a coping strategies index in relation to food shortage and income-related food insecurity. • A single "Food Sufficiency" question from the USDA food survey may be a simple and useful indicator of food security. A caution is that a single indicator does not provide a complete picture of food security.
• Household reports of anxiety or concern about food access.	• The *United States' Household Food Security Survey Module* focuses on self-reports of uncertain, insufficient or inadequate food access, availability and utilization due to limited financial resources, and the compromised eating patterns and food consumption that may result. The questions range in severity from worrying about running out of food, to children not eating for a whole day. A six item short form of the module is also available. Single questions may be useful however would not capture a complete picture of the food security situation.
• Household reports of caloric intake (specific food frequency)	• Any customized household log (often 24 hour recall) of specific food intake and frequency. • Custom logs may use the *NNFB* or *RNFB*.
• Household reports of dietary diversity (frequency of different foods consumed)	• *Household and Individual Dietary Diversity Questionnaires* measures food groups and their consumption. • The *Community Gardener Survey* contains a few items regarding diverse food consumption. • The *Shape Up San Francisco Food Access Survey* includes items about food types purchased and served.
• Household reports of food suitability (quality and type of food)	• The *United States' Household Food Security Module* contains some relevant items regarding food suitability in terms of quality and appropriateness.

• Household reports of total or % income expenditure on food • Household reports of total income	• Any customized survey that asks directly about total and food purchasing income
• Direct food access outputs, e.g., number of food baskets, meals, kilograms of food distributed, etc.	• The *Common Output Tracking Form* tracks outputs of many types of CFAs in a consistent way, and includes outputs that may serve to measure access, especially when a CFA distributes food directly to participants or otherwise facilitates direct access.

Short-Term Outcomes of Systems and Policy Change Initiatives

Awareness

Assessing awareness about issues, ideas, opportunities, needs, etc. can be challenging. A CFA has to first be fairly certain of which people they have informed and then be sure that they can, in fact, access those people to examine awareness. When systems level work is aimed at a range of specific stakeholders in the system, it is much easier to gather information on awareness via interviews and focus groups.

Key indicators	Common Tools
• Citizen reports of awareness of food security issues, initiatives, needs, etc.	• Tools are usually customized and made specific to the initiative and the issues of concern. • The *Whole Measures Evaluation Rubric* tracks the status of food security issues at a broad community level, and the outcomes of systems change or community development initiatives, based on scored responses to a structured set of items.
• Reports from decision makers and opinion leaders of their awareness of food security issues, initiatives, needs, etc.	

Partnerships

Partnerships (alternatively called networks, alliances, coalitions, and collaborations) are exceedingly important for the success of systems change, yet somewhat difficult to evaluate. It is also the case that indicators and tools to evaluate partnerships are generic and applicable to partnerships in many different sectors. The most common approach to evaluating partnerships is to track partnership activities and outputs – who is participating, how often, and what is being produced? What is being done and by whom?

A more detailed approach is to conduct in-depth focus groups and interviews with a range of affected stakeholders to understand the partnership's goals, functioning, actions, and outcomes. Outputs are important and recommended, but not quite enough. Collecting qualitative indicators of partnerships will add to your understanding of how the partnerships is (or could be) affecting food security. In addition to the indicators and tools below, see http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Evaluating-Collaboratives-Reaching-the-Potential-P1032.aspx for a detailed guide on "evaluating collaboratives".

Key indicators	Common Tools
• Records of partnership structure, roles, agreements, plans, actions, etc. • # of partnership members • # and type of action items identified and implemented • # and type of champions identified • # and type of resources, policies, materials	• Custom tracking forms and basic tracking tools like meeting minutes and membership lists can be used to track these indicators. • A range of tracking forms for food security coalitions are available from the *Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit*[3] (Chapter 8, p. 201)
• Feedback from partnership members about the strength and focus of the partnership and change over time in this feedback.	• Many surveys for members of committees or coalitions exist. See http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/tools/CoalitionEvalInvent.pdf for an excellent review of available tools to evaluate a range of coalition characteristics. • Consider developing your own focus groups or interviews capture more detailed information about the work of the partnership.

[3] National Research Centre (2006). Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit. Boulder, CO: Community Food Security Coalition.

Intermediate Outcomes of Systems and Policy Change Initiatives

Systems Changes

In some cases, systems changes may be fairly straightforward to track at least to the extent that such changes are concrete outcomes of successful partnerships. Thus, new or expanded resources, dedicated funding, new or adapted policies or regulations/programs, can be counted, much like outputs. These are outputs that are good indicators of systems level change. In addition to basic outputs, there are some more involved approaches to looking at systems level outcomes.

Remember, of course, that new or expanded policies, initiatives, and services are several steps removed from food security as experienced by community members. Systems level outcomes are important to track, but if possible, consider the ways you can begin to measure subsequent outcomes concerned with knowledge and skills, food availability and affordability, access and consumption (i.e., the right side of the Framework).

Key indicators	Common Tools
• # and type of new CFAs • amount of new funding attached to food security initiatives • # and type of food security related policies drafted and/or adopted	• Custom tracking forms and basic tracking tools like meeting minutes and membership lists can be used to track these indicators. • A range of tracking forms for food security coalitions are available from the *Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit*[3] (Chapter 8, p. 201)
• Stakeholder (partners, non-profits, government, citizens, etc.) perspectives on the role of the partnership in local food security issues.	• The *Whole Measures Rubric* examines community wide impact of systems level initiatives in variety of high level domains (e.g., "vibrant farms", "sustainable ecosystems") • Consider developing your own focus groups or interviews to capture more detailed information about the work of, and lessons learned from, the partnership. • See http://ag.arizona.edu/sfcs/cyfernet/nowg/comm_index.html for a detailed framework to assess community level change via resource, policy, and citizen development. A range or indicators and tools are provided.

Long-Term Outcomes of Food Security

Often it is beyond the scope of CFAs to measure long-term outcomes. This is especially true for the two general health focused outcomes: "Reduced vulnerability to chronic and other diseases" and "Improved overall health and well-being". In practice these are inferred from an improvement in food security rather than measured directly.

[4] National Research Centre (2006). Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit. Boulder, CO: Community Food Security Coalition.

However, there may be an opportunity to measure the other two long-term outcomes directly: "Decreased family stress and life disruption" and "Reduced stigma and greater dignity in relation to food access". This is more likely possible in situations where your initiative has remained connected to your participants over longer periods of time.

Key indicators	Common Tools
• Household reports of family stress and life disruption	• The *United States' Household Food Security Module* explicitly asks about "worry" or "concern" about food security. These tools could be used over longer-term time periods. • In-depth interviews with family members regarding the longer-term outcomes of the initiative in relation to reducing stress and life disruption.
• Household reports of stigma associated with food insecurity • Household reports of dignity and its relationship to food security.	• In-depth interviews with family members regarding the longer-term outcomes of the initiative in relation to reduced stigma and improved dignity • Customized rating scales of self-perceptions on these dimensions could be created.

A Note on Qualitative Indicators and Tools

The majority of the indicators and tools listed are quantitative in nature. We do not wish you to conclude that qualitative methods are not useful and important. On the contrary, they are exceptionally useful to assess aspects of all the outcomes in the Framework. However, qualitative methods – such as interviews, focus groups, community forums, visual art and multi-media, role playing exercises, and a range of testimonial feedback – are usually created in a customized way to answer the specific questions of an initiative. If you wish to learn more about some of these methods, please consult the online *Measurement and Analysis Companion Document* for tips and resources.

In the table that follows we provide a listing of all the tools mentioned thus far that are specific to the food security field, along with a brief description and the outcome areas of relevance.[5] This is not an exhaustive list, of course. Follow the links below for additional food security resources and tools:

- http://www.phsa.ca/HealthProfessionals/Population-Public-Health/Food-Security/default.htm
- https://riskfactor.cancer.gov/mfe

[5] Several papers prepared by Jody Glacken for Public Health of Canada were particularly comprehensive and helpful in reviewing and critiquing common measures of food security. See Glacken (2009, 2010a, 2010b)

Measure/Tool	Description	Useful to collect indicators of:
Common Output Tracking Form (Nat. Res. Ctr., 2006)	Tracks outputs of many types of CFAs in a consistent way, and includes items about (for example) number of program sites initiated, amount of food donated and distributed, number of participants, attendance rates.	A standardized tool, designed to be completed about a CFA rather than an individual or a family.
Community Gardener Survey (Nat. Res. Ctr, 2006)	Designed to gather feedback from gardeners about their reasons for participation and a variety of personal outcomes. A version designed especially for youth gardeners exists.	• Knowledge and skills (associated with community gardens) • Access and Consumption (dietary diversity)
Coping Strategies Index (CARE/WFP, 2003)	An indicator of household food security in reference to six coping strategies. Can be customized for local use by identifying locally relevant coping. Items ask about previous month of food access and use.	• Access and Consumption
The Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) (Bickel, et al, 1997)	The 18 items (6 in the short form) of the HFSSM focuses on self-reports of uncertain, insufficient or inadequate food access, availability and utilization due to limited financial resources, and the compromised eating patterns and food consumption that may result. Results categorize from "food secure" to "food insecure with hunger (severe)". Ten of the 18 questions are specific to the experiences of adults in the household or the household in general (*Adult Scale*), while 8 are specific to the experiences of children under the age of 18 years in the household (*Child Scale*).	• Access and Consumption
The Food Sufficiency Question (USDA, 2008)	A single item indicator that has been used by the USDA since 1977. Which of the following statements best describes the food eaten in your household? 1. Enough of the kinds of food we want to eat, 2. Enough but not always the kinds of food we want to eat, 3. Sometimes not enough to eat, or 4. Often not enough to eat.	• Access and Consumption
National Nutritious Food Basket ((Health Canada, 2008); **Revised Northern Nutritious Food Basket** (AANDC, 2010)	A checklist of items available to purchase, which lists 66 nutritious food items based on Canada's Food Guide. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada has also developed a version consistent with consumption patterns of northern residents.	• Access and Consumption
Promising Practices Food Security Tool (Glacken, 2010b; unpublished draft)	A simple, 15-item survey that assesses household food security and includes questions about how respondents adapt to a shortage of food. Also included are open-ended questions that ask, for example, whether the project has helped them get more affordable and health food for their family.	• Coping Skills • Food Availability and Affordability (household level) • Access and Consumption

Measure/Tool	Description	Useful to collect indicators of:
Rural Grocery-Store Owner Survey (Nat. Res. Ctr., 2006)	A survey for grocery store owners about the challenges they face, and self-ratings of their success in making food affordable, accessible, and healthy.	• Food Availability and Affordability (community level)
"Shape Up San Francisco" Food Access Survey (SEFA, 2007)	A survey designed to gather information about the food shopping habits of respondents, their priorities and concerns about shopping for food, the barriers they face in attempting to purchase healthy food. Designed for distribution to all residents of a neighbourhood, but could also be used to survey participants.	• Food Availability and Affordability • Access and Consumption (dietary diversity)
Whole Measures Evaluation Rubric (Community Food Security Coalition, 2009)	Tracks the status of food security issues at a broad community level, and the outcomes of systems change or community development initiatives. Designed for completion by members of a multi-stakeholder evaluation working group. Can be adapted to include questions about many kinds of outcomes, but is especially useful for tracking community- or systems-level changes.	• Awareness • Systems changes

Building Your Evaluation Measurement Plan

Now that you have a sense of the data you already have and some ideas regarding existing measurement tools in the field, you can begin to build your measurement plan. Worksheet #4 is an *Evaluation Planning Table* that serves as a single place to compile all this related information. A sample version of Worksheet #4 can be found in Appendix C. This version uses the outcomes from the Framework, poses sample questions, and provides examples of the types of indicators and tools that could be used to assess the outcomes. The blank version in Appendix C also provides a column to insert timelines for your plan.

Below is an excerpt of the worksheet example followed by some tips on how to complete it for your own initiative.

Worksheet #4 (excerpt example) – Evaluation Planning Table (see Appendix C)

Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Tools
Increased affordability and availability of food	Has our CFA led to a reduction in the amount of the household budget being used for food?	• Household reports of food affordability • Financial ability to buy food.	• *United States' Household Food Security Survey Module* • *National Nutritious Food Basket, Revised Northern Nutritious Food Basket*

In addition to the completed example, Appendix C also contains an empty template version for you to complete for your own CFA. Alternatively, you can recreate this table yourself electronically. Here are some tips to complete it.

Column 1 – Listing Outcomes

This is fairly straightforward. Using Worksheet #3 (your model of your CFA) copy your outcomes, from short-term to long-term, into the left-hand column.

Column 2 – Adding Evaluation Questions

In Step 2, you were asked to generate several key evaluation questions in consultation with initiative stakeholders. Place these questions in this column next to the outcomes that seem most relevant. Add any additional (and perhaps more specific questions) you may wish to answer. Remember: only ask the questions you really want the answers to. Recognize that you can't answer all your questions. Keep the number of questions manageable.

Column 3 – Identifying Indicators

Remember that indicators are sources of information that help determine the degree to which your outcomes have been achieved. You already have some options available through our review

of potential indicators and tools, as well as your own analysis of the data you already have and collect. Ask yourself the question "from whose perspective do I need to get information?" Many food security indicators are self-reports or "household reports". Sometimes the clearest indicator is a simple count of something (e.g., "number of food baskets distributed"). Wherever possible, identify more than one indicator, since multiple indicators tell a more complete story than one alone.

Column 4 – Identifying Tools

There are many tools available to gather common food security indicators that are reliable, fairly easy to use, and effective at measuring change over time. Review the previous sections on indicators to see what might fit for you. However, depending on the outcome, you may have to create your own custom tools to ensure you can get the information you need. Perhaps a single survey is the best way to collect several of your indicators at once, by compiling multiple tools into one package for administration to participants before and after the program. Or perhaps a particular indicator is best collected in a face-to-face interview with each participant.

Considerations in Choosing Indicators and Tools

When it comes time to picking the indicators and tools you are actually going to use, decisions often come down to finding the right balance between:

- Indicators that are easy and inexpensive to gather, and
- Indicators that gather high quality information in a rigorous way, and
- Indicators that are not overly invasive or uncomfortable for people to provide.

Some of the best evaluation indicators and tools are the simple, every day kind. Simple questions on one-page client surveys and basic tracking information, for example, can easily be gathered by anyone. Gathering this kind of information isn't likely to be too intrusive or time-consuming, and will probably be easy to analyze. However, sometimes more formal indicators that are time-consuming to collect and analyze can provide really convincing evidence that you have changed the lives of participants. Additionally, funders and other stakeholders may expect rigorous measurement of outcomes using fairly involved and standardized tools.

Of equal importance is ensuring that indicators are not invasive. Citizens may not wish to divulge their income or may be embarrassed to communicate their food consumption habits. Food insecurity, like poverty, can feel stigmatizing. CFAs must be careful to collect information that respects privacy and dignity while also clearly stating why such information is important to collect.

Sensitivity to Context

When developing indicators, sensitivity must be given to varying cultures, realities and contexts. In an evaluation workshop in 2009, a small group of representatives from First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada were brought together to develop a draft food security evaluation tool. The objective was to develop a practical tool that communities could use to evaluate food security outcomes based on their input. This group discussed the reasons for evaluation in an in-depth, open-ended way, and talked about their many understandings of food security, what it means in their communities, and how hunger and food insecurity are handled. This dialogue was used to create a draft tool, which was also informed by current literature and existing tools. Workshop participants gathered feedback on the tool from their program users, which has helped to refine the tool and develop more useful instructions on how it could be used.

Ethical Evaluation

Formal research projects that involve the participation of people, such as those carried out at universities or hospitals, go through a significant ethical review process. Research (including evaluation) undertaken in communities by NGOs, consultants, funders, and governments, has no such requirement. This is changing and for the better. There are strong calls to establish greater ethical oversight and consideration of local research projects. Some funders are starting to require it.

When making final decisions about your research design, including who is involved, the questions you are asking, and the methods employed, it is important to pause and make sure that the approach you take will do no harm. Key considerations include:

- **Informed consent**. People who share information with you for evaluation purposes should understand how that information will be used, and they should have the right to refuse participation at any time during the project. Although it may seem like the information you are collecting is not very important or intrusive, it is easy for misunderstandings to arise. This is especially true when doing work in a multicultural context.
- **Careful handling of confidential information**. Care must be taken to ensure that no-one sees evaluation responses other than those who really need to. Staff members who may have conflicts of interest should not be responsible for handling confidential information. If you are going to guarantee anonymity of participants, make sure you can! There are many ways to identify people who participate in an evaluation.

Resources regarding community-based research ethics are growing. If you are unsure about the ethical aspects of your evaluation, you can get help. For example, The Community Research Ethics Office in Waterloo, Ontario provides support, advice, and ethical reviews of research projects. See http://www.communityresearchethics.com for more guidance on ethical research practices.

Your Evaluation Sample

Who will participate in the evaluation? In formal terms, who will serve as your evaluation sample? You must select a subgroup of individuals who have participated in your CFA, and perhaps some individuals who have not, for comparison purposes. It can also be useful to access people who started the program but dropped out, although this is often challenging.

The intent of sampling is to acquire a subgroup of people, who together best represent all the people who participate (or are likely/eligible to participate) in the CFA. The smaller subgroup is your 'sample' and you hope it roughly looks the same as the bigger group, which is the 'population'. A biased sample is a group which is systematically different from the larger population. For example, if a CFA was meant for all 250 students in a public school and your sample of 25 children was composed of only boys from grades 2 and 3, your sample is biased (it favours certain groups over others) – it does not represent the age ranges and gender split of the larger school population. Evaluation results can be difficult to interpret if the sample is biased.

Some Tips on Making Sampling Decisions
✔ Try to include <u>all</u> regular users of the CFA in the evaluation, if feasible.
✔ If your CFA has a large number of participants, be as random as possible when you sample participants. All CFA users should have an equal likelihood of being asked to participate. If not random, even large samples can still be biased and unrepresentative of the 'population'. This is more likely to be a problem with small samples.
✔ If working with small numbers of participants, do not randomly select them for the evaluation. Small random samples can easily end up being biased, simply due to chance. Instead, sample purposively; try to select people who you think represent the larger group of CFA participants. Balance the sample by gender, age, income, participation, or other dimensions you think are important.
✔ If your methods are largely quantitative, larger samples are preferred. With larger samples, you can be a little more confident that summary statistics (averages, frequencies, etc.) are not being influenced too strongly by individual differences.
✔ If your methods are largely qualitative, smaller samples are acceptable because the methods and analysis are time-intensive. There is no simple rule for sample size. One strategy is to keep sampling until no new ideas seem to be coming up in the data.

Making Comparisons

For the most part, evaluations are about making comparisons. When you think about how to interpret an outcome, a comparison of some sort is usually made, and this is how we decide something is good, bad or somewhere in between. For example, you may compare your participants to others who are not involved in the CFA, or to themselves at times before and after their involvement. Making comparisons that allow for straightforward interpretation requires paying attention to *when* you collect your indicators from your program sample and, sometimes, a comparison group.

Some Tips on Making Comparisons
✔ Whenever possible, collect indicators from participants *before* and *after* their participation in your CFA. This is called "pre-post" test design. If you see differences between the pre-test and post-test indicators, they can most likely be attributable to the effect of your CFA. Be careful, though, as there may be other explanations for the change.
✔ There may be many reasons you cannot get pre-test information. If you cannot, your design is "post-test only". You should ask program participants to indicate how much change they feel they have experienced, as a result of the CFA , or ask them to retrospectively provide pre-test data (e.g., "rate the following items based on what you would have answered 6 weeks ago"). This can be unreliable but is better than not having any pre-test information at all.
✔ Consider collecting the same indicators from a comparison group of similar people who did not participate in the CFA, participated less often, or dropped out. Note that there may also be other important group comparisons (e.g., based on gender or income differences). Comparisons provide more evidence about how your CFA works, who has benefitted, and what changes are due to the program's influence.

In some contexts, these standard types of comparisons might not make sense. Some CFAs do not have a clearly defined beginning and end, or participants may be difficult to access before or after the program. We talk about dealing with challenging contexts in the final chapter.

For additional information on evaluation designs, please see the online *Measurement and Analysis Companion Document*.

CFA Case Illustrations – Moving to Indicators and Tools

Below we reproduce the evaluation planning table for each of our case examples.

CFA #1 – *Traditional Food, Traditional Land (TFTL)*

Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Tools
Increased knowledge and skills of hunting, fishing, trapping, and foraging on traditional lands.	Do youth gain the knowledge and skills necessary for successful access to and use of traditional foods?	• Youth self-reports of knowledge, skills, and experiences • Hunting Guides' reports of youth skills	• "Photovoice" trip journal • Youth trip-end focus group • Hunting Guide assessment of youth learnings
Increased knowledge and skills of traditional food storage, preparation and use.	Do youth gain the knowledge and skills necessary for successful access to and use of traditional foods?		
Increased knowledge of healthy nutrition and diets based on traditional foods.	Do youth gain the knowledge and skills necessary for successful access to and use of traditional foods?	• Youth nutrition quiz scores	• Youth nutrition quiz of traditional and healthy food
Improved attitudes toward traditional food options.	Do youth have a positive experience of the project and do their attitudes toward traditional food options change?	• Youth reports of attitude change towards traditional food options	• "Photovoice" trip journal • Youth trip-end focus group
Increased access and consumption of healthy traditional foods.	Do youth pursue traditional food options after completing the TFTL?	• Youth reports of traditional food access and use	• Follow up interview survey

CFA #2 – *Capital Urban Garden and Food Drop In (CUG)*			
Outcomes	**Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Tools**
Increased knowledge of gardening and harvesting vegetables among garden volunteers	[no questions asked]	• Volunteer reports of gardening knowledge	• Community Gardener Survey
Increased affordability and availability of fresh, garden grown vegetables among garden volunteers	What is the level of benefit experienced by volunteers in reference to *food security outcomes* (affordability, availability, access, consumption)?	• Volunteers reports of food availability and affordability	• Community Gardener Survey
		• Volunteers reports of dietary diversity	
Increased access and consumption of fresh vegetables		• Volunteer reports of anxiety/concern of food access, food suitability, and eating frequency	• Focus group with volunteers
Increased feelings of social connection	How do social connections relate to ongoing volunteerism?	• Volunteer reports of friendships, feelings of community	• Focus group with volunteers
Relevant to all outcomes	Are the people who regularly volunteer at the gardens in financial need?	• Income of volunteers	• Volunteer Intake Form

CFA #3 – *The Regional Food Security Coalition (RFSC)*			
Outcomes	**Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Tools**
Greater awareness among identified cross-sector partners regarding food security issues and needs in the region.	[no questions asked]	—	—
A cross-sector partnership is formed to address food security policy and programming in the region	What organizations should be represented on the coalition, but are currently not? Which individuals? Why?	• # of organizations • List of coalition members • Scan and list of other relevant organizations; their mandates	• Coalition meeting minutes • Coalition member tracking file • Web search
Opportunties for policy and program development are identified and pursued by the coalition **Development of new social system policies, funding allocations, and initiatives that support improved food access for vulnerable communities.**	What sorts of funding, policy, and/or programming initiatives are the coalition members involved in that can be leveraged to improve food security in the region? How do these ideas inform the short-term agenda of the coalition?	• Feedback and dialogue of existing coalition members and other potential members.	• Coalition meeting minutes • Key informant interviews (with current and potential members)

In this Chapter you will learn about:

- ✔ *Resources to conduct your analysis*
- ✔ *Communicating your findings to stakeholders*
- ✔ *Making recommendations and strategically using your findings*

STEP 4

Analysis, Communication, and Use

Step 4 – Analysis, Communication and Use

- Identifying analysis options
- Developing communication strategies
- Making recommendations

Steps 1 through 3 involve developing your evaluation purpose, focus, and questions and collecting information about your CFA's operation and associated outcomes. As you acquire new evaluation information, the next important step is to interpret it. At times it can seem like a daunting task to arrive at a coherent understanding of the varied and detailed information that has been collected. Remember, however, that you have been systematic in asking evaluation questions and identifying your outcomes and associated indicators. A structured, well-planned evaluation makes interpretation much easier.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis are disciplines in their own right and whole courses and textbooks have been devoted to them. We encourage you to read more and to consult the online *Measurement and Analysis Companion Document*. It should also be emphasized that basic approaches to data analysis are actually straightforward, informative, and useful in answering many evaluation question. Most readers will already know a little bit about analysis strategies.

There are plenty of online resources to consult. Here are some recommendations:

- *Analyzing Quantitative Data* is a brief but informative primer on basic quantitative analysis. http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-6.pdf.
- *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. Another primer, this one for qualitative data. http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/G3658-12.pdf.

- For a more comprehensive look at measurement, design and analysis methods visit the *Research Methods Knowledge Base* at http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/analysis.php.
- *Using Excel to Analyze Survey Questionnaires* is a useful resource that links analysis to practical software use. http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-14.pdf.
- *User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations* is a very helpful and comprehensive resource that brings together quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis. http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/start.htm.

There is also a wide range of print material. Review the list in the box on page 33 for some examples.

The Meaning of Data: What Counts as Success?

Evaluation, by definition, is about *interpretation and judgement of value*. Analysis will tell you what you found, but the final challenge is coming to some conclusions on what it all *means*. Consider the following questions:

- What results will count as success? For example, if you are using a tool to measure "consumption of healthy food", what level of change over time reflects a "positive finding"?
- Under what conditions will you attribute change to the influence of the CFA?
- What if your sample is very small? Are indicators from a few people enough to talk about outcome achievement?
- Are your findings meaningful, important, and actionable?

What counts as success?
It's a good idea to decide in advance. For example, you may decide with stakeholders that a group average of 3.5 or higher on a 5-point scale is "high" and less than 3 is "low". Any change from low to high is considered "success"!

A central part of interpretation involves deciding on what counts as a "positive finding". This is best done in advance of analysis, and in collaboration with the project stakeholders – staff, the board, participants, and funders. In fact, the setting "targets" or "benchmarks" for success can start as soon as indicators are chosen. Indicators can be made very specific in your evaluation planning table (Worksheet #4). For example, an indicator could be written in reference to specific and desired results, such as "scores on the *Household Food Security Survey* will on average fall into the range of Food Secure after participation in the CFA".

Failing to have an upfront discussion about "what counts as success" can lead to explanations of the data after the fact, sometimes to discount, mitigate, or dismiss less positive findings. This discussion, of course, cannot be arbitrary and/or contrary to basic principles of research methods and measurement. It may be helpful to generate some hypothetical data and do a "mock data interpretation" to test out your group's assumptions and standards of success.

For example, your evaluation planning group may decide that:

- The participation of 8 to 12 people in a CFA activity (e.g., a nutrition class) is desirable. Less than 8 people is inadequate and means you will need to try to reach more people. More than 12 means that you may need to increase the number of classes offerred.
- A group average of 3.5 or higher (on a 5-point scale that is measuring a core indicator) is "high" and less than 3 is "low". Any change from low to high is considered "success"
- Attributions of the CFA's influence will be accepted as reasonable if the following, at minimum, applies: a) there is an average change from pre-test to post-test and b) a majority of participants claim that the CFA "helped them" in the written qualitative survey feedback.
- Evidence that your outcomes were achieved based on small numbers of participants will be suggestive and encouraging, but it will not be considered enough evidence of program effectiveness. More evaluation will be required.
- Findings will be meaningful, important, and actionable to the extent that they a) come from reliable, consistently collected data from a good representation of participants and b) the data helps you answer your main evaluation questions.

One additional point to remember: A failure to meet the criteria for success should not be taken to mean "a negative finding". Any result of your evaluation is an important finding, especially if based on good information that helps to answer your questions. Evaluation is a learning process and opportunity. Do not be intimidated by so-called "bad results" (e.g., people don't like the program, there is no change on your indicators over time, etc.). Rather, use your results strategically with other information to inform strategies to adjust, improve, and evolve.

Communicating and Reporting Your Findings

Reporting your findings should be much more than writing a technical report for people to read if they are so inclined. On the contrary, the reporting and dissemination phase of evaluation is a continuation of your findings and interpretations, as others begin to digest, work with, and sort through the implications of the results. There are numerous ways to present and disseminate your findings.[6]

Strategies to get the word out:

- Technical reports
- Executive summaries
- Graphical summaries
- Academic publications
- Fact sheets
- Newsletters
- Web pages
- Public Presentations/forums
- Narratives, stories, pictures and video

The options you select will depend upon the needs and expectations of your audiences, so knowing your audience is very important. A funder may require a full technical report while community members may only need a fact sheet or summary. In all cases, clarity is paramount. Most people only have a limited amount time (and memory!) for your findings. When beginning to plan your communication strategy consider the following:

- What are the three most important things about your evaluation?
- If you had 30 seconds in an elevator to tell someone what you learned through your evaluation work, what would you say?
- What does your audience *need* to know?

Making Recommendations

Stakeholders of an evaluation often want some solid commentary of the bottom line – what are the main recommendations or implications of your evaluation? Recommendations represent the transition point between evaluation and action and are therefore quite important stage in reporting. There is a real art to crafting good recommendations. They need to be challenging enough to prompt meaningful change, but they also need to be closely tied to the evaluation data to be constructive and achievable. Below are some tips in developing and reporting your recommendations.

[6] Check out http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/G3658-13.pdf for a great brief on using graphical summaries of evaluation findings.

Some Tips on Making Evaluation Recommendations
✔ Ask your stakeholders and audiences what areas of recommendations they would find most useful. Focus on "primary intended users".
✔ Recommendations should be linked to, and follow clearly from, evaluation findings. This is not as obvious as it might seem.
✔ Distinguish between different types of recommendations: major versus minor, short-term versus long-term, based on strong evidence versus less strong evidence.
✔ Consider multiple options in your recommendations, with pros and cons associated with each. Try to include a few small recommendations that are easy to achieve, as well as a few bigger, more ambitious ideas.
✔ Limit yourself to actions that are within the control of stakeholders.
✔ Be politically sensitive; find out political implications of recommendations. "Pilot" recommendations with others before finalizing them in a report.

Linking to the Greater Cause

Evaluations are often conducted in response to the requirements of funding but also, one hopes, to improve the effectiveness of CFAs. All evaluations should strive to generate useable, information that can lead to improvements. That said, many evaluations can be broadly criticized for operating in isolation of one another and failing to link up strategically to larger goals of the sector. Even effective communication to stakeholders can be limited in reach and consequence. This issue is not unique to the food security sector.

At what point do promising practices "scale up" to become a broader, comprehensive response to food insecurity? Evaluation findings, from small programs to larger more complex initiatives, need to be more widely shared, critiqued, and transferred across contexts so there is a greater opportunity for collective learning, wisdom and action. This Guide cannot delve into this complex issue in any depth – except to point out that evaluation findings can be made more valuable when they can be considered in relation to other community programs, and local policies and needs. This requires concerted efforts at connecting stakeholders via partnerships, coalitions, and collaborations that puts research and evaluation as a central and ongoing agenda item.

CFA Case Illustrations – Analyzing, Reporting, and Using Findings

CFA #1 – *Traditional Food, Traditional Land (TFTL)*

- TFTL relied on "Photovoice" as a main evaluation tool. Photos were taken throughout the outdoor trips by youth and their guides and together they chose 10 photos that they felt "reflected traditional hunting" and/or "an important experience on the trip". Youth wrote a brief paragraph about each photo about "what they learned" and "why it mattered". The Photovoice project was assembled into a scrapbook and a display. Stories commonly pointed to outdoor skills that were learned as well as the "importance of the land" to First Nations.

- On each trip, the project's Hunting Guides completed a brief report of each youth to judge learnings. The Guides reported growth in the youth's understanding of traditional food access.

- TFTL conducted a nutrition knowledge quiz in the school for all students in grades 7 to 12 as part of their general health curriculum. At the end of the TFTL pilot project, 6 months later, the quiz was administered again. The project was able to demonstrate that the 15 students who participated in TFTL scored higher on these quizzes with an average difference of 17%. Questions related to traditional food nutrition showed an even greater difference of 25%.

- TFTL is planning on following up with TFTL "grads" to see if traditional food access evolved as a result of the program. Anecdotally, youth are in need of greater support and resources to maintain involvement in outdoor hunting/fishing opportunities.

USE: The findings to date were presented to the Elders Council and the Local Health Authority to support a funding application to a) expand the program to a second community and b) allow for repeated program participation over the course of school aged years. The Photovoice exhibit/scrap book is continually being used to communicate the program to the local community as well as more broadly.

CFA #2 – *Capital Urban Garden and Food Drop In (CUG)*

- Via the focus groups, CUG found that volunteers highly valued the social connections and feelings of affiliation promoted by the community garden.

- After a 3 month period, new volunteers reported in the *Community Gardener Survey* that they spent less money on produce and had a more diverse diet.

- However, the average income level of volunteers was above the neighbourhood median and there was no significant increase in scores on the *Household Food Security Survey Module*. Pre-volunteer scores were already fairly high and indicative of adequate food security.

USE: The Board of Directors and the volunteers, after some debate, concluded that while it is hoped that low income community members who are having challenges with food security will become volunteers, the main role of volunteers is to keep the garden well-tended and productive, in order to fill the share boxes of members and for subsidized distribution. Future evaluation will examine the food security outcomes of the share boxes for at-risk users.

CFA #3 – *The Regional Food Security Coalition (RFSC)*

- The RFSC discussed the findings of a scan of community organizations and a set of key informant interviews with coalition members and other community leaders. It was decided that an important first step was to approach First Nations leaders to gain a better understanding of specific communities' needs. Secondarily, the RFSC felt it was necessary to enumerate existing food vendors, sellers, and stores in the region to examine gaps in relation to population spread and transportation. This prompted connections to the Chamber of Commerce and Public Health representatives, who could provide some of this data.

USE: The lesson of RFSC is that their efforts were (and had to be) very developmental. While their ultimate and more distant goal is improved food security in the region, evaluation of such outcomes will only make sense in relation to future, as yet undeveloped, Community Food Actions. In the meantime, tracking the work of the Coalition is an important preliminary step to fully understand systems level changes.

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Appendix A – Evaluation Planning Worksheets #1-3

Worksheet #1 – The Activities of Your CFA

	Systems and Policy Change Initiatives	Direct Community Food Actions for Individuals and Groups
Activities from the Framework	• Undertake research, develop resources, convene stakeholders (government, private sector, NGOs, farmers), etc. to raise awareness about local food security issues • Create partnerships with stakeholders • Engage in food security policy development, advocacy	• Provide education and resources on food, nutrition, access and use • Facilitate shared food production and use • Facilitate shared food preparation and use • Create affordable options for local food access • Provide emergency food access
List the Activities of your *own* program		

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Worksheet #2a – Identifying Your Outcomes – Individual/Group Outcomes of Direct Community Food Actions

CFA Outcomes From the Framework	Additional Details About the Outcome	Some Examples of CFAs that Relate to these Outcomes	Applies to Us? ✓	How would you word this outcome for your own CFA?
Short-Term Outcomes: Knowledge and Skills				
• **Increased knowledge and skills** o **in food production** o **in food preparation** o **in food budgeting, management, and use**	Knowledge and skills have increased about the importance of food security, healthy food production and preparation, and strategies for accessing food inexpensively has increased.	This group of outcomes group makes sense for CFAs with a clear "training component", like many community kitchens, community gardens, or business development programs.		
• **Improved coping skills in managing food insecurity**	Knowledge and skills have increased about healthy and unhealthy strategies for coping with food insecurity.			
• **Increased awareness of the local and global food system**	There is greater awareness of where food comes from, the implications of food choices, and the relationship between local and global food security issues.	This outcome makes sense for CFAs like food co-ops, community garden, farm-to-school or farm-to-cafeteria programs.		
Short-Term Outcomes: Food Availability and Affordability				
• **Increased production and distribution of food**	Food is increasingly produced, shared, and distributed in a range of community locales and contexts.	Entrepreneurial food and agriculture related activity, farmers markets, food boxes and baskets, food co-ops, and community gardens may fit here. Also, CFAs attempting to change the practices of grocery stores may choose these outcomes.		
• **Increased affordability of food**	Healthy food is more affordable – markets are competitive, prices are lower, consumer decisions are improved, people have greater purchasing power, etc.			
• **Increased availability of food**	More healthy food is made available to the local community. Food is not wasted or misused, but directed to those in need. Food availability is community-driven and generated.			

(Continues)

Worksheet #2a – Identifying Your Outcomes – Individual/Group Outcomes of Direct Community Food Actions (continued)

CFA Outcomes From the Framework	Additional Details About the Outcome	Some Examples of CFAs that Relate to these Outcomes	Applies to Us? ✓	How would you word this outcome for your own CFA?
Intermediate Outcomes: Access and Consumption				
• **Increased acquisition of healthy food** • **Increased consumption of healthy food**	People have greater choices and are able to access more healthy food as a result of the CFA Because of greater access, healthy, balanced, food consumption increases among people.	Many types of CFAs, including community gardens, farm-to-table/ farm-to-school programs, or food banks may choose these outcomes. CFAs that have regular, ongoing contact with their participants will find it easier to measure this outcome.		
• **Increased stability and regularity of healthy food use**	People are able to acquire and use healthy food in ways that are sustainable over time. Healthy food access is normalized.			

Worksheet #2b – Identifying Your Outcomes – Systems and Policy Change Outcomes

CFA Outcomes From the Framework	Additional Details About the Outcome	Some Examples of CFAs that Relate to these Outcomes	Applies to Us? ✓	How would you word this outcome for your own CFA?
Short-Term Outcomes: Awareness				
• **Greater awareness among decision-makers and opinion leaders of food security and social planning needs**	One or more target groups are more aware of the prevalence, nature, underlying causes, or effects of food security issues.	This outcome is appropriate for CFAs that engage in systemic advocacy work, like lobbying, coalition building, or policy analysis.		
• **Greater community awareness of food security issues**	Members of the community at large are more aware of the prevalence, nature, underlying causes, or effects of food security issues.	This outcome fits for CFAs that involve public awareness or media campaigns.		
Short-Term Outcomes: Partnerships				
• **Multi-sector partnerships are formed or strengthened between organizations in food and related systems**	New organizations or individuals have become involved in food security work in an ongoing and substantial way. They may have become more involved in the work of your CFA, or in other efforts linked to your work. They may be sitting on committees or coalitions, volunteering, supporting events, providing in-kind support, or co-leading programs. Target groups become aware of the potential for a particular strategy or action and express support for it.	CFAs that invest considerable time in networking and coalition building, above and beyond the normal networking work involved in running any CFA have the best chance of making a measurable difference here.		
Intermediate Outcomes				
• **Development and/or enhancement of a broad range of policies, funding, and initiatives that increase food security, particularly for vulnerable communities**	New policies are created, diverse funding opportunities evolve, and new community initiatives and ideas emerge around the issues of food security. New donations and investments are made and the sustainability of community food action work is increased.	These outcomes may fit for CFAs doing systemic advocacy, policy development, coalition building, research, or needs assessment.		
• **Expansion and improvement of existing CFAs**	Existing CFAs are supported to improve their outcomes and expand their reach.			
• **Development of new and innovative CFAs to meet local needs**	New CFAs are developed, supported, and initiated to meet new and changing community needs.			

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Worksheet #2c – Long-Term Outcomes

CFA Outcomes From the Framework	Additional Details About the Outcome	Some Examples of CFAs that Relate to these Outcomes	Applies to Us? ✓	How would you word this outcome for your own CFA?
• **Decreased personal and social disruption surrounding food acquisition**	Access to food has become more convenient, more timely, less time consuming, and less stressful. Levels of worry or uncertainty over food have decreased.	Most community food action programs, and especially those that have ongoing contact with a defined group of participants, can measure this outcome.		
• **Reduced stigma and dignity relating to food access**	Food access improves without carrying feelings of stigma and charity. Improved food security is dignified and associated with normalized community participation.			

Worksheet #3 – Creating a Model of Your CFA

	Systems and Policy Change Initiatives	Direct Community Food Actions for Individuals and Groups
Program Activities		
Outputs		
Short-Term Outcomes		
Intermediate Outcomes		
Long-Term Outcomes	• Decreased family stress and life disruption due to food insecurity • Reduced stigma and greater dignity in relation to food access • Reduced vulnerability to chronic and other diseases/Improved overall health and well-being	
Long-Term Outcomes (add your own if necessary		

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Appendix B – Evaluation Components, Staff Commitments, and Rough Timeframes

Evaluation Planning Component	Activities may include…	Time Required	Timeframe	Staff Allocation
Project management and communication	• Develop overall plan and schedule • Delegate and coordinate evaluation tasks • Communicate with stakeholders	Ongoing – 1.5 days/ week	1 month for start-up, program cycle, 1-2 months post program	Lead staff person
Engagement with stakeholders	• Form multi-stakeholder advisory committee • Inform participants of evaluation	Twice month, 2-3 hr. meetings plus ongoing communi-cation	Monthly or bi-monthly meetings	Lead staff person with staff support
Development of CFA model and evaluation priorities	• Develop CFA model • Review with staff and committee • Generate evaluation questions • Set evaluation priorities	Half day staff/ stakeholder meeting; 2 days of fine-tuning, then feedback and revision	At start-up of evaluation	All staff and advisory committee
Identify available data	• Review tools and procedures already used • Review existing data collected from participants • Identify measurement gaps based on outcomes	1 day of review, staff consultation	At start-up of evaluation	Staff responsible for existing data procedures.
Evaluation design and tools	• Incorporate existing data and procedures • Select available tools based on outcomes • Create custom tools based on outcomes • Develop the evaluation design and sampling	3 to 5 days, although this may be fairly quick if measurement resources are readily available	At start-up of evaluation	Lead staff with staff support
Data collection	• Recruit participants • Collect data based on methods (e.g., focus groups, interviews, surveys, intake forms, etc.)	Depends on ease of access of participants to participants, and type and amount of data collection. Data entry and analysis can be quick once a database is in place. Transcription and qualitative analysis is time consuming.	Depends on design, but at least before and after program	Staff, students, volunteers
Data entry and management	• Transcribe interview/focus group data or notes. • Enter quantitative data into database; coding; data management		As data comes in	Staff with database management skills
Data analysis	• Quantitative and qualitative analysis (descriptive, narrative, statistical)		As data comes in and at end of evaluation	Lead staff with staff report
Reporting and dissemination	• Interim and final reports of findings, executive summary, fact sheets, presentations, posters, forums, etc.	7 or more days over a month time frame or more.	At end, after analysis	Lead staff with staff support and advisory committee
Actions based on findings	• Modification, addition or streamlining of CFA, new materials, approaches, new resource allocation, funding proposals, dissemination, etc.	Actions may go far beyond the "project" and involve the whole organization		All stakeholders

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Appendix C – Content Examples for an Evaluation Planning Table (Worksheet #4)

Worksheet #4 – Content Examples for an Evaluation Planning Table

Direct Community Food Actions for Individuals & Groups			
Outcomes	**Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Tools**
Increased knowledge and skills • **food production** • **food preparation** • **food budgeting** • **awareness of food system** • **coping skills in managing food insecurity**	Have participants learned new skills? Have participants applied the skills learned in the CFA at home?	• Self-reported knowledge • Re: coping skills, a reduction of poor coping skills (e.g., skipping meals) may be captured by several of the "Access and Consumption" indicators and tools (see below)	• Customized tools using scales, true/false, written feedback, etc. • Focus groups and interviews that focus on their learnings, usefulness of the knowledge, how they use knowledge in practical contexts, etc. • The *Community Gardener Survey* (for garden initiatives)
Increased production and distribution of food	How much food has our CFA distributed? To whom?	• Food production/ distribution outputs: o number of food baskets, o number of meals o kilograms or other amount of food generated, produced, donated, collected, distributed, or gleaned	• The *Common Output Tracking Form* tracks outputs of many types of community food action programs
Increased affordability and availability of food	Has our CFA led to a reduction in the cost of food for participants?	• Household reports of food affordability; financial ability to buy food	• *United Sates Household Food Security Survey Module*
	Has our CFA made healthy food more available and affordable in the community?	• Grocer reports of their ability to make food available and affordable	• *The Rural Grocery Store Customer Survey*
		• Customer reports of food availability	• *The Rural Grocery Store Owner Survey*
		• Cost of individual food items • Number of missing food items (by store, market, etc.)	• Store checklist of *Health Canada's National Nutritious Food Basket* or *Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's Revised Northern Food Basket*
Increased access and consumption of nutritious food **Increased stability and regularity of healthy food use**	Do participants have more food, or more healthy food, as a result of participation?	• Household reports of eating/meal frequency, food intake (general frequency) • Household reports of food depletion; running out of food	• *Promising Practices Food Security Tool* • *Coping Strategies Index*
	To what degree has the food consumption of participating families become healthier?	• Household reports of dietary diversity (frequency of different foods consumed)	*Household and Individual Dietary Diversity Questionnaires*

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Worksheet #4 – Content Examples for an Evaluation Planning Table

Systems and Policy Change Initiatives			
Outcomes	**Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Tools**
Greater awareness among decision-makers and opinion leaders of food security and social planning needs	Has our CFA improved awareness among decision makers and opinion leaders?	Reports from decision makers and opinion leaders of their awareness of food security issues, initiatives, needs, etc.	• Tools are usually customized and made specific to the initiative and the issues of concern. • The *Whole Measures Evaluation Rubric* can provide information on awareness.
Greater community awareness of food security issues	Has our CFA raised awareness about specific topics related to food security?	Citizen reports of awareness of food security issues, initiatives, needs, etc.	
		Survey responses from community member	• A community-wide "public opinion" type survey could be used to gauge attitudes.
Multi-sector partnerships are formed or strengthened between organizations in food and related systems	Who are our partners and how are they involved? Have we developed partnerships with new sectors of the community?	• Records of partnership structure, roles, agreements, plans, actions, etc. • # of partnership members • # and type of action items identified and implemented • # and type of champions identified • # and type of resources, policies, materials	• Custom tracking forms and basic tracking tools like meeting minutes and membership lists can be used to track these indicators. • Tracking Forms on coalition activities from the *Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit* [7]
Development of new social system policies, funding allocations, and initiatives that support improved food access **Expansion and improvement of existing CFAs** **Development of new CFAs designed to meet local needs**	Have new food security initiatives, policies, and practices emerged since our work began? Has our work played a role in the development of those initiatives?	• # and type of new CFAs • amount of new funding attached to food security initiatives • # and type of new food security related policies drafted • # and type of new food security related policies adopted	• Custom tracking forms and basic tracking tools like meeting minutes and membership lists can be used to track these indicators. • A range of tracking forms for food security coalitions are available from the *Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit* [6] (Chapter 8, p. 201)
		• Stakeholder (partners, non-profits, government, citizens, etc.) perspectives on the role of the partnership in local food security issues	• The *Whole Measures Rubric* • Custom designed focus groups or interviews

[7] National Research Centre (2006). Community Food Project Evaluation Toolkit. Boulder, CO: Community Food Security Coalition.

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Worksheet #4 – Content Examples for an Evaluation Planning Table

Long-Term Outcomes			
Outcomes	**Evaluation Questions**	**Indicators**	**Tools**
Decreased family stress and life disruption due to food insecurity	Are participants experiencing less stress related to nutrition? Are participants spending less time and energy coping with food insecurity?	• Household reports of family stress and life disruption.	• The *United States' Household Food Security Survey Module* explicitly asks about "worry" or "concern" about food security. This tool could be used over longer-term time periods. • In-depth interviews with family members regarding the longer term outcomes of the initiative in relation to reducing stress and life disruption.
Reduced stigma and greater dignity	Do participants feel stigmatized by their difficulties acquiring food and feeding their families? Do they achieve greater dignity (e.g., through self-sufficiency) in relation to food.	• Household reports of stigma associated with food insecurity. • Household reports of dignity and its relationship to food security.	• In-depth interviews with family members regarding the longer term outcomes of the initiative in relation to reduced stigma and improved dignity. • Customized rating scales of self-perceptions on these dimensions.

A blank copy of this worksheet can be downloaded for electronic use at http://cdpac.ca/admin/media.php?mid=1112

Worksheet #4 – Evaluation Planning Table (blank template)

Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Tools	Timelines

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