



Introduction

The Food Systems Lab is a one-year pilot Social Innovation Lab funded by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation working on solutions to address the issue of food waste and food insecurity in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Through this collaborative process we aim to contribute towards a resilient, sustainable and just food system in Toronto and beyond.

The Lab process includes ongoing qualitative and quantitative research such as interviews with stakeholders and experts to harvest current knowledge about food waste, analyzing archival records, and modelling food waste data. Stakeholders were engaged in a series of three workshops to gain a deep understanding of the system, identify and prototype innovations and opportunities that can address root causes of food waste. Summaries of the first and second workshops are available for download on the Food Systems Lab website (www.foodsystemslab.ca/workshops).

Workshop Objectives

This workshop used rapid prototyping tools to redesign ideas based on feedback through various mechanisms. These tools included sensitivity testing, pitching in a 'Regenerative Food Den' (a mock Dragons' Den), and minimum viable product (MVP) testing. By prototyping in an iterative way, we pressure-tested key assumptions and challenged ideas in a safe environment. The goal of this workshop was to have '80% baked' ideas that could be developed into pitches to stakeholders and potential supporters. This workshop also served as a space to gather input from Food Systems Lab members for a discussion paper to present at the Food Policy for Canada Summit (June 22-23) and National Zero Waste Council Food Waste Reduction Strategy stakeholder consultation.

Pitches

Building off the seven business concepts for reducing food waste in Workshop 2, five pitches were developed.

- **Our Food, Our Future:** A coalition to align the efforts of organizations working on sustainable food in education and build a standard guideline for increasing awareness of food waste and food issues in schools, support schools to implement change and policies, and reduce the amount of food wasted in schools. The behaviours that students adopt from school to reduce food waste may then be adopted by their families, leading to less food waste in homes as well.
- **App C:** Matching food vendors or urban growers to community food organizations, the private sector, and general public so surplus food can be sold at below-market prices. Community food organizations have a preferred window to purchase food before it becomes available to everyone else.
- **Brother Nature's Food Waste Pick-Up:** A bicycle-powered delivery service to bring food scraps from restaurants to community gardens/urban growers. The compost can be used to grow food and delivered back to the restaurants using bicycles.
- **Mosaic Campaign:** A friendly neighbourhood education campaign combined with a competition to waste less food. Residents learn skills such as preparing meals from different cultures, using leftovers or parts of food that usually are not eaten, and meal planning at community workshops. Residents track how much food they waste on an app and the equivalent savings from not wasting food are re-invested in the community.
- **Technology for Change:** Introduce food processing technology at the farm level to decrease perishability while increasing revenue by capturing more of the value chain through selling preserved crops throughout the year.



Prototyping Solutions: Food Waste in Toronto

Workshop 3 Recap

What's Next?

While the Food Systems Lab pilot comes to an end in August 2017, we are looking forward to continuing the work of the lab through new opportunities. Here are some of the initiatives in progress:

- Circular food curriculum pilot (under the Our Food Our Future theme) with a class at Hawthorne School that will include: vermicomposting workshop, food waste campaign at school and letter campaign to local politicians.
- Proposal to the Weston Foundation for funding to test different food waste awareness campaign strategies in Toronto
- Ongoing participation in the steering committee Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Food and Organic Waste Framework
- Creating an open source guide to running a Food Systems Lab or similar process.
- Ongoing participation in the National Food Policy consultation for Canada
- Contributing to Food Secure Canada's policy briefing note on food waste
- Presenting findings at the Association of European Schools of Planning conference, Coventry U.K
- Contributing a food waste policy commentary for the Canadian Association of Food Studies Special Issue on National Food Policy (October 2017)
- Part of the advisory committee for LyoFresh Technology, one of the solutions pitched under the theme "Technology for Change"
- Part of the advisory committee for "Brew Growth" to pilot coffee ground to community garden initiative across the GTA
- Steering Committee of the first Feeding 5000 event in Toronto, utilizing what would have been wasted food to feed 5000 people (part of the international FeedBack campaign). October 8th 2017
- Part of an expert panel for the CBC Radio Ideas program "Feeding the Future" October 27th 2017

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