

DIGGING INTO THE FARM TO SCHOOL MOVEMENT

ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS OF CONNECTING LEARNERS AND GROWERS THROUGH FOOD LITERACY AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

Elina Blomley, Dina Sadeghi, Hafsa Salihue
F2SBC Conference // May 18th



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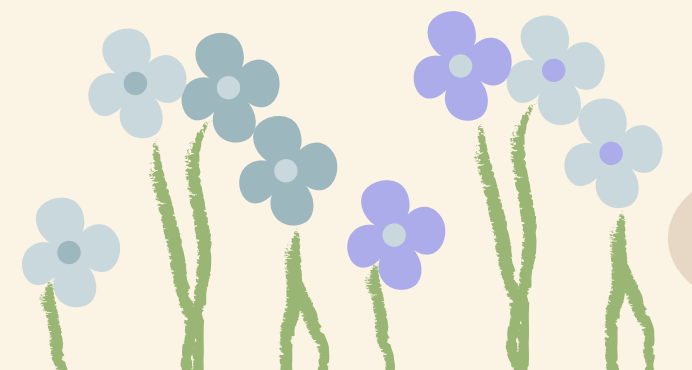
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Canada



GRATITUDE TO THE LAND & HOST NATIONS



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Elina Blomley

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Dina Sadeghi

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Hafsa Salihue



CASE STUDY 1

THE ROLE OF FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING IN FACILITATING LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT FOR SCHOOLS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Elina Blomley

MRM Simon Fraser University, BA - ESS Dalhousie University



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INTRODUCTION

**"WHEN WE MAKE
PLANS, WE CHOOSE
WHOSE FUTURES
MATTER"**

(Zapata, 2021, p.641)

EXPORT ORIENTED FOOD CHAIN

trapping farmers between a rock and a hard place

Introduction

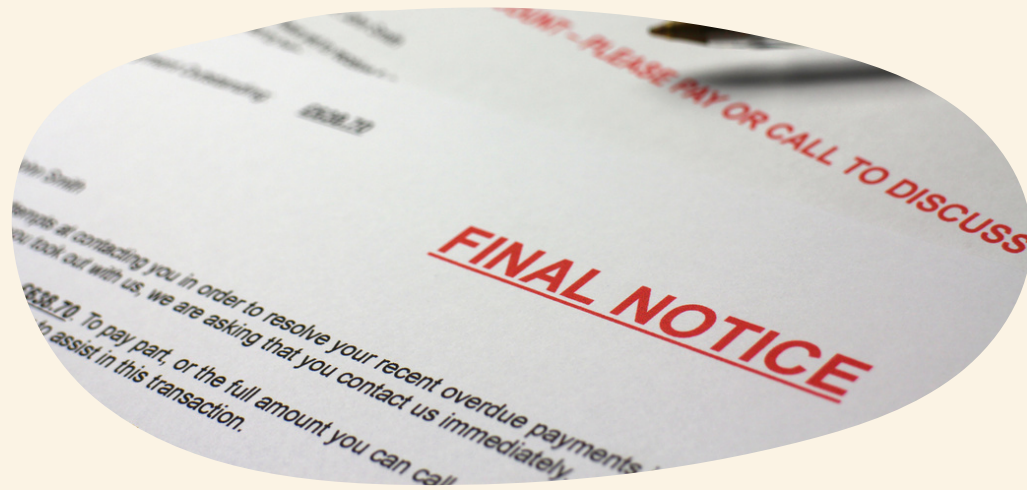
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EXPORT ORIENTED FOOD CHAIN

trapping farmers between a rock and a hard place



FARMER INDEBTEDNESS

Canadian farmers are over 115 billion dollars in collective farm debt.

(Statistics Canada, 2021)

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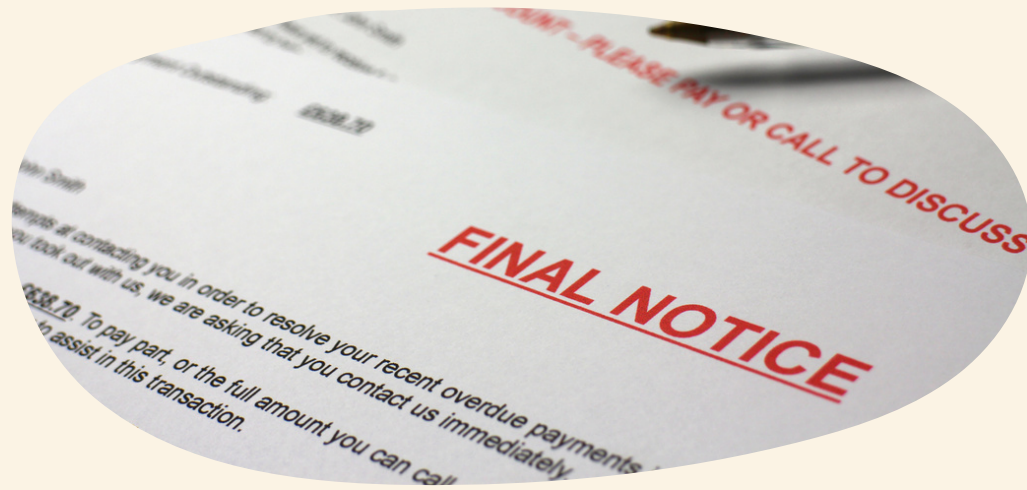
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EXPORT ORIENTED FOOD CHAIN

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CONSOLIDATED MARKETS & INFRASTRUCTURE

Agri-input corporations capture 98% of Canadian farmers revenues due to the rising costs of inputs and services

(Qualman, 2017)

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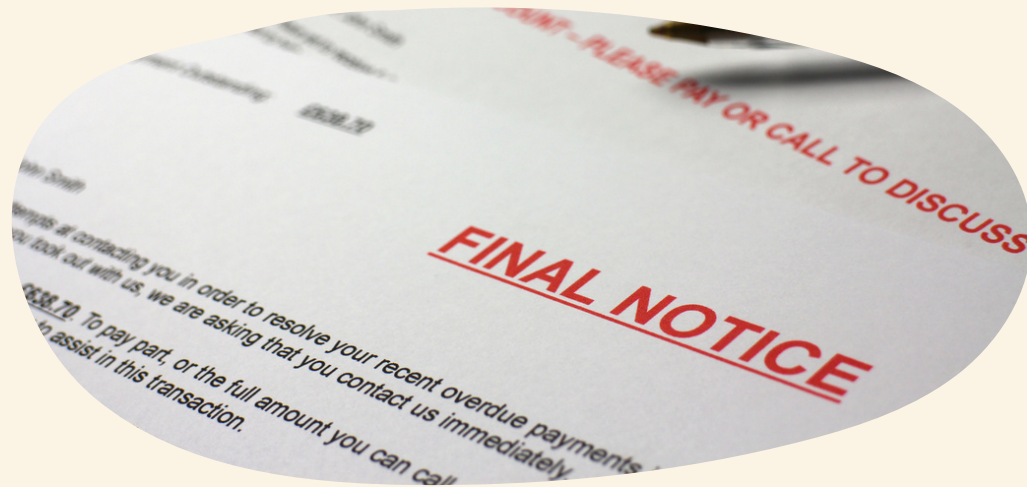
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EXPORT ORIENTED FOOD CHAIN

trapping farmers between a rock and a hard place



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Agri-input corporations capture 98% of Canadian farmers revenues due to the rising costs of inputs and services

(Qualman, 2017)



IMPACTS OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Increasing anthropogenically induced climate events (e.g. flooding, heat domes, early glacier runoff)

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OTHER END OF THE CHAIN

Rising costs, reliance on imports, increasing food insecurity

1 in 7

Canadians experiencing household food insecurity

1 in 6

Children experience household food insecurity

(Idzerda et al., 2022; Tarasuk et al., 2021)



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OTHER END OF THE CHAIN

Rising costs, reliance on imports, increasing food insecurity

1 in 7

Canadians experiencing household food insecurity

1 in 6

Children experience household food insecurity

(Idzerda et al., 2022; Tarasuk et al., 2021)

Legally infringing on the right to food



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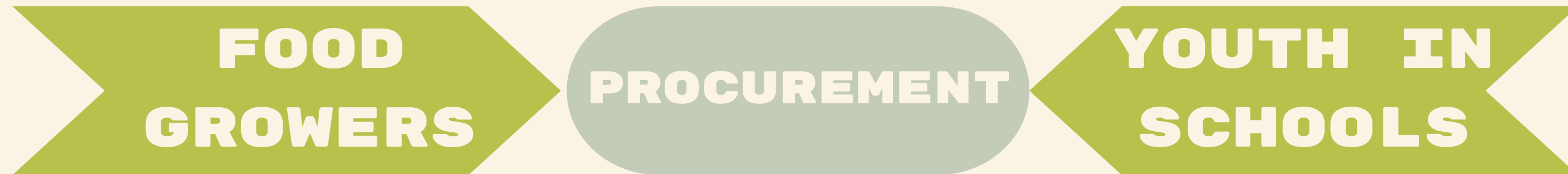
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FEDERAL & PROVINCIAL POLICY WINDOWS

for a national school food policy



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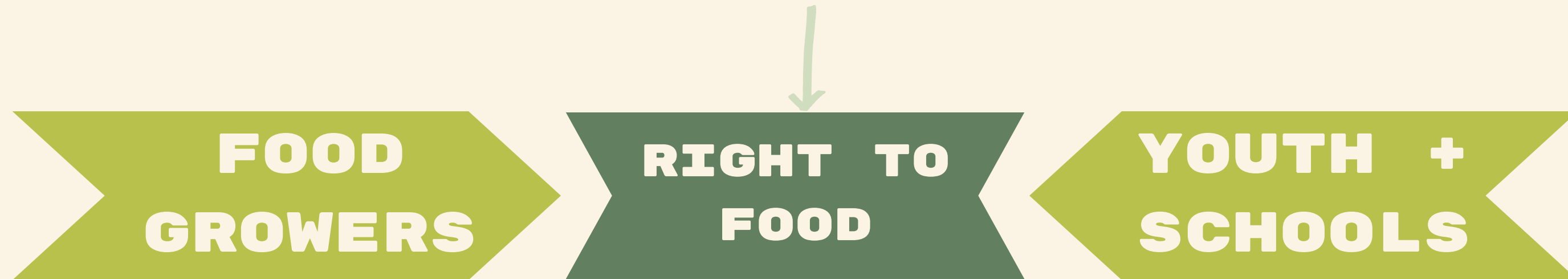
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FEDERAL & PROVINCIAL POLICY WINDOWS

for a national school food policy



Publicly funding school food opposes
neoliberalism and contributes towards the "right
to food"

(O'Brien, 2014)

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“Activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management, as well as all the associated regulatory institutions and activities”

(Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000, p.113)

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BRITISH COLUMBIA'S DIVERSE AGRI-SECTOR

Spatial Context

- Less than **5%** of the land base
- Over **200** agricultural crops
- **2.1\$ billion** towards the province's GDP

(B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, 2022)



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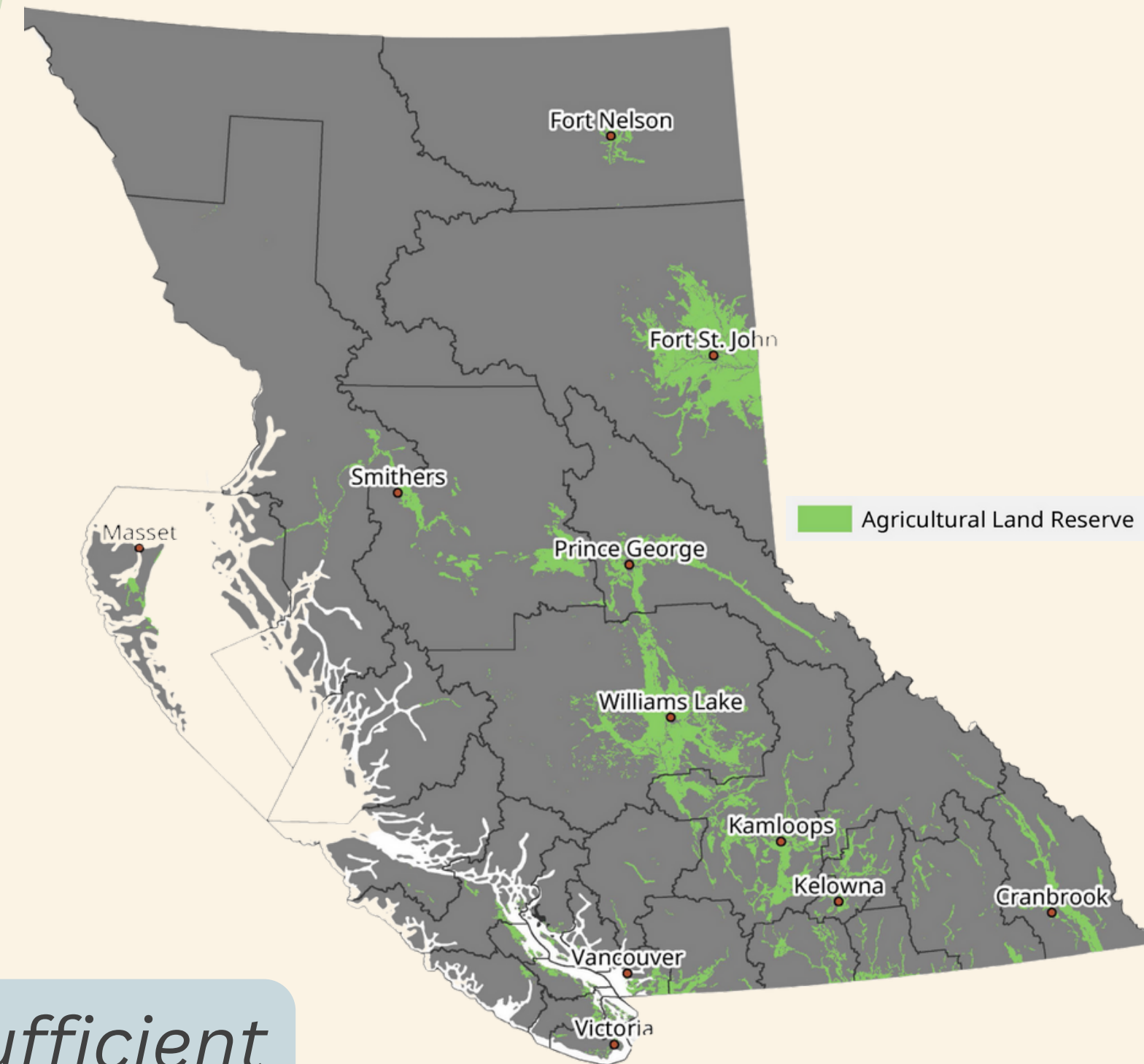
THE AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE ACT (1973)

Spatial Context

- Unique jurisdictional authority & protection of agricultural land with an independent administrative tribunal
- 4,612,526 hectares (5% landbase)
- ALR is rapidly decreasing at 600 hectares. a year

(Shore, 2018)

Farmland protection alone is insufficient



(ALC, 2022)

AS THESE POLICY WINDOWS OPEN DO WE CONTINUE WITH THE STATUS QUO?



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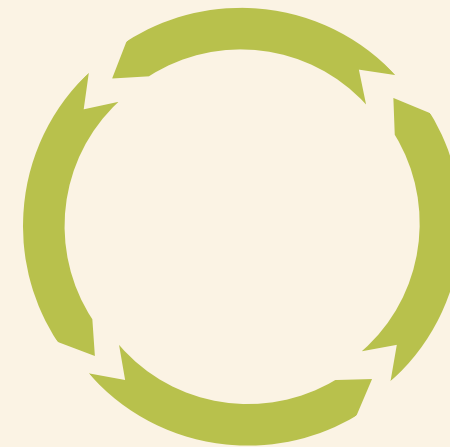
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**AS THESE POLICY WINDOWS
OPEN DO WE CONTINUE WITH
THE STATUS QUO?**



OR MAKE A DIFFERENT PLAN?



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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES



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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. What are planning-related barriers and opportunities to scale up local food procurement for farm to school programs?



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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. What are planning-related barriers and opportunities to scale up local food procurement for farm to school programs?



2. What is the role of planning and planners in helping facilitate local food procurement in schools?





METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION



Ethics approval
through SFU
Research Ethics
Board

Key Informant
Interviews
September 2021 to
March 2022

Transcribed on
OtterAi & analyzed
over NVivo 12

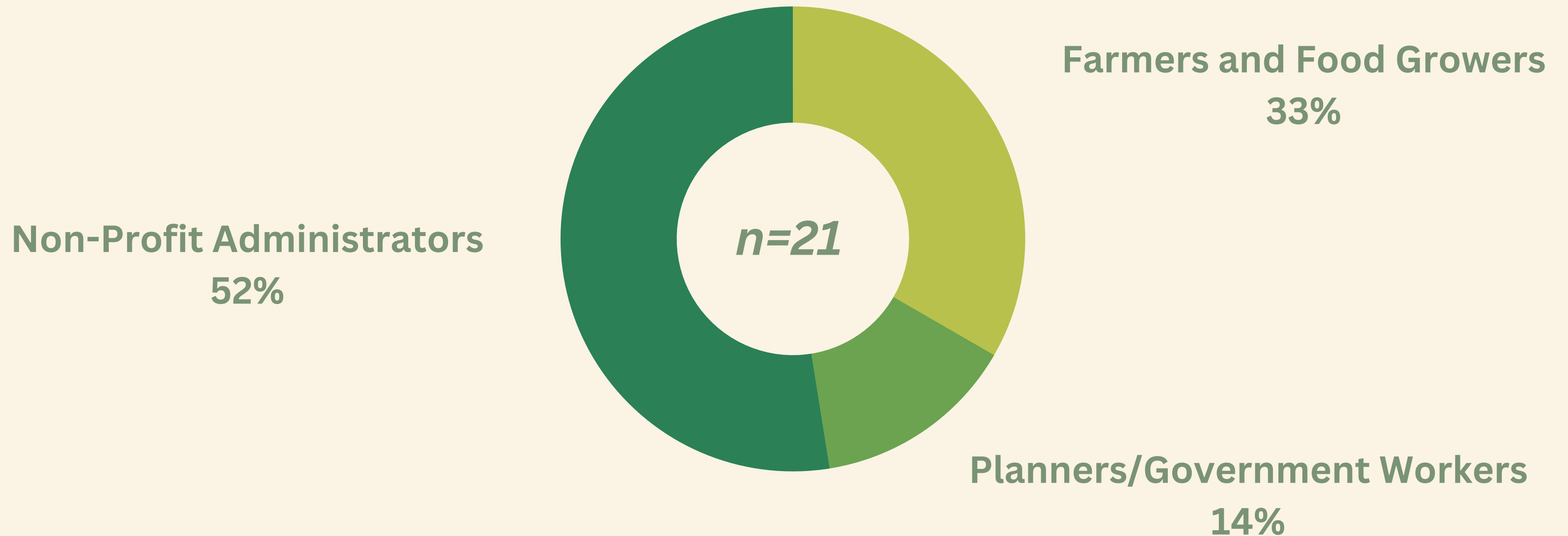
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KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWEES



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LIMITATIONS

- Small amount of interviewees
- Geographic location of stakeholders
- Agriculture as the dominant food growing practice



LIMITATIONS

- Small amount of interviewees
- Geographic location of stakeholders
- Agriculture as the dominant food growing practice

**Tension between erasure and co-opting →
Food systems are pluralistic**



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FINDINGS

BARRIERS

1 . INACCESSIBLE PLANNING PROCESSES

2 . LACKING INFRASTRUCTURE

3 . FARMING IS NOT FINANCIALLY VIABLE

4 . GAPS IN COMMUNICATION AND EXPECTATIONS

BARRIER #1

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

INACCESSIBLE AND SLOW PLANNING PROCESSES

ALR zoning was hindrance, insufficient incentives, exclusion from consultations

“... planning processes are difficult for farmers to engage in based on timelines and level of commitment and can be frustrating when key stakeholders are not well engaged in those processes. And often, when the ALC considers who is a farming stakeholder, I think most of their access to who would those people would be is through land ownership. So I also wasn't in a position of land ownership, like we weren't considered farmers under B.C. assessment”

(Farmer 6)

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BARRIER #2

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

LACKING THE 'INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE MIDDLE'

“(...) even if we wanted to grow more food, there's not enough of a market regionally to sell that food and the transportation distribution network is a challenge (...) so we're growing on only on a fraction of our land.”

(Planner and Farmer 4)

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BARRIER #3

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

**FARMING IS NOT
FINANCIALLY
VIABLE**

**farmland, inputs, labour,
speculation, impacts of the
climate crisis**

“(...) when you're looking at growing on a market scale or market garden scale, and you need to have that capital input to begin with, and when we look at something like, if you're purchasing raw land, you need to have a 50% down payment, that's not necessarily accessible for a lot of folks to have that money upfront (...) there's barriers around the cost [of land].”

(Non Profit Administrator 8)

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BARRIER #4

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

GAPS IN COMMUNICATION AND EXPECTATIONS

“Issues that came up there as challenges were minimum orders. So in that sense, it was the reverse - that generally those clients [schools] wanted large volumes. So small farmers typically don't have the consistency and volume available that those clients are looking for.”

(Planner and Farmer 4)

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OPPORTUNITIES

1 . GOVERNMENT FUNDING & SUPPORT

2 . LOCAL FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

3 . CREATIVE POLICY INTERVENTIONS

4 . COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5 . AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE REFORM

OPPORTUNITY #1

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

GOVERNMENT FUNDING & SUPPORT

“... the government role I think would be to (...) provide sustained ongoing funding to diverse place-based program. And I think that there's also a huge risk in having these like one off 12 month, granting like pilot projects, you know, where (...) we want to see something innovative and new, and then you start something, and then it stops after a year because there's not ongoing funding.”

(Food Policy Council Member 3)

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OPPORTUNITY #2

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

PLACE BASED LOCAL FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

“When it comes to the actual physical location, food hubs really should not be paying rent. Like it makes no economic sense if they have to pay rent on top of trying to do much of this, which is, not many schools have that payment model (...) This needs to be public land and it needs to be publicly funded. Because this is a community asset that we're building. We're building both physical assets as well as social capital.”

(Farmer 1)

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OPPORTUNITY #3

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

CREATIVE POLICY INTERVENTIONS

*“The first one would be that policy piece, yes, make it a requirement that you buy, (...) **if government can do more than that, they can also enact policy that says, ‘this much of your budget goes to food’.** (...) the schools don't have a huge budget to begin with. You also make sure that you're valuing the way the school can spend their money, and then also valuing the food that's coming locally.”*

(Farmer 3)

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OPPORTUNITY #4

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**community food asset
mapping and policy
councils**

“I think it's really important that all of those people [students, public, staff, all levels of staff at school districts, community groups] are part of the conversation as well as experts in the industry (...) from the start, and not partly, (...), and then it's sort of very well organized, and facilitated (...) and if I think about the ones that were the most successful, (...) it's the ones that were people focused, people centered, and student centered, the students, they're the users, they should be part of the conversation”

(Non Profit Administrator 6)

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OPPORTUNITY #5

to scaling up local food procurement for F2S

REFORM OF THE AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE

**coupling farmland
protection with economic
development**

"I think that the opportunity is that there still are stronger protections being in the ALR then there are other non-ALR land pieces and the existence of the ALR also pushes municipalities to continue to maintain agricultural land zoning. (...) But in general, the acknowledgment more recently that the ALR needs to be changed [to] allow for succession planning and new generations of farmers to access land"

(Farmer 6)

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*“I think that there's a **real danger in a missed opportunity** around this (...). In British Columbia, in particular, we have the opportunity to be tapping into local food (...) if we're able to couple that out with a local procurement initiative, that is going to be so much more powerful for our economy (...) there's the health outcomes associated with that better food, the economic outcomes, and also all of those intricate and relational pieces tied to that, that help move our whole food system development forward.”*

(Non Profit Administrator 10)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS

1. Multi-year funding for procurement programs including coordinator role

DATA COLLECTION

2. Support and scale up economic development for food growers

COHESION & COLLABORATION

3. Carrot and stick approach to support the food growers and prevent speculation

COMPLEXITY

4. Invest in and support local food infrastructure

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RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS

**DATA
COLLECTION**

**COHESION &
COLLABORATION**

COMPLEXITY

5. Support in establishing a cohesive regional multi-dimensional metric and data tracking system for F2S food procurement programs. Including mandated and embedded metrics of redistribution, justice, and equity as identified by the community.

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ACCESS

6. Begin with community consultation, engaging and establish policy councils to identify community values

DATA COLLECTION

7. Undertake community food asset mapping

COHESION & COLLABORATION

8. Engage across jurisdictions to collaborate and share infrastructure

COMPLEXITY

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ACCESS

**DATA
COLLECTION**

**COHESION &
COLLABORATION**

9. Embed local food procurement into policies that clearly outline and assign roles to address necessary funding, seasonality, and capacities with clear and mandated minimum % local food procurement targets

COMPLEXITY

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**"WHEN WE MAKE
PLANS, WE CHOOSE
WHOSE FUTURES
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(Zapata, 2021, p.641)

THANKS :)



THANKS :)

*questions? comments?
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CASE STUDY 2

LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMMING AS A TOOL FOR FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCY

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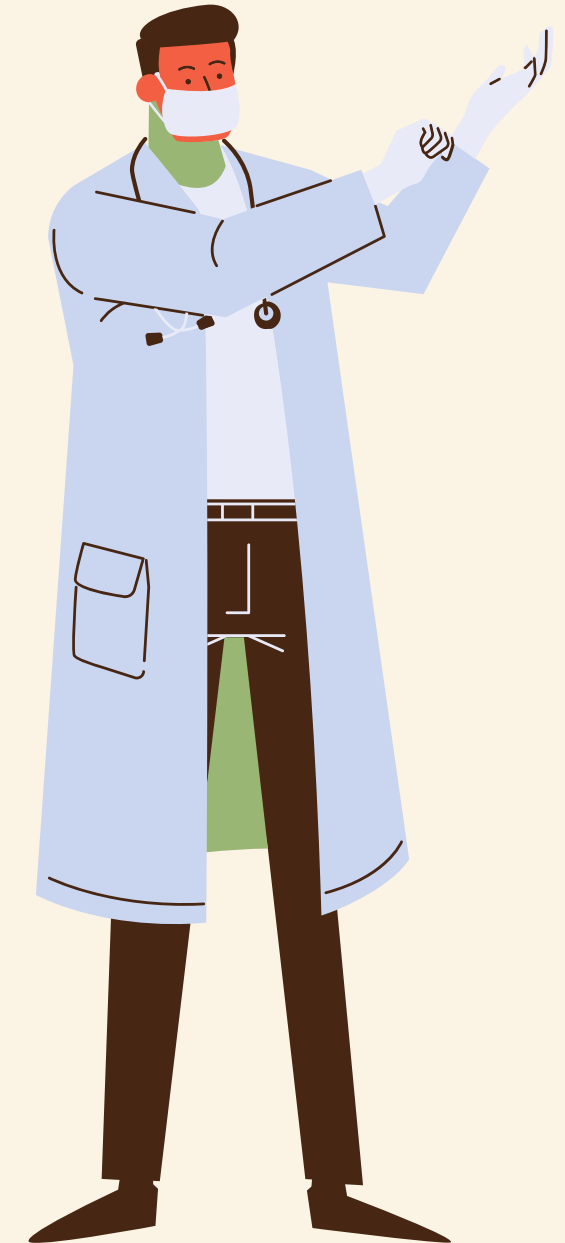


INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- New physical barriers to food access
- Over-reliance on food production models dependent on global supply chains
- Food workers are considered “essential frontline workers”

(Raja, 2020)



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COVID-19 IMPACT ON CHILDREN

- Households with children were found to be more food insecure than households without children.
- School closures disproportionately affected students who relied on school provided meals.
- Students on school food meals consumed 21% less fruits and vegetables during lockdown

FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCY

- Food providers need to have social, financial, natural and political resources to tap into during a disruptive event

Resilient Food System is one that...

- Incorporate an assessment of available financial resources
- Analyses their staffing situation, and their staff to volunteers ratio



Food System Resilience: A Planning Guide for Local Governments (Moore et al., 2022)

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Objective 1:** To identify the gaps in school food related programming, through identifying the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Objective 2:** To learn how we can strengthen our food system resiliency, to better inform planners and policy makers in emergency preparedness efforts.





METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANT STATS

n=15

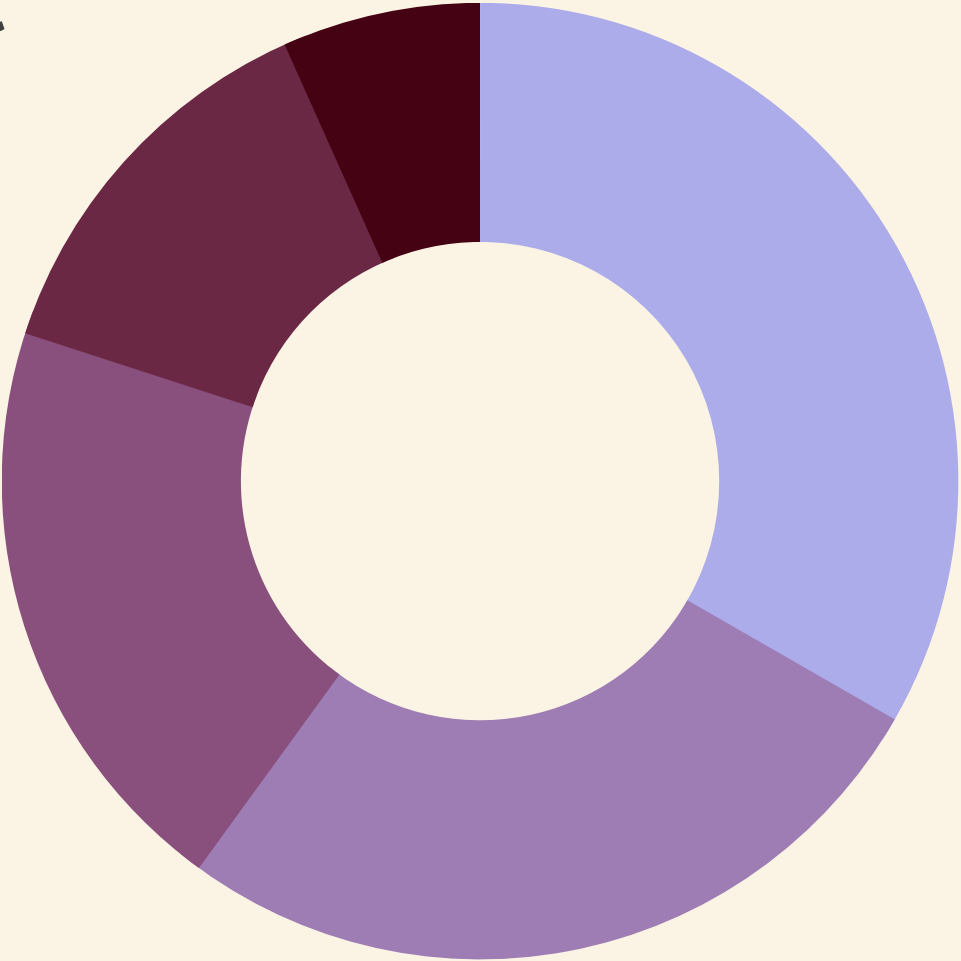
School Support
13.3%

Government
20%

Volunteers
6.7%

Non-Profits
33.3%

Educators
26.7%



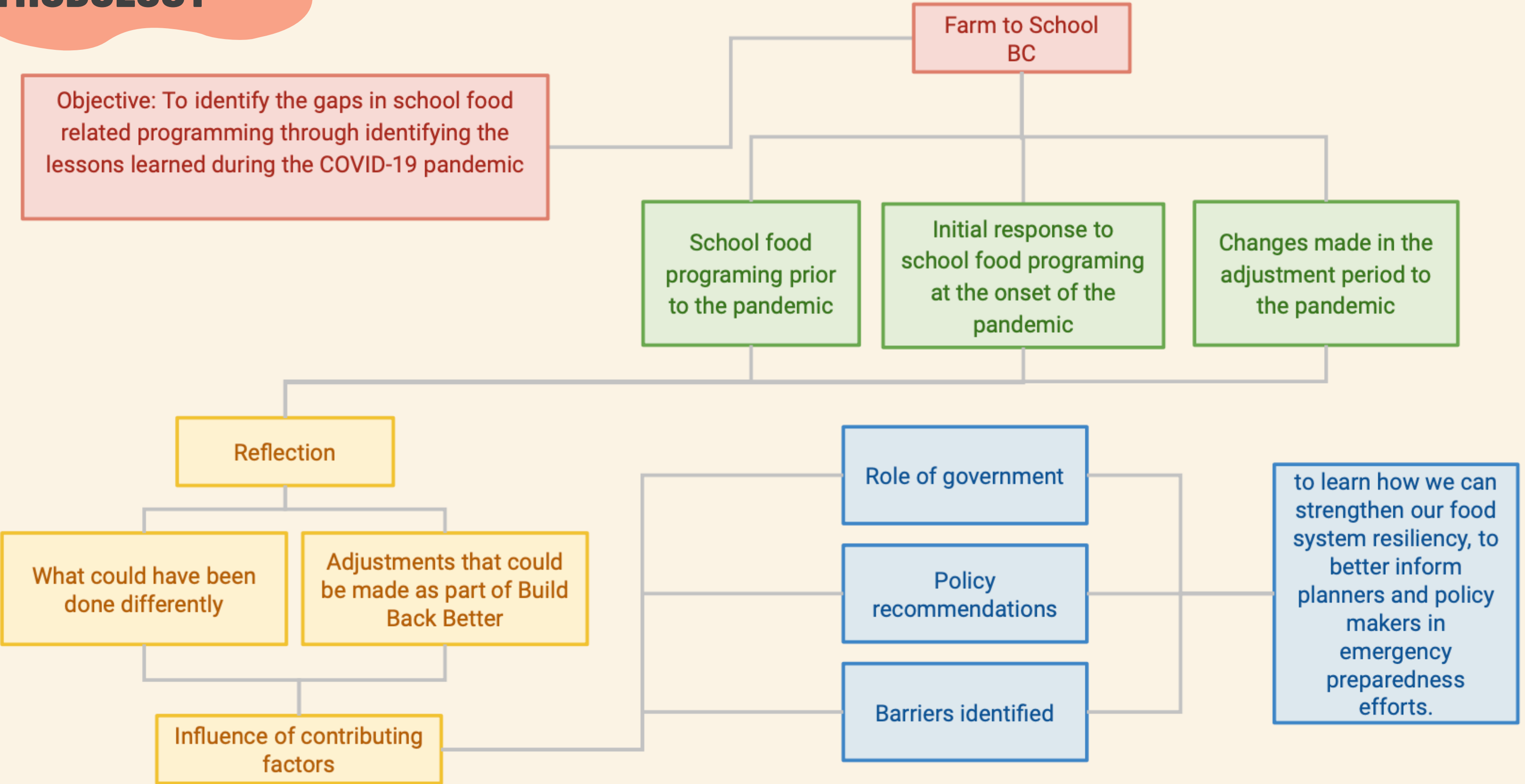
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METHODOLOGY





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FINDINGS OVERVIEW



Initial Response and Restrictions



Infrastructure (Physical and Social/Human)



Funding Limited operational capacity



Policy Integrating schools in food policy

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INITIAL RESPONSE AND RESTRICTIONS

- Some educators stated they would not do anything differently due to pandemic uncertainties
- Moved food programming to online
 - Not only food education, but food preparations as well



INITIAL RESPONSE AND RESTRICTIONS

“...And you were instructed not to go to the grocery store. So you need to go and buy these ingredients to make this dish... So for me, it was more just trying to keep in touch with students. And if they sent me stuff awesome, if not, also fine...”

(Educator 1)

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NOTEWORTHY FIND...

“So where we used to feed, you know, that child in that classroom...and you remember only sending food for the one child...we got to give more when a family comes to pick up food, this isn't just about feeding that one kid, **it's about the family.**”

(Consultant 1)

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INFRASTRUCTURE (HUMAN)

“...just always **more support for teachers** so that they can kind of have the ability to take on those kind of projects, which feel just sort of extra at this point to the already **large workload that they have**, I would say more funding for these types of food education programs...”

(Non-profit supporter 3)



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INFRASTRUCTURE (HUMAN)

“We're always struggling for volunteers; we have all the same people and they're gonna **burn out**.”

(Volunteer 1)

“So I think that's probably the barrier like **human resources**, whether they're paid or unpaid, like if they are around or not, and **are there enough of them...**”

(Government 3)



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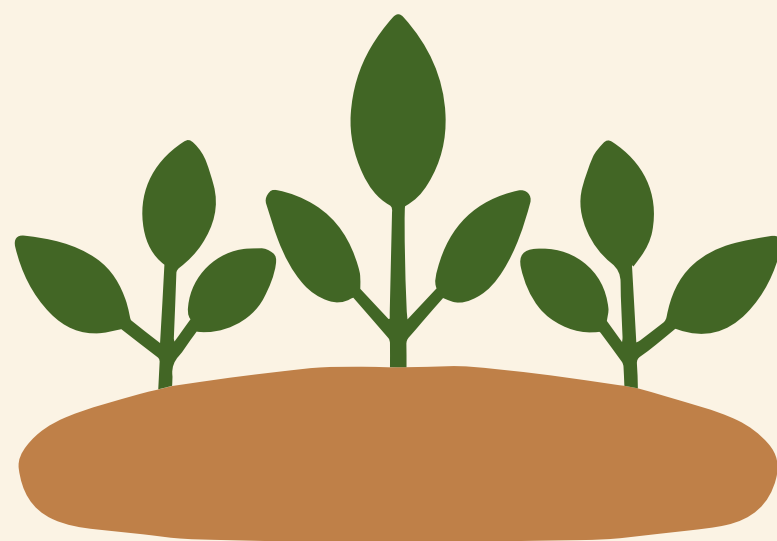


INFRASTRUCTURE (PHYSICAL)

- The need for new infrastructure, and use of existing infrastructure to its full capacity

“Some teachers that I talked to were just like, Yeah, we have, we weren't able to really take care of the gardens...”

(Non-profit supporter 4)



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FUNDING

- Lack of funding is a barrier to food program delivery
- Not just funding, but continuous funding
- Providing financial opportunities for teachers to support their work



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FOOD AND POLICY

“...COVID is also a catalyst to getting creative, to help break down silos, to not create this illusion that schools can do it all, because no one system can...You know, I think people were doing what they could ...and they just were in crisis mode...”

(Health and safety consultant for schools)

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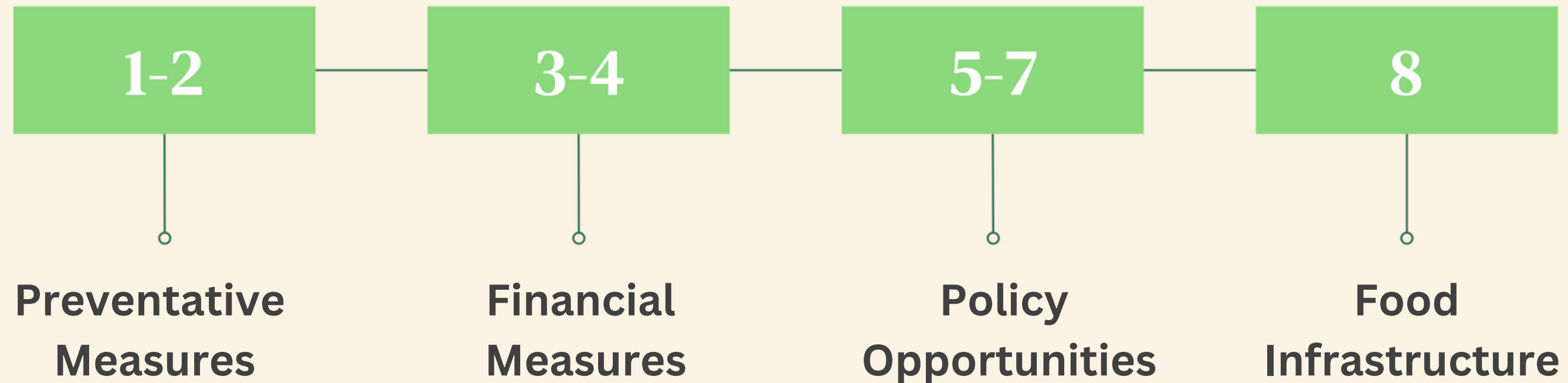
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FOOD AND POLICY



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FINANCIAL MEASURES

- Address food insecurity at the household level using financial measures such as income-based solutions for families, in order to alleviate student food insecurity.
- When possible, provide timely and detailed instructions on emergency protocols tailored to the school institution and their operations
- Charity-driven forms of support are not long-term solutions to food insecurity in emergencies.
- Policies to address food insecurity, must be income-based solutions and not food-based, in order to address the root cause of food insecurity.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLICY

- Evaluate existing infrastructure in schools and identify new opportunities to support operations during emergencies at the school level.
- Consider the importance of the following;
 - School gardens/ School farms
 - Large open outdoor and indoor multi-purpose spaces
 - Industrial kitchens
- Provide compensation for educators to acknowledge additional work hours.



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FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

Consider schools as being important food hubs, and an important infrastructure for food access for communities, especially during an emergency events.



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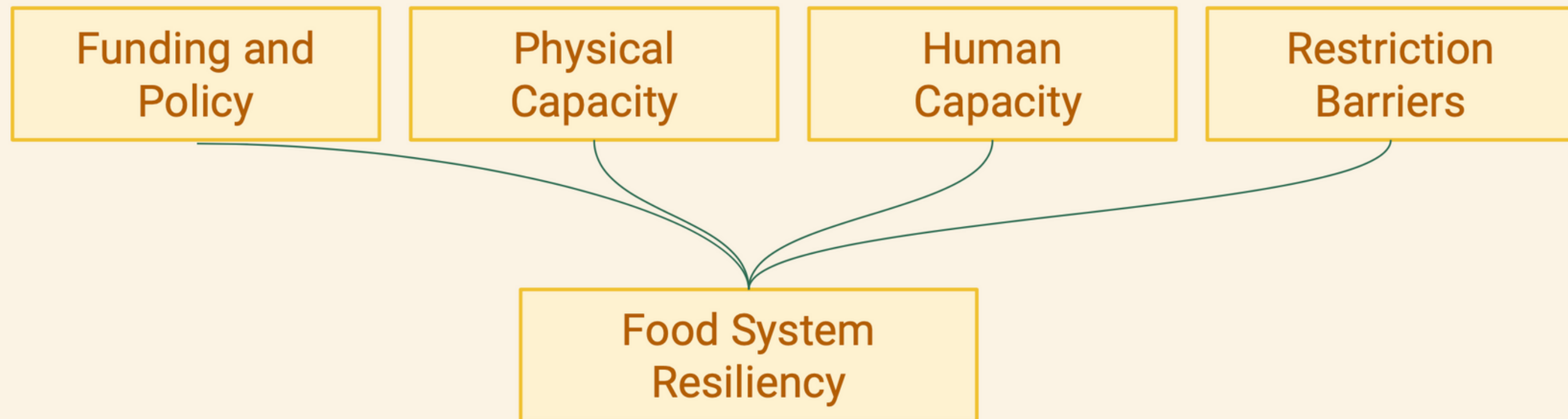
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Preventative Measures	1. Address food insecurity at the household level using financial measures such as income-based solutions for families, in order to alleviate student food insecurity.
	2. When possible, provide timely and detailed instructions on emergency protocols tailored to the school institution and their operations
Financial Measures	3. Governments (federal and provincial) should provide guaranteed continuous funding to ensure sustainable and ongoing school food programming.
	4. Governments (federal and provincial) should provide guidance on navigating funding resources and opportunities for educators throughout the application process.
Opportunities for Policy	5. Evaluate existing infrastructure in schools and identify new opportunities to support operations during emergencies at the school level. Consider the importance of the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School gardens/ School farms ● Large open outdoor and indoor multi-purpose spaces ● Industrial kitchens
	6. Provide compensation for educators to acknowledge additional work hours.
	7. Manage paid staff to volunteer ratio for school food programming to ensure sustainable program delivery so that educators and volunteers are working within their respective capacity.
Food Infrastructure	8. Consider schools as being important food hubs, and important infrastructure for food access for communities, especially during an emergency event.

IN CONCLUSION...

The COVID-19 pandemic brought forth an opportunity to assess the school food structure...



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THANK YOU!

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CASE STUDY 3

SCALING UP, OUT, AND DEEP: OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTEGRATING LOCAL FOOD INTO A UNIVERSAL SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

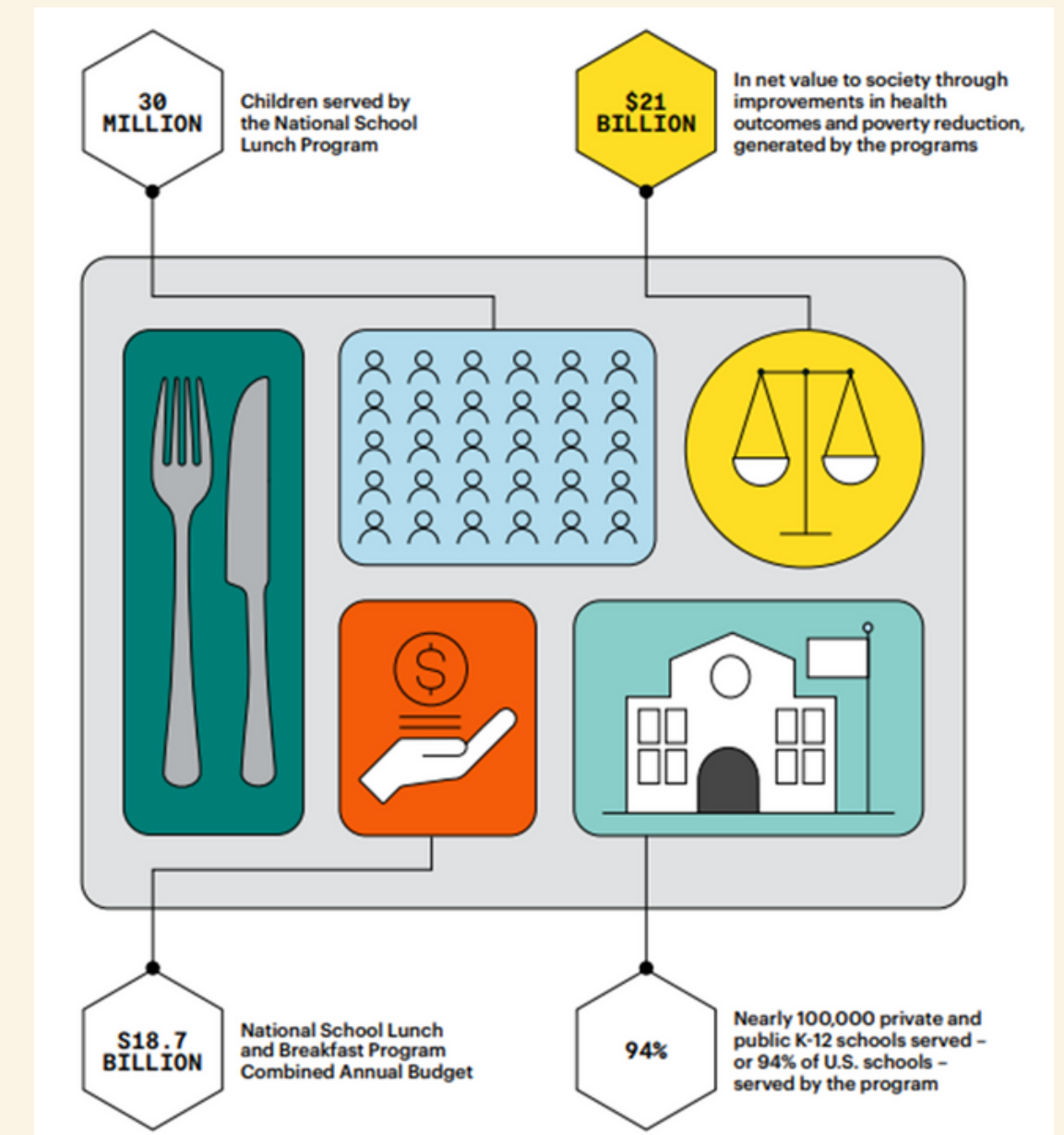
*Hafsa Salihue, MRM. Planning
Food Systems Lab
Simon Fraser University*



INTRODUCTION

WHY INTEGRATE LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS?

- Public institutions have high purchasing power
- Provides local food providers with an alternative market for their products
- Provides children with access to nutritious & culturally appropriate food
- Shortens food supply chain – less vulnerable, less waste



Rockefeller Foundation, 2021

THE CHALLENGES WITH LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOLS

- Mismatch of growing season and school year
- Seasonal variations in local food availability
- Small-medium producers not being able to supply large quantities
- Excess cost of local food
- Varying aesthetics (size, shape, and quality)



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

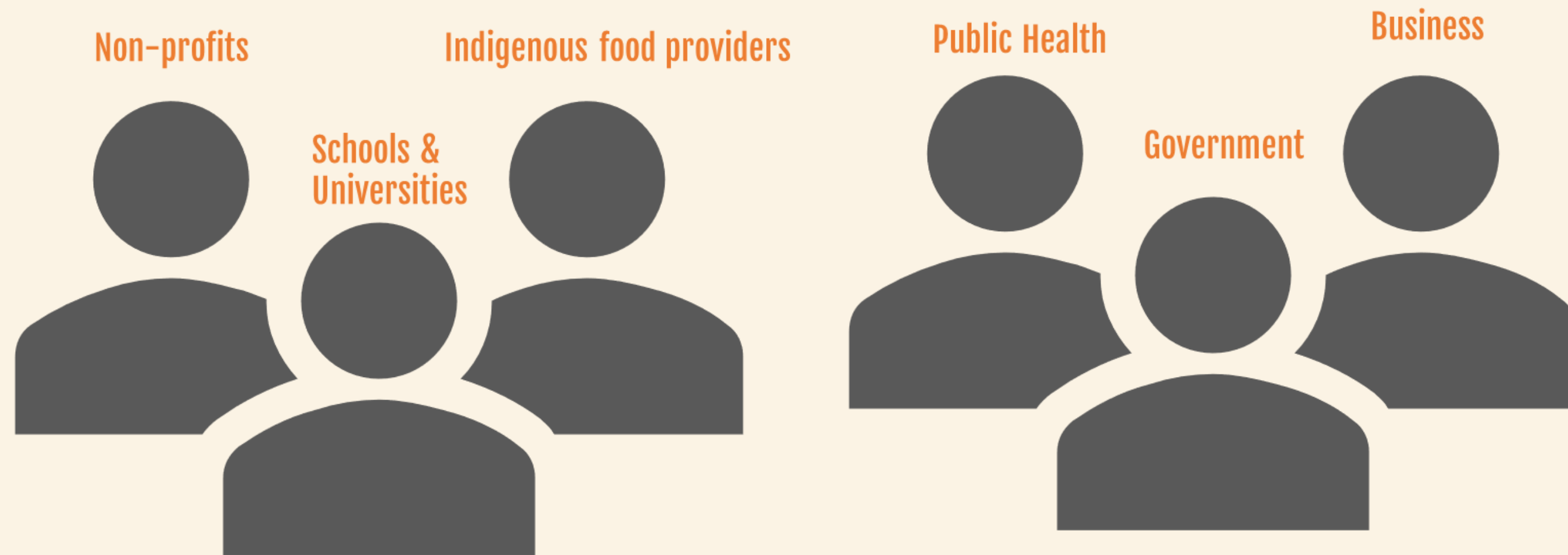
1. To explore the challenges and opportunities of scaling local food procurement in School Food Programs (SFPs) from the perspectives of stakeholders in the school food environment
2. To develop recommendations for scaling the integration of local food in SFPs in urban and rural schools in B.C.



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METHODOLOGY

CROSS-SECTORAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS



Introduction

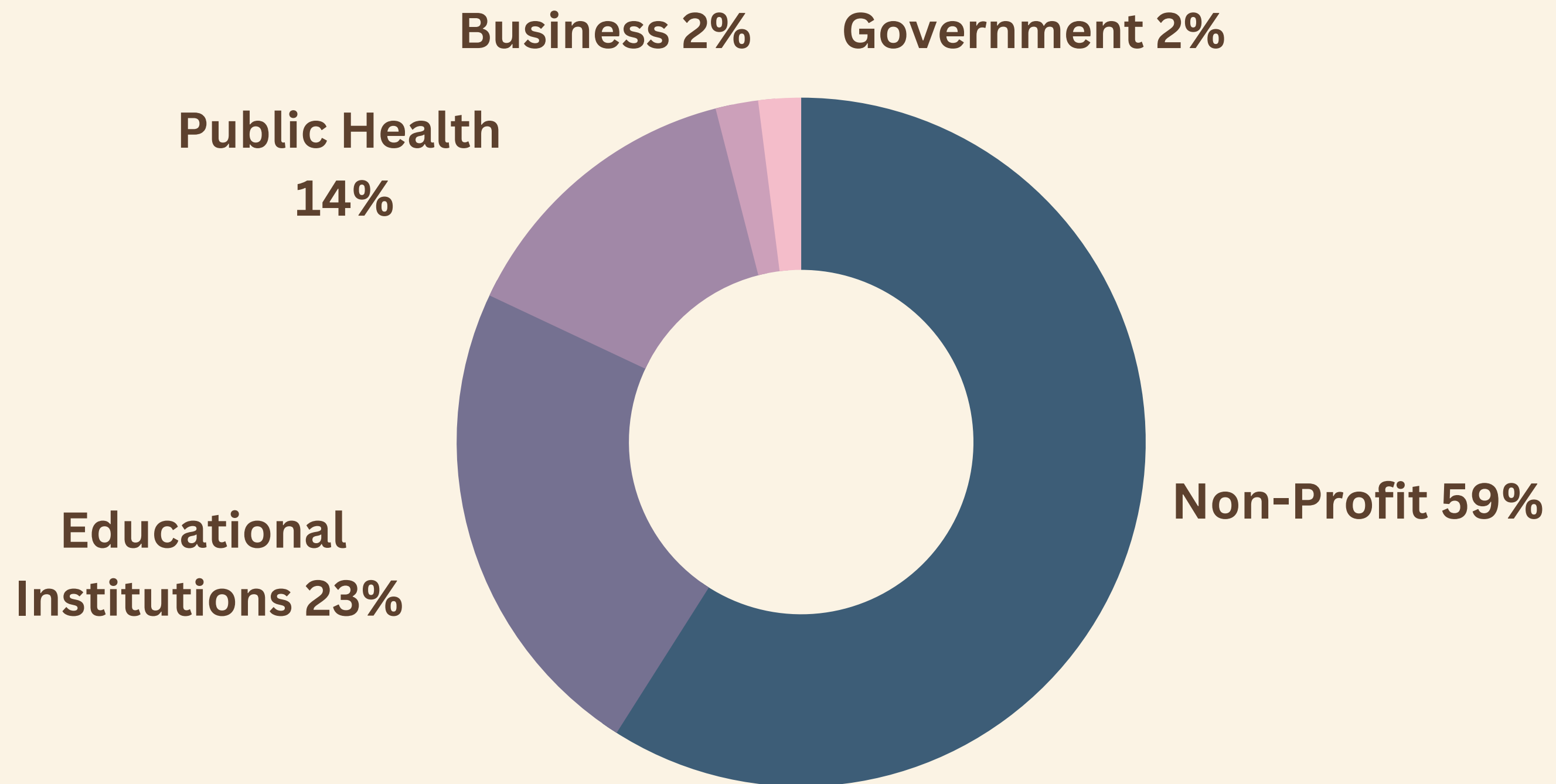
Methodology

Findings

Recommendations

WORKSHOP STATS

- 2 Workshops
 - Urban
 - Rural & Remote
- 45 Participants



Introduction

Methodology

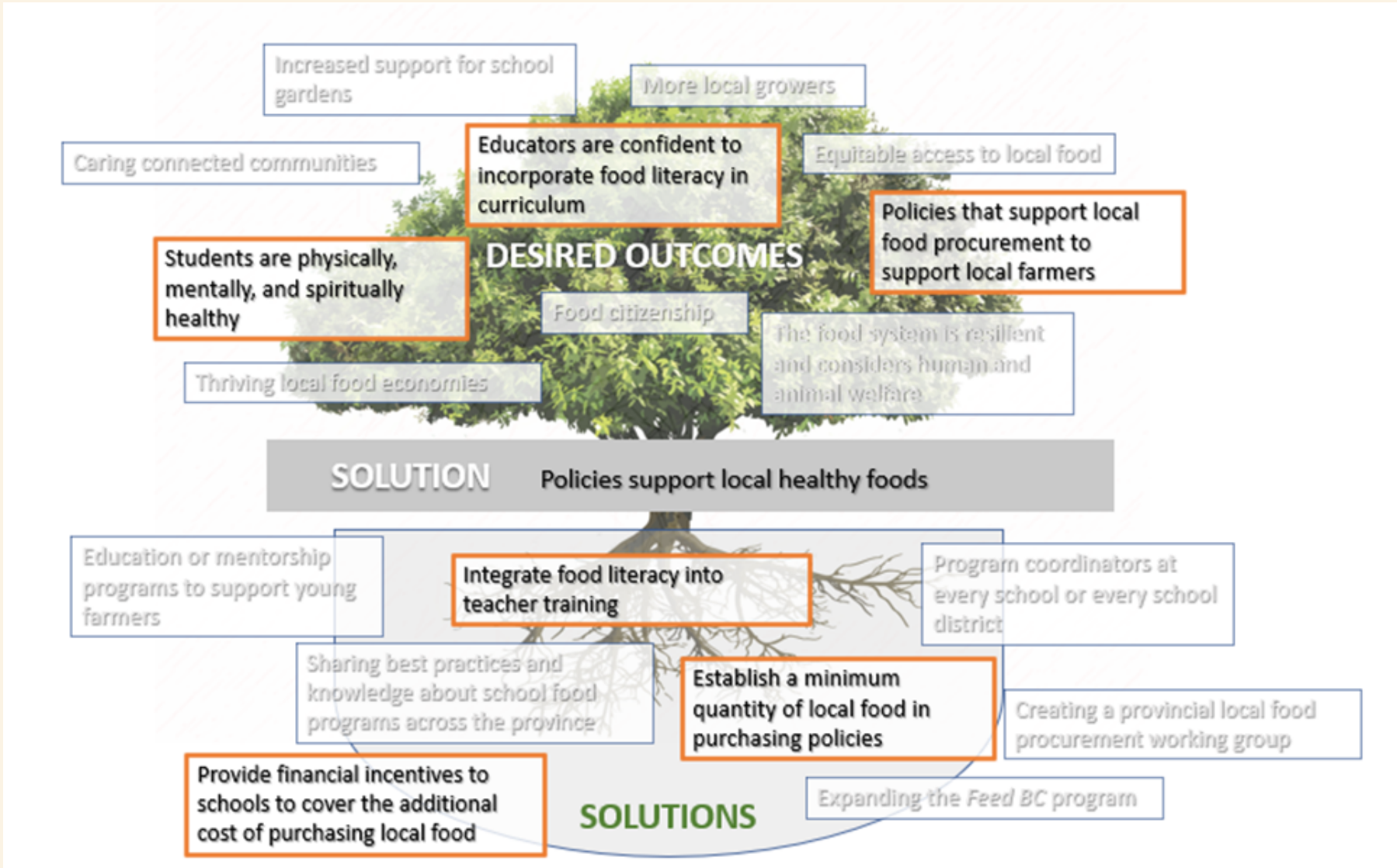
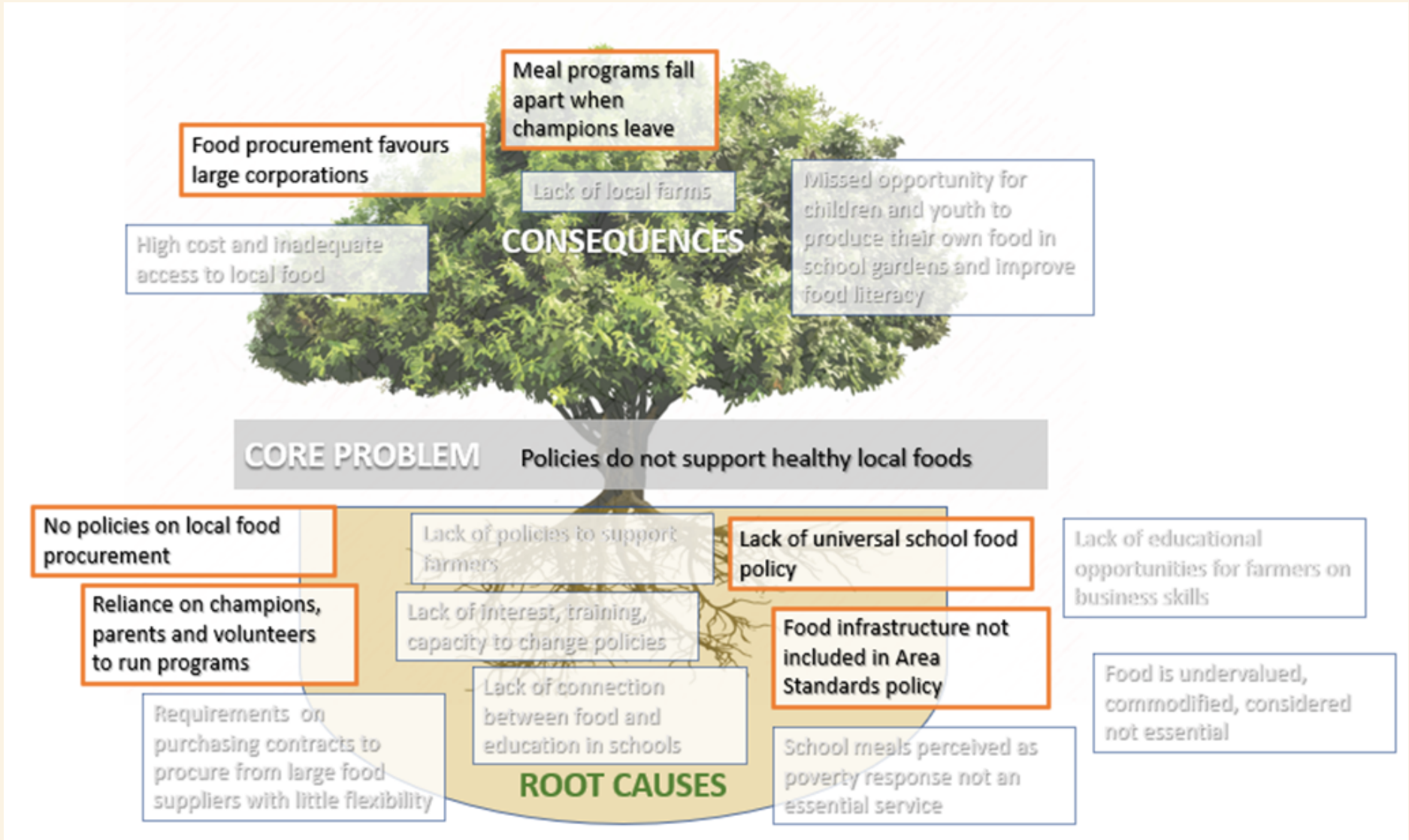
Findings

Recommendations

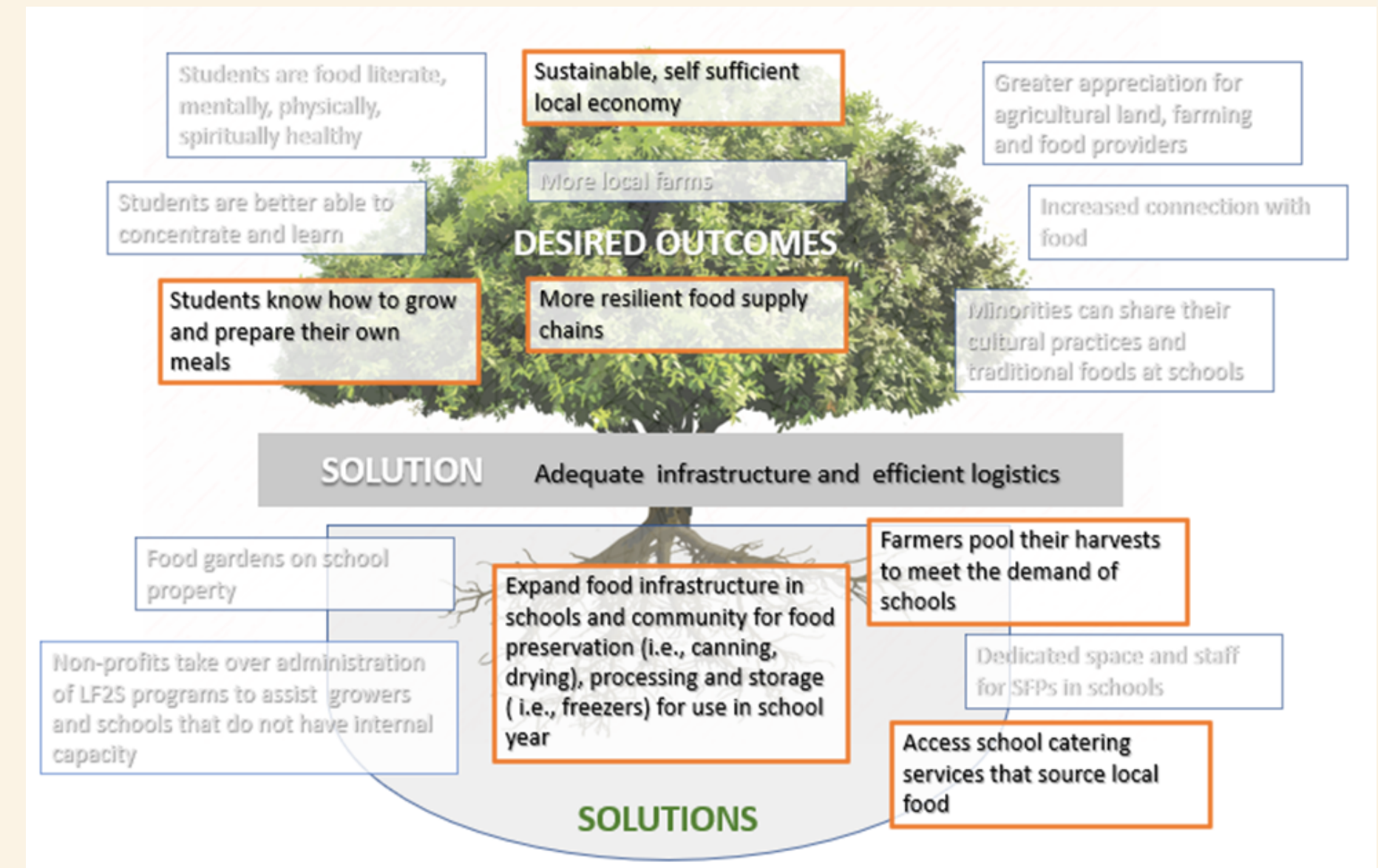
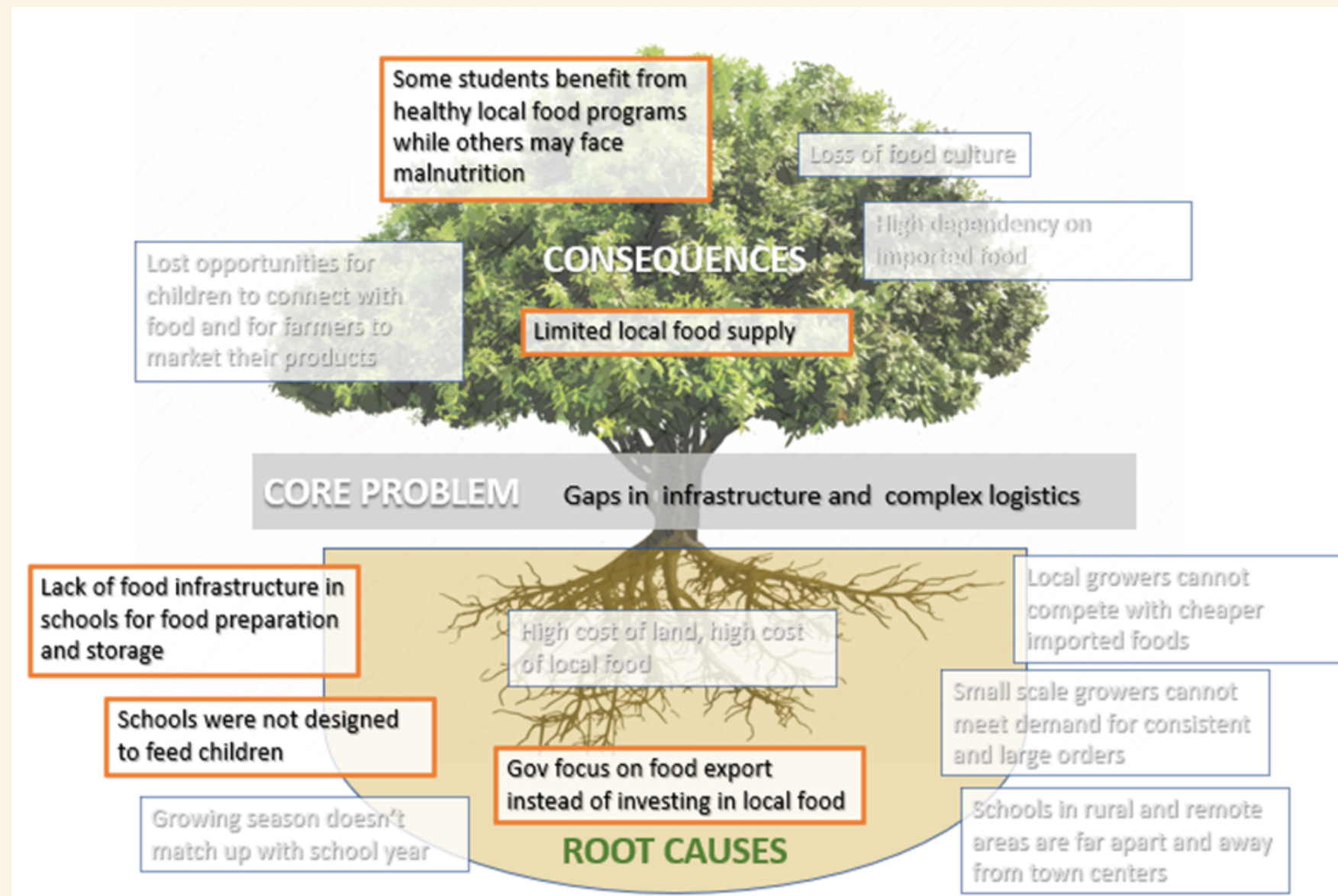


FINDINGS

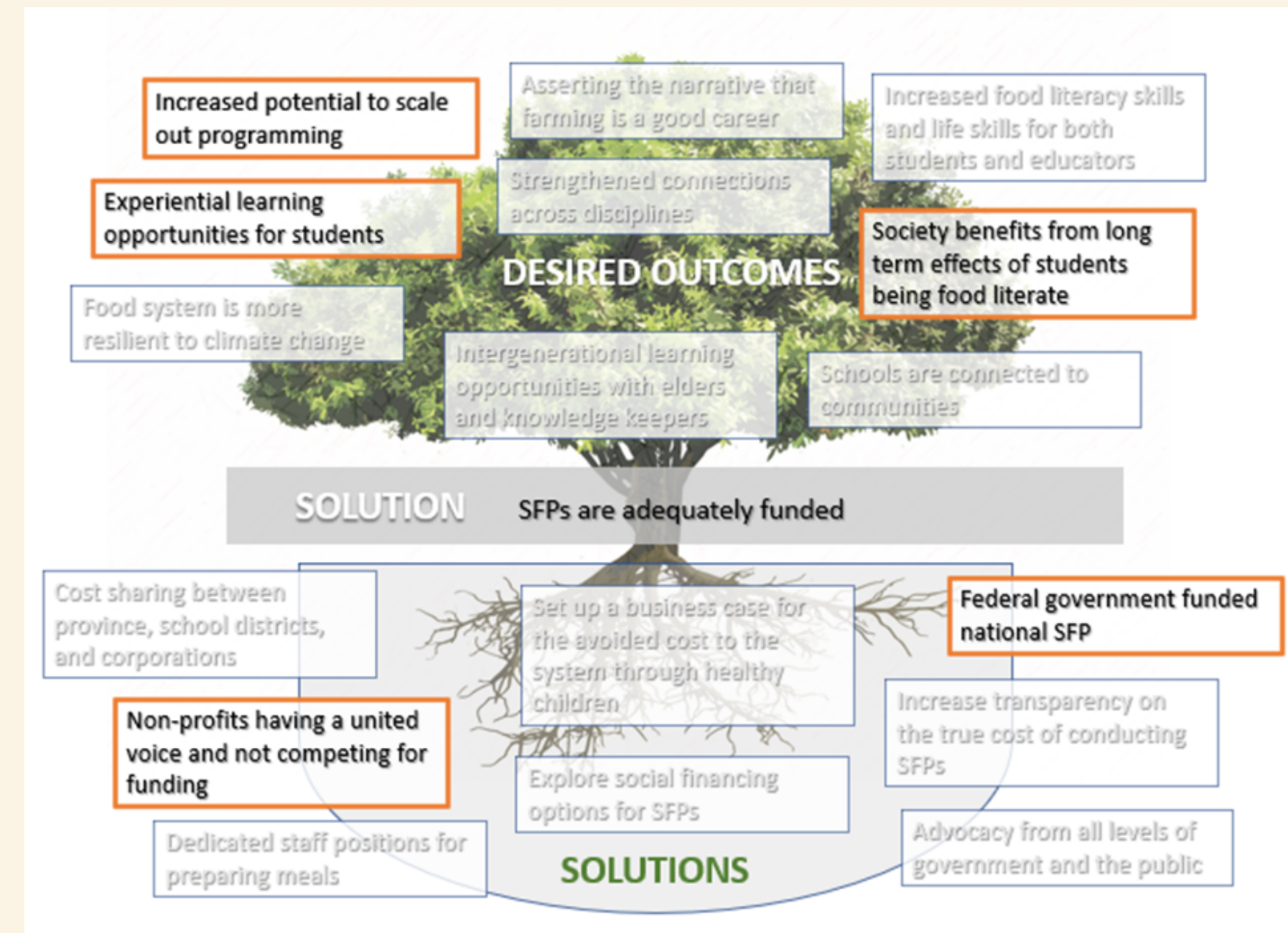
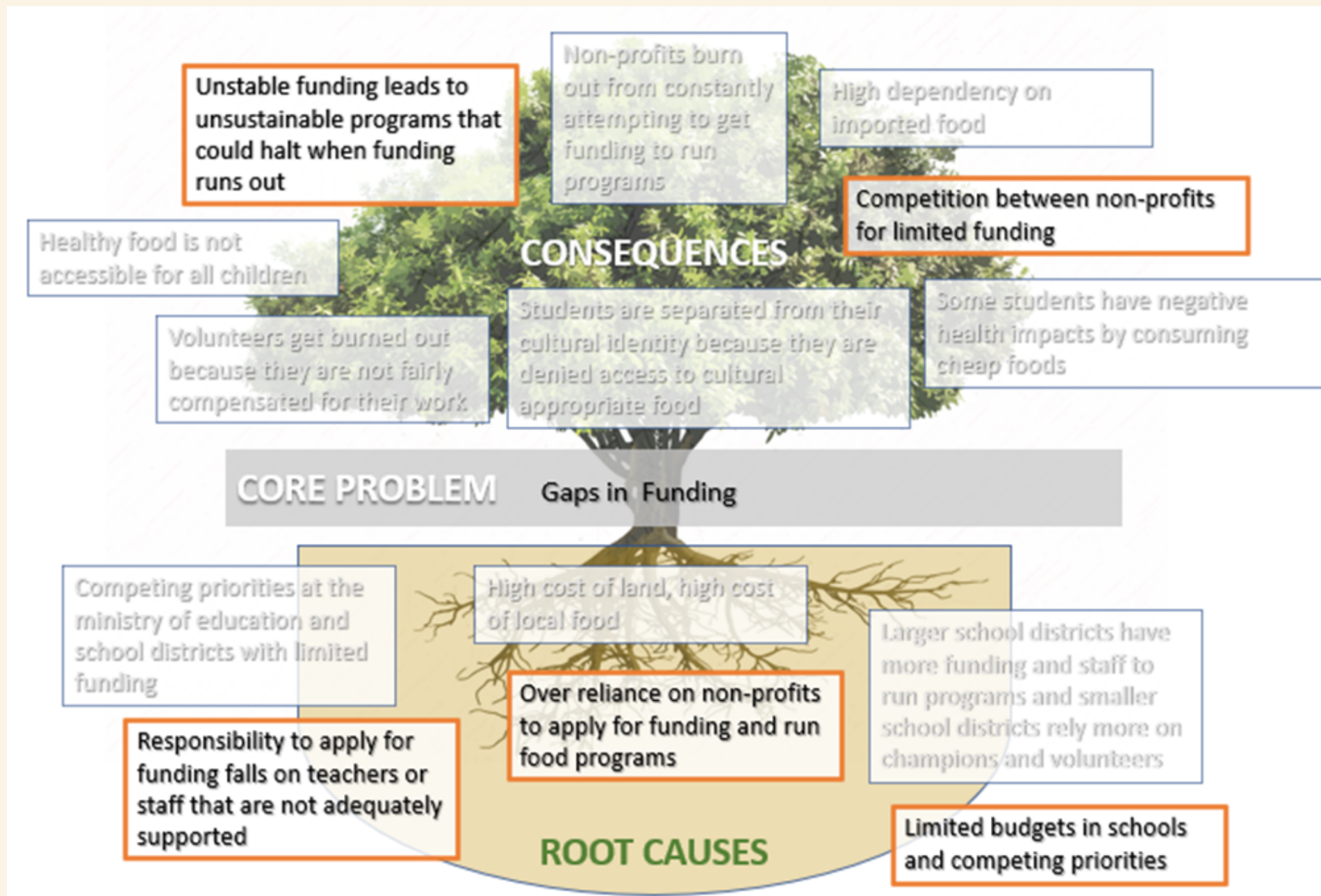
WORKSHOP 1: POLICY



WORKSHOP 1: INFRASTRUCTURE & LOGISTICS



WORKSHOP 1: FUNDING



WORKSHOP 2: MOA

Motivation

Educational and nutritional benefits for students & sustainable food Supply chain



Opportunities

Dedicated staff and funding for programs & expanding existing programs (Feed BC and BCAITC)



Abilities

Training for teachers and staff on how to incorporate local food into curricula and meals



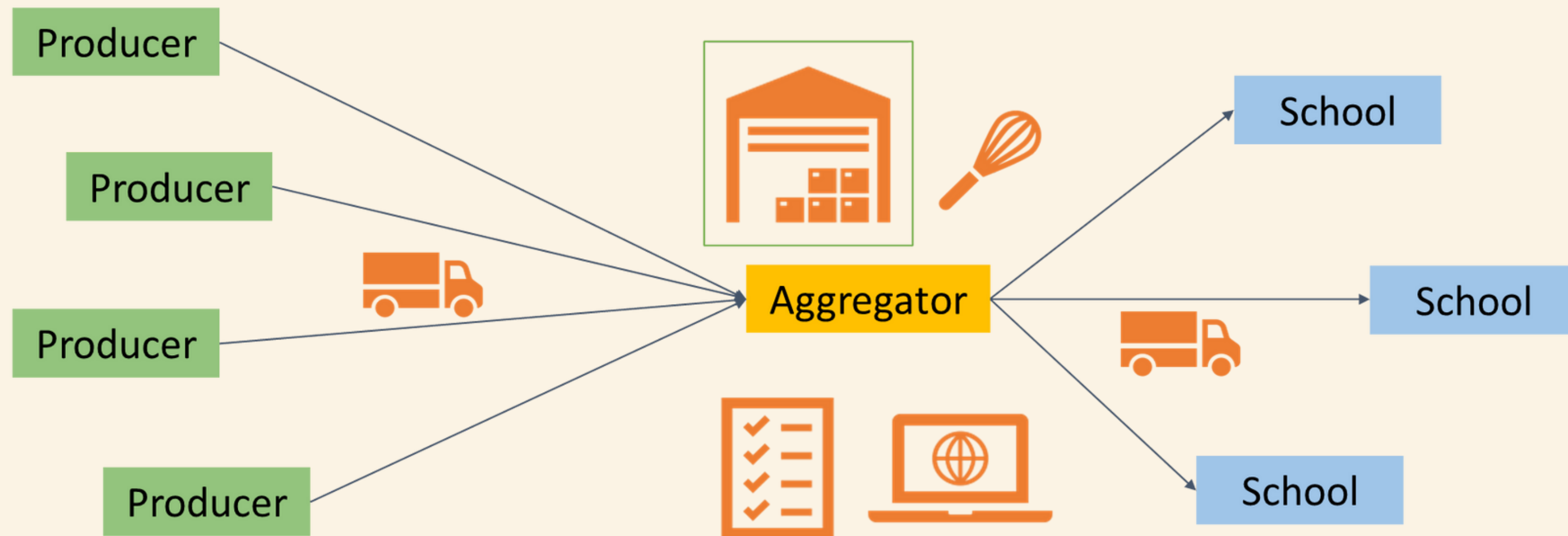
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WORKSHOP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE MIDDLE



WORKSHOP 2: AGGREGATOR MODEL

*“there are organizations that are already putting in the time have the relationships, the one that comes came to mind... is the B.C. Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation. And so, they're aggregators and disseminators, of food. So really, **let's build on the strengths of what's already out there.**”*

- University Representative U1, Rural & Remote Workshop 2

Introduction

Methodology

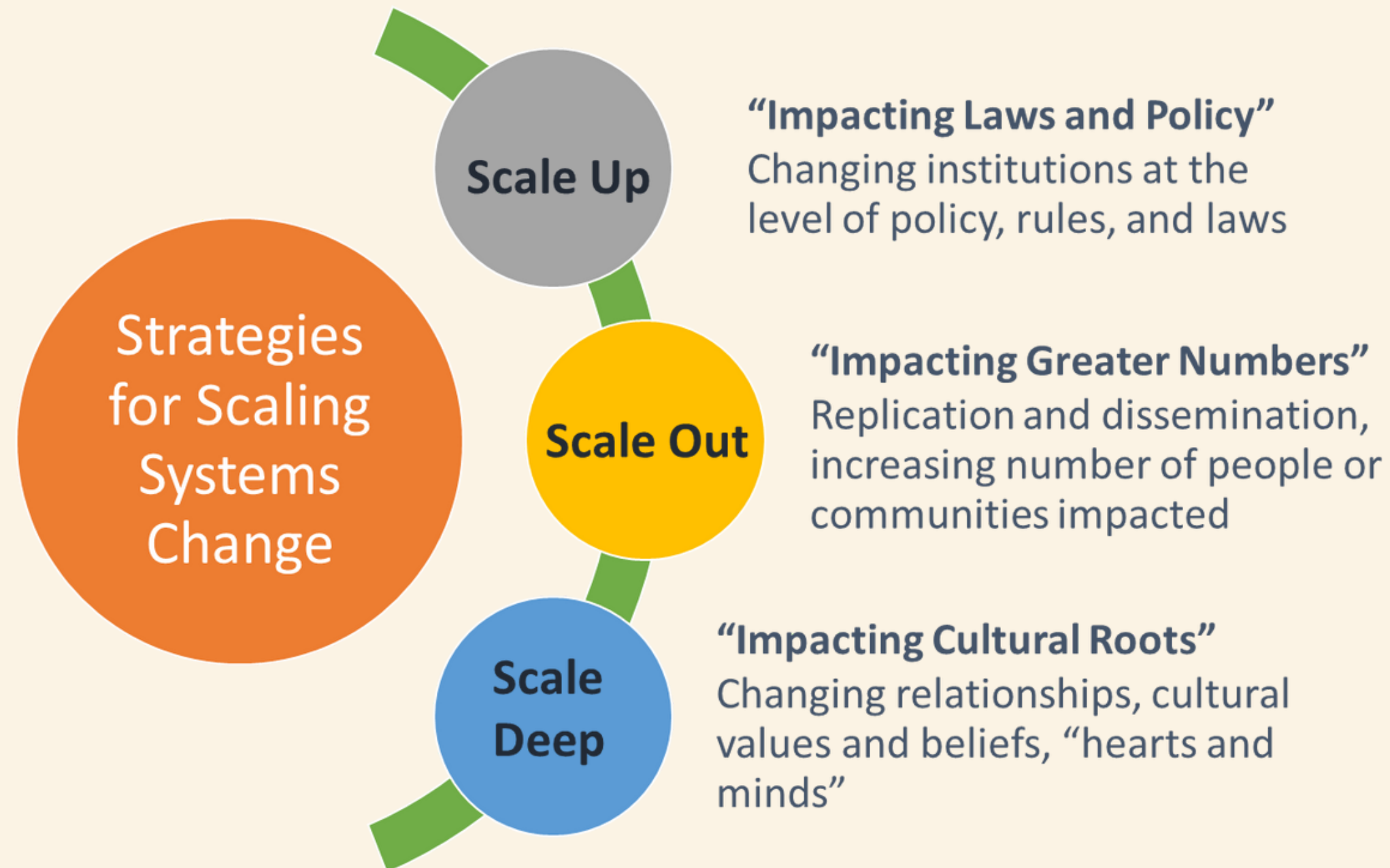
Findings

Recommendations



RECOMMENDATIONS

ROUTES TO SYSTEMIC IMPACT: SCALING OUT, UP AND DEEP



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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Scaling Up

Establish legislation that sets out clear goals, roles, and responsibilities for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the impact of scaling up local food procurement in SFPs.

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100

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Scaling Up

Establish legislation that sets out clear goals, roles, and responsibilities for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the impact of scaling up local food procurement in SFPs.

2. Scaling Up & Out

Provide stable, sustainable, and non-competitive funding for SFPs. Consider cost-sharing between federal and provincial governments and direct funding to local authorities for program implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Scaling Up

Establish legislation that sets out clear goals, roles, and responsibilities for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the impact of scaling up local food procurement in SFPs.

2. Scaling Up & Out

Provide stable, sustainable, and non-competitive funding for SFPs. Consider cost-sharing between federal and provincial governments and direct funding to local authorities for program implementation.

3. Scaling Out

Invest in the local food economy and infrastructure to scale out local food procurement. Create platforms for collaboration and information sharing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Scaling Up

Establish legislation that sets out clear goals, roles, and responsibilities for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the impact of scaling up local food procurement in SFPs.

2. Scaling Up & Out

Provide stable, sustainable, and non-competitive funding for SFPs. Consider cost-sharing between federal and provincial governments and direct funding to local authorities for program implementation.

3. Scaling Out

Invest in the local food economy and infrastructure to scale out local food procurement. Create platforms for collaboration and information sharing.

4. Scaling Deep

Include food literacy in school curricula. Establish place-based food culture, value for food and food providers, and reduce waste.



Thank You



Social Sciences and Humanities
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QUESTIONS?

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