Nourishing Neighbours: A Joint Initiative to Find Creative Solutions to Food Security for Halton's Vulnerable Populations (Neighbours)

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A Joint Initiative to Find Creative Solutions to Food Security for Halton's Vulnerable Populations (Neighbours)
Food for Everyone

A Summary of the research findings from focus groups held at February 22, 2017

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The Research Context

The Community Ideas Factory is a SSHRC funded collaborative research project that aims to leverage Sheridan's research and creativity expertise, in supporting the Oakville Community Foundation's efforts to implement and execute actions to address community issues identified in their Vital Signs® report. The co-investigators of this project are Dr. Michael McNamara, professor of creativity at Sheridan College and Dr. Sara Cumming, professor of sociology at Sheridan College.

The Community Ideas Factory is a two year project that includes an analysis of four separate, and yet interrelated, areas in the Halton Region; housing, food (in)security, employability and wraparound services. Qualitative research will be conducted in each of the identified areas to determine any underlying issues or gaps in services in each of the sectors. Once the data from a sector is collected and analyzed by the lead researcher, Dr. Sara Cumming, the project will then move to Creative Problem Solving sessions led by Dr. Michael McNamara. Specifically, the project is to engage the Foundation, its charitable donors, charitable funding recipients, and clients of services in a series of Creative Problem-Solving Facilitations in order to produce new, creative, and fundable projects that align with the issues identified in the qualitative research. An expected key deliverable of the project is the development of new, creative and fundable project plans that address the Vital Signs® issues.

This report is a summary of the findings from qualitative data collected from a group of food program users, herein referred to as 'neighbours', held at the Oakville Neighbourhood Centre, February 22, 2017.

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Contextualizing the Research

Approximately 795 million people are undernourished worldwide[1]. There is a growing concern around the globe on the topic of food security. This topic is of particular importance to academic researchers, nutrition and health professionals, as well as policy makers, who understand the ever-present consequences that a lack of food security could bring to just about every facet of society. Although food security is time and again misconstrued as an issue affecting only developing countries, a remarkable number of people in developed nations such as Canada are also dealing with the effects of food insecurity, hunger, malnutrition, and undernourishment. The 2016 Hunger Count Report reveals that since 2008, food bank use in Canada has increased by 27.8%[2]. Considering this staggering statistic and the prevalence of food security as a social issue, the Halton Food Security Initiative (HFSI), in partnership with the Region of Halton, was created to improve hunger in Halton through a joint effort prepared by Food for Life (FFL), the Halton Poverty Roundtable (HPRT) and the Region of Halton.

It is estimated, that approximately 1.7 million Canadian households, comprised of roughly 4 million people, are faced with food insecurity each year[3]. Of these 1.7 million households, 20% or 340,000 are dealing with severe food insecurity – in all likelihood, these are the households that must access food banks to survive. Although the Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB) does not represent all food security programs in the province (4 of the 60+ in Halton programs are members), the OAFB remains Ontario's most prominent benefactor of emergency food support to frontline hunger-relief agencies and the front-runner in province-wide hunger research. In their 2016 Hunger Report[4], the OAFB revealed that Ontario's food banks serve an

overwhelming 335,944 adults and children each month. The OAFB also emphasized the need for change, to work together through the collaboration of the Government of Ontario and contributions by initiatives like the HSFI, although not directly linked to the OAFB, their main focus is to increase access to healthy food and obtain long-term solutions that address the core needs of those who are going hungry. The Ontario Association of Food Banks believes that together, we can end hunger.

On the whole, many factors contribute to food insecurity; the OAFB has emphasized how poverty, precarious employment, lack of affordability, and an unavailability of access to proper nutrition throughout Ontario are key contributing factors that lead to increases in food insecurity. Since so many people are affected by these factors, the population of Canadians dealing with food insecurity is heterogeneous in nature, consisting of both men and women, as well as children, youth and seniors. Furthermore, the 2016 Hunger Count suggests that children and youth are overrepresented among people helped by food banks: although individuals under the age of 18 explain only 19% of the Canadian population, they represent a whopping 36% of people receiving food assistance. As might be expected from the overwhelming number of children being assisted by food banks, families with children (comprised of both single and dual-parents) account for two of every five households being helped. Additionally, 1 in 9 Canadian seniors is now living in poverty, which corroborates the 22.8 % surge in the number of senior citizens depending on emergency food assistance. Similarly, Single Person Households also represent a significant portion of those requiring assistance, amounting to over 45 % of those who visit food banks in the province, an increase of over 21% since the 2008 recession.

While a number of major stakeholders such as the OAFB, Second Harvest, Food for Life and many others have played a significant role in addressing hunger, over the past 35 years, Ontario's food banks have spearheaded the fight against hunger through their promise to provide access to healthy food to those who need it most. While the OAFB contributions have played a significant role in responding to food insecurity in Ontario; today more than ever - there is a pressing need to unite forces to develop and put into action long-term solutions that will improve hunger for all, and truly make Ontario a healthier, more egalitarian province. Whether reacting to the ever-present issue of food insecurity or making conscious efforts to prevent it, research suggests that a collaboration between public, private, and non-for profit organizations at a federal, provincial, and municipal level is vital. Most of all, municipal governments and service providers must recognize that there is no "universal" solution to food insecurity - that is, while sharing best practices is important, municipalities such as Halton, must also be responsive to the unique challenges being faced by all regions at an individual level. The purpose of this literature review is to identify definitions and report on the current state of affairs in the Halton Region around the issue of food insecurity.

Background on Food Security
A common vocabulary is the perfect starting point to begin understanding the problems that exist within the study of food security. The most common phrases and definitions offered by researchers and key organizations have been gathered from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) website[5] and provided below:

Food insecurity - A situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity may be chronic, seasonal or transitory.

Chronic food insecurity - is long-term and persistent in nature. Occurs when people are unable to meet their minimum food requirements over a sustained period of time which results from extended periods of poverty, lack of assets and inadequate access to productive or financial resources

Transitory food insecurity - is short-term and temporary in nature. Occurs when there is a sudden drop in the ability to produce or access enough food to maintain a good nutritional status. Often results from short-term shocks and fluctuations in food availability and food access, including year-to-year variations in domestic food productions, food prices and household incomes.

Seasonal food insecurity - falls between chronic and transitory food insecurity. It occurs when there is a cyclical pattern of inadequate availability and access to food. This is associated with seasonal fluctuations in the climate, cropping patterns, work opportunities (labour demand) and disease.

Food security[6] - A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food

preferences for an active and healthy life. Based on this definition, four food security dimensions can be identified: food availability, economic and physical access to food, food utilization and stability over time.

Hunger - According to FAO, the term hunger is used as being synonymous with chronic undernourishment.

Malnutrition - An abnormal physiological condition caused by inadequate, unbalanced or excessive consumption of macronutrients and/or micronutrients. Malnutrition includes undernutrition and over nutrition as well as micronutrient deficiencies.

Undernourishment - A state, lasting for at least one year, of inability to acquire enough food, defined as a level of food intake insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements. For the purposes of this report, hunger was defined as being synonymous with chronic undernourishment.

Undernutrition - The outcome of undernourishment, and/or poor absorption and/or poor biological use of nutrients consumed as a result of repeated infectious disease. It includes being underweight for one's age, too short for one's age (stunted), dangerously thin for one's height (wasted) and deficient in vitamins and minerals (micronutrient malnutrition).

Literature Review

During the last 30 years, food banks have played an active role in the Canadian social landscape. Ever since the appearance of the first food bank in Edmonton in 1981, these charitable

organizations have persistently increased in size and number, while food bank employees and volunteers constantly make efforts to adapt to the growing and shifting needs of food insecure individuals and communities. Today, there is a new paradigm shift which questions the role of food banks within the communities in which they operate, as well as society on the whole. Even though food banks were first established during the 1980s to deal with emergency food needs, the increase in chronic food bank use has proven troublesome for food banks to keep up with the ever growing demand under current models. (Tarasuk et al. 2014; Tarasuk, Dachner, & Loopstra, 2014; Miller, 2013).

A Toronto-based report on the usage of food bank conducted by Loopstra and Tarasuk (2012) found that almost all families communicated concern about meeting food needs or being unable to do so. Thirty percent of families were identified as severely food insecure, 32 percent were moderately food insecure, and 13 percent were marginally food insecure. This study also reported that an overwhelming 91 percent of families indicated they would have needed to spend more money to meet the needs of their household compared to the previous month at the time of the interview (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012). In March of 2012 alone, about 882,188 Canadians received support from food banks, a whopping 31 percent increase from March 2008 (Food Banks Canada, 2012). The recognition that food banks are no longer just providing temporary hunger relief but also spearheading the fight against chronic food insecurity has caused food banks and their supporters to challenge the present situation and advocate for a systemic change. Current food bank system in Canada has been challenged by numerous academic research. For instance, Loopstra and Tarasuk's (2012) study reported that twenty-two percent of families expressed the feeling that their food needs were unmatched with what was provided at food

banks, and the poor quality of foods that were offered made it not worthwhile for them to use food banks. However, there is a misconception that food banks are responsible for providing 100 percent of grocery needs for households, when in fact, most programs intend to supplement food. Even when food is provided from the food bank, this does not guarantee adequate daily nutrition for families. Respondents felt food banks do not fresh foods, healthy foods, or foods that met their dietary restrictions (e.g., Halal). They also described receiving rotten fruit/vegetables, "junk food," foods that were past their "best before" dates, and/or only canned foods (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012). Research that reviewed studies on food bank systems across different countries, including Canada, by Bazerghi, McKay, and Dunn (2016) also revealed that clients desired a greater range of foods, particularly more fruits, vegetables, dairy and meats. Additionally, clients who are new immigrants also wished for more culturally appropriate foods, as well as greater consistency across food items and quantities, especially for staple items and special needs food, such as age and health appropriate foods.

Apart from the increasing demand of diverse food from the food banks, studies also demonstrate the need to restructure the way food bank operates. Warren (2011) examined two single mothers' experiences as former food bank clients and found that food bank users struggled with feelings of pride and their need to provide for their children when using the food bank for the first time. They explained how most often food banks were their only option to get groceries. This was especially true since after all the bills were paid, social assistance payments did not leave much money. One mother explained that it felt horrible, rent took most of her paycheque ¾, leaving only ¼ left for utilities, food and gas or bus fare. This illustrates the need to restructure the food bank delivery to help clients access their needs with dignity. Relating to this, Bazerghi, McKay,

and Dunn (2016) also raised the difficulty culturally and diverse populations experienced accessing services, communicating their needs, receiving information, using unfamiliar foods and participating in nutritional workshops.

In order to revamp the food bank model for increased impact and efficiency towards community food security, a scan on food banks' operations and initiatives have been conducted to obtain a better understanding of what's working within food banks across Canada and identify best practices. We believe this is needed in order. A major shortcoming of food banks is the nutritional content of the food being provided. In its 2016 Hunger Report, the Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB) recognized the importance of a balanced diet which must include fruits, vegetables, lean meats and grains, especially for children who require proper nutrition for their cognitive development and ability to learn. In addition, organizations such as Second Harvest and Food for Life focus on sourcing fresh, nutritious food to all food programs, regardless of OAFB membership.

Today, food banks are becoming more aware of these nutritional deficiencies, and are consciously integrating strategies to increase the amount of fresh produce being offered. Halton Region in particular has taken a lead in this area and is conducting a number of surveys identifying specific agency and community needs for food. This is often reflected through the development of partnerships with community gardens, community kitchens, and farmers' markets, as well as implementation of strategic policies about the adequacy of fresh produce donations, and infrastructural investments in refrigeration (Food Banks Canada, 2016). More integrated farm-based programs like the ones being implemented by "The Stop" Community

Food Centre (CFC) offers alternative solutions to the shortage of fresh produce at food banks. The Stop CFC uses a dedicated grant on a monthly basis to purchase a "food of the month", typically an item of fresh produce, often organic and sourced from a local farmer. Additionally, The Stop CFC developed a purchasing policy that gives priority to local products and fosters direct relationships with local farmers and with suppliers to purchase top quality food (Levkoe & Wakefield, 2011).

In our efforts to identify best practices amongst food banks, there was a shortage of publications outlining the specific practices that make food bank operations successful.

In the United States, individual food banks often publish scoring rubrics for best practices based on rubrics produced by Foodshare, central Connecticut's regional food bank (Foodshare.org, 2008); the Food Research and Action Center, which produced a best practices report after a study of the top 10 food banks in North Carolina (Edwards, 2014); as well as the West Michigan Food Bank, a member of the Feeding America program which serves 40 counties in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula (Arnold, 2004). However, in Canada, very little contributions have been made to the community of learning within food banks around strategies and best practices. To date, the only documented efforts in the literature addressing this topic is the Environmental Scan of Social Innovation in Canadian and US Food Banks, conducted by the Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) (De la Salle & Unwin, 2016).

In this paper, the language used to define those practices has been taken from the above mentioned scan, produced by the GVFB. The scan revealed thirteen dimensions of social innovation in food banks, which represent the core functional areas of food bank work, as well as

new areas of activity for food banks. Social innovation may occur in one or many of the following dimensions: Strategic Planning; Food Distribution to Members & Partner Agencies; Data Collection & Metrics; Governance Strategies; Human Resources; Partnerships; Programming; Community & Donor, Education & Engagement; Advocacy; Development & Finance; Food Purchasing; Food Recovery & Waste Management; and Communications (De la Salle & Unwin, 2016). Furthermore, 9 patterns of social innovation among the thirteen dimensions offered insight into the strategies currently enabling food banks to break the mold and effectively change their current model towards a community food security model of food banking. The nine patterns of social innovation for food banks include the following: Creating a platform for shift; Taking a whole systems approach; Focusing on quality over quantity; Scaling out not up; Creating a healthy and dynamic culture of shift; Balancing change with the immediate need for emergency food services; Engaging new voices; Starting with assets; and Working upstream (De la Salle & Unwin, 2016).

The work of De la Salle & Unwin revealed that there is a great deal of social innovation happening already in Canada (2016). These best practices already address aspects relating to poverty alleviation, which seem to reassure the need for creating a community of practice around systems change within the food bank sector. For instance, the Partnerships dimension calls for the development of partnerships with other service providers above and beyond food assistance. Individual food banks are already partnering with community health service providers to connect food bank members with added services including dental, accounting, legal, haircuts, as well as employment opportunities. By collaborating with other service providers and leveraging existing

community assets, food banks are better positioned to better help members access a wider range of services.

Community Kitchens, for example, are places where people unite by learning new recipes and cooking techniques and sharing the meals they've created together. More than 500 of the organizations that handle food banks operations offer this type of program (Food Banks Canada, 2016). Doolarichan Singh, a food bank member at the Fort York Food Bank, said "Fort York helps me with food, clothing, and counseling on housing and health. I am proud of the help I have received". Great partnerships among food banks, food donors, and other service providers are a stepping stone for achieving the change that is needed for people like Doolaricham Singh. Programming & Member Engagement is yet another example of best practices for fostering long-term solutions to improve community food security. The Stop, a Toronto based food bank offers a variety of programs, ranging from food literacy and skill building classes and learning environments to piloting mobile fresh markets and new formats for distribution. The Stop's work has been recognized greatly as they have transitioned for the past 20 years away from the food bank model. Recognized today as the Greener Village Community Food Centre, The Stop combines emergency food programs with additional programs such as gardening workshops, where under the supervision of an experienced team of growers, children and adults gain hands-on experience in sustainable food production (The Stop, n.d.).

The need for a systems change within the food banking sector is evident. Initiatives for social innovation are becoming more prominent, in part due to the recognition that food banks play a vital role in the fight against hunger and food insecurity. The shift to a community food security

model is now more necessary than ever, and thus the increasing need for sharing best practices to improve the community of learning and knowledge sharing among food banks and their supporters. Though the work of De la Salle and Unwin (2016) pioneered the way towards gaining a better understanding of the meaning of social innovation in food banks and best practices to achieve it, continuing to create ways to engage and communicate with food bank organizations is paramount for inspiring this much needed change. Furthermore, through the use of shared advocacy platforms, we can help the government and industry to better align their efforts to bolster the change that is happening within the food bank sector.

Current food insecurity situation in the Halton Region

With more than 335,000 people presently depending on food banks on a monthly basis, Ontario's food banks are providing food to nearly 7% more individuals than when the recession started back in 2008. Consistent with other cities in Ontario, the Halton Region too has experienced an increase to those individuals requiring assistance to obtain alternative sources of food in order to survive. As outlined by Canada's Food Guide[7], healthy eating exists when individual's diets include grains, vegetables and fruits, as well as milk and meat or substitutes - to feel good and maintain health. However, sustaining a healthy diet is often challenging for low income families with restricted financial resources.

In 2014, an average Ontario household spent 9.5% of their gross income on food. For families belonging to the bottom 20% of the income scale, food expenditures represented 14% of their overall income[8]. Additionally, these households spent close to half (49%)[9] of their income on food and shelter combined. According to data collected in 2016, in Halton, the estimated cost for nutritious food for a family of four is about $896[10] per month which is $37.19 more than what a

family of four pays in Toronto at $858.81[11] per month. For low income families and individuals currently receiving social assistance from Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or earning minimum wage, the cost of food can represent anywhere between 25% to 40% of their already rigid budgets. Recently, the Food Institute at the University of Guelph confirmed that food prices will sustain faster increases than general inflation, which they explained using the recent 4 to 4.5 % increase in costs for meat, vegetables and fruits between 2015 and 2016[12]. This only adds to the existing challenges to food security for low income families and individuals in Halton.

Maintaining Food Security and Caring for Halton's Hunger

One way of becoming more aware of the challenges that the Region of Halton is currently facing when it comes to maintaining food security, is to first analyze the issue from a wider perspective at the federal and provincial levels. For instance, Ontario's food banks are seeing unparalleled spikes in the number of seniors accessing emergency food support, and suspicions of even worse levels of food insecurity amongst seniors due to access barriers have inspired many food banks to develop innovative programs to assist the elderly in their communities. Similarly, a comparison between social assistance rates to cost of living can explain just how perplexing it can be for individuals from single households relying on these social programs to stretch their dollars on a monthly basis. At present, a single person on OW receives $706 per month, in contrast, a single person on ODSP receives around $1,128 monthly. In relation to the average rent for a one bedroom apartment in most cities in Ontario – which in Toronto is $1,085, in Sudbury is $804[13], and in Halton is $976[14] - it is obvious that this income is inadequate for covering housing costs, not to mention other expenses such as transportation, personal care items, utilities, and food.

The 2016 Hunger Report made a distinctive connection between poverty and hunger, revealing that "…hunger is a symptom of poverty, and without long-term solutions to poverty reduction, there will always be a need for food banks in Ontario". Alternatively, the 2016 Hunger Count advocated that food bank use is just one facet of the greater consequences brought about by poverty and food insecurity in Canada. Thus far, the provincial government has been unable to provide comprehensive or inclusive enough assistance for individuals and families struggling to pay their way. The impact of increasing hydro prices, for instance, are not only impacting Ontario families, but also organizations like food banks that are already struggling to balance limited resources alongside increasing demands for their service. Further adding to the problem of food insecurity is the direct relationship that exists between homelessness and housing insecurity, and the healthcare and justice systems. Homeless people are exposed to higher risks of mental health problems, and in turn more likely to run into trouble with the law. The average cost per month of housing someone in a hospital is $10,900. On the other hand, the average monthly cost in a regional jail is $4,333. And yet, the average cost to provide an individual with rent support to guarantee access to safe and appropriate housing is a measly $701 per month. It is therefore evident that the best financial decision for our provincial government is to provide support to Ontarian individuals and families who need access to housing which in turn will benefit the security of all citizens.

On November 2, 2015, representatives from 18 community organizations met to have a discussion about hunger relief efforts in Halton. Participants included food banks, outreach programs, organizations that provide food as part of a broader range of programming,

organizations that focus on food distribution and representatives of food collaboratives. The purpose of the discussion was to: Share knowledge/information, including trends, have a client centered discussion about what's working well and what could work better, and to explore opportunities to enhance collaboration/work together

The Halton Food Security Initiative (HFSI)

The Halton Food Security Initiative (HFSI) formally began in November of 2015, when Food for Life (FFL), the Halton Poverty Roundtable (HPRT) and the Region of Halton (the Region) organised a meeting to discuss challenges being faced by the network of services that exist for hunger relief in the food security sector. The November meeting echoed an agreement for the need to address the issue of collaboration and other related consequences such as communication, transportation, and storage. In terms of collaboration, it was noted that organizations tend to operate independently of each other, serving communities that are within the loosely defined catchment area set primarily by the geography where its food agency is located. As a consequence of operating as separate portals, there is very little collective action or shared benefit realized around major themes including bulk food purchasing arrangements, communication (on everything from hours of operation and location, to inventory availability, to eligibility requirements, etc.), transportation, both of consumers to food programs (FPs) and/or food to consumers, services to seniors, storage and refrigeration, and a range of other common challenges faced by both FPs and consumers.

Thanks to financial and staff support from the Region, and in combination with select agencies that comprised a Project Steering Committee (PSC), the Halton Poverty Roundtable, Food for Life, who took a lead role in coordinating and planning the Raise the Bar (RTB) Forum. As

previously noted, the purpose and creation of the HFSI was motivated by finding themes of common ground and common interest, where Food Programs and consumers could both recognize opportunities for refining the existing network of largely distinct services around Halton. The main idea behind the Raise the Bar event, was to generate animated conversations in smaller discussion groups through a series of interactions among interested parties that would eventually result in the establishment of Working Groups focused on producing two bundled outcomes by July 2016:

- a long short-list of potential process/system ideas that would both positively impact food delivery and distribution, and find possible areas of shared practice among FPs and even funders; and

- a list of medium to long-term actions (1-3 years) that, subject to available funding, could result in substantive changes to the food security system across Halton.

Responding to food insecurity and hunger

The importance of hunger prevention is unquestionable. However, the Halton Region is currently facing an increase in the local population of individuals and families dealing with food insecurity, malnutrition, and undernourishment. The most recent Household Food Security & Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket Report for the Halton region revealed that during the period of 2013-2014, 4.3% of Halton households were identified as food insecure. In Halton, the average cost of a healthy diet has experienced an increase of 2% since 2014, and a whopping 52% since 2003. The monthly low income scenarios for 2015 indicated a struggle for low income households to pay rent, buy food for a nutritious diet, and pay for basic expenses.

The Region of Halton is committed, through its strong base of dedicated volunteers, the enthusiasm among organizations to collaborate and support one another and the emergent

community awareness about issues of poverty and hunger to improve its hunger relief efforts. Consequently, the largest food drive in Canada takes place in Halton. Moreover, the Executive Director of Food for Life shared a number of hunger relief efforts currently being implemented in Halton which include 15 food banks and agencies with food banks, 38 Outreach Programs, 40 food distribution agencies, 19+ food literacy programs, community gardens and community kitchens, and 8+ collaboratives involved directly/indirectly with food/income related issues.

A Brighter Future – A Hunger Free Halton

The HFSI development has exposed many shared interests, challenges and opportunities for the food security sector to create a more inclusive systems approach. The various discussions that have taken place since the November 2015 meeting have made it clear that it does not matter the role being played within the food security sector, everyone must contribute through collaborative efforts, to reduce food insecurity, hunger, and malnutrition in the Halton Region. As relationships grow stronger and new alliances form, stronger system-wide approaches will continue to surface that build upon the opportunities underlined in this review. The existing research being conducted for the Halton Region not only builds upon the existing body of literature that surrounds the topic of food insecurity but hones in the need to adopt unique efforts to local challenges which often vary amongst countries, provinces and more specifically municipalities.

 The Halton Food Security Alliance initiative brings with it new-found hope and is a timely answer to The Ontario Association of Food Banks cry for help, because there is strength in numbers, because together, hunger can be brought to an end. One of the steps in doing this is to

incorporate the voices of those who are food bank users. Research that reports from the experiences of the food bank users themselves will provide a more complete picture in seeking to implement better practices from the clients' perspectives

Methodology

The methodology for this project entailed a two-step qualitative data collection strategy. The first step was the incorporation of a *problem tree analysis.* Problem tree analysis is used often for project planning amongst development agencies and was used here for its effectiveness in mapping out cause and effect around issues. This methodology has several advantages:

- The problem can be broken down into manageable and definable chunks. This enables a clearer prioritisation of factors and helps focus objectives;

- There is more understanding of the problem and its often interconnected and even contradictory causes. This is often the first step in finding win-win solutions;

- It identifies the constituent issues and arguments, and can help establish who and what the political actors and processes are at each stage;

- Present issues - rather than apparent, future or past issues - are dealt with and identified;

- The process of analysis often helps build a shared sense of understanding, purpose and action.

The participants were divided into four groups consisting of 8 to 10 people at each table. Each table had a facilitator leading discussion and an illustrator capturing the group's ideas in real time drawings. Each group was assigned an issue that the participants would discuss; "little access to healthy food". The issue was identified prior to the research through consultation with the community partners, and as a follow up to the Raising the Bar Report written by the Halton Food Security Initiative. "Little Access to Healthy Food" was written in the middle of a tree that

had been drawn on flip chart paper. The participants were tasked with identifying the causes of

this issue in their own lives (the roots of the tree) and then were asked to explain what the

consequences of having little access to healthy food was (branches of the tree). As participants

discussed the causes and consequences, the facilitator wrote down each idea on either the roots

or the branches of the tree. In addition to the drawing of the tree there was an extra flip chart for

facilitators to write down any other interesting ideas that came up that were not directly related to

the task at hand. While the facilitator worked with the participants, an artist interpreted the data

into an illustration that represented the findings.

In step two of the research, participants were tasked with imagining what their ideal food

program would look like. The facilitators and artists were tasked with creating mind maps from

the participants' ideas. A representative image and/or the words 'ideal food program' were

written in the center of the mind map. The participants then contributed the different areas that

they felt had to exist for any food program. Facilitators used probes such as 'what kinds of

food', 'where would it be located', 'how do you access the program' etc if participation

dwindled.

Participants

The researchers worked in consultation with Food for Life to determine how their neighbours[1]

would be approached to participate in the study. Food for Life developed a very comprehensive

list of those providing food support within the Region. The list consisted of:

- Food Banks

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[1] Food for Life refers to all individuals who use food banks or food programs as their neighbours
rather than as consumers or users. In an effort to stay true to the spirit of the research we will use
neighbours throughout.

- Community Dinners
- Community Kitchens
- Food for Life Programs
- Community Agency Food Outreach Programs
- Youth and Snack Food Programs

Once the messaging was clear regarding the information we were hoping to gather from anyone who uses food programs, the invitation was developed. Five hundred copies of this invitation were printed (*See Appendix A*).

This invitation was also available in PDF format. An email was sent to the key contacts at each of the above noted types of organizations. Key contacts may have been the Executive Directors in some cases, front-line staff in others, Food for Life Volunteer Coordinators, or Program Coordinators/Managers. There was a total of 77 food-related partners contacted via email – 37 Agencies and 40 Food for Life sites. Within the email, it was noted to share with their colleagues, as well as with those who attend their food program.

The five hundred printed copies of the invites were spread across the 40 Food for Life sites within Halton Region. These copies were sent in envelopes on the Food for Life trucks and given to the Volunteer Coordinator to hand out to those at the Food for Life programs. Most programs received approximately 10 copies to share with those coming to the program.

Participants were then registered when they called or emailed into Donna Slater, who then noted their name, phone number or email address, which program they were associated with and if a taxi was required. On February 21st, Donna Slater connected with those registered to confirm their attendance. On the day of the event, there were 34 registered for the event.

The number of participants fluctuated between 35 to 48 participants throughout the activities. Some participants came for lunch however left before the activities were fully underway; others came part way through the activities as they came after stopping at their normal food program or once their children were in programs for the afternoon. The data presented here focuses on the 36 participants who remained throughout the afternoon. Below is the demographic information provided from the participants (some participants chose not to answer some questions):

Q1. What is your gender?
n=36

	n	%
Female	30	83.3
Male	6	16.7
Total	36	100

Q2. Age
n=36

	n	%
under 20	0	0
20-30	0	0
31-40	5	13.9
41-50	6	16.7
51-60	4	11.1
61 and over	21	58.3
Total	36	100

Q3. Relationship status
n=36

	n	%
single	14	35.9
non-cohabitating relationship	1	2.6
common-law	1	2.6
married	7	17.9
separated	4	10.3
divorced	6	15.4
widowed	6	15.4
Total	39	100

Note: participants could select more than one answer

Q4. Number of children (regardless of age) whom you provide food for
n=15

Answer options: open-ended

	n	%
0	1	6.7
1	7	46.7
2	3	20
3	2	13.3
4	1	6.7
6	1	6.7
Total	15	100

Q5. Number of people in your household whom you provide food for
n=24
Answer options: open-ended

	n	%
1	7	29.2
2	8	33.3
3	5	20.8
4	1	4.2
5	2	8.3
6	1	4.2
Total	24	100

Q6. Race
n=23
Answer options: open-ended

	n	%
African Canadian	1	4.3
Asian	1	4.3
Black	4	17.4
Canadian	1	4.3
Caucasian/White	8	34.8
English	1	4.3
Indian	1	4.3
Polish Canadian	1	4.3
Serbian	1	4.3
Vietnamese Canadian	2	8.7
West Indian Mixed/West Indian (South American)	2	8.7

Q7. Sources of income (please circle all that apply)
n=34

	n	%
wages, salary, self-employment	2	3.3
social assistance (e.g. Ontario Works/welfare)	5	8.3
Disability payments (e.g. Ontario Disability Support Program/ODSP)	8	13.3

child support	2	3.3
alimony	0	0
child tax benefit	4	6.7
private pension	4	6.7
CPP	18	30
OAS	13	21.7
other (please specify	4	6.7
Total	60	100

Note: participants could select more than one answer

The combinations of income received

CPP, OAS	6
CPP, OAS, GIS	1
CPP, OAS, U.S. social security	1
disability payments, child tax benefit	1
disability payments, deceased survivor CPP	1
private pension, CPP, OAS	4
social assistance, child tax benefit	2
wages, salary, self-employment, disability payments	2
child support, CPP, work insurance -diability	1
child support, child tax benefit, not sure, was recently laid off, EI pending; unsure of monthly income	1

Q8. Including all sources, what is your average monthly income before deductions
n=33

	n	%
under $1000	3	9.0
$1000-$1500	15	45.5
$1501-$2000	11	33.3
$2001-$2500	3	9.0
$2501-$3000	1	3.0
$3001-$3500	0	0
$3501-$4000	0	0
over $4000	0	0
Total	33	99.8

Q10. How many times in an average month do you use a food bank or program?
n=30

Answer options: open-ended

	n	%

1	3	10
2	4	13.3
3	1	3.3
4	19	63.3
5	0	0
6	1	3.3
7	1	3.3
8	1	3.3
Total	30	99.8

Q11. How many locations of food banks do you access?
n=32
Answer options: open-ended

	n	%
0	1	3.1
1	14	43.8
2	12	37.5
3	3	9.4
4	0	0
5	2	6.2
Total		100

The participants were invited to enjoy lunch as they filled out the informed consent forms (*see Appendix B*) and the background sheets (*see Appendix C*). They arranged themselves into four separate seating areas. Each area was assigned a facilitator and an illustrator. Two of the facilitators were the co-investigators for the Community Ideas Factory, Dr.'s Michael McNamara and Sara Cumming, one was a colleague, Dr. Jessica Pulis, and the fourth was a Master's student Research Assistant with the project. The four illustrators were all students at Sheridan College. The participants were told that they would be contributing to our understanding of the causes and effects of not having enough access to healthy foods.

Findings

The findings from the participatory research are presented in three sections. Section one

discusses the participant identified causes of have little access to healthy food. The roots of the

trees (causes) revolved around four major themes; access to money, access to food programs or

food banks, stigma, and the food itself. Section two of the findings outlines the participant

identified consequences, or effects, having little access to healthy food (*See Figures 1 through*

4.2 below for the participant designed, as well as artist illustrations of the data). Finally, section

three discusses the participants ideas surrounding the ideal food program.

Causes

Lacking the financial means

Not surprisingly, the inability to purchase the required foods based upon the participants' income

levels was the most often cited reason for having little access to healthy foods. There was

recognition that there has been a change in the economy whereby there is little access to fulltime

stable jobs, rather most work is in the low-income precarious labour market. In addition Ontario

Disability Support Program and Ontario Works benefits remain low while the cost of living

continues to rise. Participants articulated their frustration that food banks and food programs

were put in place as an emergency measure once upon a time but have now become normalized.

In addition, seniors articulated that they never imagined that the cost of living would become so

high in the Halton Region and as a result were ill prepared to live off of their low pensions. Two

lone parent participants also contended that they had not anticipated the breakdown of their

relationships and stated that they were surprised to find little support for their newly formed

family type. Many argued that access to stable and affordable housing should improve their

29

ability to purchase healthy foods, however there are extremely long waits to access housing. In addition, those who already reside in government subsidized housing stated that when their financial circumstance improved their rent, not their ability to purchase food, immediately increased as well.

Navigating Access

Difficulties surrounding accessing food programs and food banks were noted as barriers to obtaining access to healthy food. There were a number of issues surrounding access noted, some surrounding getting to the programs, being allowed entrance to them once they arrive, and the experience at the program once access is granted. Food programs that are attached to low income housing received the most positive feedback as the food is directly delivered to the neighbours place of residents. However, for the bulk of participants who do not live in these housing units, getting to the food programs remains one of the most consistent barriers. A lack of transportation and/or prohibitive transportation costs act as roadblocks for participants who have to travel too far to walk to access programs. In addition, the elderly, those with mental health issues, and parents with young children argued that getting to the food banks and/or programs was more difficult and thus not worth the effort for the food they would receive.

Accessing food programs also remained difficult for newcomers and those who were new to the process as there remains a lack of knowledge about where programs are located throughout the Region. In addition the hours of operation of the food banks render those with employment incapable of utilizing the services at all.

Participants argued that programs that were not attached to subsidized housing units have inconsistent, and at times, prohibitive intake policies which require too much personal information, and difficult screening processes. It was argued that having to prove that one is poor enough to use a program is degrading and offers the neighbours no level of privacy, in turn, making them question the confidentiality of their private finances.

Stigmatizing experience

Many participants spoke at length about the stigma associated with the need to access any type of help at all, but more so, the embarrassment attached to not being able to provide enough food for ones family. Participants argued that they felt incredibly judged not just by wealthy community members, but also by other food bank users, and the volunteer staff. Every group articulated great frustration with the personnel that work at the food programs and urged that the volunteers go through some type of training prior to being allowed to work in the system. Participants spoke at length about the way in which volunteers treat them, and what they articulated as a lack of professionalism. Some participants were also annoyed that volunteers help themselves to all of the best product before the food banks even open their doors. Interestingly, while many felt judged by other neighbours, members in three out of the four groups placed judgment on some users of services, arguing that there are many dishonest wealthy people who do not need the services however continue to consume products that they do not deserve.

Quantity, Quality, Variety

It is important to note that many participants expressed gratitude that food programs exist, and recognized that the major issue resides with the government not providing enough income for

them to purchase their own food. However, participants also had no shortage of complaints about the quantity, quality and variety of foods they were offered at the varying food programs. More than any other complaint, was a continual plea for more access to healthy food, protein, dairy and food that meets the needs of varying health and cultural needs (diabetics, gluten allergies, vegans, halal). Parents of young children also asserted that there is very little 'kid friendly' food and a desperate need for formula and baby food. While not part of the access to healthy food analysis, a side point was raised regarding a lack of access to toiletries and personal hygiene products.

Participants asserted that at many programs the quality of the food is questionable due to no labelling on packages, although the FFL is regulated the same as grocery stores and other food organizations, participants stated that some of the food that is past the expiry date and sometimes sits in trucks far too long before being processed. Some participants expressed fear of food poisoning and thus would by pass any food they deemed as questionable.

Some of the neighbours articulated that they didn't possess the knowledge required to either cook healthy meals with the products on hand, or how to cook in bulk when large quantities of particular items were available. Related to this, participants at three of the tables stated that their lack of space at home, both cold space (fridge and freezer) and cupboard space was too tiny to accommodate bulk cooking. These same participants also noted that they lacked the ability to grow their own foods at home, which could significantly increase their input of healthy foods.

Consequences

After the participants discussed their barriers to accessing healthy food they were asked to discuss the resulting consequences. The facilitator filled out the branches on the tree with the participants' responses to the question (See Figure 1 to figure 4), simultaneously the artist illustrated the conversation in real time (See Figure 1.2 to figure 4.2). The consequences were organized around the six themes that emerged from the data; physical, mental, emotional and financial health, isolation and the reproduction of generational poverty and hunger.

Physical Health

A deterioration in physical health was the most discussed consequence of having little access to healthy food. Some of the participants noted that they were chronically hungry and often skipped meals so that there was enough food for their children. The neighbours discussed at length their inability to concentrate, constant fatigue, lack of muscle mass and high rates of obesity. Specific physical ailments plagued many of the participants who attributed their illnesses directly to their diets. Anemia, Osteoporosis, and diabetes were ailments present at all four tables. The participants with these illnesses stated that the lack of access to protein and dairy were large contributing factors to their diagnosis; stating that the foods they are eating are literally making them ill. Many questioned the logic behind government decisions around food security, stating that having such little access to healthy food results in drastic increases in costs to Health Canada.

Mental Health

Being hungry, or concerned about potential hunger takes up an immense amount of space in one's own thoughts. Due to this, participants discussed a number of mental health issues;

hopelessness, depression, lethargic, stress, anxiety, discouraged. were all descriptors used to describe the consequences they experiences in their own lives as a result of not having adequate access to healthy food. Additionally, the participants spoke about feeling less intelligent as a result of being unable to concentrate on anything but hunger. Interestingly, a number of seniors at three different tables discussed that their feelings towards food had changed over time and that they dreaded eating. They articulated that a lack of flavour, and the necessity to eat the same foods over and over again, resulted in them finding meals times completely unenjoyable.

Emotional Health

Many participants stated that their emotional wellbeing has deteriorated significantly over the last couple of years. Seniors articulated that they never imagined that after working and paying taxes for the majority of their lives that they would end up in a situation where they needed to rely "on handouts" to survive. Moreover, the participants who had children at home to feed stated that they felt great shame and embarrassment for their inability to provide adequate nutrition for their families. These participants contended that this embarrassment and shame led them to having very low self esteem and rather negative outlooks on life. Some spoke of feeling anger and hostility, and stated that they lived in fear as they felt like they were under constant surveillance from the government.

Financial Crisis

Some participants discussed the ways in which food insecurity has at times put them into financial crisis. Participants spoke about being so hungry that they made the decision to forgo paying bills to purchase food. Hydro and rent were both discussed as payments that have been

missed over the past year. In addition, some participants suggested that their inability to concentrate had resulted in them losing their employment.
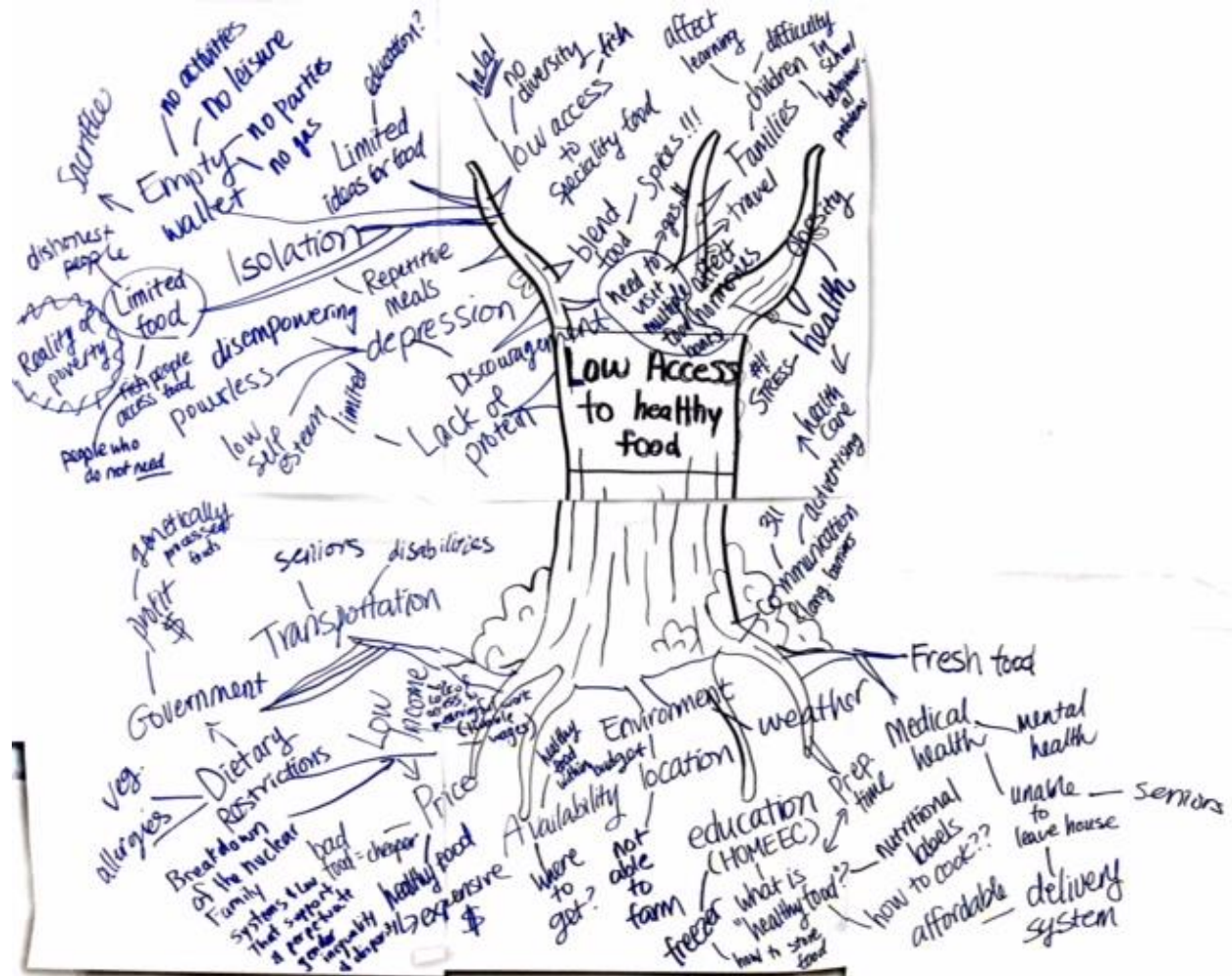
Isolation

The neighbours who participated in this study were very aware of the personal consequences of not having access to sufficient supplies of food. Some stated that there continual inability to provide adequately for their children resulted in them having to move back in with family. Others stated that they had to rely on family handouts in both food and money over the years. Both of these situations resulted in family breakdown, or at the very least very strained family relationships. Relationships with friends were also extremely difficult to maintain as participants felt they could not invite people to their homes out of fear they wouldn't be able to properly entertain them. In addition, participants find it very difficult to socialize outside of the house as they lack the finances to partake in leisure activities and rarely have the required gas money to get anywhere if they are lucky enough to drive.

Generational issues

The parents who participated in this activity illuminated their very real fear of reproducing poverty in their children's lives. They articulated that lacking food results in children who are unable to concentrate at school, and who, if are lucky enough to attend a school with a child hunger program, are immediately stigmatized. The participants felt that students who can't learn properly are quickly mislabelled as having behavioural problems, ADD or ADHD, rather than an understanding that hunger encourages deviant behaviour. In addition, the participants articulated that their financial situations often resulted in their children also becoming isolated as they are unable to finance social activities and often don't have the strength to participate in free school

sports. These participants feared that their children would grow up less happy than generations

before them and would not be able to become productive members of society.

Figure 1: Tree Analysis Facilitator Table One

Figure 1.1: Tree Analysis Illustrator Table One

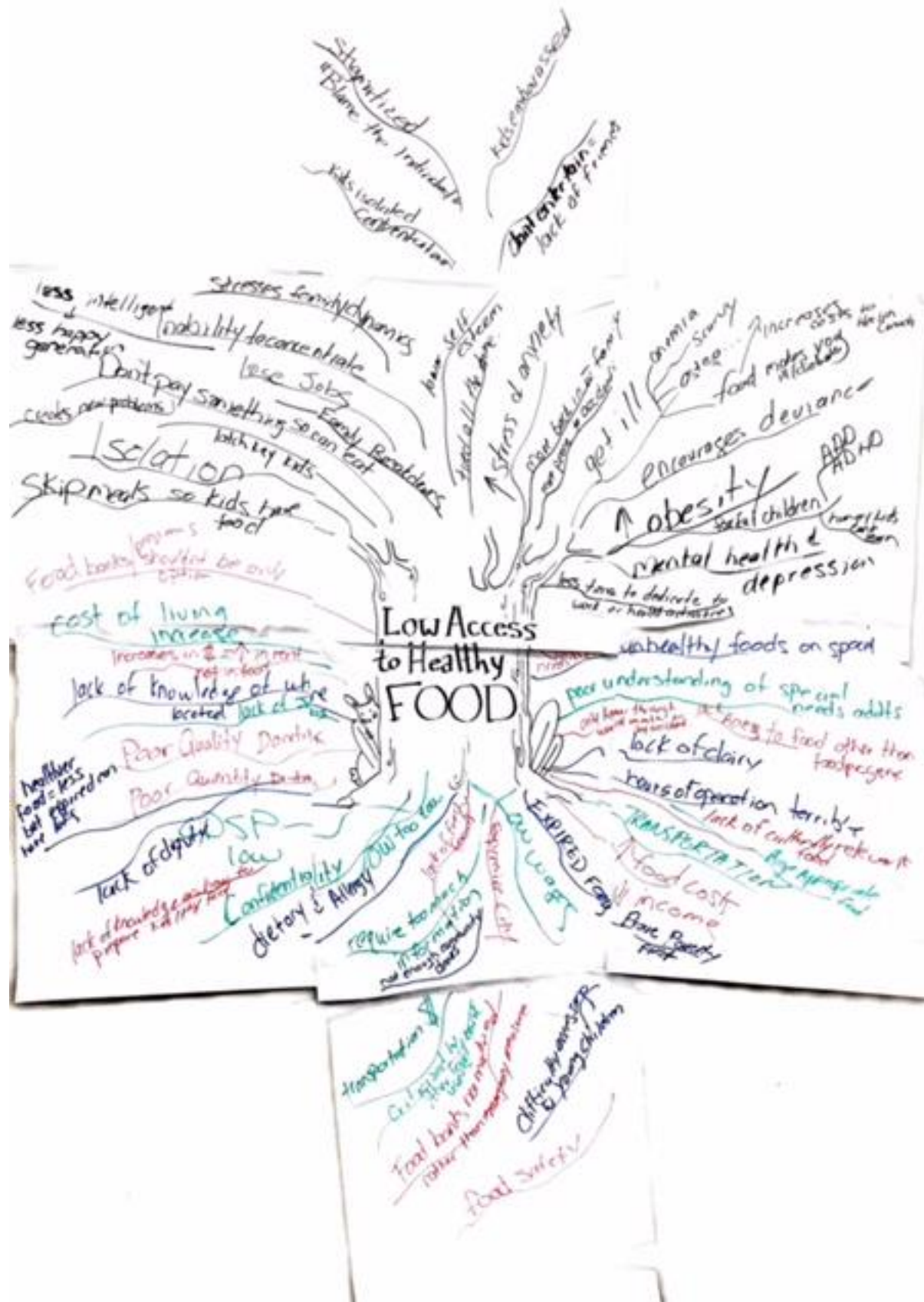**Figure 2: Tree Analysis Facilitator Table Two**

Figure 2.1: Tree Analysis Illustrator Table Two

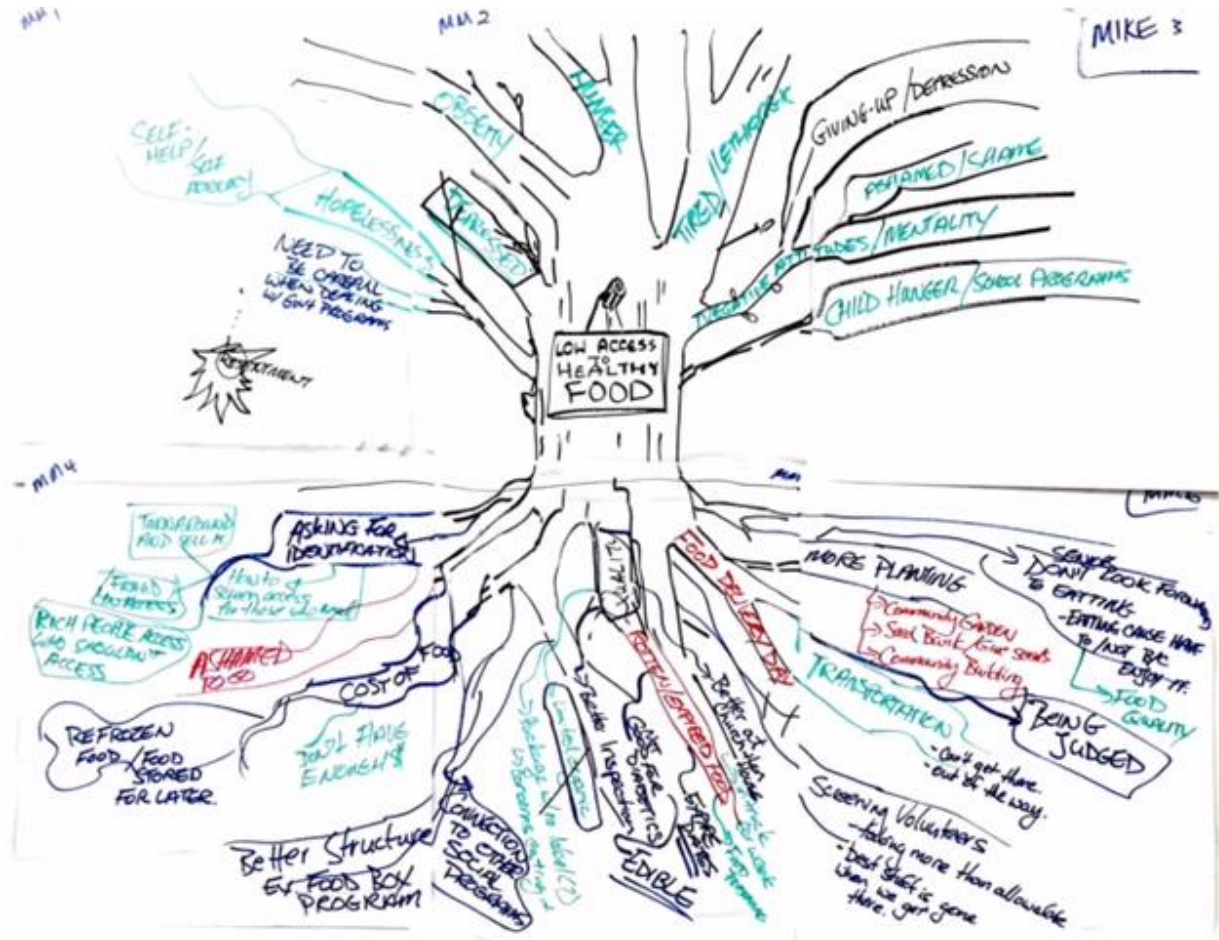**Figure 3: Tree Analysis Facilitator Table Three**

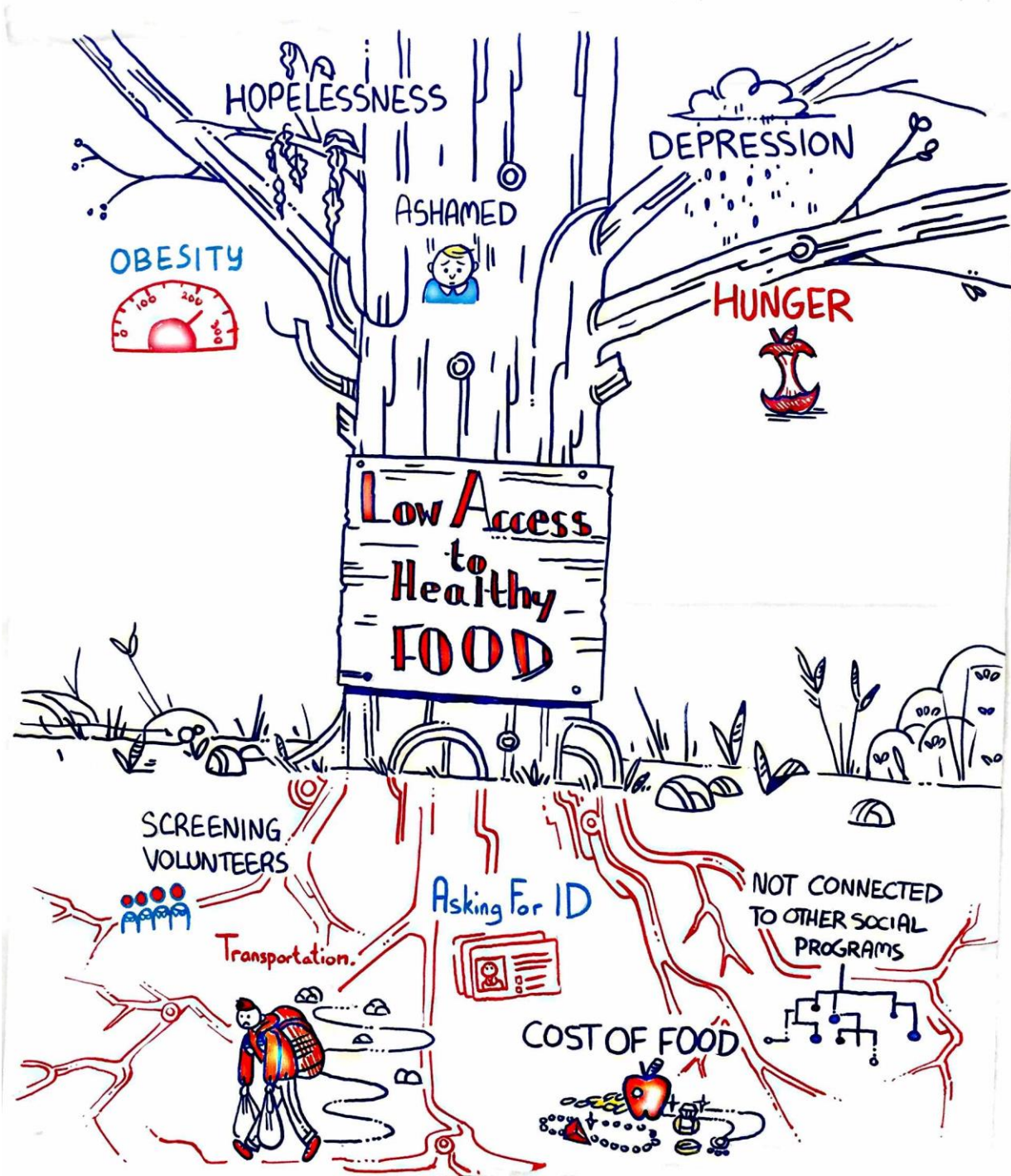**Figure 3.1: Tree Analysis Illustrator Table Three**

Figure 4: Tree Analysis Facilitator Table Four

Tree Analysis Facilitator Table Four (w/ notes)

Nobody should go hungry.

Impact of user labels — should not matter who you are, we should all have = access

Very appreciative of opportunity to access food.

What is going to happen in the future? → most seniors living in poverty

Always fighting for change.

Even when we try to change it nothing happens / Ignored.

Have to access different food bank locations to survive.

Why do I have to live like this? If children are sick we do not go for food.

moms shipping — meals so kids can eat

senior financial abuse

LOW ACCESS TO Healthy FOOD

Lack of variety

No choice

No energy to survive

Quality of food subpar

No culturally specific food

Language barriers

No consistency week to week

Healthy baby food / formula

Students / youth / lack of information

Unstable labour market

No long term benefits

Lack of subsidized housing

Consistency in funding mandates

Lack of stable housing

Δ in personal circumstances

Government ignoring the issue

Lack of information — location, access

MONEY — personal ↓, pensions ↓, government funding, cutbacks to existing

Mobility — personal, distance, locations, delivery

No / Little Healthy

COST of

Afraid it will get worse before it gets better.

Hard to transport food w/out stable transportation esp. to babies / shelters / homes / sleeping in shelter

Not just access to food but shelters / temp. homes

What about using abandoned buildings? Warehouses? w/ running water, electricity

This Xmas good quality turkeys → no consistency in the year

Type / access / quality of food is better at Xmas. More stuff given to us at Xmas.

Figure 4.1: Tree Analysis Illustrator Table Four

Solutions: Building an Ideal Food Program

Once the causes and effects of having little access to healthy food was determined by the participants, each table was tasked with developing a Mind Map surrounding the components of their ideal food program. The participants were asked to imagine that money was not an issue and that they could design any type of food program they would like. Once again, both a facilitator and an artist were simultaneously interpreting the participants' answers into illustration (*see figures 5 to 8.1 below*). Six themes emerged from the data that was collected in the Mind Mapping activity; the types of programs offered, methods of receiving food, the types of food offered, intake processes, communication, and wrap around services.

Programming, more than just providing food

The four tables of participants all brought forward a number of ideas surrounding different ways to help ameliorate food insecurity outside of the current programs being offered. Every table stated their ideal program would include community based cooking and nutritional classes to help neighbours learn how to cook the foods that are offered each week, as well as to cook in bulk so that fresh in season foods can be prepared and frozen when there are specials in the grocery store or when an influx of items comes to the food banks/programs. Participants also imagined a food program where there were weekly community dinners which would not only help feed those who may be struggling to get enough, but also help to alleviate some of the social isolation that many are experiencing. In addition, programs that offer predetermine food baskets should be accompanied by a number of recipes that include the contents of the basket. Three of the groups underlined the importance of instituting community gardens where neighbours can

actively participate in growing their own food. Moreover, giving neighbours seeds and directions to plant some of their own produce was also offered as a suggestion.

A number of participants suggested a radicalization of the entire food program process stating that one of two things would significantly increase the usefulness of these measure. First, participants stated that they would much prefer having a gift card for a grocery store given to them so that they could purchase the kinds of foods, or household products that they wanted. They stated that this would solve many of the problems they are currently facing accessing services and would although them to purchase culturally specific foods. Second, the participants argued that having a food program set up exactly like a grocery store where they could use a grocery cart and pick out the foods that their family required would be ideal.

One of the most unexpected programs suggested was for the volunteers who work at the food programs. Every table brought forward the idea that all individuals who work, either for pay or volunteer, should have to go through mandatory sensitivity training prior to being allowed to work with vulnerable populations. One table suggested that a "school of social grace' be instituted immediately.

Shifting the method of transportation

Participants recognized that food programs that were associated with particular low income housing locations were ideal as food was delivered to the building rather than residents having to search out programs. They offered suggestions for improving access to food by providing more choices over how and where they could access food. The most commonly stated suggestion was to offer delivery services, especially for the elderly, lone parents of young children and for those

with any type of disability. Ideally, neighbours would be able to link on to what foods are

available for the following week and would be able to check off the items they wish to have.

The argument was that less food would be wasted as the foods some people dislike would not go

to the garbage.

Other suggestions revolved around the delivery of the food to the various programs. Participants

stated that should money be no option, their ideal food program would include several

refrigerated delivery trucks that drop food off to programs that have refrigeration and freezer

units on site, to increase the variety of foods as well as the freshness. In addition these food

programs would have day and night access, would have predictable days of the week, and would

be located in areas with easily accessible public transportation. For areas where this is not

possible, the neighbours suggested mobile trucks that set up in different locations throughout the

Region at pre-set times and days. Lastly, participants also contended that food programs should

set up carpooling options with the neighbours, offering small incentives to those willing to pick

up other neighbours.

Improved quality and variety of food

In imagining their ideal food program, it is not surprising that there was vast discussion over the

types and quality of food that would be offered. Neighbours stated that in their food program

they would have an abundance of access to protein, dairy and fresh produce. In addition, they

would have a staff that would check daily for foods past their expiry date and would specifically

mark them as such in one area of the location. Three important considerations continued to

surface in the discussions surrounding food; sensitivity to neighbours' allergies to particular

types of foods (e.g. gluten, corn, lactose), offering a variety of culturally specific foods (halal as

just one example), and the necessity of always having labels on all products. In addition, neighbours stated that their food program would have a variety of spices, sauces and condiments available.

Intake Processes

In an ideal food program, participants argued that all residents of the Halton Region who attempted to access a program should automatically be given access without any burden of proof of poverty. This is interesting given that in the Tree Analysis many neighbours argued that people who did not need help were accessing the food programs far too often. If some type of residency must be required, participants argued that a family should apply one time and then be granted a family membership card that allows access to any program throughout the Region without any other requirements.
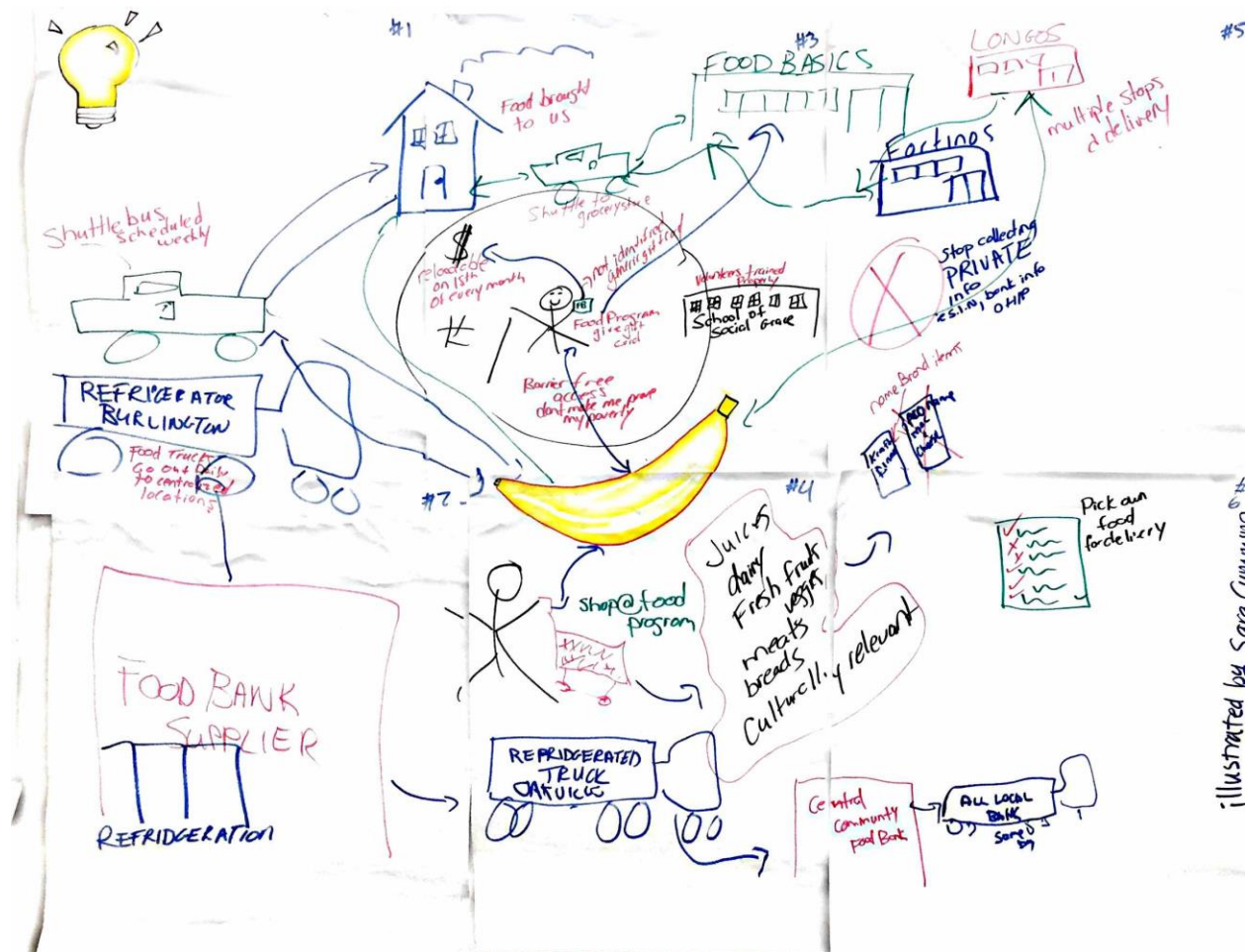
Communication Strategies

The neighbours stated that their food programs would be well advertised with posters throughout the Region, but also through weekly email updates, phone calls and through door-to-door advertising for those who don't have access to a phone or the Internet. Social Assistance offices, Employment Support offices, subsidized and cooperative housing units, apartment buildings and houses in known low income areas would all have a pamphlet that listed all of the programs and services offered throughout the entire region, and would include their hours of operation and intake requirements. In addition, participants felt strongly that all food programs would fall under an advisory board that would be make up of neighbours who would be pivotal in determining communication strategies. Moreover, administrators of programs, and boards of

directors would work to build bridges between the executives and the neighbours, which would result in reduced stigma and a more pleasant experience.

Wrap Around Services

Participants recognized that those who are most likely to access food programs also require the help of numerous other services such as subsidized housing, subsidized childcare, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Government Pensions, Newcomer programs, Legal Aid, and/or Employment Support services. As a result, an ideal food program would be located in a central location connected in one building to all of these other services. Anyone who requires any of these services should automatically be accepted into any food program. The participants echoed one another in their assertion that having one location for all services would increase access for many and would simultaneously help reduce stigma and stress. Accessing one location would also reduce the amount of time, and transportation costs, that participating in multiple programs requires.

Figure 5: Facilitator Mind Map Table One

Figure 5.1: Illustrator Mind Map Table One

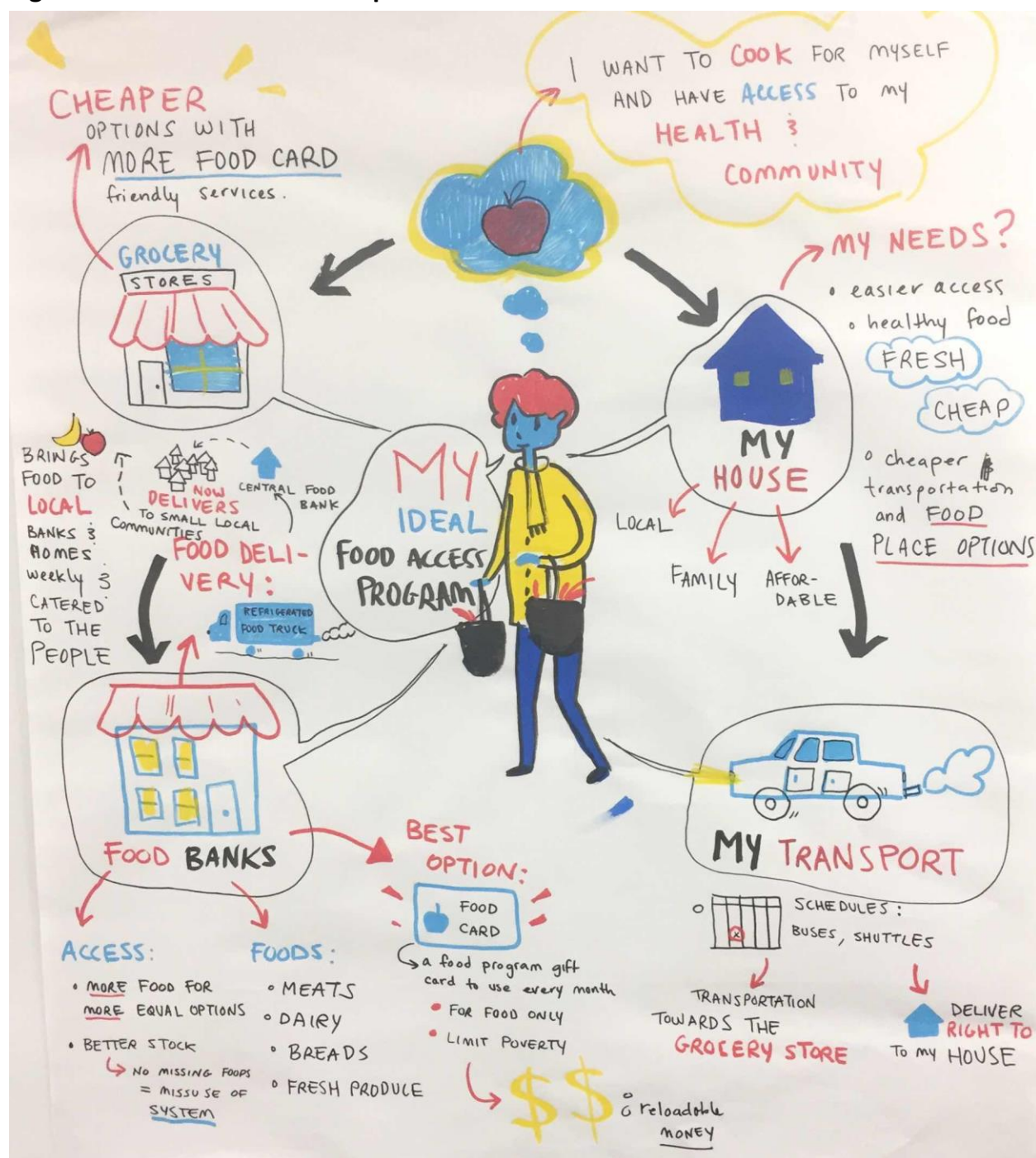**Figure 6: Facilitator Mind Map Table Two**

MM1

METHOD OF RECEIVING

We are very happy w/
→ Predictable
system

→ is ok (delivered to building)
→ sits in truck
- FOOD BANK IS ALSO GOOD SYSTEM

MM2

CONNECTION TO OTHER PROGRAMS

w/ HALTON HOUSING

- Cooking classes.
- Community gardens
- seed → aligned w/
- bank/seed program
- gardening program
→ Flower/food gardening competition
→ Community BBQ
→ kids, family, police, conviviality

$?

→ Civic literacy
→ Civic Capital

TYPE OF PROGRAM

INTAKE / QUALIFICATION

- Living in assisted
place/ you already qualify
- No intake
- Align intake Aligned w/ other prog.
- Need to screen out "wealthy" users.

IDEAS FOR MAKING OUR FOOD PROGRAM BETTER

MM3

FOOD TYPE

- More organic /=/healthier
- low sodium option
- Gift cards for Meat/dairy
  concerns over quality/expiry/safety.
  → Refrozen meat.
- Fresh Fruit/Veg
- Needs to have label w/ Expiry date.
- DON'T OPEN PACKAGES!!
- PERIODIC INSPECTION (QUALITY)
- MORE STAFF.

MM4

COMMUNICATION

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
- RECIPES / FOOD PREP IDEAS
→ SIMPLE /APPROPRIATE
→ BACK TO BASICS

COMMUNITY EVENTS / CALENDAR

PROPER TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS
- People skills/sensitivity training
- Vetting of volunteers

Attitude - RESPECT
- COMPASSION
(People feel bad already)
- Admin/Execs lost touch
w/ users
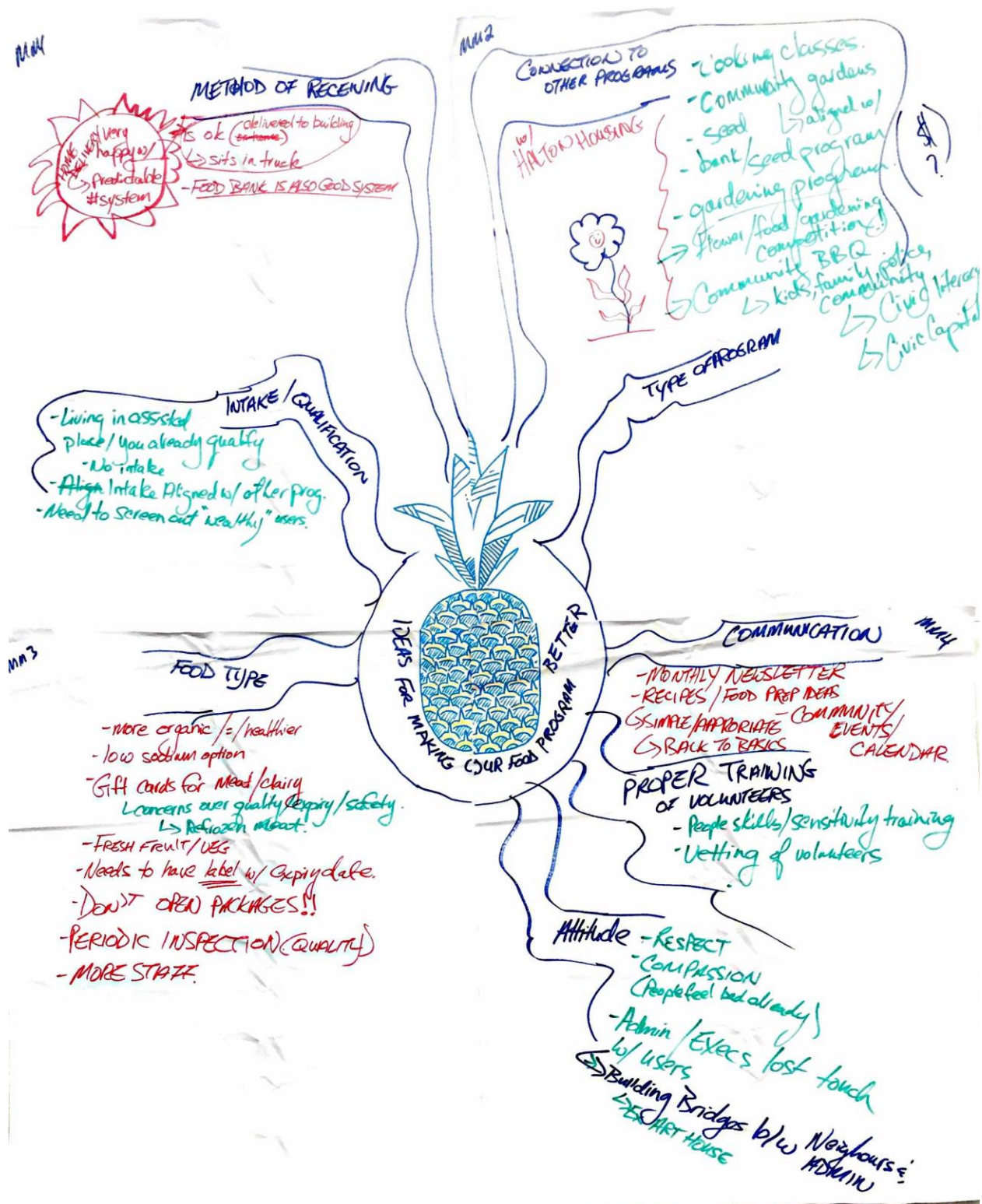→ Building Bridges b/w Neighbours &
→ START HOUSE ADMIN

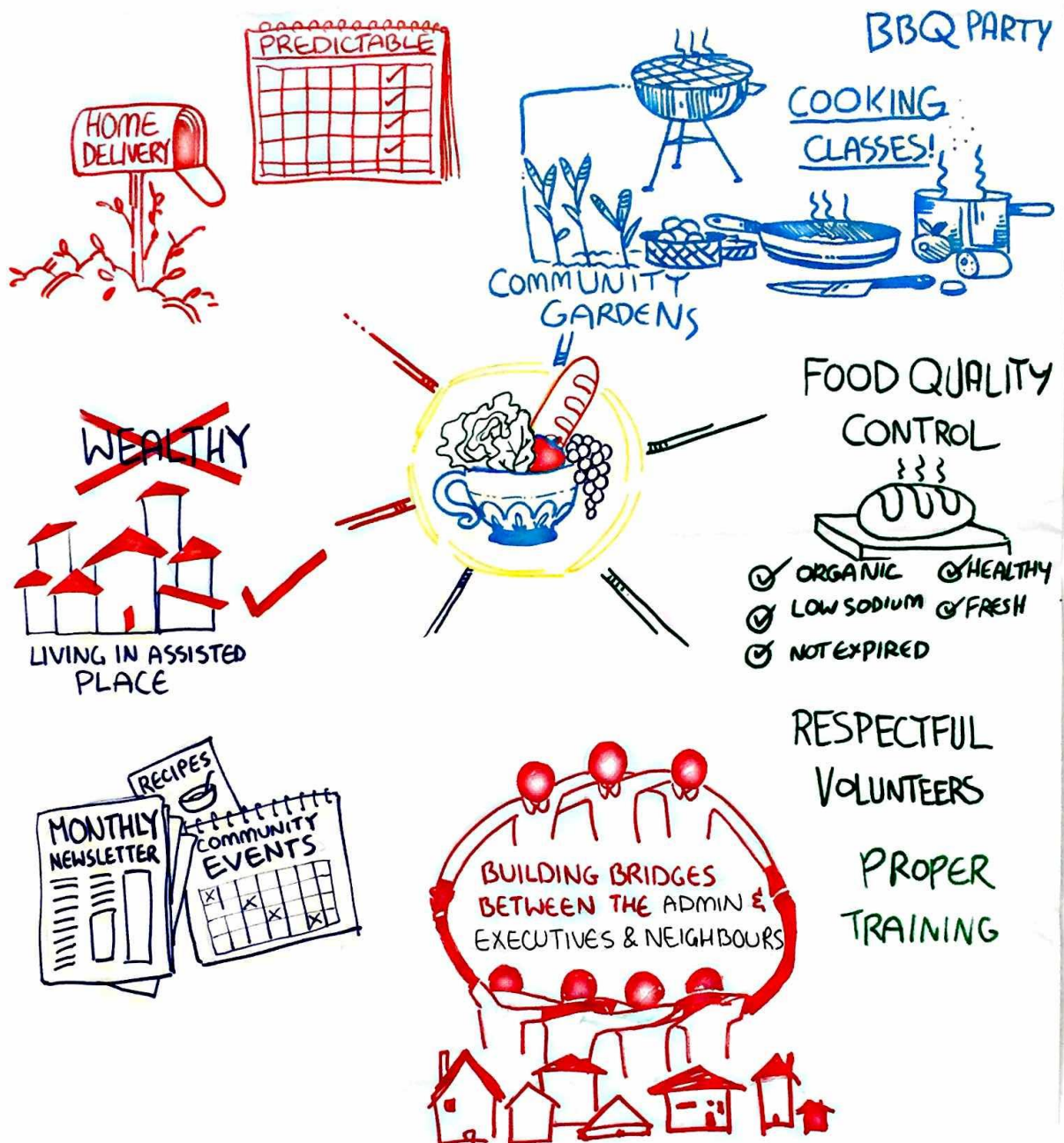**Figure 6.1: Illustrator Mind Map Table Two**
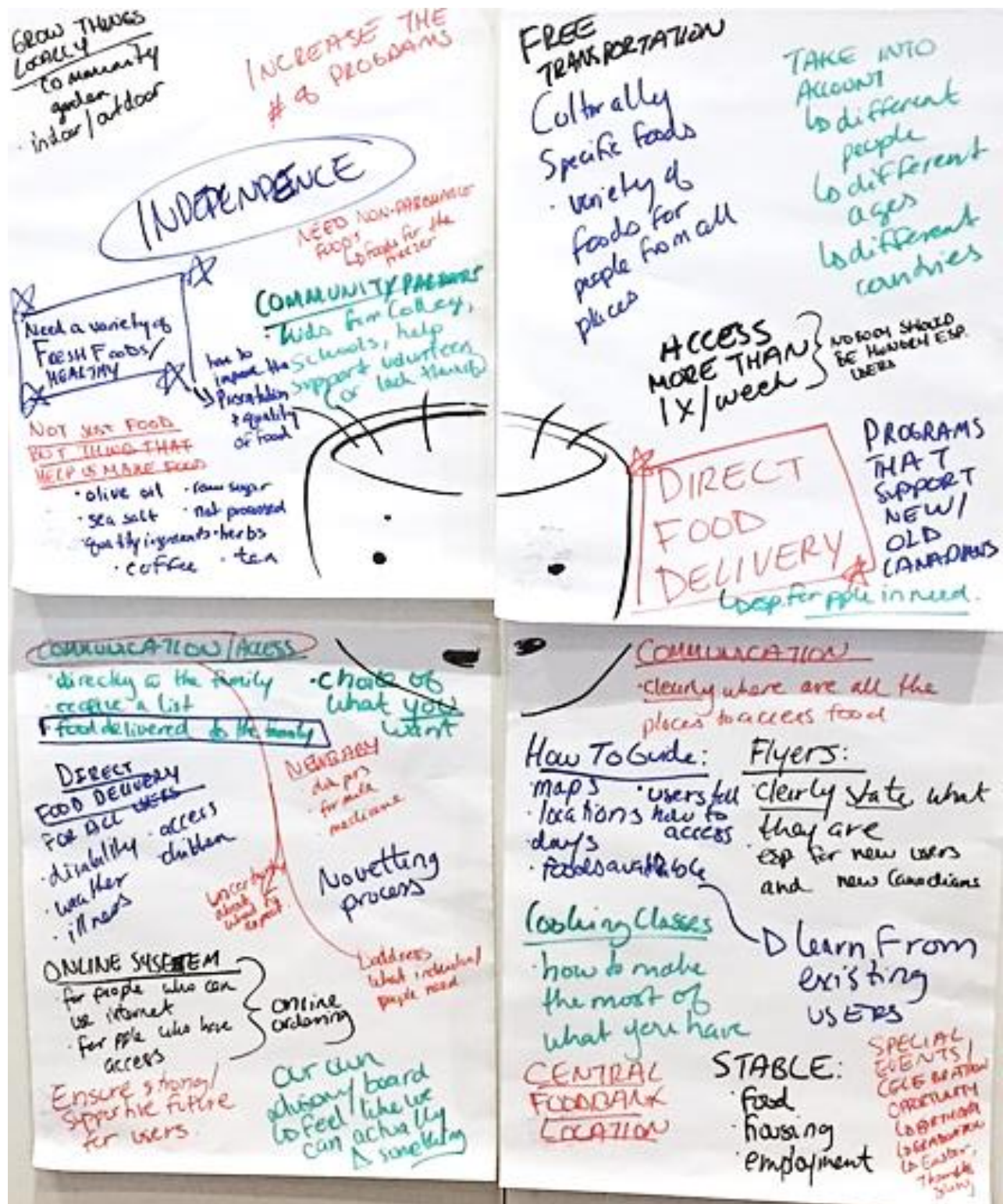
Figure 7: Facilitator Mind Map Table Three

Figure 7.1: Illustrator Mind Map Table Three

Figure 8: Facilitator Mind Map Table Four

MIKE REPLACE WITH SCAN

Figure 8.1: Illustrator Mind Map Table Four

How would *you change* access to food in your community?

We would like to hear about *your experience* accessing food:

- what is and is not working
- changes you would like to see
- what is important to you
- ideas to make it better

You'll receive a $10 grocery gift card as a 'thank you for your time'

Wednesday February 22, 2017

🕐 12:00 noon – 3:00 p.m./12:00-15:00

📍 Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre
2200 Sawgrass Dr
Oakville, ON L6H 7K3

🚌 Accessible by
Oakville Transit Route #19
Stop is right in front.

🚕 Bus fare can be covered. Taxi can be provided.

🍴 Lunch is provided. Vegetarian options are available.

More information? Please contact: **Interested in participating? Please register:**

👤 Donna Slater

📞 (905) 635-1106 ext. 221

🖱 donna@foodforlife.ca

Please register early to guarantee a spot.

**Your input is valuable to us.
We hope you will participate!**

food *for* life   Sheridan   oakville community foundation

Icons from thenounproject.com. Map courtesy of the jellybrothers.com

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Sheridan College, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Informed consent

Title: The Community Ideas Factory (Focus Group Interviews)

Lead Researchers: Dr. Michael McNamara (Michael.mcnamara@sheridancollege.ca) and Dr. Sara Cumming (sara.cumming@sheridancollege.ca)

Name of stakeholder:

I understand that the goals and objectives of the Community Ideas Factory project are to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Oakville's philanthropic sector. I understand that, throughout this project, key stakeholders in Oakville's philanthropic sector are being asked to participate in one, two, or several data collection exercises in Oakville, ON.; namely, Asset-mapping, Focus-Group Interviews, and Creative Problem-Solving Facilitations.

I agree to participate in this Group Interview in Oakville, ON. I understand that my responses will be recorded by the researchers.

I understand that my participation in this exercise is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. I understand that I may withdraw from the study by contacting any one of the lead researchers listed above and that by withdrawing, all my contributions will be stricken from their records. I understand that there is no obligation to answer any question. I also understand that if I choose to withdraw from this study before it is completed, any information I have provided for the drawings cannot be omitted.

I understand that there will be no payment for my participation.

I understand that my personal biographical data (gender, race, age, marital status, income level) will be recorded by the researchers and not disclosed to my fellow session participants. I also understand that my contributions to these sessions may be recorded through note taking and live-scribing for the sole purposes of advancing understanding and knowledge of the research topics and issues. I also understand that my name will be disguised in any/all academic publications.

Participant's signature: Date:

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Sheridan College Research Ethics Board (file#..........., Dr. Kirsten Madsen, Chair of the Research Ethics Board, 905-8459430 ext 9430).

If you have any questions or concerns about this research please contact Dr. Michael McNamara Michael.Mcnamara@sheridancollege.ca or Dr. Sara Cumming Sara.Cumming@sheridancollege.ca

Thank you for your help.

I have fully explained the procedures of this study to the above stakeholder

Researcher's signature:

Appendix C: Background Sheet

Food Security Background Sheet

The purpose of this sheet is to allow us to gather some background knowledge in a confidential manner to help shed light on the use of food banks in the Halton Region. If you are not comfortable answering any question on this sheet please leave it blank.

Please Circle One

Gender: Male   Female   Transgender   Gender Neutral

Age: under 20   20-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   over 60

Relationship Status: single   non-cohabitating relationship   common-law   married   separated   divorced   widowed

Number of Children whom you provide food for:_____

Number of people in your household:_____

Race:_____

Sources of Income (please circle all that apply): work   Ontario Works   ODSP   child support   alimony   child tax benefit   pension   other_____

Average monthly income: under $1000 $1000-$1500 $1501-$2000 $2001-$2500 $2501-$3000 $3001-$3500 $3501-$4000   over $4000

How many times in an average month do you use a food bank/program?

_____

How many locations of food banks do you access? _____

If you would like us to share the results of our research on food security with you, including the results of this session, please leave us your email address, or your mailing address in the event you do not have access to email

References

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