



# MEAL EXCHANGE

**2015-2016 Annual Report**  
Supporting Student Leadership For Just, Sustainable  
and Accessible Food Systems on Campuses Across Canada



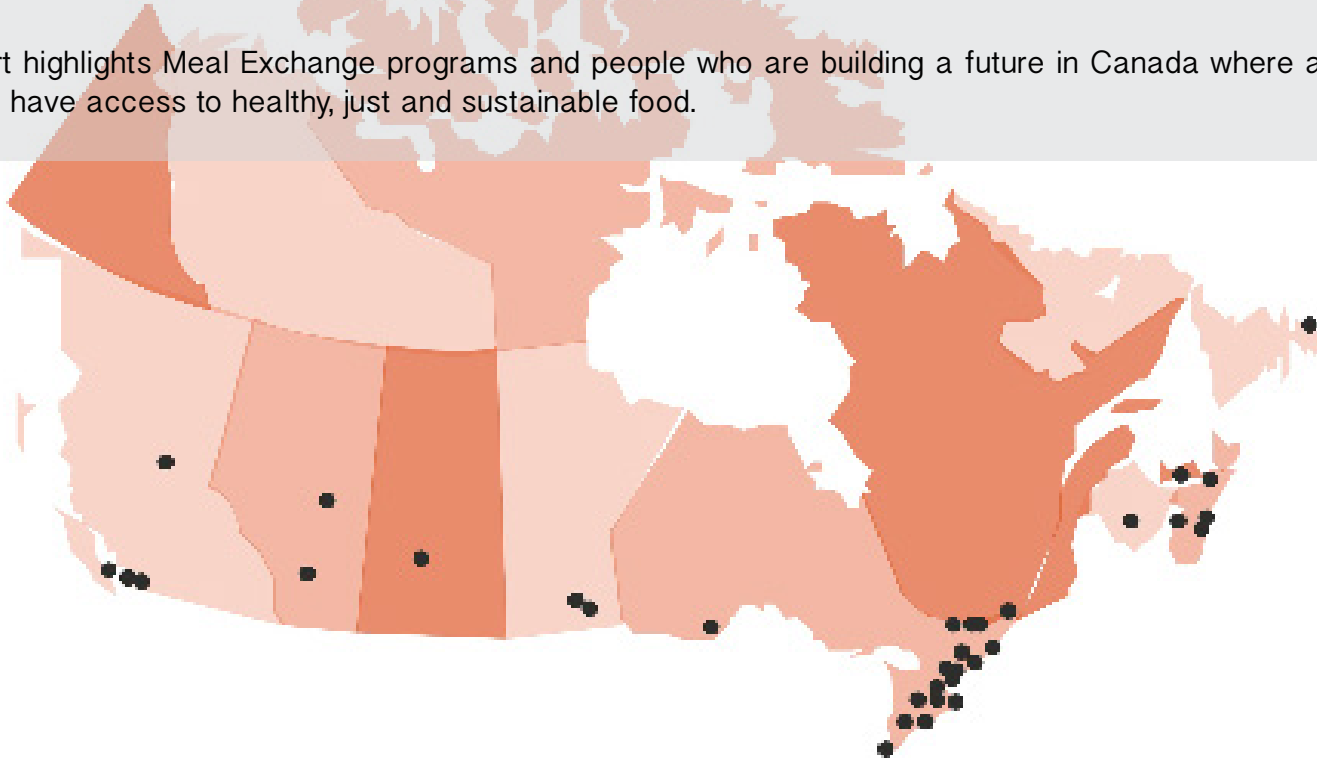
# Overview of Meal Exchange

Meal Exchange empowers youth to take an active role in creating healthy, just and sustainable food systems in Canada.

In 1993 Rahul Raj founded Meal Exchange on a simple principle: students could spring into action to make a difference. Over the past twenty years, over 40,000 students have connected with one hundred Canadian communities and made a difference through Meal Exchange programs.

Meal Exchange works with students across Canada to address some of the most pressing issues of our time. Today, students face the reality of rising hunger, threats of climate change, debt and dietary related illness. Despite these challenges, Meal Exchange believes that students can and must spring into action to develop innovative solutions to address food insecurity and sustainability on their campuses and communities.

This report highlights Meal Exchange programs and people who are building a future in Canada where all individuals have access to healthy, just and sustainable food.





# Trick or Eat 2015

Trick or Eat is Meal Exchange's national day of action. On Halloween, young people come together and actively show that they want to see a difference on the issue of hunger on their campuses and in their communities. Meal Exchange's 2015 Trick or Eat Campaign saw leadership, community collaboration and youth engagement to address food insecurity across Canada.



"My city was recently designated the most food insecure urban centre in the country. I wanted to get involved to help change that, and so started a team for Trick or Eat!" - Participant

## CAMPAIGNS

organized by community groups, post-secondary, high school and workplaces in 10 provinces and 2 territories across Canada

91

## DOLLARS OF FOOD

collected for food agencies across Canada

## UNIQUE VIEWS

of the hashtag #TrickOrEat and 90,000 site visits to Trickoreat.ca in October 2015 and 25 Media Article

100,000

4011

## PARTICIPANTS

between the ages of 6 and 65 visited approximately 55,000 houses across Canada and carried an average of 49lbs of food per person

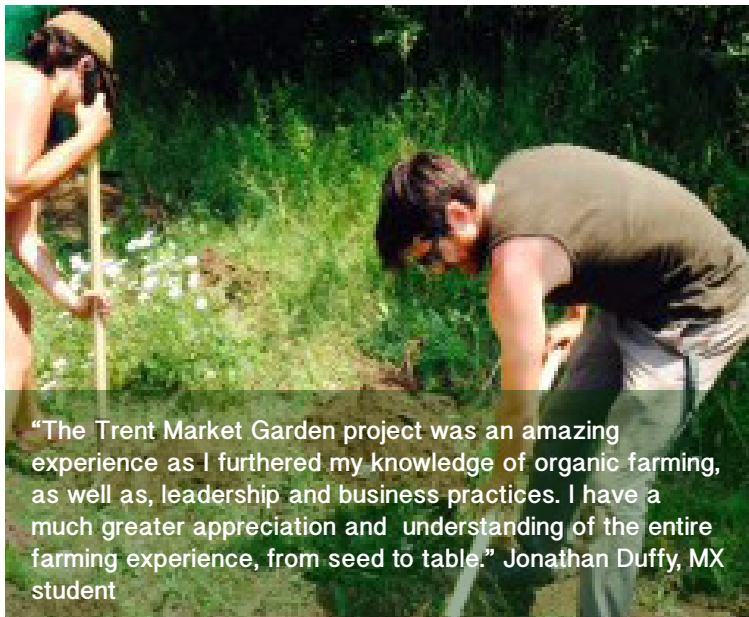
"Trick or Eat helps us to replenish the food stores that keep our students fueled all year. It's a great way to give back to the organization that gives to us all year long." - Campus Organizer



# Campus Garden Network 2015-2016



"It was amazing to see everyone come together and feel at home at the farm; it feels like a community space. Through this project, I feel more prepared to enter into an agricultural job. Ecological farming is now a possibility and I now know that I am capable of becoming a farmer." - Emma Macdonald, MX student



"The Trent Market Garden project was an amazing experience as I furthered my knowledge of organic farming, as well as, leadership and business practices. I have a much greater appreciation and understanding of the entire farming experience, from seed to table." Jonathan Duffy, MX student

The Meal Exchange Campus Garden Network is a platform to foster connections and resources for students across the country and advocate on behalf of an alternative food system that is growing across the country. Meal Exchange supports students coordinating campus gardens and farms to build spaces for education, community collaboration and provide meaningful experiences to build sustainable and just food system alternatives.

## Highlights from the 2015-2016 Garden Network

- Over **30,000 pounds** of student-produced organic food harvested
- Over **100 students** trained on gardening, farming and healthy living
- 100% of students who visited the Waterloo campus garden felt more **connected to nature**
- Creation and expansion of **campus gardens** at Memorial University, Trent University, University of Waterloo, University of New Brunswick, George Brown College and University of Windsor
- Student-run **farmers' market** growth and development at McGill University, Dalhousie University, Mount Saint Vincent University, University of Northern British Columbia
- Opportunities for students to connect with small-scale farmers and innovators in **sustainable food systems**



# Beyond Campus Food Banks 2015-2016

There is a food bank on almost every campus. The BCFB program aims to raise the standards of those food banks so that they promote dignity, health and community, and see how Community Food Centre (CFC) models could also find a place on campuses.

- Raises awareness about the hidden problem of student hunger by linking campus food banks together in a network, and coordinating National Days of Action on Student Poverty
- Shows the real extent of the problem through Student Food Insecurity Reports that address the gap in knowledge about student food insecurity and enable advocacy efforts at the campus, provincial and national levels
- Builds student leadership for change at the campus food bank by providing training and sharing knowledge to transform campus food banks into welcoming spaces that promote dignity, health and community

All along, asking...

**WHY** is campus food insecurity and bank usage



**TUITION**

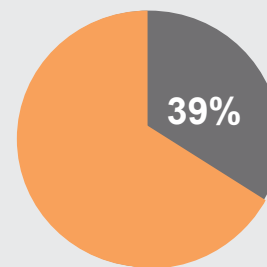


**Employment Opportunities**

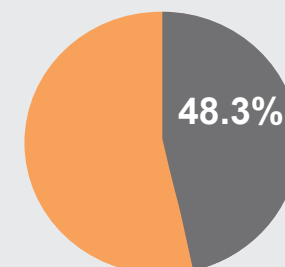


**FOOD INSECURITY**

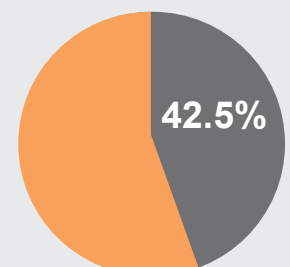
## Meal Exchange Student Food Insecurity Reports on 5 campuses found:



average food insecurity rate across 5 campuses



of food-insecure students said physical health was affected



of food-insecure students said mental health was affected



# What MX students are doing about it

## **DALHOUSIE FOOD CART**

Student-led initiative to bring affordable, equitable, sustainable and healthful options to a campus that has very few options

## **CALGARY KITCHEN**

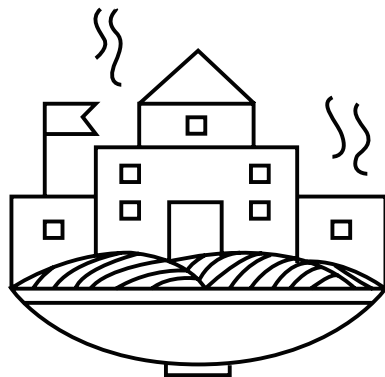
Where students cook food, make friends and live well, together.

## **WINDSOR FARMER'S MARKET**

Showcases local food producers, craftspeople and entrepreneurs while providing access to fresh, healthy food for the public and student community.

## **UNBC FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM**

Collects surplus food from UNBC's new Dining Hall (that would otherwise be thrown out) preserves it, and donates it to St. Vincent de Paul.

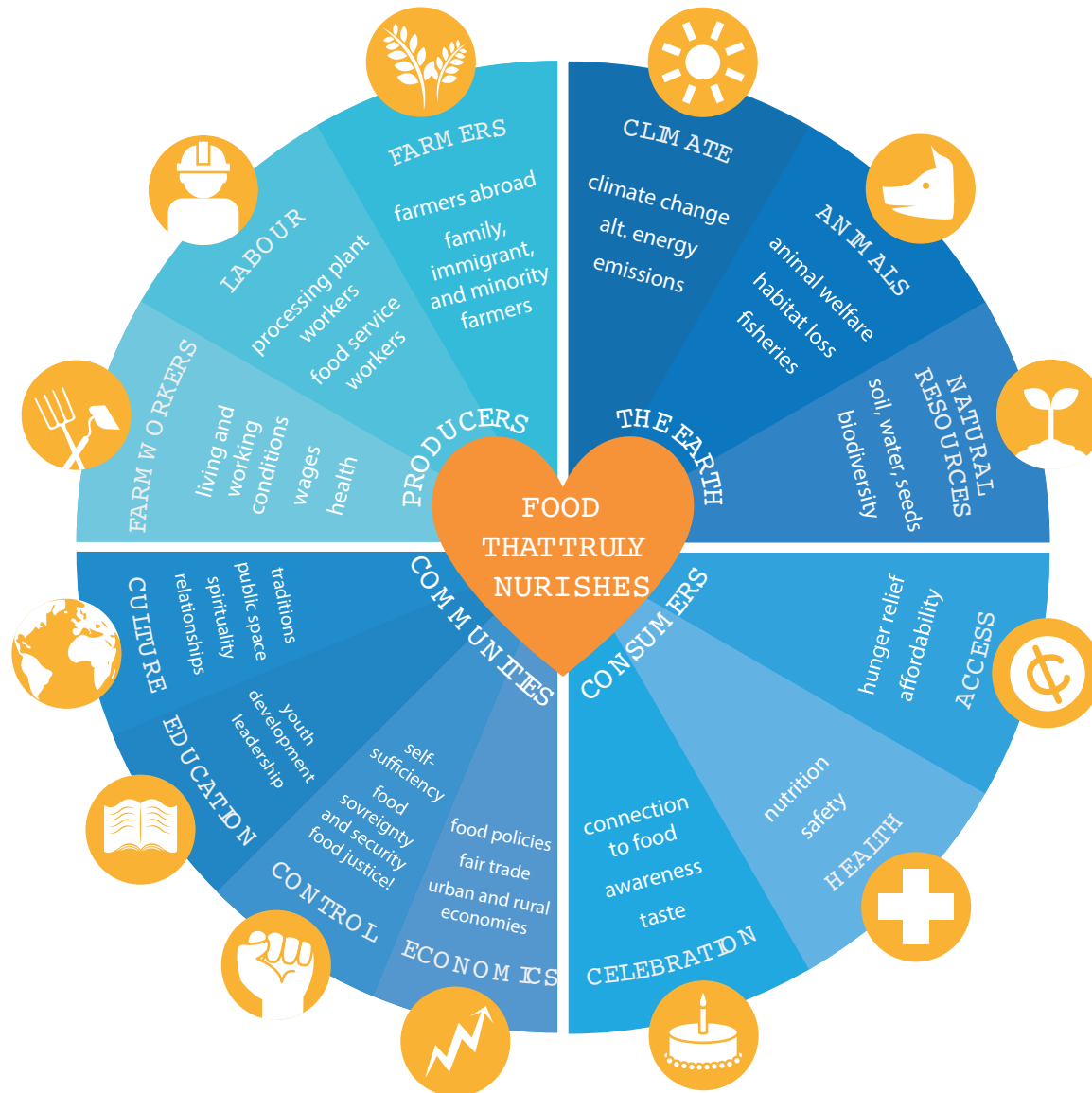


.... and much more!



# Real Food Challenge 2015-2016

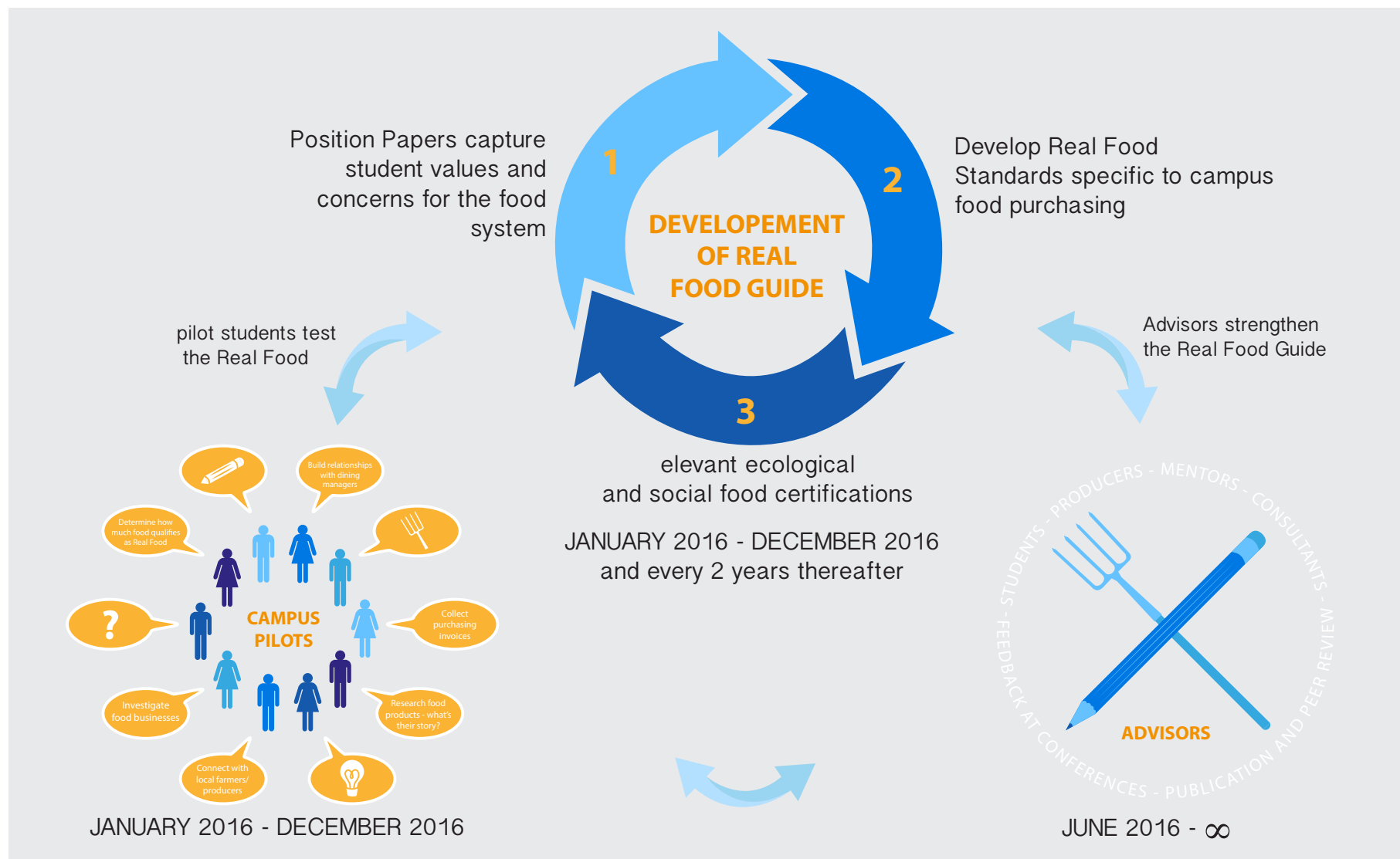
The Real Food Challenge leverages the power of youth and post-secondary campuses to create a sustainable, socially just, humane and healthy food system. It is piloting in British Columbia during Spring and Summer 2016, and will launch across Canada in the Fall. During the pilot phase, students across B.C. are testing the standards, resources and models to strengthen the program.



The MX Network established core values that students want to uphold when defining Real Food. Over 50 students have contributed to position papers on the topics of:

- Ecologically sound food
- Socially just food
- Humane food
- Community-based food
- Healthy food
- Food sovereignty
- Sustainable seafood

RFC receives feedback from a group of advisors from all over Canada, from academics to farmers, as well as from the pilot campuses, in order to refine the Real Food criteria and ensure that it meets best practices.



With audits completed, MX then supports students in challenging their campuses to make the steps towards the goal of reaching 20% Real Food purchases by 2020





# National Student Food Summit 2016

The National Student Food Summit is a 3-day event that engages youth from across Canada on campus-related food issues. By bringing together multiple sectors including government, academics, non-profit organizations, food industry, and more; students are provided with authentic youth leadership development, networking opportunities and a platform to share ideas and strategies.





## SUMMIT OVERVIEW

- 70 student leaders attended
- 30 campuses represented
- 100,000 students reached through MX programming each year
- 26 speakers presented

## WHAT WE LEARNED

**Technical knowledge:** gardening, food banks, aquaponics

**Current Issues:** food justice, indigenous food insecurity, procurement processes, food policy and research

**Knowledge of national MX projects** and the skills to bring these projects to their own campuses

**Soft skills:** public speaking, leadership, communication, critical thinking, project management, strategic thinking

**Networking** with other student leaders passionate about food issues

## NEXT STEPS

- Launch of MX 2020 Goals
- Continual growth of MX Network
- Strengthening of Chapter Model
- National launch of Real Food Challenge
- Trick or Eat Planning

# MEAL EXCHANGE

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