



# Vancouver Coastal Health Community Food Action Initiative

## Evaluation: Summary Version

January 2019



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# Introduction

**This summary report presents the findings of an evaluation of Vancouver Coastal Health's Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI) between 2013 – 2018. A full evaluation report is available from Vancouver Coastal Health.**

## BACKGROUND

The CFAI is a provincial health promotion initiative that was started in 2005 by the BC Ministry of Health, coordinated by the Provincial Health Services Agency (PHSA) and delivered by all health authorities in BC. Provincially, the purpose of the CFAI is to increase food security for all British Columbians, especially those living on low incomes<sup>1</sup>, by focusing on the following goals:

- Increase awareness about food security;
- Increase access to healthy, local food;
- Increase food knowledge and skills;
- Increase community capacity to address local food security; and
- Increase development and use of policy to address local food security.

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) administers the CFAI funding through the Community Investments Team to nine communities in the VCH region: Richmond, Grandview Woodland (Vancouver), Cedar Cottage (Vancouver), North Vancouver, Squamish, Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Bella Coola, and Bella Bella. Annually, the VCH CFAI invests approximately \$200,000 across these communities. The contract for the ninth community of Bella Bella was in transition during the time of the evaluation and therefore this community was not included in this evaluation.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation was to focus on the last five years (2013-2018) building on the 2011 VCH CFAI Evaluation to:

1. Assess the impact of the VCH CFAI on access to local healthy food, community capacity to address food security, development and use of policy that supports community food security, and awareness, knowledge and skills about food security;
2. Identify and articulate the VCH CFAI model and how this model has achieved the objectives of the CFAI;
3. Explore how multi-sectoral collaboration contributes to achieving the VCH CFAI objectives; and
4. Contribute to the development of shared learning and shared measures of CFAI funded programs at the community and regional level and provincially.

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<sup>1</sup> PHSA (2008). Taking Action on Food Security: Overview of the Community Food Action Initiative evaluation

## METHODOLOGY

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This evaluation used a blended summative and developmental evaluation (DE) methodology.

### Summative Evaluation

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Used to evaluate an initiative according to specific goals and outcomes.

### Developmental Evaluation

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Provides feedback on the development of an innovation, often in complex environments. Learning is used to inform adaptation and action.

The evaluation team engaged with VCH staff and regional / provincial partners, coordinators, participants and partners across eight of the nine CFAI communities.

The following methods were used in this evaluation:

- Document analysis of annual progress reports (2013-2018) from all eight communities and review of relevant VCH and provincial reports and planning documents;
- Survey of:
  - » Program participants (141 responses)
  - » CFAI Community Coordinators (7/8 coordinators were available to participate)
  - » Community collaborators and partners (25 responses)
  - » VCH staff and Provincial leadership (7 responses)
- 20 interviews with all 8 community coordinators, VCH staff and provincial staff
- A focus group at the SMART Grants celebration in Vancouver (March 2018)
- A Community Coordinator Evaluation Workshop (10 participants); and
- A VCH Staff Evaluation Workshop (8 participants)







# Overview of the VCH CFAI Model

The VCH CFAI approach is described as a “supported community development model”, consisting of a number of elements that have evolved over the course of twelve years of CFAI.

## KEY FEATURES OF THE VCH CFAI MODEL

**Systemic approach:** there are regular opportunities for linkages from the community initiatives to the VCH Regional Food Security Committee and from the Regional Food Security Committee to the Provincial Health Authority Food Security Committee and back again. This has been important to inform provincial priorities as well as sharing provincial and regional opportunities with communities.

**Stable funding over long term:** for over 10 years there has been consistent and stable funding to communities allowing them to build relationships, trust and momentum; this long-term funding has also been critical to advance food policy. Funding goes directly to a community agency, which determines how best to allocate funds to support food security within an upstream health promotion approach.

**Community Coordinators:** to date, all communities have hired a Community Coordinator (predominantly part-time). The Community Coordinator is a critical component of the VCH CFAI model as they are the primary support for the community food network and liaison with funders, partners, volunteers and participants.

**Community-driven and owned:** communities have flexibility to identify their own priorities and create their own strategies, thereby building ownership and empowerment to use funds in ways that are community determined and driven. Each community completes an annual year-end report and submits an updated logic model for the following year.

## VCH Capacity building supports:

Beyond funding, the VCH CFAI model offers other supports such as:

- Each community has the support of the local community dietitian who brings content expertise and sharing from other communities;
- The Community Investments Team provides ongoing program planning, monitoring and reporting guidance; and
- Each community is supported with professional development and organizational capacity building opportunities.

## Provincial Capacity Building supports:

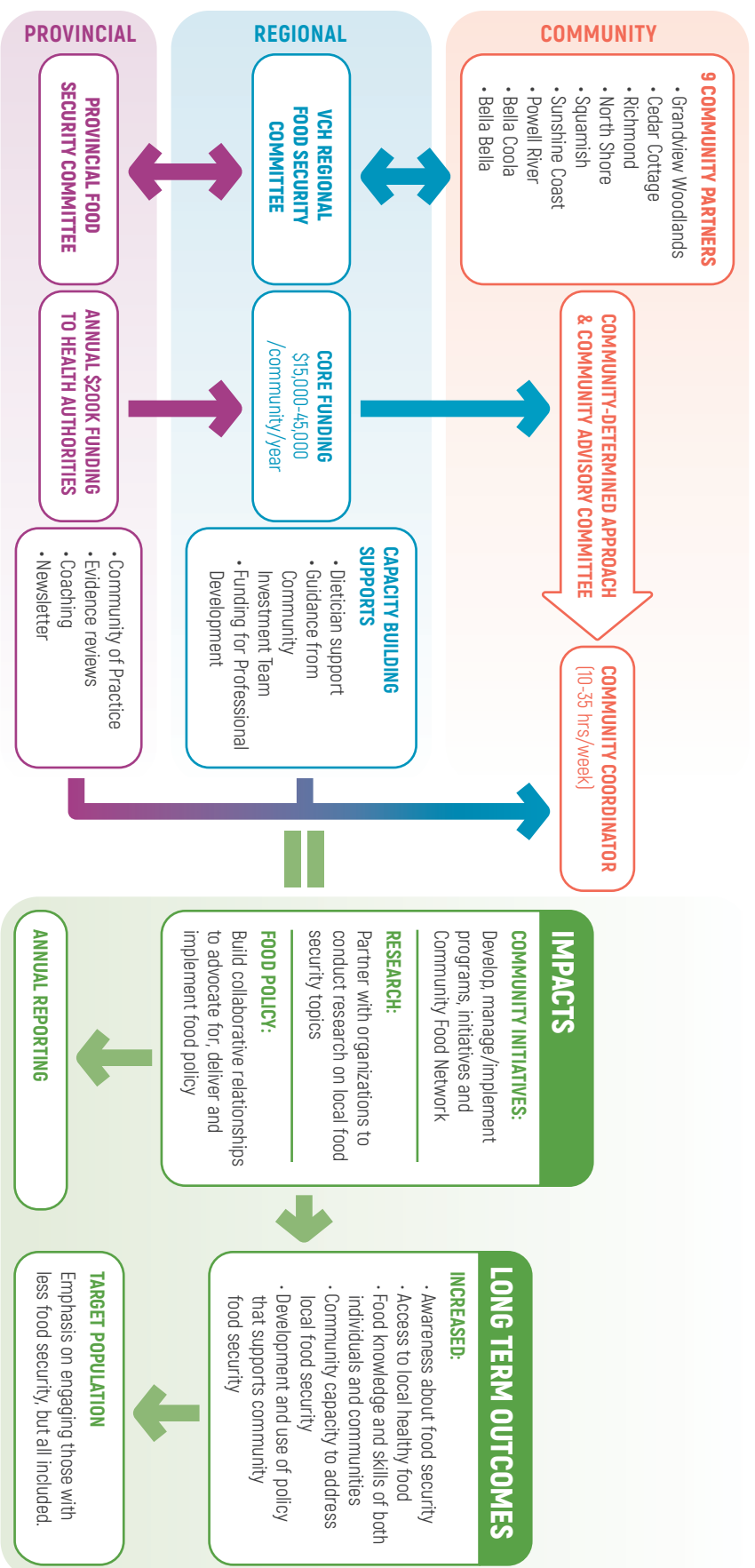
- PHSA has produced a number of literature reviews and information on best practices to support the work of the communities;
- The PHSA's Food Security Portal and the Gleaner Newsletter provide access to evidence-based research and stories of change;
- A provincial community of practice (COP) supports the local government policy work through content expertise and facilitation; and
- The facilitators of the CoP have provided two rounds of 4-8 hours of tailored coaching to some CFAI communities.

**Equity:** The focus of the food security work is on vulnerable populations although all are welcome to participate.

**Community Food Security:** CFAI work is about finding the health promoting benefits of food engagement rather than addressing household food insecurity. Addressing food insecurity is an income issue and needs to be addressed through poverty reduction.



# VCH CFAI Supported Community Development Model







# Summary of Findings and Impact

This evaluation has focused on exploring and summarizing six key findings that have relevance for the CFAI regionally and are evident across all of the communities.

- An Equity Lens in CFAI
- Food Access
- Food Security Awareness, Knowledge and Skills
- Food Policy
- Community Capacity and Social Connections
- Collaboration and Partnerships

# VCH CFAI Regional Impact

From 2013-2018, the Vancouver Coastal Health Community Food Action Initiative program resulted in the following impacts across 8 communities:



**Nearly \$1 Million** in funds leveraged (1:1 ratio of funds invested/leveraged.)<sup>1</sup>

## COMMUNITY IMPACT



**76**  
new community gardens  
+ more plots in existing gardens



**> 51,500**  
volunteer hours (2,381 volunteer  
hours from vulnerable populations)



**489**  
capacity building workshops



**568**  
new community partnerships<sup>2</sup>



**> 29,500**  
community participants



**> 121**  
community collaborations<sup>3</sup>

## RESEARCH IMPACT



**14** research initiatives

## FOOD POLICY IMPACT



**8/8**  
communities developed, planned  
or implemented **food policies**



**5/8**  
communities developed/  
implemented **food charters**



**7/8**  
communities embedded food security  
into **municipal policies** (i.e. Urban Agriculture,  
Sustainability, etc.)



**2/8**  
addressed food security  
in **Provincial Poverty  
Reduction** efforts

<sup>1</sup> Does not include in-kind

<sup>2</sup> Based on total number of partners at all levels of collaboration

<sup>3</sup> Based on collaborations defined on collaboration spectrum



AN EQUITY LENS IN CFAI

Many communities aim to decrease barriers and increase opportunities to enable access to food, programming, and resources for specific populations (see Figure 1). An equity lens was reflected in *how* communities engage with vulnerable populations. Several communities indicated that programs were designed to not only provide access to food, but also to create safe, inclusive, and dignified interactions as well as opportunities to have an empowered connection with the community. Many coordinators also described how consistent long-term CFAI funding has allowed for trust and long-term relationships to develop with specific populations.



HOW SUCCESSFUL HAS YOUR CFAI PROGRAM BEEN IN ENGAGING THE FOLLOWING POPULATIONS?

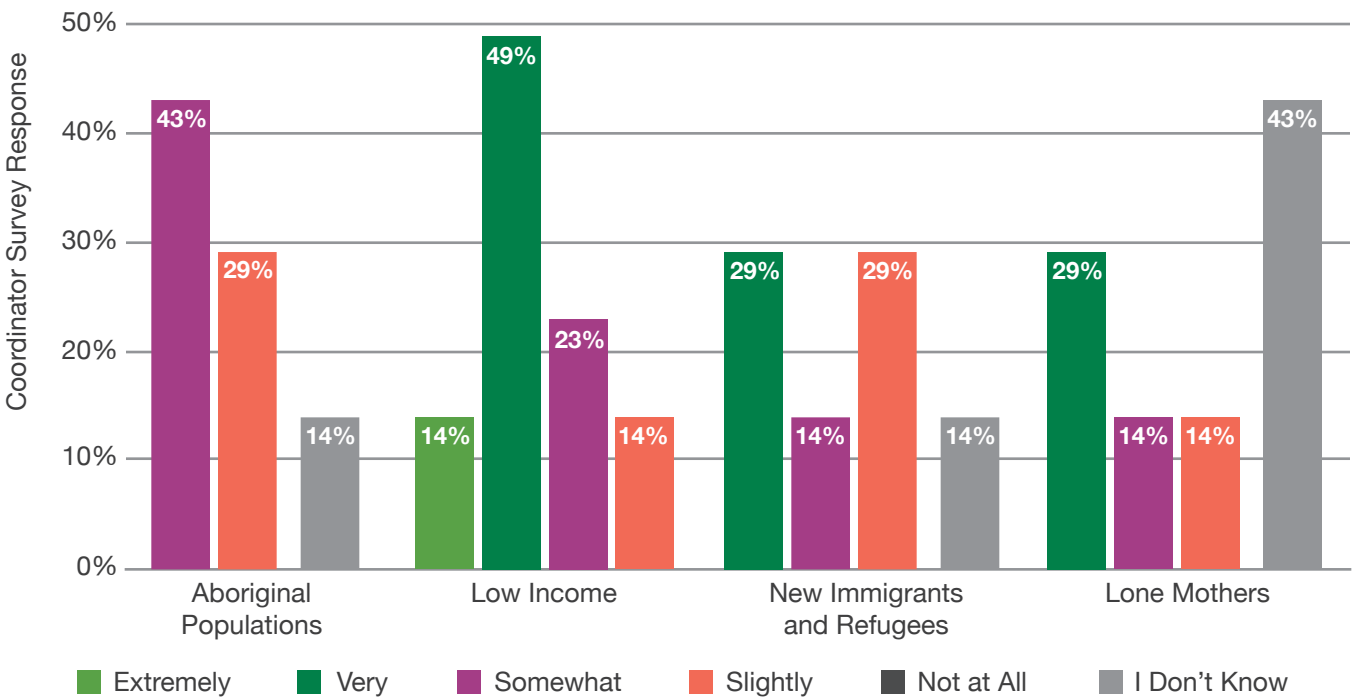


Figure 1. Coordinator perception of success in engaging target populations (Coordinator Survey)

*“It’s about giving opportunities to vulnerable people to step up and have an empowered connection with us—becoming a mentor, skill sharing, volunteering (i.e. not just taking from community garden).”*

(Community Coordinator)

### **Indigenous Populations & Reconciliation**

Six of seven coordinators reported their CFAI programs have relationships with indigenous groups and 71% of coordinators reported prioritizing indigenous populations in their food security work. Taking a reconciliation lens to their food programming is reflected in awareness of indigenous history and food systems, critically reflecting on what decolonization means (often with the support of their organization), and creating opportunities for indigenous leadership in their programs and organizations.

*“I think that our [CFAI] programs take a decolonial lens that is highly influenced by reconciliation but goes beyond it; that means we acknowledge our territories and practices, encourage Indigenous leadership and specifically reach out to these populations for our program committee and board.”*

(Coordinator Interview)

### **FOOD ACCESS**

There are a number of ways CFAI communities are increasing access to food, including food distribution programs (i.e. good food box), food harvesting programs (i.e. gleaning and fruit tree initiatives), food production (farming and community gardens) and emergency food services (see Figure 2). 82% of participants are confident that they know more about accessing local food since they first became involved in this food security program.

Gardens are the most common type of activity that communities have undertaken to increase access to food. 77% of respondents in the participants survey have participated in a community garden.

Furthermore, since 2013 there have been a total of 76 new community gardens (and many more plots in existing gardens) across the nine communities.

The other most common types of food access activities are food harvesting—such as fruit and vegetable gleaning programs—and food distribution programs such as co-operative buying programs, and salvaging food from the waste stream for redistribution.

72% of coordinators felt that their CFAI programming helped to increase the amount of food distributed in the community and 100% felt that their programs have increased the amount of food harvested locally. For example, Bella Coola harvested 5302 lbs of fruit and vegetables through their gleaning program and distributed to elders, families with young children, transition houses, the food bank and feasts.

**82% OF PARTICIPANTS ARE  
CONFIDENT THAT THEY KNOW MORE  
ABOUT ACCESSING LOCAL FOOD  
SINCE THEY FIRST BECAME INVOLVED  
IN THIS FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM.**



## TYPES OF FOOD ACCESS ACTIVITIES IN CFAI COMMUNITIES

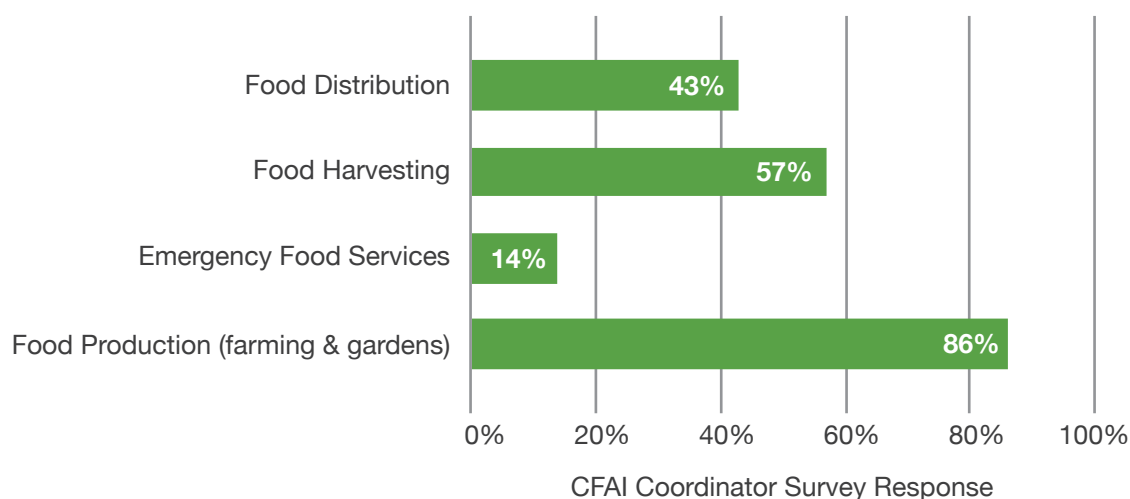


Figure 2. Types of food access activities in CFAI communities (Coordinator Survey)

### FOOD SECURITY AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Communities have been raising awareness and building knowledge and skills about food security in a variety of ways such as: workshops (i.e. edible garden workshop and tour, indigenous plant walk, food skills, food literacy), community kitchens, community events and celebrations, developing and distributing materials (i.e. local food guide), and increasing outreach and promotion through communication channels (i.e. newsletters and social media).

81% of participant survey respondents are confident that they make healthier food choices since their involvement in this food security program and 79% are confident they know more about how to prepare healthy food. Furthermore, 83% of participant survey respondents reported increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and over half (59%) of participants responded that CFAI has increased their ability to shop for and prepare nutritious, affordable and healthy food.

*“The program was very good for me. It helps me manage cooking and choosing good food choices.” (Participant Survey)*

Participants also reported a moderate to major impact of CFAI on their knowledge of food security. Specifically,

- 70% reported increasing their knowledge of food systems (including production, harvesting, distribution, consumption and waste);
- 62% reported increasing their general knowledge of food security; and
- 53% reported increasing knowledge of nutritious, affordable and healthy food.

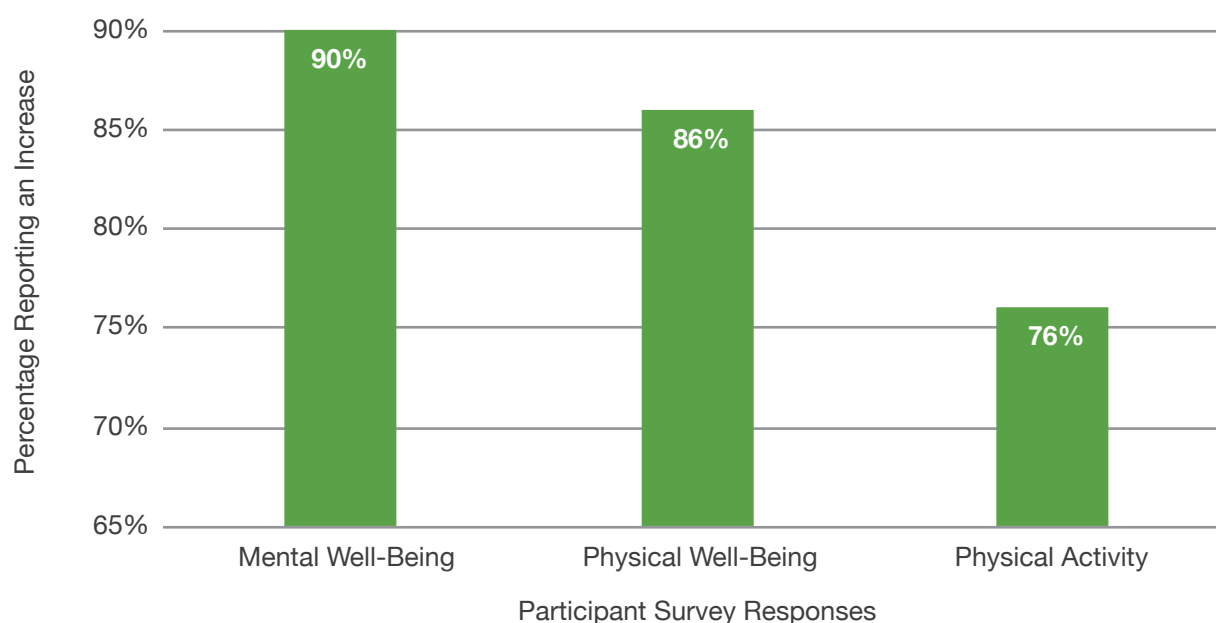
Moreover, as a result of their involvement in the program, respondents to the participant survey reported increased mental well-being, physical well-being, and physical activity (see Figure 3).





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## PARTICIPANTS REPORTING INCREASE IN MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATION IN CFAI



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Figure 3. Participants reporting increase in mental and physical well-being as a result of participation in CFAI (Participant Survey)

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### FOOD POLICY

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Over the last five years there has been a significant focus (building on VCH's Healthy Communities Initiative), to partner with local governments to influence local food policy across VCH CFAI communities. For many of these communities, the VCH CFAI program is the sole source of funding that encourages food policy and food systems efforts.

Given the CFAI program has been underway in these nine communities for over a decade, there is strong evidence that as the programs have become more established (i.e. stronger networks, partnerships, skills and knowledge base) and there is increased readiness in the larger communities to implement and develop food policy/systems change work.

All eight CFAI communities participating in the evaluation have reported working on some level

of food policy over the last five years. From 2013- 2018,

- six of the eight communities have drafted or completed a food charter in their community;
- six communities are establishing or have established food policy councils; and
- four communities have been involved in regional or provincial level food policy efforts.

There is a strong perception that the local policy work over the last five years has had a significant impact in the food system. Nearly all coordinators strongly agreed or agreed that the CFAI work in the community has resulted in an increase in food policy, integration of food security within other policies and plans (i.e. OCP's, sustainability plans, waste reduction plans, etc.) and an increase in engagement of civil society groups and community members becoming involved in food policy.



Furthermore, respondents to the Participant Survey indicated that the CFAI program has had an impact on their interest, capacity, and involvement in community food policy. As a result of their participation in the CFAI,

- 74% strongly agreed or agreed that they have increased in their personal interest in food policy; and
- 72% strongly agreed or agreed that they increased their confidence to be a champion for healthy food.

While originally CFAI started out with more of a focus on community gardens or kitchens, increasingly the policy efforts and other system change work has ramped up and become more of a focus. For the communities where food policy is well developed (i.e. Vancouver, Squamish, Richmond) they are working more on food policy implementation and some have begun to focus more on food policy provincially (i.e. BC Poverty Reduction Plan). These communities are also turning their attention to taking more of a systems lens in their food security policy work, looking further upstream to address root causes.

*“As food security work has progressed, there seems to be more conversations focused on changing the system and re-designing food policies, with more groups playing an active role in making that happen”.*

(Leadership Survey)

## COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

This evaluation has looked at a number of indicators of community capacity such as: social connectedness, community leadership, community networks, volunteerism, mentorship, and resources (coordinator time and funding).

This evaluation has found that the CFAI program has had a significant impact on community capacity over the last five years. Overall, there are more diverse demographic groups engaged in food security work locally (i.e. youth, seniors, new immigrants), there are more diverse sectors involved in food security work (i.e. school boards, civic organizations, agricultural groups, food suppliers), and there is the perception of strengthened community leadership for food security.

### ACROSS ALL EIGHT COMMUNITIES BETWEEN 2013-2018:

- OVER 2100 VOLUNTEERS WERE TRAINED;
- VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED OVER **51,500 VOLUNTEER HOURS** WITH OVER 2,300 OF THESE HOURS FROM VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.



**Social Connections**

There is strong evidence that CFAI programming, such as community gardens, workshops, and events are enabling social connections. Many participants indicated that their participation in the CFAI program has resulted in increased sense of belonging, connection and relationships (see Figure 4).

Throughout this evaluation, coordinators described how social connection is often at the centre of their CFAI programming and very intentionally included in the design of the activities to support the “whole person’s well-being”.



*“It’s a really social space; they might not even buy food, but they hang out with neighbours.”*  
(Coordinator Interview)

**PARTICIPATION IN THE CFAI HAS RESULTED IN:**

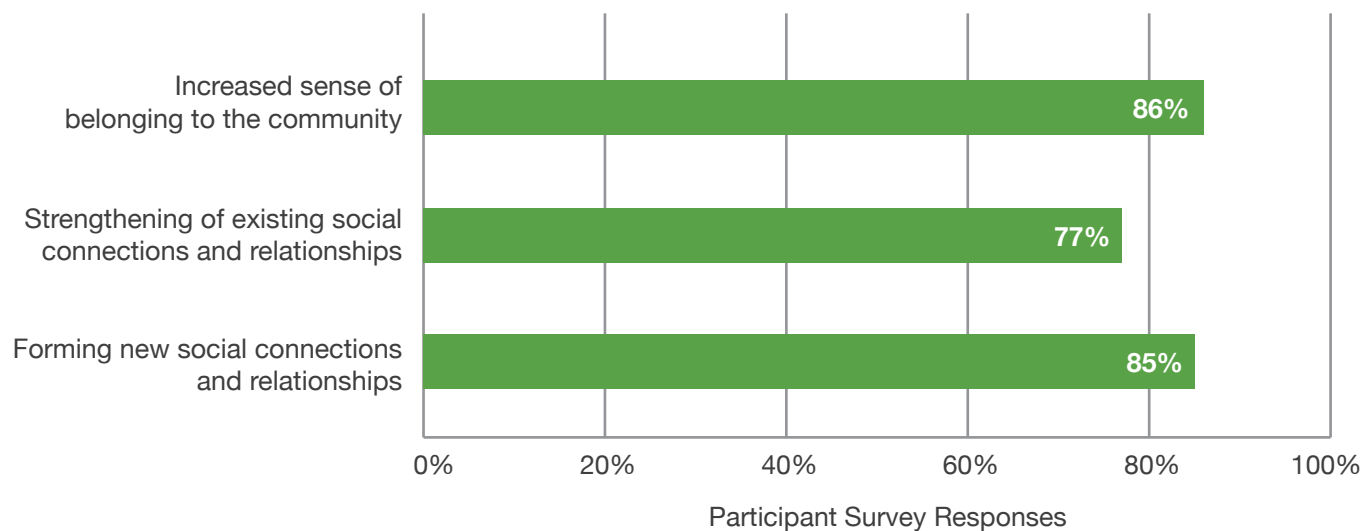


Figure 4. Participant social connection outcomes from participation in the CFAI program (Participant Survey)



# Resources

VCH CFAI funding ranges between \$15,000 - \$45,000 per community per year (depending on the size of the community). There is no question that the consistent core funds from the CFAI program to the same communities over time has been successful in leveraging more financial capacity for food security work. Between 2013-2018, the eight communities collectively leveraged over \$975,000 in funds, representing an approximate 1:1 ratio of CFAI money invested to CFAI funds leveraged.

**BETWEEN 2013-2018, THE EIGHT COMMUNITIES COLLECTIVELY LEVERAGED OVER \$975,000 IN FUNDS.**

# COLLABORATION

Over the last five years there has been significant progress in the number of collaborative partnerships in CFAI communities, but also in the depth of these relationships. As communities have oriented their work towards food policy and understanding / addressing food systems, working across sectors has become increasingly critical. The top sectors that communities have been prioritizing collaboration with include local government, school districts and non-profit organizations.

Since 2013 there has been a significant shift in both the number of collaborative relationships overall, but also the level of collaboration in VCH CFAI funded communities. Trends indicate that the most significant change is in the number of relationships described as cooperative and collaborative (as opposed to a network relationship). This indicates that collaborations are moving beyond networking and information sharing towards taking collaborative action together (see Figure 5).

## TOTAL NUMBER AND LEVEL OF COLLABORATIONS BY COMMUNITY (2013-2018)

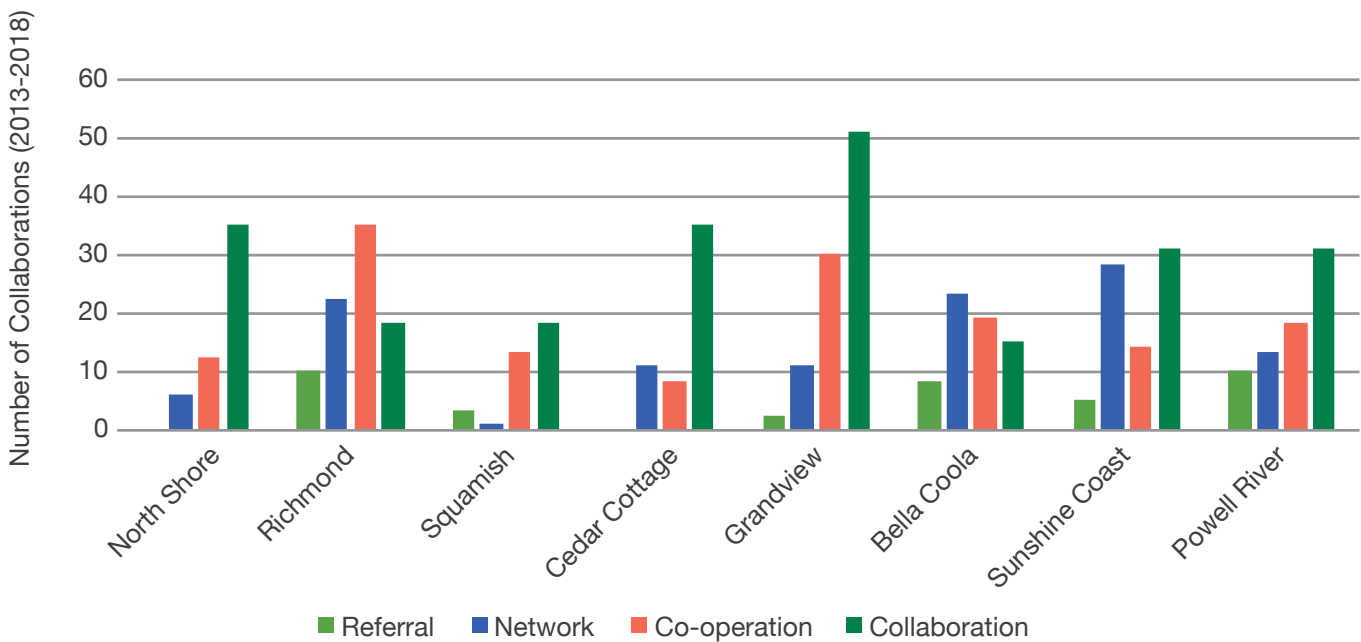


Figure 5. Total number and level of collaborative relationships by community, 2013-2018 (Community Reports)





# Summary of Themes for Discussion

There were four themes that stood out in this evaluation, appeared in all methods of data collection (surveys, interviews, workshops), and have implications for where to focus attention for VCH CFAI in the future.





## THEME 1:

### Articulating the VCH CFAI Framework and Supports

Currently, there is a VCH CFAI Model which articulates the supports offered and desired long-term outcomes; however, the model could be more precise in describing the short-to-medium term outcomes, how it supports and balances community self-determination, and the specific capacity building priorities it will pursue in the coming years.

1.1 Evolution of the CFAI Framework	Given the development of the field of food security in BC over the last 10 years and changes within VCH, it seems timely to more precisely define what the VCH CFAI model and approach is, the short-to-medium term outcomes it is trying to achieve relative to other initiatives, and how it will achieve these outcomes through targeted supports and structures.
1.2 Community Self-Determination	There is an inherent tension between each community setting their own priorities and the desire for, (a) communities to have greater guidance on how to have more impact (for example, what to focus on or let go of), and (b) the desire for VCH to generate collective impact across the region towards strategic outcomes.
1.3 Coaching, Mentorship & Community of Practice	The vast majority of coordinators indicated that continuing to participate in a food security / food policy <u>community of practice</u> would be highly valued. Moreover, there is the opportunity for community coordinators to offer peer mentorship and coaching to each other.
1.4 Learning and Capacity Building Supports	Coordinators expressed interest in learning and capacity building opportunities that are more focused on the content of food security, food systems, and food policy as well as continuing to participate in provincial capacity building initiatives.



## THEME 2:

### Taking a Systems Approach to Food Policy

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As many communities have made significant progress on food policy work, questions have emerged in relation to scope (which policies to focus on), scale (local, regional, provincial, federal) and community/organization/coordinator readiness.

2.1 Tension Between Food Insecurity and Community Food Security	For many in this evaluation there is a sense that the CFAI work needs to take a more intentional systems approach to address the root causes of food insecurity, including income. While most coordinators are using a health equity lens to address community food security, few are explicitly addressing poverty reduction or income through their food policy work.
2.2 Addressing Food Policy Across Scales	Once communities have adopted local food policies (as many of the VCH CFAI communities have) there is the opportunity for the local CFAI work to leverage their networks and partnerships to 'scale up' their policy efforts to address food security at other scales (i.e. regional, provincial, and federal).
2.3 Readiness to Address Food Policy	As communities have transitioned to do more food policy work, many have noticed that the capacities (knowledge, skills and mindsets) required to do food policy work are distinct from those required to develop and coordinate food access or literacy programs and capacity building is required.





## THEME 3:

### Building Organizational / Coordinator Capacity

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While the core funding of the CFAI is highly valued, several Community Coordinators do not have adequate time or resources to fulfill their roles; communities are grappling with what is highest priority given their limited time and budgets.

3.1 Importance of Core Funds	The consistency of CFAI funds supports communities to retain staff, which is important for maintaining relationships and trust in the communities and focus on policy efforts. However, many coordinators and partners reported challenges in the fact that the amount of CFAI funding to the community has not changed in 10 years.
3.2 Coordinators Vulnerable to Burnout	While many communities have been able to achieve significant impacts with limited resources, there is strong evidence that coordinators are feeling overworked and vulnerable to burnout. The biggest risk is high turnover of coordinators, jeopardizing trust and relationships in the community.
3.3 Need to Focus on Strategic Impact	With such limited time and resources, the coordinators and their host organizations need to be strategic in what strategies and outcomes they want to pursue. Often this requires trade-offs—they simply cannot do it all. Several communities have decided to focus their efforts on going upstream to build capacity for addressing food policy and let go of coordinating food programming by handing it off to other community groups.



## THEME 4:

### Supporting Learning, Evaluation and Measurement

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While VCH has been flexible in supporting communities to adapt annual reporting to their own context, many communities have questions about the efficacy of the outcomes measurement framework and the connection between monitoring of data, reporting and learning.

4.1 Outcomes Measurement Framework and Data Collection	Across communities, there is a sense that the annual progress report is not capturing the most meaningful impacts of the program and has not evolved as the nature of the CFAI work has changed towards addressing food policy, and working more with food systems.
4.2 Clear Expectations and Support Around Measurement and Reporting	One of the main areas that communities would like support with is gaining clarity on expectations related to evaluation data and tools. There is a desire for a clear reporting process and the need for additional support to determine what measures are most important and meaningful to capture.
4.3 Telling the Story of CFAI	VCH collects data annually from all CFAI communities and uses this to track the impact of the program. However, communities wonder how this data could be used to make sense of the progress that is being made on food security in each community and in the region.
4.4 Learning as Action	Working on community food security is complex and coordinators spoke about the desire to be learning with and from each other's experiences, challenges and successes. Looking ahead, how might the VCH CFAI adopt an evaluation approach that embeds and facilitates learning more iteratively into the community work?









# Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggestions for how VCH can respond to the themes that emerged in this evaluation and continue to strengthen the CFAI in the future.



## Theme 1: Articulating the VCH CFAI Model and Supports

Theme	Recommendation	Actions / Considerations
1.1 Evolution of the VCH CFAI Model 1.2 Community Self-Determination	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage key VCH staff and Community Coordinators in a CFAI planning session to collectively discuss the <b>VCH CFAI model (i.e. theory of change)</b> and opportunities to strengthen it in the future.</li> <li>2. Offer clarity and guidance on <i>what short-medium term outcomes</i> the VCH CFAI is trying to achieve regionally and continue to support communities to self-determine <i>how</i> to achieve these outcomes locally.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beyond the five high level long-term outcomes of CFAI, become more nuanced in naming the specific short-medium term outcomes the VCH CFAI is striving to achieve.</li> <li>• In light of the evaluation findings, explore how the model may evolve to specifically support capacity building to address food systems, food policy, and multi-sector collaboration;</li> <li>• Articulate how the model includes outcomes relating to social connectedness and mental health and well-being.</li> <li>• Explore how more explicit connections can be made between the VCH 'Healthy Communities' program and CFAI. What synergies and opportunities exist here?</li> <li>• Communicate the VCH CFAI Model to relevant VCH staff, community coordinators, and partners (provincially, regionally and locally).</li> </ul>
1.3 Coaching, Mentorship & Community of Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Explore opportunities to collaborate with PHSA and other health authorities to continue to support the provincial food security <b>community of practice</b> and look for opportunities to re-introduce the <b>coaching program</b>.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate opportunities to collaboratively develop or support provincial (virtual) sharing and learning strategies on food policy and food systems (specifically) that could benefit CFAI communities across the province.</li> </ul>

## Theme 2: Taking a Systems Approach to Food Policy

Theme	Recommendation	Actions / Considerations
2.1 Tension between Food Insecurity and Community Food Security	4. Articulate how the VCH CFAI can acknowledge the interconnections between and address both <b>community food security</b> and <b>household food insecurity</b> through local / regional policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the spectrum of possible policy areas that communities may support in building capacity to increase community food security and/or reducing poverty to decrease household food insecurity.</li> <li>Support communities to understand how food security and food insecurity show up in local government policies. For example, how are food related interests addressed within policy on housing, poverty reduction, education, and/or early childhood development?</li> <li>Make more explicit linkages between food policy work and the healthy communities policy efforts that VCH is supporting in communities.</li> </ul>
2.2 Addressing Food Policy Across Scales	5. Identify and describe the potential of VCH CFAI and Community Coordinators to <b>address food policy across scales</b> (i.e. local, regional, provincial and national).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the 'next level' of food policy work that communities can address once local food policies have been adopted and what supports may be needed to 'scale up' policy work.</li> <li>Communicate how the local CFAI food policy work aligns with the VCH regional provincial and national food security policy work.</li> </ul>



Theme	Recommendation	Actions / Considerations
2.3 Readiness to Address Food Policy	6. Provide additional <b>resources and supports</b> to rural communities to support food policy efforts with local governments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support rural community coordinators to participate in the BC Food Security Gateway Community of Practice (provide additional resources to enable this where needed).</li> <li>• Explore enhanced support for food policy efforts from Population Health Dietitians or VCH Healthy Communities staff, specifically to help navigate and enable local government, community and coordinator readiness to address food policy in rural communities.</li> <li>• Consider peer support mechanisms for sharing and learning about food policy between communities in the VCH CFAI. How can seasoned coordinators use their skillsets to support others?</li> </ul>

## Theme 3: Building Organizational and Coordinator Capacity

Theme	Recommendation	Actions / Considerations
3.2 Coordinators Vulnerable to Burnout	7. Prioritize seeking <b>additional funding</b> to ensure each coordinator position is funded at minimum 20 hrs/week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the budget required to enable all Community Coordinator positions to be at minimum a 0.5 FTE;</li> <li>Identify and promote other funding opportunities that Community Coordinators may apply to;</li> <li>Advocate to the Province for additional funds to support CFAI;</li> <li>Consider support for succession planning to prevent loss of intellectual and social capital during coordinator transitions.</li> </ul>
3.3 Need to Focus on Strategic Impact	8. Develop, promote or connect coordinators to capacity building <b>opportunities, resources or supports around strategic impact</b> , developing a theory of change, or strategic planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how to assess the 'fit' of the host organization for the strategic direction of the local food security work.</li> <li>Given limited coordinator time and resources, clarify what type of work needs to be enabled and what needs to be let go. This could be determined through coaching, evidence reviews and determining where each community is having the biggest strategic impact.</li> <li>Intentionally connect communities with each other and prioritize capacity building supports that can enable coordinators to focus on achieving strategic impact (i.e. professional development on theory of change, outcomes mapping, etc.).</li> </ul>



## Theme 4: Supporting Learning, Evaluation and Measurement

Theme	Recommendation	Actions / Considerations
<p>4.1 Outcomes Measurement Framework and Data Collection</p> <p>4.2 Clear Expectations &amp; Support around Measurement &amp; Reporting</p>	<p>9. Refine the CFAI Outcomes Measurement Framework to provide a basis of <b>common shared measures</b>, drawing on the results of the forthcoming BC Centre for Disease Control food security indicators research (2019)</p> <p>10. Articulate the important impacts that CFAI is having on <b>social connectedness and mental health and well-being</b> and continue to develop methods for communities to report on this.</p> <p>11. Explore brokering <b>partnerships with academic institutions</b> to support CFAI research and evaluation needs in communities and regionally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine the BCCDC food security indicators and adapt/refine as needed for the CFAI context;</li> <li>• Explore how other food security funding agencies are measuring impact on food security;</li> <li>• Investigate what types of activities are common across all CFAI communities, and define a set of shared measures, specifically for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food policy</li> <li>- Food access</li> <li>- Food awareness, knowledge, and skills</li> <li>- Community capacity building</li> <li>- Collaboration</li> <li>- Mental wellbeing</li> <li>- Physical wellbeing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide training on how the coordinators are to engage with the OMF, shared measures, and reporting, clarifying the extent they have agency to adapt to their own context.</li> <li>• Explore how other funders (e.g. the Vancouver Foundation) and organizations interested in social connectedness are measuring impact in this area;</li> <li>• Include required measures on social connectedness in the refined OMF*.</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities to partner with universities and colleges such as the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at Kwantlen Polytechnic University or the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at UBC to bring capacity and rigour to community research projects and support evaluation of impact.</li> <li>• Form partnerships with research institutions that are studying the link between social connectedness, health and well-being.</li> </ul>

\* Currently there are some measures in the OMF however they are optional.

Theme	Recommendation	Actions / Considerations
4.3 Telling the Story of CFAI	12. Utilize data from annual reporting to tell <b>the story</b> of the CFAI across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share more community stories for the Gleaner Newsletter to promote VCH CFAI and its impacts to partners and the public. Encourage community partners to do the same.</li> <li>• Explore how other mediums such as infographics or video be used to share the program results.</li> </ul>
4.4 Learning as Action	13. Adopt an evaluation approach that embeds <b>more frequent cycles of learning, analysis, and adaptive action</b> into the food security work on ground and the reporting to VCH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the annual reporting as an opportunity to facilitate learning and analysis with and between communities.</li> <li>• Explore appropriate mechanisms to connect coordinators across CFAI communities.</li> <li>• Link-up more experienced Coordinators to work with less experienced Coordinators.</li> <li>• Support Community Coordinators to gather once in person each year and once virtually to reflect on impacts, lessons learned, successes and challenges.</li> <li>• Consider how the VCH Community Investment team or Population Health Dietitians support facilitation of this type of reflection and exchange.</li> </ul>



# Conclusion

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In the last five years, the CFAI program has had significant impacts on food security in the nine communities it has supported in the VCH region. CFAI has also been key in influencing change in the field of food security across the region, enabling community capacity and shifting local government food policy that will have impact for decades to come. Moreover, the CFAI communities in this region have been working on food security for over ten years. In this time, they have not only accumulated significant experience, relationships, and trust in the community, but they have also learned a lot about how the CFAI can be leveraged for the most strategic impact towards food security outcomes. Looking ahead, there is a real opportunity for VCH to engage with the Community Coordinators to build on current successes to continue to adapt and strengthen the program towards sustainable food systems and community food security for all.



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