Global Ideas Institute Booklet Series:

FOOD SECURITY IN CANADA

GII Booklet Series will accompany each lecture by providing additional information and insight into the topic of food security. We strongly encourage you to look into the topics presented in both the lectures and booklet to engage with this material between GII sessions.
Valerie Tarasuk

Professor Valerie Tarasuk is a Professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Toronto. Professor’s Tarasuk’s research aims to elucidate the scope of household food insecurity, policy, and programmatic responses in Canada. Her work has included: studies of food banks and food bank users; homeless youth and community responses to the food needs of homeless and under-housed individuals; a study of housing, neighbourhood characteristics, and food access among low-income Toronto families; an examination of meal services in Salvation Army shelters; and, analyses of population survey data to elucidate the health, nutritional, and sociodemographic correlates of household food insecurity in Canada. Currently, she leads a large, interdisciplinary program of research called PROOF, which is designed to identify effective policy interventions for the reduction of household food insecurity in Canada.
Per the roadmap presented at the Global Ideas Institute Launch, this year’s program contains two critical elements of student engagement as we approach the mid-way point. Details about these two areas of engagement can be found below:

1. **Interview with Community-Based Organization**  
   **Deadline:** January 16, 2017

   Following the November 30th GII session, students are tasked with identifying an organization in their community that is addressing food security and coordinating a one-hour interview. During the interview, students should aim to gather information about how the organization is approaching the issue of food security, what successes and challenges they have seen, and any insights they can share about what makes a solution effective. Students should plan their specific line of questioning using the enclosed interview guide:

   - **Overview**
   - **Interview Guide**

2. **Initial Student Pitch**  
   **Deadline:** January 16, 2017

   At the January 16th GII session, students will present a two-minute pitch of their initial idea. This pitch session will replace the typical two-minute mentor workshop, following the GII lecture. The students will pitch to a food security expert and receive initial feedback. Details on the student pitch are outlined below:

   - **What should my pitch contain?**
     1. What aspect of food security are you aiming to address with your solution?
     2. Why?
     3. What region will you focus on for the implementation of your solution? (Note: students must select a specific community/population group in either Canada or India for the implementation of their solution.)

   - **Who is the target audience?**
     Students will be pitching to an expert working in the area of food security. They should consider this as an opportunity to gain feedback on their focus area, and rationale at this mid-way point of the GII program.

   - **Do I require any materials for the student pitch?**
     No. Students will not have access to a screen for PowerPoint or visuals for this pitch. Students should treat this as an “Elevator Pitch”, a catchy 2-minute verbal pitch.

   - **Does the entire team need to present the pitch?**
     No. Students may select 1 or more team members to deliver the pitch. Team members who do not chose to deliver the pitch itself will be given an opportunity to speak during the expert feedback portion of the pitch session.
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| October 13th 2017  | Joshua Folkema   | 1. Intro to food security  
2. Intro to GII  
3. Intro to I-Think Complex Problem Solving Tools | GII Roadmap, I-Think Tools                | How does food security relate to you?         | Program roadmap                                | 10 mins: GII Q&A  
20 mins: GII Teacher Sharing  
30 mins: World Vision Q&A                        |
| (Program Launch)   | Joseph Wong      | 3. Josie Fung                                              |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
|                    | Josie Fung       | 1. Intro to food security  
2. Intro to GII  
3. Intro to I-Think Complex Problem Solving Tools |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
| November 2nd 2017  | Josie Fung       | 1. Intro causal modelling (15 min)  
2. Reach lecture (30 min and Q&A) | Use I-Think tools from previous week     | Practice causal model                         | Draft causal model                             | GII Q&A with Joseph Wong, I-Think briefing            |
|                    | Joseph Wong      | 2. Joseph Wong                                             |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
| November 30th 2017 | Tammara Soma     | Food Security in Globally (30 min & Q&A)                   | Interviews/inquiry                          | Discovery                                       | Interview tools                                 | I-Think Briefing                                      |
| December 13th 2017 | Valerie Tarasuk  | Food Security in Canada (30 min & Q&A)                     | Research Methods/Lessons learned          | Defining an intervention point (interview results and causal model review) | Identify intervention points using causal model | GII Q&A, I-Think Q&A, Tools Check-In                  |
| January 16th 2018  | Panel:           | Expert Panel Q&A                                           | Business Model Canvas                      | Pitches                                         | 1 min pitch on intervention point, expert feedback | Student pitch sessions                               |
|                    | 1. The Stop      |                                                            |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
|                    | 2. Food Secure   |                                                            |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
|                    | Canada           |                                                            |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
|                    | 3. Feedback App  |                                                            |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
| February 20th 2018 | North York Harvest Food Bank | Case studies: failed solutions | School pair and share of ideas | What worked in a failed solution? Pro pro chart | Pro-pro chart                                 | GII Q&A, Yu-Ling Speaker                             |
| March 6th 2018     | Dilip Soman      | Behavioural economics (30 min & Q&A)                       | Business Model Canvas                      | Idea development                                | Revised idea                                    | GII Q&A with Dilip                                   |
| March 27th 2018    | Adam Sheikh      | Polishing your pitch                                       | Pitch support                              | Pitch prep                                      | Final Pitch                                    | Symposium expectations/working session                |
| April 13th 2018    |                  |                                                            |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
|                    |                  |                                                            |                                            |                                                 |                                                |                                                        |
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Monitoring Food Insecurity in Canada

Food insecurity - the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints - is a serious public health problem in Canada. It negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health, and costs our healthcare system considerably.

Statistics Canada began monitoring food insecurity in 2005 through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Since then, food insecurity has persisted across Canada, with over 4 million Canadians now affected.

Data on food insecurity are collected through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), a cross sectional survey administered by Statistics Canada that collects health-related information from about 60,000 domiciled Canadians per year.

However, the CCHS excludes individuals living on First Nations reserves or Crown Lands, full time members of the Canadian Forces, persons in prisons or care facilities, and the homeless.

Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) on the CCHS consists of 18 questions regarding the presence of food insecure situations in the household over the last 12 months. These situations range from worrying about running out of food to going for whole days without eating, due to inadequate finances.

Depending on the number of positive responses, households are classified as food secure or marginally, moderately, or severely food insecure.

Although the CCHS is conducted every year, some provinces and territories opt out of monitoring food insecurity on the survey cycles (2 years) when the food security survey module is not mandatory.

National estimates are available for the 2007-2008 and 2011-2012 cycles. They will not be available again until the 2017-2018 cycle because Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Yukon opted out in 2015 and 2016.

In 2013 and 2014, Yukon, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Newfoundland and Labrador, chose not to monitor food insecurity. As a result, there are no national estimates for those years.

Among the provinces and territories surveyed in 2014, there were no significant drops in food insecurity prevalence, and even indications of an upward trend in the already vulnerable North.

The inclusion of the HFSSM on the CCHS enables monitoring of food insecurity. As a serious public health problem, it is crucial that provinces and territories participate in all cycles of measurement.

PROOF RESEARCH
FOOD INSECURITY POLICY RESEARCH

PROOF is a CIHR-funded, interdisciplinary research program working to identify effective policy interventions to reduce household food insecurity in Canada.

For more information, see our series of annual reports, Household Food Insecurity in Canada, available at: proof.utoronto.ca
Children in Food Insecure Households

Food insecurity - the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints - is a serious public health problem in Canada. It negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health, and costs our healthcare system considerably.

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Household food insecurity affects 1 in 6 Canadian children under the age of 18.

Food insecurity is more prevalent among households with children under the age of 18, particularly those headed by single mothers.

Exposure to severe food insecurity leaves an indelible mark on children’s wellbeing, manifesting in greater risks for conditions like asthma, depression, and suicidal ideation in adolescence and early adulthood.

Among the provinces and territories that monitored food insecurity in 2013-2014:

- 17.2% of children lived in households affected by food insecurity.
- Two-thirds of these children were in moderately or severely food insecure households.
- Over half the children living in Nunavut lived in food insecure households, the highest rate in Canada.
- The Northwest Territories had the second highest prevalence of children living in food insecure households at 29%.
- The Maritime provinces, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick had rates above 20%, meaning more than 1 in 5 children were affected in these provinces.
- The lowest prevalence of children in food-insecure families was found in Quebec and Alberta, both at 16%, but even in these cases, almost 1 in 6 children were affected.

* In 2013 and 2014, Yukon, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Newfoundland and Labrador, chose not to monitor food insecurity.

Households with children by household food security status

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2013 and 2014.

PROOF is a CIHR-funded, interdisciplinary research program working to identify effective policy interventions to reduce household food insecurity in Canada. For more information, visit proof.utoronto.ca

Footnotes:
The Impact of Food Insecurity on Health

Food insecurity - the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints - is a serious public health problem in Canada. It negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health, and costs our healthcare system considerably.

Statistics Canada began monitoring food insecurity in 2005 through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Since then, food insecurity has persisted across Canada, with over 4 million Canadians now affected.

Food-insecure individuals, both adults and children, are likely to have poorer health.

Food-insecure adults are more vulnerable to chronic conditions, with the risk increasing with the severity of food insecurity.

Exposure to severe food insecurity leaves an indelible mark on children’s wellbeing, manifesting in greater risks for conditions like asthma, depression, and suicidal ideation in adolescence and early adulthood.

Food insecurity also makes it difficult for individuals to manage existing chronic health problems, such as diabetes and HIV.

Due to scarce resources, food insecure individuals may forego critical expenses like medication.

Prevalence of chronic conditions among Canadian adults, (18-64 years) of age, by household food security status

Health care costs

Average health care costs incurred over 12 months by Ontario adults (18-64 years of age), by household food insecurity status

Household food insecurity takes a tremendous toll on the health care system.

After adjusting for other well-established social determinants of health, such as education and income levels, total annual health care costs in Ontario were:

- 23% higher for adults living in marginally food insecure households than in food secure households
- 49% higher for adults living in moderately food insecure households than in food secure households
- 121% higher for adults living in severely food insecure households than in food secure households

These findings imply that addressing food insecurity through targeted policy interventions would reduce the associated health care costs and improve overall health.

Public Policy and Food Insecurity

Food insecurity - the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints - is a serious public health problem in Canada. It negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health, and costs our healthcare system considerably.

Statistics Canada began monitoring food insecurity in 2005 through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Since then, food insecurity has persisted across Canada, with over 4 million Canadians now affected.

Despite discussions and initiatives in some jurisdictions, the reduction of food insecurity rates has not been an explicit goal of public policies in Canada.

Food insecurity is rooted in material deprivation, with low income being the strongest predictor.

Research has demonstrated reductions in food insecurity where social policies have improved the material circumstances of vulnerable households.

The impact of social policy on food insecurity

While many provinces have enacted poverty reduction strategies, Newfoundland and Labrador stands out as a key example of how policy interventions can reduce food insecurity in low income households by improving their material circumstances.

Food insecurity among social assistance recipients in that province dropped by almost half between 2007 and 2012, following the rollout of a new poverty reduction strategy in 2006 that tackled the depth of poverty through interventions like increasing income support rates and indexing rates to inflation.

Prevalence of food insecurity among households in Newfoundland and Labrador reporting any income from social assistance

The low rate of food insecurity among Canadian seniors reflects the protection afforded by the guaranteed annual income they receive. Extending a guaranteed income to all Canadians through a policy like Basic Income could be an effective way to reduce food insecurity across the country.

Being on social assistance in Canada poses an extremely high risk to food insecurity. Social assistance recipients are more likely than not to be food insecure, suggesting that these programs are not designed in ways that enable recipients to meet their basic needs.

Key interventions in NL poverty reduction strategy:

- ↑ income support rates
- ↑ indexed rates to inflation
- ↑ earning exemptions
- ↑ low-income tax threshold
- ↑ affordable housing
- ↑ health benefits
- ↑ liquid asset limits

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2013, 2014.

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Food Procurement, Food Skills & Food Insecurity

Food insecurity - the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints - is a serious public health problem that affects over 4 million Canadians. It negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health, and costs our healthcare system considerably.

Statistics Canada began monitoring food insecurity in 2005 through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). In 2012 and 2013, questions were included on the CCCHS to assess the food skills and practices of adults with sample of 10,000 Canadians for each year. This factsheet summarizes the findings from a recent study using that data.\(^1\)

### Food Purchasing

The vast majority (84%) of adults in food insecure households report shopping with a budget on how much they can spend on food, but only 43% of adults in food secure households say they do this.

The two groups do not differ when it comes to other shopping behaviours, like planning meals before shopping, using a written grocery list, or using Canada's Food Guide.

### Food Preparation Skills

Adults in food insecure households do not report having lower food preparation skills than those in food secure households.

In fact, most Canadian adults, regardless of food insecurity status, considered themselves highly skilled at various aspects of food preparation.

### Cooking Ability

The cooking abilities of adults in food insecure households are similar to those in food secure households. In fact, very few Canadian adults, regardless of food insecurity status, report not knowing where to start when it comes to cooking.

#### Self-rated cooking ability by household food insecurity status

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<tr>
<th>Food Secure</th>
<th>Food Insecure</th>
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<td><img src="chart.png" alt="Cooking Ability Chart" /></td>
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- Don’t know where to start when it comes to cooking
- Can do things such as boil an egg or cook a grilled cheese sandwich
- Can prepare simple meals but nothing too complicated
- Can cook more dishes if I have a recipe
- Can prepare most dishes
- Frequently prepare sophisticated dishes

### Recipe Adjustment

Almost two-thirds of Canadian adults report adjusting recipes to make them healthier by reducing fat, salt, or sugar, and those in food insecure households are not any less likely to do so.

### Gardening

Although Canadian adults in food insecure households are less likely to garden for food than those in food secure households, there is no indication that gardening for food protects households from food insecurity.

### Reducing Food Insecurity

Canadian adults in food insecure households do not have poorer food skills than those in food secure households. There is no indication that food insecurity is rooted in a lack of food skills or that gardening for food protects households from food insecurity.

While interventions designed to increase food skills and promote gardening for food are important in reaching other public health goals like increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, the findings here suggest that such interventions are unlikely to impact food insecurity rates in Canada.

\(^1\) For more information about this research, see: Huiskan, A., Orr, S. K., & Tarasuk, V. (2017). Adults’ food skills and use of gardens are not associated with household food insecurity in Canada. Canadian Journal of Public Health, 107(6), e526-e532.
Food Insecurity and Social Assistance

Food insecurity - the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints - is a serious public health problem in Canada. It negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health, and costs our healthcare system considerably.

Statistics Canada began monitoring food insecurity in 2005 through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Since then, food insecurity has persisted across Canada, with over 4 million Canadians now affected.

Social assistance programs vary among provinces and territories, and food insecurity rates among recipients fluctuate from year to year within jurisdictions. However, being on social assistance anywhere in Canada poses an extremely high risk to food insecurity.

Nearly one third of households reliant on social assistance as their main source of income are severely food insecure, indicating serious levels of food deprivation. The rate of severe food insecurity among social assistance recipients is 11 times higher than the rate nationally.

The high rates of food insecurity among households reliant on social assistance suggest that these support programs are failing to enable recipients to meet their basic needs.

The notably lower rate of food insecurity among social assistance recipients in Newfoundland and Labrador is linked to the impact of policy reforms introduced as part of their poverty reduction strategy in 2006.

Further evidence of the sensitivity of food insecurity among social assistance recipients to policy changes is the temporary drop in rates in British Columbia, following a one-time increase in income support in 2006.

Given the extreme vulnerability of social assistance recipients and the evidence that policy interventions can reduce their food insecurity, provincial and territorial governments need to reform current programs to ensure that recipients can meet their basic needs, tracking food insecurity rates to assess the success of program changes.

*The data available from CCHS do not allow us to differentiate people on disability support programs from those receiving general welfare assistance.

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October 13 – Introduction to Food Security

GII Challenge Brief

November 2 – What is Complex Problem-Solving?

Mandatory reading:
“Feeding the World Into the Future – food and nutrition security: the role of food science and technology”

“Food Security”

“Nutrition: A world of insecurity”

Recommended reading:
2017 Global Food Policy Report

Food Security: Everybody’s Business
Sophie Healy-Thow, Tedx Youth, 10 February 2016.

November 30 – Food Security in Canada

Mandatory reading:
Nutrition and Food Security
United Nations in India.

India’s National Food Security Act (NFSA): Early Experiences

Hunger in a Time of Plenty: The Curious Case of Indian Food Security

Recommended reading:
India’s NFSA: Fiscal Assessment and Implementation Challenges

Food Security: How to ensure no one sleeps with an empty stomach
Alka Parikh, Mumbai University, TEDxDAIICT, 08 August 2016.

December 14 – Food Security in India

Mandatory reading:
Food Insecurity in Canada
PROOF: Food Insecurity Policy Research.
January 16 – Failed Solutions

Mandatory reading:
Why Big Data Hasn’t Yet Made a Dent on Farms

Lessons in Scaling and Failing
Anjali Sharker, Shameran Abed and Christian Seelos,

Learning From Failure
Eric Nee, Stanford Social Innovation Review, 18 February
2015.

Failing Up for Social Enterprise Success
Epaminondas Farmakis, Devex, 15 August 2014.

February 20 – Solutions at Scale

Mandatory reading:
FoodShare’s Good Food Programming: Hubs Within a Hub
Cassie Wever, 2015.

This Woman Has Been A Leader in Toronto Food Security
Wayne Roberts, Torontoist, 3 October 2016.

Case Study: Reuters Market Light
Peter McNally, Mobile for Development Impact, October 2014.

Recommended reading:
Connected Farming in India
RML AgTech Ltd, 17 June 2015.