



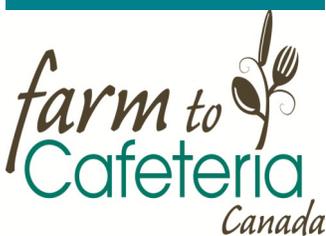
Farm To School (F2S) programs close the distance between field and fork to bring healthy, local, and sustainably produced foods - including wild foods - into our schools and onto our children's lunch plate.

Farm to Cafeteria Canada (F2CC) is a national network that promotes, supports, links F2S programs, policy and practice from coast to coast to coast.

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The First Learning Lab on Haida Gwaii

F2S has been underway on Haida Gwaii since 2010 serving up fresh healthy fruits and vegetables in the school lunch and snack programs. In early 2014, Farm to Cafeteria Canada (F2CC), in partnership with BC Northern Health Authority secured funding from the Nourishing School Communities team to revitalize the F2S program through a series of forums known as **Learning Labs**.

Learning Lab is a gathering of people involved in buying, growing or harvesting wild food for school food programs.

The aim of the Learning Lab is to bring key people

together to share ideas, develop common goals and collaborate on ways to increase the use of local food in schools in a well facilitated supportive environment.

A local F2S coordinator, Kiku Dhanwant, has been hired to convene 3-4 Learning Labs over the next two years and work with the participants to achieve their goals.

On May 16th, the First Haida Gwaii Learning Lab was held in Port Clements. It brought together food growers, wild food gatherers and school staff involved in food purchasing to create a **locally appropriate**



Haida Gwaii Produce Served in Local Schools

Picture from Ruth Wheadon

F2S vision, define what is **local** and identify **3-5 goals** to build on their vision.

The vision will help to guide how local food would be used in schools in the long term while goals help to cultivate realistic actions over the next 2 years

Making Connections

During the discussion, the farmers, school principals, elders and food coordinators shared their ideals for F2S on Haida Gwaii with common themes from very different perspectives. The collective vision was captured in a mural depicting

connections between key concepts and associated ideas or activities.

The group then had a chance to create their own definition of "what is local" followed by a passionate discussion of the challenges

and opportunities that await. Six goals with several immediate actions were identified for the group to work on as a collaborative effort.

The connections and ideas were inspired by a fabulous feast of local foods.



Above: Kids digging in the dirt
Opposite: Food fishing trip
Pictures from Dan Schulbeck

A Vision in the Making

The Learning Lab group felt that there is a need to shift “culture on the islands back to a life centered around value and importance of locally grown food: collectively growing, preparing, preserving, eating, and sharing”

Even on a small island community, we need to work towards building solid connections between those growing and gathering food and those buying, preparing

and eating it in schools. The group expressed that face to face gatherings and field trips with students are necessary to help keep that connection alive.

If money were no object, kids would enjoy local healthy food in schools five days a week. Courses would focus on getting students outside and teaching self-sufficiency through farming, traditional skills and growing food on school grounds.



Participants offered their enthusiasm for connecting kids to their food and willingness to work together towards a vision they shared.

What is local

Three possible definitions of “what is local” were discussed. These included: **Provincial** (within BC), **Radius** (a growing distance from the islands)

Growing Circle (as close to home as possible).

The majority of the group

supported the working definition of **local to mean from Haida Gwaii**, including ocean harvest with some flexibility of using the Growing Circle definition.

The group chose to not define sustainable since the farming practices on the

island generally follow high ethical standards.

Bulk buying of staples that do not grow on Haida Gwaii was discussed as an option to reduce food costs and allocate savings to purchasing more local foods.

The Goals that will get us there

Together, the Learning Lab group agreed on the following six goals:

GOAL 1: Increase food being purchased from local food producers and harvesters.

GOAL 2: Develop a coordinated system of food transport from farm to school on the islands.

GOAL 3: Integrate wild, harvested, foraged and locally preserved food into school menus.

GOAL 4: Work with community to share assets and resources

GOAL 5: Build capacity in schools and community in planning, communication and education

GOAL 6: Ensure economic sustainability of farm to school program.

These goals will guide our actions for the next 2 years. Immediate action items included developing food catalogues and F2S transportation network. We will continue to share our progress with the F2S community as we move forward.



Pickled vegetables from the GM Dawson Greenhouse
Picture by Dan Schulbeck