Strategic Priorities for Addressing Childhood Hunger in a School Setting

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Executive Summary

Introduction
The Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (E4C) alleviates child hunger by providing nutritious snacks and lunches to high needs schools in Edmonton through its school nutrition program. Childhood hunger happens in a wider context of food insecurity and social vulnerability.

This research project was undertaken to develop a program plan for E4C that fit within the organizational mandate and strategic direction of eliminating poverty and addressing root causes. The project sought to move beyond short-term solutions to childhood hunger to long-term solutions to support sustainable access to food for students and their families. In doing this the following research question was explored: what can be done to address childhood hunger in three school settings and what is the best way to do so?

Literature Review
A review of the literature on current approaches to childhood hunger in Canada found that school nutrition programs on their own are ineffective in addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger. Existing approaches to addressing childhood hunger found in the literature included utilizing food banks, community kitchens, meal programs, good food boxes, and intra-household coping strategies. Although useful to a certain extent, these approaches have been found to be ineffective in increasing access to healthy and affordable food for children and their families in a complete and sustainable manner (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013, p. e55; McIntrye, Bartow, Pow, & Potestio, 2012, p. e428). Meal programs such as school feeding programs have been found to be effective in alleviating hunger and improving children’s school performance (Greenhalgh, Kristjansson, & Robinson, 2007, p. 858); however, these programs can also perpetuate inequality (Hay, 2000, p. 15). While there are many positive aspects to childhood hunger programs, the literature also found that programs can take on a family substitution role (Williams, McIntrye, Dayle, & Raine, 2003, p.168) that tend to stigmatize and blame the parents (McIntrye, Dayle, & Raine, 2003, p. 162) and undermine parents’ knowledge (p. 164). A broader approach that reduces inequities rather than seeks to modify individual behaviour is recommended by the literature.
Existing examples of guiding principles and frameworks for school nutrition programs can provide tools and strategies for further addressing childhood hunger. Approaches that connect nutrition programs to classroom learning and the wider community, shared decision making that values parents’ participation in program planning and delivery, and sustainable food practices could be useful in further addressing underlying causes of childhood hunger.

**Methodology and Methods**
To identify how E4C can move beyond short-term solutions for childhood hunger to supporting sustainable access to food for students and their families, this project asked three school communities the research question: what more can be done to address childhood hunger in their school setting and how? Recognizing the school community as experts, a community-based research approach was used to explore what school communities saw as the most effective way forward. A focus group was scheduled at each of the schools to gauge perceptions on existing school food programs, childhood hunger, food security, and the role of the school community in addressing childhood hunger.

**Findings**
In total responses were collected from two parents, three principals, and an assistant principal. All three schools that were involved in the interviews had a breakfast, snack, and lunch program. It was found that childhood hunger was a concern for all schools because kids were coming to school hungry, which affected their ability to learn. All participants found existing food programs as useful. Time, cost, and convenience affected participants’ food choices.

Different ways to improve access to food identified by participants included: having the child’s caretaker(s) be in a stable job, having affordable and convenient transportation to be able to shop, being in close proximity to healthy food choices, and having access to lower food prices. Different ways to address childhood hunger in a school setting included additional education on healthy eating, more funding, and effective staff resources.

**Discussion and Analysis**
Due to the participation rate, interviews were held rather than focus groups providing limited but valuable insight into how E4C can address underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting through its school food programs. The findings indicated that while systemic challenges were recognized such as employment, transportation, and food prices, modifying individual
behaviour, doing more of the same—more education on healthy eating, more funding, and staff resources—were seen as the way forward. The response rate as well as alternative options and solutions identified by the research findings all suggest that further information is needed to develop a program plan.

**Next Steps and Recommendations**

This research project sought to identify a program plan to move E4C beyond the short-term alleviation of childhood hunger to addressing its underlying causes in a school setting. In identifying a way forward, E4C’s organizational direction, the research findings, and the literature informed the need to engage the community in establishing how to mobilize to find solutions. This principle formed the basis for three recommended strategic priorities for addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting:

- Engaging community
- Building capacity
- Integrating programming

Informed by the research findings and current approaches to childhood hunger, the following two action steps were recommended for implementation:

- Develop and adapt best practices on parental involvement
- Develop a local food procurement policy
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1.0 Introduction

The school day at Mother Teresa Elementary School in the inner-city of Edmonton starts with students praying. One boy’s prayer is for his family to have enough food (personal communication, April 15, 2016). This concern about not having enough food or food insecurity, which is unreliable access to healthy and affordable food, affects 1 in 6 children in Edmonton, Alberta (Edmonton Social Planning Council & Edmonton Community Foundation, 2013, p. 4).

The Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (E4C), the client for this project, is currently alleviating hunger by providing nutritious snacks and lunches through its school nutrition program. Childhood hunger happens in a wider context of food insecurity and social vulnerability. This research project was undertaken to develop a program plan for E4C to move beyond short-term solutions to long-term solutions to support sustainable access to food for students and their families through its programming.

1.1 Defining the Problem and Background

E4C, a non-profit charitable organization, addresses childhood hunger at the elementary school level through its school food programs in Edmonton, Alberta. Childhood hunger “is an extreme manifestation of food insecurity” (McIntyre, Batrow, Pow, & Potestio, 2012, p.428). Current E4C school food programs address one symptom of food insecurity namely childhood hunger. E4C addresses childhood hunger through a lunch and snack program that provides healthy meals and snacks and alleviates hunger at schools located in high needs neighbourhoods in Edmonton. E4C does not run a breakfast program. In addition, the Young Chefs program that they offer teaches children about food safety, food preparation skills, and nutrition. E4C’s school nutrition program has been in operation since 1993.

The program primarily addresses the symptoms, not the underlying causes, of food insecurity. This project was undertaken to identify a way forward for this E4C program to address underlying causes. This fits within the organizational mandate and strategic direction. E4C exists to eliminate poverty (E4C, 2016, para 1) and works towards this mission by programs and services for “children, youth, families, and communities” that: work “with people at their starting point”; “build community capacity”; and address root causes. Quality programs and community engagement are organizational priorities in eliminating poverty (E4C, 2013a, p.6-7). Thus, this project seeks to strategically further E4C’s mission by identifying ways to address underlying
cause of childhood hunger and to promote sustainable access to food in a school setting through its school nutrition program.

Childhood hunger in a school setting is situated in a wider context of food insecurity and poverty. Edmonton Social Planning Council & Edmonton Community Foundation have found that “children disproportionately live in food insecure households” (2013, p.4). In Alberta, 40% of those” being helped by food banks” are children” (Edmonton Food Bank, 2015, para. 4). Financial constraint is recognized as the primary cause of food insecurity. Financial constraint and poverty, is the result of any or all of: disruptive events, systemic barriers, life stages and personal vulnerabilities (Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative, 2013 in EndPoverty Edmonton, 2015). Food insecurity is more likely in socially vulnerable households which include: single parent homes, new immigrants, First Nation, Metis, or Inuit, low income, and those who receive government transfer payments (Dietitians of Canada, 2015, p.1). Other social indicators of food insecurity include low education of parents (Taylor, Evers, & McKenna, 2005, p. S21), employment (p.S21) and rented dwelling (Tarasuk & Vogt, 2009, p. 184). Childhood hunger is a symptom of poverty and resulting food insecurity.

The E4C school lunch program has been operating for over 20 years, and began “with a group of concerned parents and the Child Poverty Action Group” as a response to child poverty (E4C, 2013b, para.2). In its 20 year history, E4C school nutrition program surveys have shown parent and teacher satisfaction with the program. A progress report conducted ten years after the start of E4C’s lunch program documented “positive change in student behaviour, socialization, and school performance” (Community Consulting Ltd, 2005, p.2). Hunger is known to impair school performance and behaviour (Howe & Cowell, 2003, p.1078). Other school nutrition programs have also been documented as improving student achievement in the areas of problem solving and class participation (Muthusway, 2011, p.26). A realist review of school feeding programs, noted that school feeding programs are successful in improving the cognitive performance of disadvantaged children (Greenhalgh, Kristijansson, & Robinson, 2007, p. 858). Long-term outcomes around educational attainment and breaking the cycle of poverty, however, are difficult to establish. Thus, E4C’s school lunch program, which began in response to child poverty, addressees only a symptom and not the underlying causes of childhood poverty.
E4C offers school food programs at 24 high needs schools, which are determined by Edmonton Catholic School District and Edmonton Public School Board in part by the social vulnerability of the neighbourhood in which the school is located in Edmonton. E4C provides funding for all 24 schools to run a morning snack program and operates a lunch program at ten schools. Each day more than 2100 meals are served and each year over one million dollars’ worth of food is distributed through E4C’s school food programs. At each school, E4C employs two part-time staff to prepare, order, and serve the food. The program also employs a full-time manager and a program assistant who work together to collect school lunch registrations and payments, administer funds to the snack schools, purchase food, ensure nutritional guidelines and health regulations are followed, fundraise, work with the schools, run the Young Chefs Program, and manage staff and volunteers.

Participation in the program is optional but universal, which means it is open to all students. At the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians can register their children in the program. Each month parents/guardians return a school lunch envelope which contains voluntary payment. Payment is not a condition of participation in the lunch program and not receiving an envelope does not impact registration in the program. E4C program staff does not know who paid and who did not.

This research project examined three E4C lunch programming sites, which were located at Mother Teresa Elementary School, St. Alphonsus Elementary/ Junior High School, and St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School. The project was limited to three schools in identifying next steps for E4C Community Services in order to support E4C’s capacity in implementing the proposed next steps. These programming sites included all of the Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD)’s schools in which E4C runs a lunch program. ECSD determines high needs based on social vulnerability, diversity of population (number of high needs students, number of English Language Learners, number of First Nation, Metis, and Inuit students), and student achievement (Edmonton Catholic School District, 2015). What follows is an overview of E4C’s three Edmonton Catholic School District lunch programming sites:

- **Mother Teresa Elementary School**, located in the inner-city of Edmonton, is the second ranked high needs school of Edmonton Catholic School District’s 86 schools. This rank is informed largely by social vulnerability factors including: median income, lone-parent
families, child welfare, juvenile crimes, rented dwelling, percent of population over the age of 15 with no high school diploma, and unemployment as well as the number of English Language Learners. 180 of the school’s 345 students are newcomers. There are 297 students registered in the lunch program.

- **St. Alphonsus Elementary/ Junior High School** is ranked the highest needs school, informed largely by social indicators of the neighbourhood the school is in. Of the school’s 210 elementary students, 110 are registered in the lunch program.

- **St. Francis of Assisi School** is ranked number 4 on the high needs school list, due to social vulnerability, number of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students, and low student achievement based on provincial achievement tests. There are 284 students, 265 of whom are registered in the school lunch program.

To run the school nutrition program, E4C relies on funding from foundations and private donors as well as funding from the municipal and provincial government, including Family and Community Support Services and Edmonton Region Child & Family Services, to cover the program costs.

The E4C school lunch program does not receive any direct federal government funding. Canada is the only G7 country not to have a nationally-funded school lunch program. E4C is a member of the Coalition for Healthy Food that advocates for a national, universal (available to all students) healthy school food program. In Canada, school food policy is provincial jurisdiction. A study of the school food environment in Alberta found that “schools require more support and financial stability when it comes to creating healthy food environments” (Alberta Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention, Growing Food Security in Alberta Network, & Promoting Optimal Weights through Ecological Research, 2015, p. 26). Provincially, the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention advocates for a universal school food strategy. The elected Alberta New Democrats have committed “to a small-scale pilot project at select schools this year with a promise of $30 million to expand it in the following two years” (Ibrahim, 2016, para.31). The provincial government also provides the nutritional guidelines for children and youth which are followed by E4C’s school nutrition program: E4C only uses “choose most often” and “choose sometimes” foods (Government of Alberta, 2012, p.7).
An overview of both the E4C school nutrition program and the current context of childhood hunger in Edmonton provide the background to this study. This project is concerned with how the E4C school nutrition program, situated in the context of social vulnerability, can move beyond alleviating short-term hunger to addressing food insecurity as part of the organization’s poverty elimination mission.

1.2 Project Client
The client of the project was Annette Woudstra, the director of Community Services at Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (E4C) who identified the opportunity for school lunch programming sites to promote food security in school communities. Community Services’ programs include the School Nutrition program, Make Tax Time Pay, Financial Empowerment, Community Gardens, and ArtStart. Altogether, Community Services is in over 50 sites throughout Edmonton. The researcher works for E4C Community Services doing community food and wellness programming at various sites.

1.3 Project Objectives and Research Questions
This study used a community-based research approach, which is situated in the community and is seen as a vehicle for positive social change (Centre for Community Based Research, 2016, para. 2) to explore how E4C’s school lunch programming sites can promote sustainable access to food in school communities. The purpose of this research project was both to review how childhood hunger is being addressed at three of E4C’s school lunch programming sites and to develop a program plan for E4C in supporting long-term solutions to childhood hunger in these school settings. The project sought to outline a program plan for E4C Community Services’ school food programs that would address both underlying causes of childhood hunger and incorporate feedback from the school community on the role of individuals, the school, and community organizations.

The objectives of this project were: (1) to identify a strategic framework for addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger based on current approaches and smart practices; (2) to provide an overview of the wider context of childhood hunger and food insecurity in Edmonton, Alberta; (3) to identify existing food programs at the three Edmonton Catholic School District schools in which E4C has a lunch program; (4) to identify opportunities in school settings for
addressing root causes of childhood hunger; and (5) to develop a program plan for E4C school food programs.

This project sought to answer the primary research question of how E4C Community Services can address the underlying causes of food insecurity through its school food programming. In identifying a way forward for E4C Nutrition, the following secondary questions were explored:

- What is the current context of childhood hunger and food insecurity in Edmonton?
- What approaches to childhood hunger best address underlying causes in a school setting?
- What is currently being done at a school level, in particular, at three E4C lunch program schools?
- What do these school communities see as the way forward?

1.4 Organization of Report

This report is concerned with identifying opportunities in three school settings in Edmonton for addressing the root causes of childhood hunger. First, a literature search is used to provide an overview of current approaches to addressing childhood hunger including community food programs such as school nutrition programs. The review concludes with recommendations from the literature for future approaches to addressing childhood hunger. This review informs the theoretical underpinning of this report, that addressing childhood hunger requires social change, as a way to address shortcomings of current approaches to childhood hunger. Second, moving from theory to practice, smart practice guidelines and examples of existing strategy frameworks for school food programs are presented. Third, opportunities for addressing the root causes of childhood hunger in three specific school communities are explored through community-based research.

The finding section provides more details on the research methods used to gauge perceptions on food security and the three school communities: St. Alphonsus Elementary School/Junior High, Mother Teresa Elementary School, and St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School. In the discussion section of the report, the effectiveness of the research methods and the extent to which the findings can be used to develop a program plan for E4C on promoting sustainable access to food through its school food programs is assessed. The report concludes with recommendations
for next steps for E4C Community Services in engaging school communities in addressing childhood hunger.
2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction
School nutrition programs alleviate childhood hunger but do not address its underlying causes. A literature search was conducted to provide an overview of approaches to childhood hunger in Canada. The literature identified community food programs, such as school meal programs, as currently falling short in addressing underlying causes of childhood hunger and recommended political change and an integrated approach moving forward. Search terms “child*” AND “hunger” AND “Canada” were used in the JSTOR database and 1000 titles returned. All articles that were used in this literature review were published in the last 15 years. Approximately 40 articles were retrieved and 18 were used. Articles were excluded if the research did not include a Canadian context and/or childhood hunger or food security was not a primary topic. Grey literature from organizations such as Food Secure Canada, HungerCount Canada, and Growing Food Security Alberta was also reviewed.

This literature review first provides an overview of the discussion on community food programs as an approach to addressing childhood hunger. Second, the literature on a particular community food program, child food programs including school nutrition programs, is presented. In conclusion, future recommendations identified in the literature for addressing childhood hunger are given.

2.2 Community Food Programs
Community food programs such as food banks, community gardens, and community kitchens, are one approach to addressing childhood hunger. Community food programs do not increase access to healthy and affordable food. Despite an increase in community food programs over the last decade, it has been found there is not an increase in households using them to cope with childhood hunger (McIntrye, Bartow, Pow, & Potestio, 2012, p. 428). Somewhat paradoxically, food banks which provide food with low nutritional value (Raine, 2005, p. S10) were found to be the most commonly used food programs (Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk, 2009, p.137). Consistent with McIntrye & et al’s study (2012), Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk (2009, p.137)’s study found that low-income families would rather use intra-household coping strategies for food insecurity such as delaying paying a bill rather than a community food program.
Loopstra & Tarasuk (2013) asked low-income families their perspectives on community food programs. The study found that families did not participate in community food programs, in particular community kitchens, community gardens, and good food box programs, because of lack of access (did not know where or how to participate and programs were not in their neighbourhood) and lack of fit (did not fit their “schedule, interest, or needs”) (p. e55). Interestingly, the study noted low participation in community food programs regardless of geographic proximity to the program (p. e57). These studies demonstrate how community food programs are ineffective in addressing food insecurity and the underlying causes of childhood hunger. Turje (2012) offered this critique as an explanation of why community food programs are ineffective: community food programs are a form of social control that suggests the issue is with the individual rather than the system (p. 132). This is consistent with Power’s review of the literature on factors determining healthy eating among low-income individuals which found that “neither nutritional knowledge nor food skills appear to be significant factors” (2005, p.S39). Current responses to food insecurity based on nutrition and public health were also critiqued by Power (2008, p. 95) for not taking into full account traditional food systems which are place-based and rely on wild-harvested food. An overview of the literature on community food programs suggest that the current approaches fall short in addressing childhood hunger and its underlying causes.

2.3 Child Nutrition Programs

One type of community food program is child nutrition programs, such as school meal programs. This section highlights the literature on school meal programs. A realist review of school meal programs by Greenhalgh, Kristjansson, and Robinson (2007, p.858) examined school meal programs in five continents over eight decades and found that school feeding programs improve the growth and cognitive performance of disadvantaged children. The review identified “theories of why school feeding programs work” including: “long-term correction of nutritional deficiencies,” “short-term hunger relief,” “children felt valued and looked after,” “reduced absenteeism,” “improved school diet inspires improved home diet,” and “improved literacy reduces intergenerational cycle of poverty” (p. 858-9). The review observed that the most effective programs were based on an established need such as nutritional deficiencies. The most common reason for failure in a school meal program is it being built around a need that does not exist (p. 859).
There are many studies and program evaluations that demonstrate that school meal programs are effective in providing short-term hunger relief and improving student achievement (Greenhalgh, Kristjansson, & Robinson, 2007; Muthswamy, 2011). School meal programs; however, do not address the underlying causes of childhood hunger, the social context that causes food insecurity.

Some authors suggested that by addressing symptoms and not causes, that some child nutrition programs, in particular, those based on a charity or needs based model, risk stigmatization (Raine, McIntrye, Dayle, 2003, p.155) parent blaming, and undermining parents’ knowledge (p.162). School nutrition programs are often started in response to perceived need. Dayle & McIntrye suggested that child food programs start in response to child poverty and the corresponding perception of childhood hunger (2003, p. 317) and Williams, McIntrye, Dayle, & Raine (2003, p. 165) found that programs continue to justify their existence even if the majority of participants were not poor. Program and needs based, charitable approaches to childhood hunger have been critiqued for perpetuating inequality (Hay, 2000, p.15).

The number of cases of childhood hunger reported in the Canadian Community Health Survey is much lower than the perceived amount of hunger—child food programs are initiated in response to perceived needs. In 2013, 0.7% of households surveyed self-reported “children were not eating enough because [the household] could not afford food” and 1.7% of households “couldn’t afford to feed children a balanced meal” (Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2015, p. 6). The experience of childhood hungers happens in a wider context of food insecurity.

School nutrition programs which alleviate hunger can also perpetuate inequality. This is consistent with the critique of other community food programs, that these programs seek to modify individual behavior rather than addresses systemic inequities. Dayle and McIntrye suggested the child nutrition programs can act as a power over tool (2003, p. 313). In another article by Williams, McIntrye, Dayle, & Raine the accepted “wonderfulness” of children feeding programs was questioned. The authors suggested that meal programs can exclude parents (2003, p. 168). Raine, McIntrye, and Dayle suggested that school meal programs that shift away from a charity model to a social justice approach that reduces inequities could be effective as part of a comprehensive strategy (2003, p.155).
Federally, Food Secure Canada, and provincially, Growing Food Security Alberta, have supported a call for a universal (available to all students) food strategy which school meal programs are a part of. The Coalition for Healthy School Food advocates for the implementation of a national universal school food program as part of “a national food policy aiming to make our food system more healthy, equitable, and more sustainable” (The Coalition for the Healthy School Food, 2015, para. 5). Alberta Policy Coalition and Chronic Disease Prevention and Alberta Food Matters are calling for a universal food strategy for Alberta with the following elements: “making healthy meals and snacks and beverages available to all school aged children”; “provide comprehensive food education including student involvement in growing and preparing food”; “eliminate unhealthy food and beverages marketing to children in schools”; “foster relationships between schools and local food producers and consider the development of local food procurement policies when feasible”; and “monitor and evaluate school food policies across Alberta” (Alberta Policy Coalition and Chronic Disease Prevention, 2016, p.1). Child nutrition programs are ineffective on their own in addressing the causes of childhood hunger. The literature shows the need for child nutrition programs to be part of broader food programs and strategies that address the root causes of poverty.

2.4 Future Recommendations

The need for a systemic or comprehensive strategy to addressing child hunger and its wider context of food insecurity is consistent across the literature. Approaches at all levels of government have failed as child poverty (and hunger) have persisted. Initiatives such as child tax benefits do not prevent childhood hunger (Howe & Covell, 2003, p. 1074). The literature calls for policy changes such as increasing minimum wage, affordable transportation and housing (Williams, Johnson, Krazmann et al, 2006, p.433); employment opportunities (Williams, Johnson, Krazmann et al, 2006, p. 433; Howe & Covell, 2003, p.1086; Raine, McIntyre, & Dayle, 2003. P. 167); affordable childcare (Williams, Johnson, Krazmann et al, 2006, p. 433; Howe & Covell, 2003, p.1086); a national school nutrition program (Howe & Covell,2003, p.1086); and changing food pricing strategies (Power, 2005, p. S40; Raine, McIntyre, & Dayle,2003, p.167). One author suggested that beyond access to healthy food for individuals, families, and communities, access to food should support the preservation of culture and traditions (Power, 2008, p.95). Another author suggested the need for an inter-disciplinary collaboration between agri- food, health, and environmental systems as informing the way
forward (Hammond & Dube, 2012, p. 12357). Recommendations for best approaches in addressing childhood hunger identified the need for systemic and political change.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The need for systemic change that reduces inequity rather than focusing solely on modifying individuals’ behaviors was identified by the literature as the way forward in addressing childhood hunger. It is within this context that this study identified a structural approach as the conceptual framework for answering how E4C can address the underlying causes of food insecurity in a school setting.

Informed by a structural approach, this project assumes the need for social change—change in the social, political, and economic structures of society—and asks how food programming in a school setting can support this change. A structural approach “views the problems experienced by people as rooted in the social, political, and economic structures” (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2013, p. 3). A structural approach recognizes that people “are not alone in their struggles” and that people are not to be blamed for systemic inequities, as well as identifying ways for people to mobilize and find solutions (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2013, p.5). A structural approach explains the inherent assumption of this research project the need to move beyond simply feeding children to supporting sustainable access to food for children and their families by address underlying and root causes.

Figure 1: Childhood hunger and its underlying causes
3.0. School Food Frameworks

School nutrition programs on their own are ineffective in addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger. Moving theory to practice, this section looks to existing examples of guiding principles and frameworks for school nutrition programs from a program management perspective, a health promotion perspective, and a sustainable food practices perspective in addressing childhood hunger. First, smart practices guidelines for program implementation are identified. Second, two examples of how school nutrition programs can be part of an integrated approach are given. Finally, a discussion of how these guiding principles and approaches could be used to support social change is presented.

3.1 Smart Practices

Breakfast for Learning “is the leading organization that provides funding, education and organizational resources from program start-up and maintenance” (Russell, Evers, Dwyer, Uetrecht, & Macaskill, 2008, p. 113) for breakfast, snack, and lunch programs. Food programs are different than emergency food provision (Alberta Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention, Growing Food Security in Alberta Network, & Promoting Optimal Weights through Ecological Research, 2015, p 4). It is estimated there are over 2200 school nutrition programs in Canada providing food to school-aged children through breakfast, snacks or lunch programs (Russell, Evers, Dwyer, Uetrecht, & Macaskill, 2008, p. 113). In the 2015/2016 school year, Breakfast for Learning provided funding to 1900 program sites in Canada (Breakfast for Learning, 2016). Breakfast for Learning exists so that hunger does not impair Canadian children’s ability to learn. With a long term vision of children being successful, Breakfast for Learning is primarily concerned with program management and short-term hunger relief through breakfast, snack, and lunch programs.

Breakfast for Learning has identified best practices for its program sites. Best practice guidelines include: access and participation (programs are available to all students); parental involvement (parents are involved in program delivery and decision making); program management; food quality (nutritious and culturally appropriate food); food safety; financial accountability (parental contributions); and evaluation (Russell, Evers, Dwyer, Uetrecht, & Macaskill, 2008, p. p.114-6). Breakfast for Learning’s best practice guidelines provide a program management perspective on school nutrition programs.
The Breakfast Club of Canada also funds breakfast programs. Some schools are funded by both Breakfast for Learning and The Breakfast Club of Canada (Davie Jones Elementary School, 2016). Similar to Breakfast for Learning, the Breakfast Club of Canada also has guiding practices for clubs. These practices include: “build a sustainable foundation” “nourish healthy eating habit” “create a safe physical and social environment” “provide a child and youth focused breakfast club” and “engage the whole school community” (Breakfast Club of Canada, n.d., p. 1). Further than program management, the Breakfast Club of Canada, takes “a broader approach that promotes the core values of engagement, enrichment and empowerment” (Breakfast Club of Canada, 2016, para.1).

3.2 Comprehensive School Health Approach

Comprehensive School Health provides another example of a broader approach to school nutrition program, in particular, how the health and education sectors work together. School nutrition programs such as a lunch program create an intersection of health and education by providing an opportunity for schools to work with a nutritionist to ensure the program follows Canada’s Food Guide and provincial nutrition policy. A health promotion framework, Comprehensive School Health, is concerned with empowering individuals to take control of their health.

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) “is an internationally recognized approach for building healthy school communities and supporting improvements in students’ educational outcomes” (Alberta Health Services, 2012, p. 7) and is considered “a promising approach to promoting healthy eating and living” (Veugelers & Schwartz, 2010, S5). Part of promoting healthy eating is “access to nutritious foods for all students” in which “parents are key partners in the planning”. Partnership is further defined by “meaningful dialogue, transparent decision-making and collective agreements on policies, guidelines, and strategic planning” (Veugelers & Schwartz, 2010 p. S6). Thus, a community development process is central to this health promotion approach.

A comprehensive school framework is not limited to one program and is concerned with social and physical environments, teaching and learning, healthy school policy, and partnerships and services. As an evidence-based approach, it has been shown that “students among CSH schools have been shown to have more healthy eating habits” (Veugelers & Schartz, 2010, p. S6). In the
Alberta context, this is important as “less than 50% of children and youth consume adequate amounts of fruit and vegetables” (Alberta Health Services, 2012, p.9). A comprehensive school health framework provides both decision making processes for school nutrition programs and a wider context of healthy eating in the school environment and classrooms.

3.3 Farm to School

Another integrated approach to school nutrition is the sustainable food approach of Farm to Schools. Farm to Table seeks to support the health of people, place, and planet and provide educational, health, agricultural, environmental, and economic benefits (Farm to Cafeteria Canada, 2015, p. 2). Farm to School also administers grants and provides resources on how to start Farm to School programs. Multiple strategies such as local food procurement (whether through a direct relationship with a farmer or through a food distributor), school gardens or greenhouses, local food salad bars, or composting programs are suggested as ways to meet its goals of “bringing healthy, local food into schools”, “hands on learning”, and “strengthening local food systems” (Farm to Cafeteria Canada, 2015, p. 1). Important to the implementation of these strategies is wide participation including “food service staff, teachers, administrators, public health inspectors, funders, local farmers, students, parents, students, and community organizations” (Farm to Cafeteria Canada, 2014, p.1) in decision making, Farm to School effectively realizes school nutrition programs do not happen in isolation and are part of a wider food system, a sustainable food approach that is concerned about “the planet, place, and people” (Farm to Cafeteria Canada, 2016, para.1).

3.4 Towards Social Change

Breakfast for Learning’s best practices guidelines, the Breakfast Club of Canada’s guiding practices, a comprehensive school health framework, and Farm to School’s sustainable food approach, all serve as existing examples of tools and strategies for how to improve E4C’s school nutrition program. This project identified the need for social change, recognizing that childhood hunger does not happen in isolation and is concerned with the larger social context and systemic change, as the way forward. Thus, attention is given to tools and strategies that can support social change at a school level. This section identifies practices that can further social change through food programming.
A structural approach identifies ways for people to mobilize and find solutions (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2013, p.4). Raine, McIntrye, and Dayle (2003, p. 166) suggested that school meal programs that shift away from a charity model to a social justice approach that reduces inequities could be effective as part of a comprehensive strategy. Thus, the following elements of these school food approaches are identified as fitting with a structural approach to addressing childhood hunger in a school setting: integration, shared decision making, and sustainable food practices.

3.4.1 Integration.
A program that is integrated does not happen in isolation as demonstrated by Farm to Schools. It connects the school nutrition program to classroom learning and other programs and services that the school provides. Further, an integrated program does more than provide healthy food, it can supports healthy environments for the children eating, the staff preparing, and the food producers. School nutrition programs do more than just feeding children; they impart nutritional values, employ staff, and source and purchase food. An integrated school nutrition program is seen as an effective way to move beyond simply feeding children to supporting lasting change.

3.4.2 Shared decision making.
Empowering individuals is a key component of a structural approach. Parent involvement in program delivery and decision making, a best practice guideline identified by Breakfast for Learning, and parents as partners in the Comprehensive School Health approach could serve to empower individuals. Working together and partnerships, engaging in meaningful dialogue, and using a community development process as identified by Comprehensive School Health Approach, involves including people in the decision making process. The Breakfast Club of Canada also identifies engaging the whole school community. Shared decision making is empowering.

3.4.3 Sustainable food practices.
Sustainable access to food, food security, is tied to sustainable food practices. As suggested by Farm to Cafeteria Canada, sustainable food practices support the health of the food system and the local economy. A healthy food system ensures ongoing access to food. Sustainable food practices also support the local economy. This is consistent with a structural approach which is concerned with changing the economic structure. Adapting sustainable food practices in school food programming supports sustainable access to healthy food.
3.5 Summary
Breakfast for Learning, Breakfast Club of Canada, Comprehensive School Health, and Farm to School all provide tools and strategies for school nutrition programs. As this project is concerned with addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting through a structural approach, program integration, shared decision making, and sustainable food practices were identified as potential strategies.
4.0 Methodology and Methods

This project was concerned with identifying a program plan for addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting. To answer this question, what three school communities see as the way forward was explored. This section identifies the methodology and methods used in the study, how the data was analyzed to answer the research question, and the delimitations and limitations of the study. It concludes with identifying how the parameters of the project addressed a potential conflict of interest.

This research project was approved by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board and the Edmonton Catholic School District. See Appendix 1 and 2 for approvals.

4.1 Methodology

Community-based research is consistent with a structural approach in that it moves people to action and seeks to address systemic inequities (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2013, p. 4). Community-based research is situated in the community and is seen as a vehicle for positive social change (Centre for Community Based Research, 2016, para 2). There is a continuum of community-engaged research from investigator-driven research to community-driven research (Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Clinical and Translational Research, 2008 in Hacker, 2013, p. 3) in which community-based research is situated at the centre. The continuum is useful in that while this research project involved a community organization, E4C, in the design, implementation, and dissemination of results, it did not involve community members. This research project is characteristic of community-based research in that it is situated in the community—being conducted for a community organization, a topic of “practical relevance to the community”, and “the process and results are useful to community members in making positive social change and in promoting social equity” (Centre for Community Based Research, 2016, para 2). Also central to the definition of community-based research is that community members have control “in the research design, implementation, and dissemination” (Centre for Community Based Research, 2016, para.2). The project identified the school community as experts in identifying how best to address food insecurity in their particular context. Consistent with community-based research, the community is seen as a participant in the research process not a subject of the research.
The purpose of the research project was to identify how E4C Community Services can address the underlying causes of childhood hunger through its school food programming. In order to identify the way forward, background information, including an understanding of schools’ perceptions on childhood hunger and existing food programs, was needed. The project was thus exploratory in design. In exploring what the school communities themselves see as the way forward, this project was not meant to provide a conclusive solution. Rather, it presents and explores options and alternative solutions. It also clarifies areas whether further information is required in developing a program plan for E4C Community Services and identifies topics for future research.

4.2 Methods

As a method of exploratory research, focus groups were identified as a way to gauge perceptions of the school communities on food insecurity and the role of community organizations like E4C in addressing food insecurity. The focus group method of research was chosen as it provides opportunity for genuine interaction among participants, enabling them to learn from each other, making the process useful to the participants, an essential characteristic in community-based research projects.

This research project looked at three schools in Edmonton, Alberta: St. Alphonsus Elementary/Junior High School, St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School, and Mother Teresa Elementary School. These schools are Edmonton Catholic School District schools and programming sites for E4C’s school lunch program. E4C’s school lunch programming sites also receive funding for snacks from E4C, and can be a location for E4C’s Young Chefs program. (Alberta Health Services also offers a Healthy Chefs program available to elementary schools, E4C Young Chefs program runs in schools that do not have Healthy Chefs program. School participation in Young Chefs is determined by teachers and the principal) Because all of E4C’s food programming are available to these schools, unlike the snack schools which just receive funding support, these schools were identified for exploring how E4C can move beyond alleviating short-term hunger to addressing food insecurity in a school setting. E4C has 10 schools in which it operates school lunch program—3 Edmonton Catholic School District and 7 Edmonton Public School Board schools. This research project was limited to the three Catholic
schools based on the capacity of E4C Community Services for implementing next steps in supporting school communities’ sustainable access to food.

At each participating school, a focus group on addressing childhood hunger in a school setting was scheduled. Because of the low response rate, interviews were held instead. Participants were asked to identify: their connection to the school; why they were concerned with childhood hunger in a school setting; existing school food programs and their usefulness; how they can improve their access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food and what supports were needed; their role individually, the role of the school, and the role of community groups in addressing childhood hunger in a school setting; and what more can be done to address childhood hunger and how. Participants were also asked to describe the food eaten in their home and what they would like to change about it. See Appendix 3 for the interview questions. Participation in the focus groups were open to anyone connected to the school community—school staff and volunteers, parents/guardians, and students.

Participants were recruited through the school. Based on the Edmonton Catholic School District’s research approval which stated “principals who do agree to participate will distribute information to all staff, students and families/parents,” participating principals determined how the information was distributed to the school community. This required a request for modification from the University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board. See Appendix 4 for modification approval. All participating principals also agreed that the researcher could use space at the school and the principals selected the date and time for the focus groups. All the focus groups were schedule for 6 PM on a weeknight. The researcher provided a light meal to participants and offered $20 to participating parents to cover the cost of child-care. Interviews were audio-recorded and notes taken.

4.3 Data Analysis

The interview findings were used to identify next steps such as a program plan for E4C Community Services in moving beyond alleviating short-term hunger to addressing food insecurity in a school setting. The findings were summarized to give a general overview of perceptions on existing food programs, childhood hunger, and food security, and the role of the school community in addressing childhood hunger specific to each school community. The findings were then analyzed to identify solutions and alternative options to addressing underlying
causes of childhood hunger in a school setting. The extent to which the findings can be used to develop a program plan for E4C on promoting sustainable access through its school food programs was also assessed.

4.4 Project Limitations and Delimitations
The methods of this project and its exploratory design, limit the applicability of the findings to a particular context. The findings are not generalizable, nor are they representative; they only provide a snapshot view of perceptions. The decisions made in the research process as well as factors outside of the researcher’s control both impact the research findings.

Decisions made in the research process, or delimitations, impacted the findings. These factors included: limiting the study to three schools based on E4C’s capacity in implementing the next steps; using exploratory research and focus groups to collect information to inform the way forward; who was asked to participate in the study (school staff, volunteers, parents, and students); and the timeframe of the study which just looked at a point in time.

Factors outside the researcher’s control also impacted the findings. These factors included: the response rate of the school community and how information was distributed to the school determined by Edmonton Catholic School District’s research approval. Further discussion on the project’s limitations and delimitations, why the results came out the way they did, is included in the discussion section of the report.

4.5 Conflict of Interest
The researcher is employed by the client of the study thus any potential conflict of interest must be identified. A potential conflict of interest was the researcher is employed by E4C doing community food programming such as community gardens, community kitchens, and good food box programs. This conflict was addressed by the parameters and the scope of project, in particular, the school setting. As the school setting was the focus of the research, the researcher did not start any community food programming at the participating study schools during the study, nor had the researcher previously done any programming at these schools.
5.0 Findings

5.1 Introduction

A focus group was scheduled at each of E4C’s Edmonton Catholic School District’s school lunch programming sites. Because of the low response rate, interviews were held instead. This section reports on the interview findings by school: Mother Teresa Elementary School, St. Alphonsus Elementary/ Junior High School, and St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School. First, how information was distributed to potential participants is explained, second, participation is described, and third, a narrative summary of the responses is given. The section concludes with an overview of the findings.

5.2 Mother Teresa Elementary School

At Mother Teresa Elementary School, an information sheet, revised for simpler language, was distributed to all the families at the school by being sent home with the youngest child in each family. See Appendix 5 for recruitment material. A week before the scheduled focus group the researcher set up an information table at the school at the end of the school day. The principal announced over the intercom that the researcher was there. The researcher also gave an information sheet to the two after-school programs happening that day. One parent phoned the researcher to sign-up, and two participants told the researcher in person they were planning to come. The principal was not able to attend the focus group but offered that he or the assistant principal could answer the researcher’s questions at another time.

The day of the focus group, two parents showed up (the parents who showed up were not the parents who had signed up). The audio recorder failed during the interview. The notes from these interviews were used for reporting findings. On a separate occasion, the researcher met with the principal and assistant principal and asked them the interview questions. The conversation with the principal and assistant principal was audio recorded and transcribed.

Two parents were interviewed. One parent had three children who attended the school. The other parent had one child in the school and was also employed by the school doing data entry, attendance, and assisting in the classroom. The parents were concerned with childhood hunger in a school setting because food was important to the brain, and children need to be well-fed to be good learners. Existing food programs at the school, including a lunch, snack and breakfast
program, were identified as useful. One parent indicated the reason she decided to participate in the scheduled focus group was because her grade one student did not like the food choices of the lunch program. The other parent also stated the food she ate at home had more variety than the lunch program. One parent indicated she would like to eat more healthy food in her home. It was noted that culturally appropriate food is expensive and more money and a stable job make it affordable.

Other things mentioned to improve access to food included transportation, as not everyone has a vehicle, more food options close by, food delivery, and being able to shop and price compare. Convenience was recognized as impacting food choices. Identifying the role of the individual in addressing childhood hunger is easier, according to one parent, than identifying the role of the school or community. She was not sure of the role of the school and the community. The other parent stated that the school did a great job offering breakfast, which was well rounded and her children preferred the breakfast at school which included sausage, fruit, and waffles, and looked forward to it. She was uncertain of what more could be done in terms of addressing hunger and what options were out there and suggested the food bank.

On a separate occasion, the researcher met with the principal and assistant principal of Mother Teresa Elementary School. The principal and assistant principal were both concerned with childhood hunger as food is needed so children are able to learn. Both emphasized the need for not just food, but nutritious food: “the stomach just doesn’t have to be full it’s got to be full of the right stuff” (principal). Existing food programs included a breakfast program, funded by a private donor, a snack program and the lunch program. Programs were seen as useful because: “we have a lot of kids that come from impoverished home environments, not just impoverished in terms of finances but impoverished in terms of knowledge… they just don’t have the knowledge of what nutrition is” (principal). When asked to describe the food that is eaten in their own home, both indicated that they ate healthy and there is not much they would like to change. The importance of food choices was stressed by both: “You are looking at how…there a lot of kids that are obese at such a young age but it’s sometimes not making the right food choices that that happens” (assistant principal). The assistant principal also commented, although cost was not an issue for her as “both my husband and I are working”, lower food prices on organic fruits and vegetable could improve access to food: “if groceries store… look at the benefits
of…making healthier choices, it would be very helpful if they can…drop their prices” concluding that “but again that’s out of their control sometimes, right so.” Buying local was seen as a way to support access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food. The principal and assistant principal saw their roles in addressing childhood hunger as a leadership role—liaising with funders and community partners, communicating with the breakfast donor, ensuring funding, reviewing the menu for snack and breakfast, and ensuring everything runs smoothly. The role of the school was to educate children to make healthy choices, and the kids in turn could bring this knowledge home to their families:

We need to be involved with, to make sure that, the kids know what they are eating, because if we don’t provide context for this wonderful colourful snack that they’ve got or lunch that they’ve got going on they might not think about it. We need to let them know what’s in that, why it’s good, and how they can make informed choices when they are preparing their own snack after school or preparing supper for the family and also messaging, our kids are our biggest conduit to our parents.

The role of community groups was responding to the expressed needs of the school community: “it’s just communicating what those needs are within our building and bringing the community in to help us with them” (principal). Within the community, the Edmonton Catholic School Foundation was identified as looking at ways to support families in the community in regards to childhood hunger. In identifying what more can be done nutritional education was emphasized:

We don’t just want to feed the kids, that’s important, but that’s a front-end piece, that is not enough, we need to make sure that when the kids leave this building they have information, they have habits, and they have things they can actually utilize, when they are at home, when they are at the grocery store, and they can have informed conversation at home about what nutritious eating is and I think we can still do lots more in that department, we are always looking at innovative ways to connect with our families.

5.3 St. Alphonsus Elementary/ Junior High School

At St. Alphonsus Elementary/ Junior High School an information sheet was presented at a staff meeting and sent home to all the families. See Appendix 6 for information sheet. In the week before the scheduled focus group the researcher set up an information table at the school at the end of the school day. The researcher also gave an information sheet to the afterschool program and the daycare attached to the school. No one signed up for the focus group and the principal was the only person who was interviewed.
The principal was concerned with childhood hunger because many of those who attended the school were from low-income families and children were coming to school hungry which affected school performance and behavior: “until they have had something [to eat]….it is hard to get them focused…it affects their behaviour, it affects their learning, it affects their whole day.” Existing food programs at St. Alphonsus include a breakfast program, a snack program, a lunch program for the elementary school, and a concession for the junior high. The funding from the breakfast program comes from two doctor’s corporations and Breakfast for Learning, the funding for the snack program is funded in part by E4C and donations to the school. Educational assistants prepare the breakfast, snack, and run the concession, in addition to their regular duties: “all the people involved doing it are doing double duty, they do that and then they run off and work with kids and they’re back and forth.” The school does not have any parent volunteers involved in the food programs. The importance of child food programs for the kids who are hungry was stressed: “unequivocally, I know without any qualifications they [existing food programs at the school] are very, very useful.”

When asked about access to healthy and affordable food in his home, the principal indicated that he and his wife tried to eat healthy but time was the biggest barrier: “[sigh] I would love to have more time to be able to cook.” Planning and preparing were seen as ways to improve access to healthy and affordable food: “actually taking to time to prepare….what would help us if we planned it in advance.” Supports were not needed for him personally to improve his food access to healthy food—“it’s more and more willpower for me.” In his role as principal he made funding and staffing decisions about food programs. The school’s role was providing space and coordinating food programs to address childhood hunger. Community partners like E4C and the doctors’ corporations that provided funding for the breakfast program were seen as essential: “We couldn’t do it without ‘em…plain and simple…there’s no budget line that comes in from Alberta Education that says ‘Here, feed kids.’” The principal identified the need for funding and staffing resources as the way forward:

I don’t know if it’s [the snack program] is adequate for some, especially our really hungry kids….seventeen cents doesn’t cover it for them…. ideally our school would have a snack person at breakfast someone just dedicated toward doing that.
Current E4C snack funding is $0.18 per child per day. This funding is supplemented by the school through private donations and food from the food bank in providing a daily mid-morning snack to students.

5.4. St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School

At St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School, the information sheet was sent out to all the families at the school and included a response form which could be returned to the school to sign-up. See Appendix 7 for information sheet. Those who signed up were sent home a copy of the consent form. At St. Francis of Assisi school 11 people signed up to participate in the focus group—one student and 10 parents. Those who signed up were sent home a copy of the consent form. One participant returned a signed consent form to the school. Another participant returned the form to say she did not want to participate. The school also phoned those who signed up to remind them and seven of the 11 confirmed that they were planning to attend. The evening of the focus group, none of the individuals who signed up showed up. The only participant was the principal.

The principal was concerned with childhood hunger “because our families here aren’t able to provide for their children.” Existing school food programs at the school included the E4C lunch program and snack support, a breakfast program supported by individual donations and a local hospital which provided cereal (while the school pays for the milk). The school also has non-perishables from the Food Bank available to families. The school picks up from the food bank twice a month. Existing food programs were “absolutely” useful and families attended the school because of the lunch program. The principal suggested that the lunch program reduced stress for the families—“they are looking at like this is one thing I don’t have to worry about and I can really do something else with my kids or I can try to pay my utilities because I don’t have to worry about this.”

Asked to describe the food eaten in his home and what he would like to change about it, the principal indicated what he ate was nutritionally balanced as healthy eating was something he and his wife valued. The principal noted that not all his food preferences were affordable: “I wish beef was cheaper [laughing].” Nutritional knowledge was identified as what was needed to improve access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food. In addressing childhood hunger in a school setting, the principal saw his role personally as making donations to the food bank, and professionally “to make sure we are still able to offer the programs for our kids.” The
role of the school was instilling nutritional values and knowledge. The school is also an Apple school which promotes active living and healthy choices by identifying choose most often foods. The role of community organizations was providing services that are needed. The principal saw the E4C school lunch program as a good model for school nutrition programs: “when the government was asking what are we going to do about food programs for schools and sending out surveys on that, it’s like, this is the model you want to go with. this is working for the schools that we have.” In identifying what more can be done and how, the principal indicated that more options in the lunch program and sharing information about healthy eating are important going forward.

5.5 Summary of Findings
The response rate at all the schools was low but differed from school to school from no-one signing up, to signing up and not showing up, to showing up and not signing up. The researcher collected responses from two parents, three principals, and an assistant principal. All three schools had a breakfast, snack, and lunch program. Childhood hunger was a concern as being hungry affected children’s ability to learn and kids were coming to school hungry. Programs were seen as useful. Two participants indicated that they would like to make changes to the food eaten in their home to eat healthier. Time, cost, and convenience impacted food choices.

Ways to improve access to food as identified by participants included: a stable job, transportation, proximity to food, and lower food prices. The parents did not indicate what their individual roles in addressing childhood hunger in a school setting were and one principal indicated that personally he could donate to the food bank. Most of what was said focussed on the professional role of (assistant) principal(s) in providing resources and oversight to school food programs. The role of the school was to provide food programs and teach healthy eating. The role of the community was to support the needs identified by the school. More education on healthy eating, more funding, and staff resources were all identified as ways forward.
6.0 Discussion and Analysis

This section of the report explores why the results came out the way they did and the extent to which the research question, what do the school community see as the way forward in addressing childhood hunger in a school setting, was answered. The findings were analyzed to identify solutions and alternative options to addressing underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting. The discussion section, thus, identifies the extent to which the findings can inform a way forward for E4C Community Services in addressing underlying causes of childhood hunger.

First, why the results came out the way they did, including unexpected findings, are considered. Second, perceptions on addressing childhood hunger and food insecurity are identified within the context of current approaches to childhood hunger and school food programs. In conclusion, the extent to which the findings can support E4C Community Services’ objective to identify a way forward in supporting sustainable access to food in a school setting is discussed.

6.1 Reflections on Research Methods Used

Overall, there was very low participation—so much so that interviews were held rather than focus groups—which limited insight into what the school communities see as the most effective way forward in addressing childhood hunger in a school setting. Consideration to why the research results came out the way they did, reflection on the research process, is a component of community-based research. First, why there was low participation is explored. Second, unexpected findings are identified and alternative explanations for the research findings are considered.

There are many factors that could explain low participation in the study. Consideration is given to the research methods, the social context, and level of interest in the research topic. Focus group participation was open to parents/guardians, school staff and volunteers, and students as schools are a common point of contact. Each school distributed study information differently and the response at each school was different from no-one signing up, to signing up and not showing up, to showing up and not signing-up. The only participants were parents and school staff. Participant recruitment may explain why students and school volunteers did not participate, all the schools distributed information about the study by sending it home. Students and volunteers may not have been aware of the focus group. When the researcher set up an information table at St. Alphonsus School at the end of a school day, it was mainly students who picked up an
information sheet. The time, 6 PM on a weeknight may have not been a good time for students or participants in general. It is noteworthy that time is one of the factors that was identified as preventing access to healthy food.

The research project used community-based research and chose focus groups in its research design. Feedback from the school community on the role of individuals, the school, and community organizations in addressing childhood hunger was sought. Low participation could suggest that more background information about the school community is needed, in particular, on the best way to engage parents and on what issues are important to the school community. This is consistent with a community-based approach. Low participation which resulted in interviews being held instead of focus groups could also suggest lack of interest in the research topic. The willingness of the schools to participate in the study, as well as the fact that 14 individuals signed up in advance to participate, suggest that there is interest in the research topic. The interest suggests that the response was limited by factors other than the topic. It shows that while there is interest in addressing childhood hunger in a school setting, more information on how to engage the school community in a convenient and meaningful way is needed.

The social context of the school community could also inform the extent to which the school community participated. The researcher asked the principals about parent involvement at the school. The principals indicated that many parents are working multiple jobs, families are just surviving, and families come from countries where there is not parent involvement in the school. It was also interesting to note that in commenting on parent involvement one principal cited the parent satisfaction survey, saying that parents are happy with their non-involvement. While focus groups are useful in exploring perceptions there was not enough of a response rate for focus groups; alternative research methods that may generate higher response rates are worthwhile future considerations for engaging the school community. Identifying what, if anything, the school community would like to change about their social context could be done as a future assessment.

The purpose of the focus groups was to identify a way forward for E4C Community Services to address food insecurity in school settings. The findings had two unexpected, yet noteworthy, findings for identifying a way forward for E4C Community Services: (1) three participants suggested the existing food options in the lunch program need improvement; and (2) none of the
participants mentioned E4C’s Young Chefs program in the focus groups. These findings could be used as an evaluation of E4C’s existing school food program, a reason for adapting a set of best practices for the program such as Breakfast for Learning’s best practices guidelines, or indicate the need for integrating the programming so there is a connection between cooking and eating programs. The findings could also be used to question the legitimacy of E4C’s assumption that social change is necessary to address childhood hunger. In identifying what the school communities see as the way forward in addressing childhood hunger, alternative options and solutions must be considered.

6.2 Addressing Childhood Hunger in a School Setting

To understand what the school communities see as an effective way forward in addressing childhood hunger, consideration must be given to current perceptions on existing school food programming and food security. The interviews identified perceptions on the role and purpose of school food programs and respondents’ views on food security. The findings identified solutions and alternative options to consider in addressing underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting with attention given to how interview responses reflect current approaches to childhood hunger and school food programs. The findings are then used to identify what the school communities see as the way forward, what more can be done and how it can be accomplished in addressing childhood hunger in a school setting.

6.2.1 Perceptions on school food programming.

Interview respondents were all concerned with childhood hunger in a school setting, in particular how hunger impacts learning. All but one participant mentioned how hunger impacts learning and all participants saw school food programing as useful. Hunger affects children’s academic performance (Howe & Covell, 2003, p. 1077) and school food programs are effective in improving the cognitive performance of children (Greenhalgh, Kristjansson, & Robinson, 2007, p.858). How perceptions on the role and purpose of school food programs identified by this study reflect current approaches to childhood hunger is useful for identifying strategic next steps for E4C Community Services.

Beyond feeding stomachs and supporting academic achievement, school food programs can be seen as part of educating students on healthy eating and nutrition. These perceptions on school food programs suggest both an undermining of parents’ knowledge and a wider integrated health
promotion approach to school food. It is noteworthy that the long-term benefits of school nutrition programs in regards to breaking the cycle of poverty have not been documented (Greenhalgh, Kristjansson, & Robinson, 2007, p.859).

All but one participant identified providing school food programming as the role of the school. The principals also suggested that the role of the school was teaching nutritional values: “our role here ‘cuz we are an Apple School…. [is] telling our kids these are proper nutritional values that you want to have” (principal). Apple Schools are part of a wider integrated health promotion approach to school food, Alberta Health Services’ Framework for Comprehensive School Health Approach, and strive to create “school environments that support health and learning” (2012, p. 8). Another principal suggested that teaching nutritional values through school food programs could impact parents’ behaviours:

because if we don’t provide context for this wonderful colourful snack that they’ve got or lunch that they’ve got… they might not think about it….we need to let them know what’s in that, why it’s good, how they can make informed choices when they are preparing their own snack after school or preparing supper for the family… our kids are our biggest conduit to our parents

The findings suggest that school food programs can be used to inform nutritional education at the schools. In doing so, school food programs could risk taking on a family substitution role, undermining parents’ knowledge, and stigmatization (McIntrye, Dayle, & Raine, 2003, p. 162; 164). One principal suggested that providing the school lunch program created stability: “it’s to provide that stability. The kids know it, the parents know it.” Another principal suggested that teaching nutrition to children could impact parents’ buying choices:

And letting Mom know, how when we are going to the store we can easily pick up that snack right there because we had it the other day and it’s good for you, can we pick it up mom cuz it’s not that expensive.

Power (2005, p. S39) found that “neither nutritional knowledge nor food skills appear to be significant factors” affecting healthy eating among low-income Canadians. How nutrition is taught in the school, whether through school feeding programs or part of a wider approach, can risk undermining parents’ knowledge.

6.2.2 Perceptions on food insecurity.

Childhood hunger “is an extreme manifestation of food insecurity” (McIntrye, Bartow, Pow, & Potestio, 2012, p.428) which occurs in a context of social vulnerability. The principals’ focus group responses indicated that social vulnerability is an issue in the school communities.
• Mother Teresa Elementary School: “We have a lot of kids that come from impoverished home environments.”

• St. Alphonsus Elementary/Junior High School: “We are dealing with a family right now that is homeless.”

• St Francis of Assisi Elementary School:
  Our families here aren’t able to provide for their children…They’re coming home, and they’re just, they’re surviving. This morning I found somebody’s statement… saying that their utilities are going to be cut off unless their $790 bill is paid in the next day and it’s ripped up torn on the side there.

Childhood hunger and the social context in which it occurs was a concern to the school principals.

Factors that impacted access to healthy food identified by the participants included: time, cost, and convenience. Respondents, thus, identified barriers to access to healthy food. Participants identified supports needed to improve access to food, including: a stable job, transportation, proximity to food, and lower food prices. These supports are consistent with the literature which also identified the need for affordable transportation, increasing minimum wage, employment opportunities, and changing food pricing strategies.

6.2.3 What more can be done and how?
Food insecurity, barriers to healthy and affordable food, was recognized by respondents. The focus groups sought to provide the opportunity to identify ways for people to mobilize and find solutions (van de Sande & Schwartz, 2013) to food insecurity in a school setting. In order to do this, respondents were asked to identify the role of the individual, the school, and community organizations in addressing childhood hunger. The follow-up question was, what more can be done and how. Interview responses identified the need for systemic change to address food insecurity (a stable job, transportation, proximity to food, and lower food prices); however, when participants were given the opportunity to define the way forward responses reinforced the status quo.

In identifying a way forward, interview respondents focused on doing more of the same rather than social change. More education on healthy eating, more funding, and increased staff resources were all identified as the way forward. It is interesting to note one participant identified their individual role in addressing childhood hunger to be donating to the food bank and another
mentioned the food bank in identifying what more can be done. Food banks do not increase access to healthy food as the nutritional value of the food provided is low (Raine, 2005, p. S10). Two principals emphasized nutritional values, education and knowledge, as the way forward in addressing childhood hunger. The way forward focused on changing individual behaviour rather than the social context in which childhood hunger occurs. The literature identified the shortcomings of existing approaches in addressing childhood hunger and the need to shift away from individual behaviour modification to addressing systemic inequities.

Recognizing the need for systemic change, yet not identifying a way forward in addressing systemic barriers, could suggest that the current capacity of the school community in addressing underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting is limited.

6.3 Summary
The findings inform the extent to which a way forward for E4C Community Services in addressing underlying causes of childhood hunger can be identified. The findings provided limited insight into how E4C Community Services can address underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting. The response rate was low and interviews were held rather than focus groups. Responses indicated that while the school community recognized systemic challenges, modifying individual behaviour and doing more of the same were seen as the way forward. The research findings on what the school communities see as an effective way forward in addressing childhood hunger in a school setting did not provide enough information on their own for E4C Community Services to develop a program plan for supporting sustainable access to food in E4C’s school food programming sites.
7.0 Next steps: Towards a Program Plan

7.1 Introduction
This research project sought to identify a program plan to move E4C Community Services beyond the short-term alleviation of childhood hunger to addressing its underlying causes in a school setting. The low response rate as well as alternative options and solutions identified by the research findings, all indicate that more information is needed to develop a program plan. Informed by E4C’s organizational mandate, the research findings, and current approaches to childhood hunger, this section identifies further considerations for E4C Community Services in developing a program plan. It concludes with recommendations for strategic priorities and corresponding actions steps for E4C school food programming to move forward in addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger.

7.2 Options to Consider

7.2.1 Engage the school community.
The low response rate to the study limited the findings. Further information is needed to develop a plan based on what the school community sees as the way forward. The following are considerations for engaging the school community: identifying what is important to the school community (what their priorities are) and where people are already interacting (as schools may not be a significant point of contact for some in the school community). The study defined the school community as parent/guardians, school staff and volunteers (including after-school programming), and students. Future school engagement could include gathering information from the school community on the best way to engage the community, as well as, on what issues are important to the school community. How the school community is included in future research from the beginning should also be considered. In considering this, attention should be given to parent involvement.

Parent involvement in all three study schools is low, and low participation in the study is symptomatic of the wider non-involvement. While the social context in which families are just surviving was given as one explanation, other explanations included cultural differences in which parents traditionally are not involved in the school, and that parents are happy with their non-involvement. Engaging the school community needs to give careful consideration to each of
these factors. Knowing the school community, identifying how to build relationships with parents, participating in meaningful dialogue, and community development processes are essential to the way forward.

### 7.2.2 Mobilize to find solutions.

The research findings suggested that while there is a recognized need for systemic change, in identifying a way forward, doing more of the same (first-order change) was suggested. The practical implications of this are two-fold. First, informed by the exploratory research design which is open to alternative options and solutions to the research question, consideration should be given to what first-order changes E4C Community Services could make. Second, consideration should be given to how E4C can support mobilizing the school community in finding solutions to childhood hunger and addressing underlying causes.

The research findings suggested the need for three first-order changes to be considered by E4C Community Services in its school food programming. First, how E4C can increase the options offered in the school lunch program should be considered. Second, how E4C can further support schools in terms of funding and staffing resources should be considered. Third, consideration should be given to that fact that none of the participants mentioned the Young Chefs program in identifying existing school food programs. While Young Chefs is a short six week program that only occurs once or twice in a school year, nutritional knowledge was mentioned as important. Young Chefs teaches nutrition through cooking. Consideration should be given to how the Young Chefs program and/or cooking skills are connected to other school food programming.

The research findings also suggested that while there was a need for systemic change; participants were not able to identify a way forward for addressing systemic change. Recognizing the need for systemic change, yet not identifying a way forward in addressing systemic barriers, suggests that the current capacity of the school community is limited. The opportunity exists for E4C Community Services to support the school community in mobilizing to find solutions to childhood hunger. In order to identify a way forward, the school communities’ perceptions on their role in existing social arrangements need to be explored. Consideration should also be given to what extent E4C Community Services currently reinforces prevailing social arrangements and how changes can be made to existing programs. One specific area to consider is parents’ participation, or lack of, in E4C’s school food programming. Future
research could evaluate whether E4C Community Services’ current food programs reinforce systemic inequities, take on a family substitution role, or undermine parents’ knowledge.

7.3 **Recommended Strategic Priorities**

E4C Community Services identified the opportunity within the context of the organizational mandate and strategic direction to support sustainable access to food, food security, in a school setting through its school food programming. Strategic priorities, based on the research findings, existing school food approaches, and root causes, are recommended to inform the way forward. Three strategic priorities, engaging community, building capacity, and integrating programming, are recommended to support E4C Community Services in moving forward in addressing underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting. The meaning, the reason it was recommended, how it fits with the organizational plan, and potential action steps are given for each priority. In summary, a list of recommended actions steps is given.

**7.3.1 Engage community.**

Engaging community meets people where they are and seeks to understand what is important to the community. Meaningful and on-going dialogue and shared decision making are essential in engaging community. Engaging community is an important first step in developing an action plan. Understanding the school community will enable E4C to identify how best to promote food security in a school setting. Important to this is understanding E4C’s own role in the school community and whether E4C is perpetuating power over and systemic inequalities through its programming. This strategic priority is consistent with E4C’s service philosophy of meeting people where they are at (E4C, 2013a, p. 6). Two action steps that support this strategic priority are conduct an evaluation of E4C’s school nutrition program and develop and adapt a set of best practices on parental involvement.

**7.3.2 Build capacity.**

A second strategic priority that is recommended is building capacity. Building capacity develops and strengthens the skills and resources of individuals and communities. Building capacity is a strategic priority because interview respondents recognized the need for systemic change, yet did not identify a way forward in addressing systemic barriers. Increasing individual’s power to act supports addressing underlying causes. E4C school food programming could include parents in the delivery and decision making, whether through employment or as volunteers, in a way that
celebrates their knowledge, skills, and culture. Developing a set of best practices on parental involvement is again recommended as an action step.

Beyond individual capacity, E4C can help build the capacity of the community by buying local produce. Building community capacity is part of E4C’s service philosophy (E4C, 2013a, p. 6). Sourcing from local producers is healthy for the environment, the food system, and the local economy. Sustainable access to food, food security, is tied to sustainable food practices. A recommended action step is adapt a local procurement policy that commits to incorporating local produce from local producers into school food programming.

7.3.3 Integrate programming.
An integrated school nutrition program is seen as an effective way to move beyond simply feeding children to addressing root causes and supporting lasting change. It connects the school nutrition program to classroom learning and other program and services that the school provides. The research findings suggested the importance of nutritional education; however, no one mentioned E4C’s Young Chefs program which teaches cooking skills. Informed by approaches like Farm to School and Comprehensive School Health, E4C’s school food programs could move forward in integrating programming by: fostering relationships and partnerships with parents, teachers, and community organizations; and working with the schools on curriculum and programming that connects growing food, preparing and cooking food, and eating food. One way growing and eating could be connected is by establishing a school garden that is incorporated into the Young Chefs program or school lunch program.

7.4 Summary
This project has identified engaging community, building capacity, and integrating programming as strategic priorities for E4C school food programs to further the organizational mission by addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger. The research findings did not provide insight into a way forward for specific school communities. Table 1 summarizes the recommended action steps and the corresponding timeline based on the current capacity (staff and resources) of the program.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Action Step</th>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and adapt best practices on parental involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a local food procurement policy</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
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<td>Foster relationships and partnerships with parents and organizations connected to the</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>program schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct an evaluation of E4C’s school food programs</td>
<td>Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with the schools to connect growing food, preparing and cooking food, and eating</td>
<td>Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>food</td>
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8.0 Conclusion
E4C’s school nutrition program helps children learn by alleviating hunger in a school setting. Childhood hunger happens in a wider context of food insecurity and social vulnerability. This project sought to further the organizational mandate by answering the question, what more can be done and how in addressing childhood hunger in three school communities. In addressing underlying causes, the need for social change, was noted. Shared decision making, integrated programming, and sustainable food practices were identified as examples of ways to support social change through school nutrition programs. Focus groups that were scheduled at each of the participating schools provided limited insight into what the school communities see as the way forward. The response rate was low and interviews were held instead of focus groups. Findings indicated that while systemic challenges were recognized such as employment, transportation, and food prices, modifying individual behaviour and doing more of the same, more education on healthy eating, more funding, and staff resources, were seen as the way forward.

In identifying a way forward, it was noted that consideration to how to engage the community in mobilizing to find solutions is needed. The study findings did not provide enough information to develop a program plan based on what the school communities see as the way forward in addressing the underlying causes of childhood hunger in a school setting. The findings informed three recommended strategic priorities for moving forward: engaging community, building capacity, and integrating programming. Two action steps were recommended for implementation: develop and adapt best practices on parental involvement and develop a local food procurement policy. These steps are seen as the starting point for E4C’s student nutrition program to move beyond alleviating childhood hunger to supporting sustainable access to healthy and affordable food for students and their families. Further evaluation is needed to determine how E4C’s existing food programs reinforce and challenge existing systemic inequities.
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Appendixes

Appendix 1: UVIC Approval

![Certificate of Approval]

**Certificate of Approval**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Investigator:</th>
<th>Sacha Deelstra</th>
<th>Ethics Protocol Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>UVic Department:</td>
<td>PADM</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor:</td>
<td>Dr. Kimberly Speers</td>
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</table>

| Project Title:          | Addressing childhood hunger in a school setting: A strategic plan |
|                        |                                                                  |

| Research Team Member   | Kimberly Speers (Academic Supervisor, UVic); Annette Woudstra (E4C - Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation) |
|                        |                                                                 |

**Declared Project Funding:** None

**Conditions of Approval**

- This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.
- **Modifications**
  - To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.
- **Renewals**
  - Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.
- **Project Closures**
  - When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

**Certification**

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.

[Signature]

Dr. Rachael Scarth
Associate Vice-President Research Operations

Certificate Issued On: 05-May-16
Appendix 2: ECSD Approval

Date: March 23, 2016
Researcher: Sacha Deelstra
Email: sacha.deelstra@gmail.com
From: Cecilia Fenrich
Manager, District Research
780-441-6115
Cecilia.Fenrich@ecsd.net
Title of Research: Addressing childhood hunger in a school setting

Sacha Deelstra has permission to conduct the above named research project at St. Alphonsus Elementary/Junior High School, Mother Teresa Elementary School and St. Frances of Assisi Elementary School in the Edmonton Catholic School District:

- Cheryl Shinkaruk, Coordinator of Projects and Programs, must be kept informed of all research activities.
- The researcher is to contact Cheryl Shinkaruk with any questions or any further information regarding this research and is to be provided with the final report of this research as required in the research application.
- The researcher may not request nor receive contact information for school staff, students or families/parents.
- Principals may or may not choose to participate in the research.
- Principals who do agree to participate will distribute information to all staff, students and families/parents who will then contact the researcher directly if they wish to participate in the research – this will necessitate the changing of the consent forms.
- The provision of space for the focus groups, either during or after school hours, is at the discretion of the principal(s) who agrees(s) to participate. The principal(s) may agree to distribute the information but not to have the focus group meet at the school. Should a principal not agree to provide a meeting space, the consent form for that school’s participants will need to be changed.

Educational Planning
Edmonton Catholic Schools
9807 – 113 Street
Edmonton Alberta
T5K 1C2
Appendix 3: Focus Group Questions

1. How are you connected to the school?

2. Why are you concerned with addressing childhood hunger in a school setting?

3. At the school, are you aware of existing food programs? Are they useful?

4. How would you describe the food that is eaten at your home? What would you like to change about it?

5. How can you improve access to healthy affordable, and culturally appropriate food? What supports are needed?

6. What is your role individually? What is the role of the school? How do community groups, like E4C who provide a school lunch program fit in? Is there more that can be done? How?
Appendix 4: Modification Approval

Office of Research Services | Administrative Services Building Bm B202 PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
T 250-752-4362 | F 250-721-9960 | https://www.uvic.ca/research

Modification of an Approved Protocol

| PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Sacha Deelstra | ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER: 16-055 |
| UVic STATUS: Master's Student | Minimal Risk Review - Delegated |
| UVic DEPARTMENT: PADM | ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE: 04-Mar-16 |
| SUPERVISOR: Dr. Kimberly Speers | MODIFIED ON: 05-May-16 |
| | APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE: 03-Mar-17 |

PROJECT TITLE: Addressing childhood hunger in a school setting: A strategic plan

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBER: Kimberly Speers (Academic Supervisor, UVic); Annette Woudstra (E4C - Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation)

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Modifications
To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

Renewals
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Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.

Dr. Rachael Scarth
Associate Vice-President Research Operations

Certificate issued On: 11-May-16
Let’s talk about food.

You are invited to talk about your ideas in a group.

**Who:** Students, Parents/ Guardians, School staff and volunteers

**When:** Wednesday, May 18 at 6 PM.

**Where:** Mother Teresa Elementary School

Phone Sacha to sign-up or for more information: 780-886-0432. Sacha Deelstra is doing a research project as a graduate student at University of Victoria.

A light meal will be served. Child care is not provided. Participants with children are able to receive $20 to cover the cost of childcare.

This research is being conducted for E4C School Nutrition Program. This research project is approved by University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board and Edmonton Catholic School District.
Appendix 6: St. Alphonsus Information Sheet

Addressing childhood hunger in a school setting: A focus group

Let’s talk about food.

**Who:** Students, Parents/ Guardians, School Staff and Volunteers

**When:** Monday, May 2 at 6 PM.

**Where:** St. Alphonsus. Sign-up is required.

Participants are invited to talk about their ideas in a focus group setting.

A light supper will be served. Child care is not provided. Participants with children will be provided a reimbursement for child care.

Phone Sacha Deelstra, principal investigator and graduate student at University of Victoria, at 780-886-0432 to sign up or for more information.

This research is being conducted for E4C School Nutrition Program. This research project is approved by University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board and Edmonton Catholic School District.
Appendix 7: St. Francis of Assisi Information Sheet

Addressing childhood hunger in a school setting: A focus group

Let’s talk about food.

Who: Students, Parents/ Guardians, School staff and volunteers

When: Tuesday, May 10 at 6 PM.

Where: St. Francis of Assisi School. Return this sheet to the school to sign up.

Participants are invited to talk about their ideas in a focus group setting.

A light supper will be served. Child care is not provided. Participants with children will be provided a reimbursement for child care.

Phone Sacha Deelstra, principal investigator and graduate student at University of Victoria, at 780-886-0432 to sign up or for more information.

This research is being conducted for E4C School Nutrition Program. This research project is approved by University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board and Edmonton Catholic School District.

Focus group sign-up

Participant’s Name:
Connection to the school community:
   □ School staff
   □ Volunteer
       Volunteer area:
   □ Program staff
       Program:
   □ Parent/ Guardian
       Child’s / Children’s name(s):
   □ Student

Contact number: