



Foundation of Greater Montréal

# Zero Hunger in Montréal

## A large-scale project by the FGM and twelve partners

Last spring, the Foundation of Greater Montréal (FGM) and its partners announced the launch of work to map Montréal's food ecosystem.

Here's an interview with FGM President and CEO Yvan Gauthier about this initiative



### Why has the FGM chosen to tackle the issue of hunger?

Because hunger is a major issue—and a pressing one. The [2017 Vital Signs of Greater Montréal](#) report highlighted that 11% of households in Montréal experience moderate or serious food insecurity, as compared to an average 8% across Canada. And hunger affects children. We know that over a third of the Quebecers who receive food assistance are under the age of 18. It isn't hard to understand the impact food insecurity can have on school success, family life and many other things. Given that our board of directors had just adopted the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals to guide the Foundation's orientations, working towards achieving the goal of "Zero Hunger" seemed a natural next step.

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**"Hunger is a major issue—and a pressing one."**

Yvan Gauthier

President and CEO

Foundation of Greater Montréal

### What have you learned from your observations?

After publishing *Vital Signs*, we consulted many frontline actors in the fight against hunger. That was when we realized the need to create a tool to visualize our city's food security ecosystem, in order to be able to compare it to those in other cities and identify what investments are required. In these tasks, we are inspired by the work of the Victoria Foundation and its partners (Centraide, the City of Victoria and the Vancouver Island Health Authority, among others).

### How did you start?

We mandated the firm Récolte, from the Pôle systèmes alimentaires (founded in partnership with Esplanade), to conduct two studies: a meta-study of food security research in Montréal and a map of the food ecosystem.

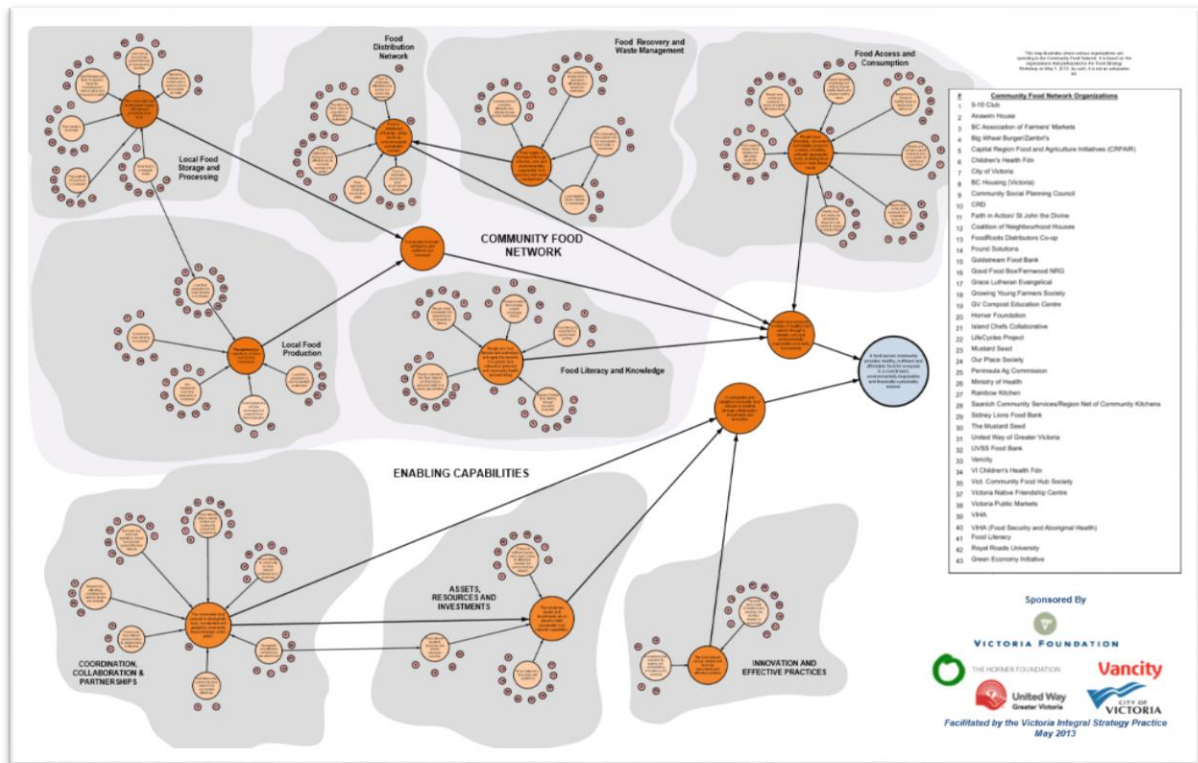
From the very start, we knew that the success of a project like this would necessarily depend on a collective process. A taskforce was therefore quickly set up to foster the sharing of knowledge, mobilize the ecosystem's stakeholders and see how we could carry out a joint effort. This taskforce gathered 13 non-profits, ministries and public agencies: Centraide of Greater Montreal; the Dépôt Community Food Centre; the Direction régionale de santé publique (CIUSSS du Centre-Sud de l'Île-de-Montréal); the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon; the Léger Foundation; the McConnell Foundation; the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; the McKinsey Group; Moisson Montréal; Système alimentaire montréalais; Ville de Montréal; the Foundation of Greater Montréal; and, of course, Récolte, which was conducting the study. The expertise contained in this taskforce is impressive!

### What are the stages of the study?

This study aims to collaboratively map out all the knowledge and stakeholders, but also the challenges and opportunities, in Greater Montréal. It is not a miracle or turnkey solution to eliminate hunger tomorrow, but this process will identify needs, define strategies and better orient the collective investments that need to be made to counter food insecurity.

First, an overall picture of the food insecurity knowledge on the island of Montréal will be drawn up to catalogue existing studies and identify neglected areas. Second, we will start mapping the ecosystem's players this fall according to the major functions of food security: food production, distribution, recycling, etc. A dozen group sessions will then be organized with stakeholders throughout this ecosystem, with a view to encompassing not only their diversity, but also their firsthand knowledge. The key element is that the entire ecosystem will be examined relative to food security. In partnership with local stakeholders, this joint process will enable the project's development to take different realities into account.

**“The study's aim is to collaboratively map out all the knowledge and stakeholders, but also the challenges and opportunities, in Greater Montréal.”**



Food System Roadmap from Victoria, B.C., sponsored by Victoria Foundation.

### And then what?

We hope that as many involved stakeholders and citizens as possible adopt the findings as their own and implement collective strategies to overcome the identified challenges. We hope the ecosystem approach will increasingly take root in the current context, which is very favourable to concerted and impactful actions that will put an end to hunger. A recently developed network that brings together the primary players in the public, community, philanthropic and private spheres, the *Système alimentaire montréalais*, provides strategic regional leadership that fosters innovation and acts as a lever of sustainable development.

What's more, a very important conference is slated to be held in Montréal from November 1 to 4 by Food Secure Canada. This will be the opportunity to learn from other Canadian cities and discuss their similar projects and experiences. The FGM has decided to encourage the participation of ecosystem players in this event by giving grants to food security organizations.

The FGM's initiative is currently stirring great interest in the community. We hope it will truly contribute to achieving Zero Hunger in Montréal!