a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
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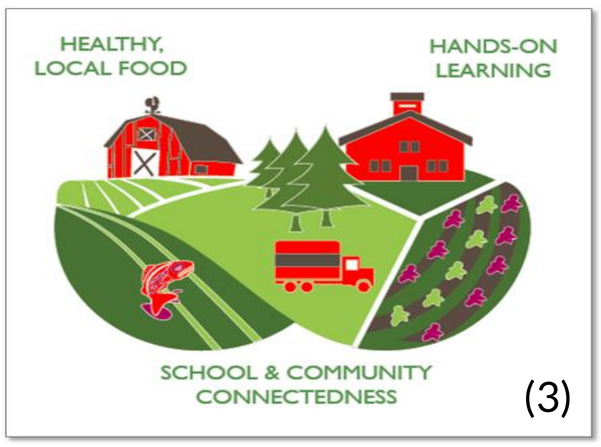
Indigenous Foodscapes

The Issue:

- There has been a lack of teaching Indigenous history, culture, and ways of knowing in Canadian schools (1)
- School gardens provide an opportunity for children to increase their food literacy and connection with the food system (2)



Why it matters:

- "Indigenizing" school food systems connects children with Indigenous knowledge, ways of learning and community. "Indigenizing" refers to integration of Aboriginal perspectives and culture into current curriculum (4).
- Indigenous knowledge is important to build attitudes and skills that enable children to work in cross-cultural settings (1)
- Foodscapes provide a space for school community learning (students, teachers, parents, community members) and the sharing of cultural knowledge

Our Approach

Help Farm-to-School (F2S) explore how to transform school gardens into Indigenous Foodscapes (IF) on Greater Vancouver school grounds, by mapping current assets and needs

Understand F2S needs in initial meeting with community partner and UBC groups → Document walking tours led by Indigenous leader, Lori Snyder, and compile assets & needs for Nightingale and Dr. AR Lord Elemetary schools → Deliver complete report to F2S on assets and needs of both schools

Nightingale Elementary

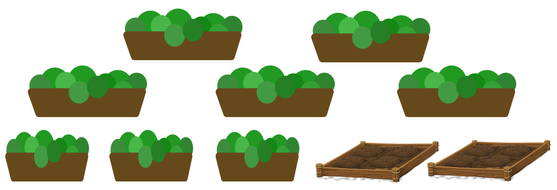
- ~250 students
- Children from 17 different countries
- 14 different languages spoken

Dr. AR Lord Elementary

- ~130 students
- Multicultural backgrounds
- 14 different languages spoken

Demographic Information

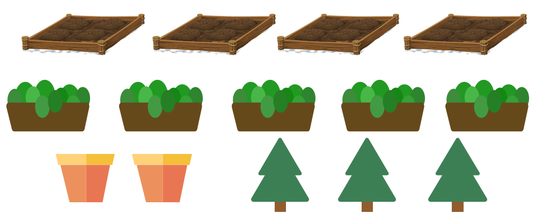
Assets



10 pre-existing garden sites:
- 5 4x8 garden boxes
- 3 2x5 garden boxes
- 2 additional non-raised beds

>15 indigenous plants (including raspberry, wild strawberry, mallow, arugula, lemon balm, rosemary, and lavender)

Assets



14 pre-existing garden sites:
- 4 non-raised beds
- 5 4x8 garden boxes
- 2 circles of large pots for potatoes & weeds
- 3 important tree sites

>7 indigenous plants (currants, sunchokes, yarrow, Oregon grape, nodding onions, arugula, raspberry)

Access to water

3 compost bins

Passionate team of teachers

Needs

- More plants: Oregon grape, viola, 3 sisters, nodding onions, salal, Nootka rose
- Repair rotting benches in school garden
- Nutrient-rich, fertilized soil for all sites

Needs

- More plants: Oregon grape, yarrow, nodding onion, strawberries, 3 sisters, snap peas
- Greenhouse bed for more vegetable production
- Nutrient-rich, fertilized soil for all beds, except tree sites

Develop garden management system

Discussion & Future Work

Both AR Lord and Nightingale Elementaries have significant infrastructures present to build Indigenous Foodscapes, under Lori Snyder's guidance. With their equally passionate team of teachers, both schools upon funding will be able to develop their IF and work towards the F2S goals of food literacy, community, inclusion and cultural understanding.

Next steps:
1) determine the allocation of funds for all 7 of the schools that are part of the F2S Indigenous Foodscape project
2) develop gardening resources for teachers to support IF development
3) utilize gardens as teaching tools for students and communities

Key Messages

- *Funding and collaboration at all levels is critical for the development of school gardens*
- *It is important for children to learn about indigenous knowledge and culture to promote cultural understanding, especially when living on unceded territories*

References:
(1) Vinkle, E. (2012). Cultural Competency - Working with Aboriginal Peoples: A Non-Native Perspective. Native Social Work Journal. 8, 129-142.
(2) Carlsson, L., Williams, PL., & Hayes-conroy, JS. (2016). School Gardens: Cultivating Food Security in Nova Scotia Public Schools? Canada Journal of Dietetics Practice and Research, 77, 119-125.
(3) Farm to School BC. (2017, October 16). Vancouver Region Farm to School Hub – Community Animator Fall Blog Post [Web log post]. Retrieved from https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/vancouver-region-farm-school-hub-community-animator-fall-blog-post/
(4) Manitoba Education and Youth (2003). Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula. Accessed at: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/abpersp/ab_persp.pdf

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