



Laurier  
Centre for  
Sustainable  
Food Systems

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems



# Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems

## WHAT WE DO

The Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems addresses the complex environmental, social, and economic challenges facing our food systems by creating:

- **Collaborative research opportunities** among food systems researchers and community partners
- **Robust knowledge sharing networks** that connect food systems actors at the local and international level
- **Sustainable food systems change** through community-driven research, knowledge mobilization, capacity building, and advocacy
- **Experiential learning opportunities** for students, research associates, practitioners, community members, and partners
- **Resources and tools** for community partners and food systems actors to support on-the-ground work in sustainable food systems



## OUR VISION

Our vision is a world where food systems are key to a more equitable, ecologically regenerative, and economically sustainable future in which all actors have the capacity to advance positive food systems transformation.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to conduct and share community-driven research through local, national, and global networks to foster more sustainable food systems.

## RESEARCH APPROACH

In our community-engaged research we work with diverse food systems actors to:

- **Co-create knowledge** about sustainable food system practices and solutions to community and place-based challenges
- Bring together food systems actors in dynamic global **knowledge sharing networks** to learn from each other and build community capacity to affect meaningful change at multiple scales



# SNAPSHOTS

## 2021-22



Continued building our connections with **50+** partner institutions

Coordinated **8** major multi-year projects and networks, including **5** in the NWT



Produced and released **4** episodes of **Handpicked: Stories from the Field**

Created **15+** academic publications and reports and hosted **3** online events



Trained and supported **17** HQP through studentships and research assistantships

Collaborated with partners from **10+** countries through the **UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity & Sustainability Studies**



# FOCUS AREAS

## 2021-22

In 2021-2022 the LCSFS focused on five key areas:

- 1 increasing UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies activities;
- 2 securing new external funding through grant writing;
- 3 supporting ongoing research;
- 4 cultivating new research partnerships; and
- 5 raising the LCSFS profile through strategic knowledge mobilization.



# UNESCO CHAIR

## ON FOOD, BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

Jointly hosted by Wilfrid Laurier University and the Balsillie School of International Affairs, the **UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies** promotes research, communication, and education about the relationships among biodiversity, food, and sustainability. Dr. Blay-Palmer serves as the inaugural Chairholder.



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair on Food,  
Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies,  
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada

## KEY CHAIR ACTIVITIES

- Submitted Stage 2 SSHRC Partnership Grant proposal titled '**Food Learning and Growing (FLAGship) Partnership**' which connects 8 Regional FLAGship Research Teams on 4 continents with 35 partner organizations.
- Developed and launched the **UNESCO Chair website** as well as ongoing strategic communication and public outreach through various online platforms;
- Participated in the **Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice** meetings, provided input on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework led by the UN Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and contributed to document reviews working towards the **COP15** meetings later in 2022;
- Created an **Undergraduate Certificate in Sustainability and Food** at Laurier, that is under review by Senate for fall 2023 start date.

# LCSFS PODCAST

## HANDPICKED: STORIES FROM THE FIELD



The second season of *Handpicked* included **four** episodes focused on feminist approaches to urban agriculture, digitization of agriculture, Indigenous food sovereignty, and a right to food approach to food waste.

Handpicked was featured in the Laurier CLA awards in 2022 and was the subject of an invited guest lecture given by **Dr. Alison Blay-Palmer** and **Amanda Di Battista** at the “Educational Pedagogies & Technologies for Sustainable Development – Translating Sustainable Innovation for Communities” international symposium.

Handpicked also provided ongoing HQP training to **6 graduate students** in 2021-22 along with podcasting guidance to other Laurier research centres and to the Voicing Change project.

# GRANT WRITING

## FOOD LEARNING AND GROWING (FLAGship) PARTNERSHIP

In February 2022, the LCSFS submitted a SSHRC Partnership Grant application for **Food Learning and Growing (FLAGship) Labs: Seeding Sustainability Transformations**, a 7 year project that aims to develop evidence-based tracking systems for sustainable food systems to address ecological, biodiversity, community, and livelihood well-being. Eight FLAGships research regions will be co-led by academics and established community partners to identify and apply regional measures, monitor food systems change through regionally relevant metrics, build and strengthen research collaboration, share and compare community-driven food system interventions, and exchanging knowledge and good food system practices.

# NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**Dr. Andrew Spring**, LCSFS Associate Director and lead researcher of the **Northern Food Systems Research Group** (NFSRG), works closely with community partners on food systems projects in several Indigenous communities in the NWT.

Key community partners include: Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation, Samba K'e First Nation, Ecology North, and the Tsá Tué Biosphere Reserve, where he is an advisor. Key Laurier partners include faculty from the Cold Regions Research Centre (CRRC) and Northern Water Futures.



## KEY PROJECTS

- Voicing Change: Co-creating Knowledge and Capacity for Sustainable Food Systems [2021-2024](#)
- Learning from and Enhancing Community Capacity for Climate Change and Food Security (C4FS) Action in the NWT [2019-2024](#)
- Northern Agriculture Futures: Climate Change Preparedness in the North Program [2019-2023](#)
- Tsá Tué Ke Kenahsenehta/Great Bear Lake Research and Monitoring Program [2021-2024](#)
- Tsa Tue Youth Council and Climate Change Planning in Délı̨ę, NT project [2020-2023](#)
- Identifying Opportunities and Barriers for Local Food Infrastructure in Yellowknife, NWT **NEW** [2021](#)
- Developing the local economies of food in northern Indigenous communities **NEW** [2021](#)

# PROJECT UPDATES



## **Food: Locally Embedded, Globally Engaged (FLEdGE)**

FLEdGE focuses on community-driven research on sustainable food systems across 7 national research nodes and 3 thematic international working groups. In 2021-22, FLEdGE partners published more than **50** journal articles, reports, and other publications, including a new OER *Food Studies: Matter, Meaning, Movement* edited by **David Szanto** (FLEdGE Researcher, UOttowa), **Amanda Di Battista** (FLEdGE Coordinator, Laurier) and **Irena Knezevic** (FLEdGE node lead, Carleton). The FLEdGE website also underwent a complete redesign, and is now more user friendly: [fledgeresearch.ca](https://fledgeresearch.ca)

## **Urbal: Urban-Driven Innovations for Sustainable Food Systems**

Urbal is an international partnership between CIRAD, ESTà, and the LCSFS that is co-led by **Dr. Blay-Palmer**. The Urbal methodology was created for practitioners, funders, and policymakers to help improve decision-making capacity and was tested in **15** international Urban Food Innovation Labs. In 2021, Urbal moved into its final phase, with researchers creating a modular publicly accessible online guide and accompanying tools. An edited academic volume about the project is due out in early 2023 through Routledge. Learn more at [urbalfood.org](https://urbalfood.org)

## **Voicing Change: Co-Creating Knowledge and Capacity for Sustainable Food Systems**

Voicing Change, led by **Dr. Andrew Spring**, aims create healthier, more equitable, and socio-ecologically resilient futures grounded in sustainable local food systems that centre Indigenous and traditional knowledge. Now in its second year, Voicing Change continues to connect community partners, researchers, and students in the Northwest Territories, Canada (led by Laurier); Migori County, Kenya (led by Rongo University); and Southern Brazil (led by CEDERVA and Embrapa Forestry).