Canada

Did you know that...

individuals and communities have the right to voice their opinions and participate with local governments in decisions and actions that affect their right to food.

Some facts about my country

There are about 31 million people living in Canada. It is a wealthy and food-secure country.

Yet, one in ten people - 3 million Canadians - were living in poverty in 2001.

Three out of every four Canadians believe that hunger is a problem in their country.

Over 800 thousand Canadians received food aid in one month in 2005. About 330 thousand of them were children and young people.

People most likely to be poor and food-insecure in Canada are single mothers and their children, disabled people, unemployed and aboriginal people.

About one million Canadians are aboriginal. Most of them have moved to towns and cities, where their traditional lifestyles and diets are adapting to city living.

The Canadian Constitution Act, 1982, recognizes and reaffirms the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

To improve food security for all Canadians, many cities and towns adopted Food Charters, built on Canada’s international commitment to the human right to food.

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Read our story to find out...

How taking away our land took away our ways of getting food.

What community action is all about.

How a Food Charter improved our access to food.
Finding Ancient Arrowheads

Come on, Tommy. Sam will already be at the park!

Don’t worry, Sara, he will wait for us. What’s the rush?

Hey, you, guys! Over here!

Hey, Sam! Hi!

Tommy, you always kick it too far! Look! It has gone into the lot across the street.

Well, go get the ball, Sara!

No way, that place always looks scary to me.

How are we supposed to find a ball in that?

Where in the world is the ball? It could not have disappeared.

Why don’t we check under those bushes?

And where did Sam go? He is missing! Sam! Sam? Where are you?

Okay, but we are going together.

Over here! Check this out! Look what I found when I was looking for the ball.
Finding Ancient Arrowheads

arrowhead: the pointed end of an arrow, usually made from stone or metal
trapper: a person who sets traps for animals in order to get meat or fur
We followed the animal tracks and trapped along their trails. We would walk for miles and miles every day just to check our trap lines.

And even though many people used guns, he taught me to hunt with a bow and arrow. He felt it connected us to our past, to our ancestors.

He taught me all the best places to fish. We ate berries and other wild fruits.

When my grandpa was a boy, they had small gardens in the fertile land close to the river. If the river flooded, they just camped further away.

It was not an easy life, but our people had their own land and enough food to eat well. Their diets and lifestyles were healthy.

I suppose people were in good shape if you had to walk for miles just to try to find your food.

Well, by the time I grew up, many of those ways were changing. No more buffalo, the beaver were gone, we could not hunt and we had to live on land that was not good for growing food.

bow and arrow: a weapon used for hunting or sport
ancestor: those from whom we are descended: parents, grandparents, etc
fertile: land which is capable of growing healthy plants
Finding Ancient Arrowheads

The changes came so quickly, some could not keep up. We lost our land which meant we lost our ways of earning a living and getting food.

You know, this city has been built on our traditional land. Our people had little say or control over what happened to them. Their rights were violated.

But this is changing. The government is listening and working with us to ensure that our rights are respected and protected.

So we will be able to hunt again?

Well, probably not, but we could fish and at least have some land back to grow food on. It will give us a chance to adapt our traditional ways to modern times.

I really hope you will discover how good wild strawberries taste when you pick them from a plant.

You know, I would like to look at the place where you found this.

Sure! It is really close. We could walk there now.

Well, thanks for lunch, anyway.
Aren’t you afraid to go back Sara?

Don’t make fun of me, Tommy. You were just as scared as I was when we thought Sam was missing.

Here it is! And that is where I found the arrowhead!

Look, think, imagine... The river is that way... A young hunter has tracked a deer for miles. The deer stops to nibble some fresh young branches, and the hunter takes his chance.

He would have kept the arrowhead if he had hit the deer, right Grandpa?

You are right. You would never throw away a good arrowhead if you could get it back again.

Why?

Because they took way too long to make! Chipping away at the stone took...

I know the answer to that!
Finding Ancient Arrowheads

What was that noise?!

See? I was r-r-right! It is weird here and even grandpa knows it now!

Hi there!

We are with a community group that is finding new uses for empty lots in the neighbourhood.

What do you mean?

Well, because of a new agreement with the city government, we have been offered the chance to use empty lots to grow food in city neighbourhoods.

Whoever lives in the neighbourhood and needs it the most.

You are growing food for the people in the neighbourhood?

No, we would like the people in the neighbourhood to grow their own food.

So who gets the land?

Yes, it means that we can use vacant land for good purposes! We want to bring the community together to grow vegetables so that they can rediscover the joy of providing for their own meals or earning some extra money!

A Food Charter?

This new agreement is a Food Charter and it allows us to reclaim vacant land in the neighbourhood and use it for growing food.

food charter: a document to improve people’s access to food created by citizens, communities and local governments
food security: when all people can always get the food they need for an active and healthy life
Finding Ancient Arrowheads

Food charters also work towards providing more local jobs for gardeners and greenhouse workers. The more idle land is turned into gardens, the more we will enjoy fresh air and clean water.

So what exactly do local governments and communities do to promote food charters?

Well, what do you think we should grow here? A huge part of the food charter is to make sure that people have a say in what happens to them and how the food charter is used, and that is why what you think matters so much...

I like tomatoes...

And corn! I love corn!

Beans are good.

I am with Sara. We grew corn along the banks of the river in my grandfather’s day.

Community action is key!

This food charter could be okay if we had a chance to work together and have some fun...

And what is the point if you are not using Mother Earth to provide for her people?

And what is the point of growing food if you can’t share it?

Maybe this place is not so scary after all...

The End

**recycling**: the collection of waste products and packaging so that it can be re-used

**organic material**: things that come from plants and animals
Have you thought about...

- in what ways Grandpa’s life has changed over the years?
- how a Food Charter can improve life for Tommy, Sara and others in their community?

Is it fair that...

- people in many countries around the world are forced from their lands and their rights not respected?
- people should have a say in actions that affect their right to food?
- native populations and cultures receive special protection?

Everyone can do something

Start a community or a school garden or join others who are already doing that.

So, what do YOU think?