

# **Food Sovereignty and the Role of Popular Education: Education and Outreach at the Seasoned Spoon**

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## INTRODUCTION:

### More Than a Human Right: Food Sovereignty Initiatives and Popular Education

This project looks at food sovereignty, popular education, and the ways in which these are manifested on a community level. My work was based around the Seasoned Spoon (or, colloquially, the Spoon), a not-for-profit vegetarian/vegan café operating at Trent University. The Spoon operates based on food sovereignty principles which include an educational mandate so that its customers and members can make sustainable food choices and enact change in their own life. During the course of this project I organized Education and Outreach initiatives in the Spoon including the coordination of four workshops facilitated using participatory education where students were able to learn about topics from a knowledgeable instructor then apply what they had learned during a hands-on demonstration. As part of my work I also did a great deal of research into food sovereignty and the role that education plays therein, studying academic sources as well as looking into similarly minded community organizations that reflect the Spoon's values, learning about their educational initiatives and how they empower students within their communities. Finally, I surveyed participants from the workshops to assess their efficacy and to hear students' thoughts on education and outreach at the Spoon. What follows is the culmination and discussion of all these aspects of my project.

My work was extremely interesting and I learned a lot about food sovereignty in general as well as engaging with these principles on a community level. I found it quite easy to get bogged down in the theories and discourse surrounding this multifaceted concept, especially when a lot of the literature refers to the global food industry and often speaks of food sovereignty in conjunction with rural agriculture in less developed nations. Linking this concept to urban projects in industrialized nations such as ours helps connect initiatives like the Spoon to the principles around which they were founded: after completing my research I was able to look at the Spoon in a whole new way. It's easy to forget, especially when one is so closely involved with an organization (I work there as a cook as well as a volunteer and researcher) why we are doing what we do: having an educational mandate reminds us of the need to engage our members directly with the principles upon which we are founded.

The Seasoned Spoon and other organizations like it are founded on the concept that food sovereignty comes from a bottom-up, grassroots approach in which the people involved are given the opportunity to engage directly with their food and know where it comes from. Educational mandates are important because they give people the incentive to *want* to get involved as they learn more about the global food system and its alternatives. Here at the Spoon, and in other initiatives, citizens are empowered through direct action, advocacy and educational opportunities that make them want to enact change. This project speaks to this on a global and community level, and seeks to explore deep seated issues of poverty and inequality while addressing the need for change.

## LITERARY ANALYSIS OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND POPULAR EDUCATION

In my work on this project I reviewed a number of books and articles to learn more about food sovereignty and popular education, and the role that education and outreach play in promoting sustainable communities, healthy food choices and agricultural autonomy. I learned a great deal from my research: I gained a greater understanding of the differences between food sovereignty and food history including knowledge of historical developments and political implications at both a global and local level. I also learned a lot about the role of education in promoting food sovereignty: the overarching theme of my research was that for communities to mobilize around food issues it is imperative that they be educated and involved from the very beginning; that the true meanings of food sovereignty implies a grassroots, bottom-up approach that will involve people from the initial planning stages onward. Another overarching theme was the implied ambiguity of this term: food sovereignty is a concept with many facets, a term that is not very easily described in one convenient, definitive explanation. However, as flexible a term as “food sovereignty” may be, it must apply to some basic tenets, one of which states that communities around the world must recognize both the shared nature of their struggle and the inherent differences based on culture, geography, religion, and other factors-- food sovereignty might look quite different in Brazil than it would in Mali, but both countries must recognize what they do share (i.e. an inherently oppressed position in the global food market, protective relationships with industrialized nations, an influx of imported foods) and support each other in both their similarities and their differences. For true food sovereignty to occur, the communities themselves must decide what this term means to them, making sure it subscribes to the basic tenets laid out by food sovereignty activists such as La Via Campesina, and implement it themselves based on their cultural, social and political values.

Another important consideration is the role that direct participation plays in food sovereignty initiatives: this is where my work at the Spoon comes in. Many of the articles and the sources that I studied spoke of the importance of educating through participatory action, and the need for development initiatives to occur on a grassroots levels with community-led action. For true food sovereignty to be manifested, it must come from the people, from communities themselves, and they must be educated in order to become empowered toward change.

The first section of my project gives a brief summary of what I learned from the sources I studied.

**“What Does Food Sovereignty Look Like?” by Raj Patel. In *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3, July 2009, 663–673**

In this article by Raj Patel, he discusses the differences between food security and food sovereignty, giving a detailed look at the progression of the food sovereignty movement and its multifaceted identity. He begins the article by referring to the ambiguity of the term “food sovereignty” and its multiple (often contradictory) definitions, stating that while “it may be hard to define, it is the sort of thing one knows when one sees” (Patel 2009:663). He begins his essay by explaining the differences

between the terms “food security” and “food sovereignty”: the United Nations definition of food security in 1974 was “the availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices”: the idea of food security was used always in connection with state-governed price stabilization and the need to discuss world food supplies: the belief was that, as long as the resources were there, they could be redistributed fairly and provide food security. The more recent definition given by the Food and Agricultural Organization states that “food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” Patel states that the shift in definition of “food security” reflects both the “cause and consequence of its increasing irrelevance as a guiding concept in the shaping of international food production and consumption priorities” (Patel 2009:664). As a result of this near-sighted definition, Via Campesina coined the term “food sovereignty” at the 1996 World Food Summit to reflect the broader picture surrounding food issues, including within its scope nutrition, social control, and public health on top of relevant concerns such as political economy and food production/distribution. Patel gives an example that really clarifies the distinctions between food security and sovereignty: in a prison or a dictatorship, he suggests, inmates would have food security (regular access to food ensuring that they will be relatively healthy) but not food sovereignty (the right to decide what to eat, how to procure it, define one’s relationship to it).

In this article Patel describes how Via Campesina’s definition of food sovereignty effectively worked its way into international discourse by shrewdly utilizing language to which states had already committed themselves, employing terms like democracy and rights to ensure that the definition be taken seriously. However, in defining food sovereignty it is important to remember that it is, as Patel describes it, “big tent” politics: in every definition the interests of many stakeholders can be perceived, and there are so many perspectives to consider in speaking of this very global topic. He explains that, with big tent politics, “disparate groups can recognise themselves in the enunciation of a particular programme. But at the core of this programme needs to lay an internally consistent set of ideas” (Patel 2009:665). Thus, in the food sovereignty movement, there are many different ways in which this will actually manifest itself: however, action will occur within a set values system. Patel references Via Campesina’s Nyéléni Declaration of 2007 and critiques it in several ways: one phrase refers to “those who produce, distribute and consume food”, which of course intrinsically involves multinational corporations. He also criticizes the glossing-over of the distinctions between farm owner and farm worker and the declaration’s hope for “new social relations” while it refers to family farms, which are as the author states, one of the oldest forms of patriarchal capitalism.

Patel refers to Hannah Arendt’s book *Origins of Totalitarianism* in discussing food sovereignty and the rights involved therein. He explains that for rights (in this case, to food sovereignty) to be meaningful, they must have a guarantor, in this case the state, which will effectively enforce these rights. He argues that for this to happen there must be multi-layered approach to actualizing food sovereignty: not just one but several jurisdictions must be responsible for this, at the varying levels of government. These jurisdictions must in effect actualize their own conception of food sovereignty, one that is in accordance with that particular landscape and culture. To this end he cites the theories of Seyla Benhabib, who speaks of the “right to rights” in the context of federal

cosmopolitanism (the varying levels of government as discussed above) and moral universalism, the idea that there is an overarching set of morals and ideals to which every human being should subscribe. Patel refers to “partial universality” in discussing Via Campesina—while there is no sovereign authority defining what countries can or can’t do, no organization can be a part of Via Campesina without agreeing with its basic principles. One of these basic tenets is women’s rights, which Patel discusses- he states that there has been a large push to promote women’s rights to own property, which doesn’t really serve to extricate women’s rights from the capitalist system. He suggests that within the food sovereignty movement, women’s rights should focus on much more than the right to own property, and must focus first on basic inequalities. In short, the need for food sovereignty addresses the need to change existing social systems by challenging deep-seated inequalities of power, such as the relationships between men and women, the young and the old, farm owners and farm workers. As he explains, “Egalitarianism, then, is not something that happens as a consequence of the politics of food sovereignty. It is a prerequisite to have the democratic conversation about food policy in the first place” (Patel 2009:271).

**“Nyéléni Declaration on Food Sovereignty: 27 February 2007, Nyéléni Village, Sélingué, Mali” by Via Campesina. In *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3, July 2009, 673–676**

This is the declaration crafted by more than 500 representatives from over 80 countries during the Forum for Food Sovereignty of 2007, in Sélingué, Mali. Those in attendance represented a wide array of people involved with food, from organizations of peasants/family farmers, artisanal fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, landless peoples, rural workers, migrants, pastoralists, forest communities, women, youth, consumers and environmental and urban movements. Attendees lived in a village built by locals and ate traditionally prepared foods, living in a way that encompasses the very principles of Via Campesina. In their manifesto those involved spoke of the importance of women representation and indigenous knowledge in preserving autonomous food systems, calling for an end to the neo-liberalism and global capitalist structures that undermine farmers’ rights and devalue culture, history and the environment. Food sovereignty, according to this definition, is a way of life encompassing not only a restructuring of the global food system, but also sustainable community-developed strategies for improving domestic markets, strengthening local economies and promoting a wide variety of culturally diverse, healthful food.

According to the statement, Via Campesina fights for a world where individuals and nations are able to determine their own food and agriculture systems, providing citizens with affordable and culturally appropriate food. They call for the recognition of women’s importance in food production, the right of all people to earn a decent wage and to choose where they want to live and work, and the assertion of food sovereignty as a basic human right. The declaration seeks to preserve and rehabilitate food production through agrarian reform, and encourages respect for the vast diversity of traditions surrounding food issues. There is an overall sense of respect for spirituality, history and culture, and a call for coalition building and solidarity amongst nations even as each individual culture’s needs are respected and its ties to the land honoured.

The declaration cries out against unfair practices such as dumping of food, domination of food industries by multinational corporations, technologies that will negatively affect future food production and harm the environment, commoditisation of

natural resources, development plans that displace people and disrupt landscapes, wars, conflicts and their aftermath, criminalization of those engaged in the struggle for food sovereignty, inappropriate food aid, and the internalization of a patriarchal capitalist food production system that marginalize small scale food producers, women, and indigenous people worldwide. The statement ends with a call for solidarity amongst food producers and procurers, with a commitment to keep building networks of food activists committed to these principles.

**“Interview with Paul Nicholson, La Via Campesina” by Hannah Wittman. In *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3, July 2009, 676-682**

This is an interview with Paul Nicholson, a founding member of La Via Campesina who sat on the International Coordinating Committee as the representative of the European Farmers’ Union from 1993 to 2008. This interview served as an interesting look at how farmers in Europe came to align themselves with peasant farmers all over the world, and how the peasantry movement was spread over such a variety of regions. I was particularly interested in Nicholson’s thoughts on “modern peasant culture” and the unification of the varied interests one sees in an organization such as La Via Campesina. Nicholson describes Via Campesina as having social and cultural cohesion despite the great diversity that exists within its structure- he suggests that peasantry is less a definitive way of being than a process in which the goals of many stakeholders can all be achieved through the establishment of a common base. He speaks of La Via Campesina’s work on a Charter or Convention of Peasant Rights similar to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, stating that this convention must apply to everyone worldwide, but that, like the very definition of food sovereignty, must be actualized according to what each community thinks is best. This process is not only to become recognized within the UN, but also to begin discussions around these topics and mobilize people through education to action.

I was specifically interested in Nicholson’s views on food sovereignty. He sees it as the alternative paradigm to the neoliberal system, less an end goal than an ongoing process involving a myriad of stakeholders. He also speaks of a social transformation in which allies will come not only from within the food sovereignty movement but that will also involve dialogue between a variety of sectors... as Nicholson warns, this dialogue will not always be easy as the needs of so many players are considered, but it will result in a more comprehensive, holistic look at global food issues. He believes that, in the midst of every sort of crisis imaginable (environmental, financial, climate change) there is a need for a complete social transformation that will radicalize not only the food system but our entire existing social structure. It was quite enlightening to read Nicholson’s perspective on agrarian reform. Interviewer Hannah Wittman asks for Nicholson’s perspective on the expansion of family farms to accommodate for a greater interest in food sovereignty, wondering how this scaling-up could avoid perpetuating large scale corporate agriculture. To this Nicholson replies that family agriculture does already feed the world, with 90% of food being produced and consumed domestically. He states that for small scale agriculture to survive and not be too drastically altered, networks of dedicated consumers and producers must continue to expand. As consumers increasingly demand a new breed of educated farmer who isn’t trained in a productivist manner. For this to occur there must be sufficient support to train and establish these new agriculturalists, and there must be a rapport between urban social movements and peasant organizations.



**“The global struggle for food sovereignty: from Nyéléni to New York” by Christina Schiavoni. In *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3, July 2009, 682-689**

Christina Schiavoni’s article is an exploration of the food sovereignty and peasant movements from an urban context. An attendee of the Forum for Food Sovereignty convention, Schiavoni examines these concepts from both a rural and an urban perspective, describing how the declaration of Nyéléni could be applied to an urban setting. The article begins with a brief exploration into the principles of the declaration and the tenets upheld by Via Campesina, summarizing its prerequisites to food sovereignty, then discusses “building a movement” in one’s home community based upon these ideals. She emphasizes the idea that “any struggle for food sovereignty in any part of the world is our struggle”, recognizing that the achievement of food sovereignty in individual communities is dependent upon solidarity and support amongst members. Like much of the other literature studied here, she emphasizes ideas of support and coalition building, and the importance of tailoring “food sovereignty” to community-specific goals.

Schiavoni explains that while the conference was extremely beneficial, the real work was in bringing it home and implementing this information in a practical way. In her home country, the USA, the National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) and the Border Agricultural Workers Project are the main proponents of food sovereignty, working to bring this concept to the forefront of American agriculture. She stresses the importance of alliance-building and networking as a support mechanism in order to achieve food sovereignty: she states that while the United States does not have the same peasant movement that one would find in South America or in Asia, for example, what they do have is a network of urban communities looking at food justice, struggling against obesity, poverty, low-quality foods and racism. She states that “despite the differences between rural and urban contexts, the parallels between these struggles and the struggles represented at Nyéléni are striking” (Schiavoni 2009:686). She stresses that in many of the communities in her home city of New York City, inhabitants are largely low-income and of colour with many being recent immigrants with rural roots: so in demographics, at least, these communities have a lot in common with third world nations struggling for food sovereignty.

In New York City, Schiavoni reports, communities are doing great work to take control over their food supply, with community and rooftop gardens being cultivated in abandoned lots all over the city even despite opposition. She speaks of Yonnette Fleming, a community leader and activist originally from Guyana who sees food sovereignty as a community-building process that ensures the right to culturally appropriate food and a connection to the land. She also mentions Reverend DeVanie Jackson, who runs a food pantry and community garden with her husband. She speaks of the marginalization of people of colour, suggesting that food sovereignty is not just about having autonomy in the food system but also about reclaiming one’s pride and heritage.

**“Food sovereignty and the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development” by Marcia Ishii-Eiteman. In *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3, July 2009, 689–700**

This article describes how the UN-led International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) can provide “a comprehensive analysis of how existing and emerging agricultural systems, policies,

investments, and institutional arrangements can hinder or facilitate progress towards equitable and sustainable development” (Ishii-Eiteman 2009:689). I found this article a little technical and somewhat confusing but I will try my best to summarize it here: maybe it is just a little too in depth for my lack of political knowledge, and I found it to be quite full of jargon. Ishii-Eiteman explains that the IAASTD examined agricultural knowledge, science and technology (AKST) for their contribution toward sustainable development. The project was cosponsored by UN organizations and the World Bank, as well as other institutions, and was led by the World Bank’s Chief Scientist, Robert Watson. The findings by over 400 scientists and development experts from multiple disciplines and sectors from over 80 countries culminated in what was seen as an important contribution that all governments need to take forward, officially approved by 95% of participating governments. What follows in the article is the summary of this report on agricultural impact on the environment.

Ishii-Eiteman states that the unique aspects of this report were its board-spectrum, multi-disciplinary approach, its explicitly normative framework and its multi-stakeholder Advisory Board which sought input from civil society. From a wide variety and researchers came a variety of recommendations, all considered in terms of their “trade-off” potentials: any potential paths to development were always considered in how they would affect other sectors of society. The main points that I derived from this article were, firstly, the definition of food sovereignty made by the IAASTD... unlike Via Campesina’s declaration, food sovereignty here is very simply defined as “the right of peoples and sovereign states to democratically determine their own agricultural and food policies”. This definition does not mention inequality, oppression, culture, history, or the environment, considerations heavily weighted in most discussions of food sovereignty. The IAASTD’s main recommendation was not novel or shocking to anyone with any idea of what is happening in the world: their most salient point was that the crises of today (energy, water, food, climate) demand immediate attention. The report states that while technological improvements have certainly led to increases in agricultural yields, they have also been largely shaped by immense investment and institutional/governmental support. The report also states that corporate concentrations of agriculture and the vertical integration of the food system have had negative consequences for health, environment, and social equity. The IAASTD calls for increased research and investment in sustainable agricultural policies, informed by multistakeholders and guided by broadly agreed-upon goals. It also found that to rely on technology alone for agricultural development would be unlikely to reduce hunger and poverty and exacerbate inequality by concentrating authority in the hands of a small, affluent minority.

The report calls for the strengthening of the small-scale farm sector, a rebalancing of power in food systems, local and national capacity-building in ecologically sound farming, the mobilization of public and private sector investment toward sustainable development, and the establishment of supportive institutions, summarizing how each of these elements could look. The article culminates with an exploration in rights and how they work in conjunction with food sovereignty. The author references the UN Human Rights Council Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in its connections with food policies. This report asks the question, “Who will produce food, how, and for whose benefit?” The IAASTD recommends the need for states to enforce these rights to ensure that healthy food is not just the right of a privileged few, but for all. For this to occur there must be a variety of political, institutional, economic, social, environmental, and cultural conditions in place.

**“Soils, food and healthy communities: working towards food sovereignty in Malawi” by Rodgers Msachi, Laifolo Dakishoni and Rachel Bezner Kerr. In *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3, July 2009, 700-706.**

This was a really wonderful and highly relevant article that described one community’s efforts to extricate itself from state control over its agricultural practices, asserting food sovereignty through ecologically-sound farming techniques. The article discusses peasant farmers in northern Malawi, who have come to rely on commercial fertilizer to grow maize, their staple food. The Banda government initially subsidized the fertilizer and distributed hybrid seeds, promoting “modern” farming methods that were partially endorsed by local farmers who in time lost a great deal of knowledge surrounding traditional ways to maintain soil fertility. Due to rising debt leading to structural adjustment policies in the 1980’s, the government stopped providing subsidies and peasant farmers, now reliant upon fertilizer, experienced a crisis in farming.

The article begins by providing some historical background into the movement away from fertilizer: in the late 1990s nurses at the Ekwendeni Hospital noticed an influx of severely undernourished children and learned of an agricultural crisis based on farmers’ dependence on fertilizer they could no longer afford. From this crisis emerged the Food, Soils, and Healthy Communities (FSHC) project which sought to educate farmers in the benefits of intercropping to improve soil health. In the first year, farmers were provided with small plots and a small amount of legume seed as an experiment to see whether or not crop rotations would have a beneficial effect on child health, soil fertility and food security. In each village there was an elected “Farmer Research Team” to tend the plots and educate other villagers, as well as help conduct assessments. Despite some issues and scepticism, farmers were largely interested: some spoke of returning to the old ways, some saw it as a new technology, and all were interested in gaining more control over their children’s health and their agricultural efforts. The program proved successful and expanded to the point where, in 2008, over 6000 farmers had received legume seeds and were participating in educational and farm-related activities.

The authors discuss women’s roles in this project, explaining that in some communities crop residue was not being buried at the right time, negating the process. They found that this was largely because this was seen as a woman’s job and they were often quite busy with other tasks at the time that this needed to be done. To improve this situation, members of the Farmer Research Team were enlisted to educate and demonstrate to men the importance of this task, which helped to shift it from women’s to men’s responsibility. The article also discusses the importance of children’s nutrition and how this was sometimes de-emphasized as men would sell their harvests and spend the money on themselves, negating one of the main purposes of the project. Project coordinators saw the need to establish a Nutrition Research Team that would educate families, particularly men, on the importance of children’s nutrition so that men would understand better the need to spend money appropriately. Through the Nutrition Research Teams activities such as Recipe Sharing Days and discussion groups helped bring community members together so that they could become better educated and mobilize together. This information sharing and coalition building is a key tenet of the project, and has resulted in the establishment of an Ekwendeni Farmers Association and a Community Seed Bank, which is run and managed by farmers.

While northern Malawi has not attained food sovereignty, the authors are pleased that they are working towards it. I found this article extremely beneficial because it is a really great representation of food sovereignty being enacted through public education:

development that is community-led, with farmers teaching each other through discussion and integrated practices. It is a great example of how rural farmers can rise above government impositions to extricate themselves from dependency; a realization of food sovereignty principles that allow farmers to produce and grow their own food in a culturally appropriate manner, increasing community health and food availability. Through this project communities were able to free themselves from reliance on government support, building on local traditions and community knowledge based on ecologically sound principles and direct participation.

**“The Role of Education in Agricultural Projects for *Food Security and Poverty Reduction in Kenya*” by Mary Khakoni Walingo. In *Review of Education* Vol. 52, 2006, 287–304**

This article, like the preceding one, offers a glimpse into a community-led development project integrating popular education into food issues. Khakoni Walingo examines an agricultural development project integrated in rural Kenya and the need to involve education in any kind of development project: as she explains, the Livestock Development Project established by the governments of Kenya and Finland was less successful than it could have been if an educational component was better included. The article begins by briefly discussing poverty and its contributions to food insecurity, particularly in its effects on women. She states that there is a growing movement to improve women’s economic powers based on their recognition as key players in sustainable development. She writes that women are responsible for 70-80% of household food production in sub-Saharan Africa, and for this reason among others they have been targeted in a number of small-scale agricultural programs, in particular livestock operations, which account for a great deal of Kenya’s agricultural activity.

Khakoni Walingo describes how education is an invaluable tool in improving food security and lessening hunger and poverty: particularly for women, adult education is extremely important. She explains that simply providing women with livestock is not enough: they need to be educated, not only on proper agricultural practices, but on the importance of what they are doing and how this contributes to their own wellbeing. She states that project-specific education has not always been present in development endeavours: often, general education is seen as being adequate for women to understand a project’s goals and benefits, but this is not the case. Her paper seeks to explore this by comparing recipients and non-recipients of project-specific training in livestock development programs.

First she provides some background on the program itself: designed to empower women and improve milk production and food security, the project was implemented in Western Kenya, a region marked by extreme poverty, high population density and small landholdings. The program sought to get women more involved in decision making, providing training and technologies to lessen women’s workload. Cattle and shared equipment were “loaned” to female farmers who met specific educational criteria: they needed to have a working knowledge of disease control and prevention, be involved in a women’s cooperative, have ownership of basic facilities, and have a developed Napier grass plot by which to feed the heifers. As the author explains, based on this criteria extremely poor women in need of real support were excluded from this opportunity.

Secondly, she provides an overview on her research on the program, including a description of the study’s site, its population, methods of data collection and analysis, and study design. In her discussion, she explains that illiteracy levels were higher for women

who did not receive training, and that this lack of education, both general and project-specific, negatively affected livestock productivity and food security. She stresses the need for all women to be better educated so that they can better manage their crops and herds- for this to happen, she argues, there must be a shift in women's empowerment by reversing negative attitudes toward women's education. She calls for the need to educate farmers about rangeland management, crop-livestock integration, economic and marketing strategies, affordable milk processing developments and employment opportunities. She suggests that adult learning centres where women could continually receive educational upgrades and training would be beneficial for women's empowerment, improving food security. She states that better time management is also integral to the improvement of food security: empowering women through a more equitable distribution of labour would be extremely beneficial, but this is unlikely to happen until both men and women become more educated on the concepts of women's equality.

Khakoni Walingo explains that while testing training beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in their expertise in dairy knowledge and nutrition, all participants showed a dismal understanding of the information, with trained farmers testing only slightly better than farmers who hadn't received education. She concludes that this particular development project lacked the focused educational component that would help it thrive, stating that "the success of the program, its planning and implementation, depends on the active involvement of those for whom it is intended. Educating the target population about the objectives and benefits of the program and helping them to understand the functions of various aspect of dairy farming is necessary for the project to achieve the desired impact" (Khakoni Walingo 2006:299). She states that women who were not trained could be better educated by women who had received education, and that knowledge should be derived from hands-on, experiential workshops and seminars. She suggests that one main reason why few women attend these sessions is that they cannot get permission from their husbands, calling for the need to better educate both men and women in female empowerment and the need for women's education. She states that all projects need to have a built-in educational component that stress the importance of women's rights, and that would underline cooperation and the benefits of these projects to both sexes. Toward the end of the article she outlines concrete suggestions for improving the education value of such development projects, including curriculum for an improved adult education system, inter-ministerial cooperation, a strengthened Ministry of Education, and an examination into "illiterate poverty" including data collection thereof. She states that success of these initiatives can only be achieved if the neediest populations are included, and if participants are more directly involved in the planning and implementation of such programs and better educated in the project's objectives and processes. She calls for a better evaluation system that would involve participants in a more direct way. Basically, Khakoni Walingo is calling for the more active role of public education in projects related to food sovereignty: by getting participants more involved in the process and through better education, these initiatives could be more successful.

**“Peasant Prospects in a Neoliberal Age” by Philip McMichael. In *New Political Economy*, Volume 11, Issue 1, 2006. 407-418.**

This article by Philip McMichael explores the “agrarian question” from a philosophical perspective, looking at how small scale farmers have managed to survive even despite intrinsic oppression within capitalist systems. McMichael echoes statements

from Via Campesina speaking of the need for the massive movement of food around the world based on the massive movement of people: this movement, the dislocation of people and the displacement of the food regime, undermines farmers' connection to the land and takes from them their food security, relegating them to the mercy of the global food market. As peasants are displaced from their land, this also provides a constant surplus labour force that depresses labour prices worldwide. McMichael describe the current food system as an "institution of the global market, the corporate food regime combines capitalism's logical processes and world-historical force" (McMichael 2006:409). He states that it is the state's prioritization of global capital accumulation over environmental and social considerations that has led to such huge inequalities in the world food system, and makes reference to Karl Polanyi's concept of double movement, which "viewed the institution of the self-regulating market in the mid 19th century as a movement to commodify land, labour and money, and the protectionist movement as a counter-movement to regulate each of these social substances" (McMichael 2006:408). The countermovement to this was the establishment of the modern welfare state that provided central banking, agrarian protection and provide other measures to reestablish the market in society, and which eventually led to the creation of development projects seeking to divert money from individual nations to unsustainable, international initiatives such as the Green Revolution and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

McMichael explains how "accumulation by dispossession" serves to enhance capital accumulation through both general and particular mechanisms of control. He describes how peasant agriculture is subordinated by accumulation methods such as dumping of northern products, the agro-industrial supermarket revolution and the use of land for agro-exporting. He stresses that capital accumulation is based upon inequalities between nation states and the inherent oppression present in corporate pursuit of "comparative advantage". He explains that this the corporatization of the food system is achieved through massive deregulation on financial relations and liberalization policies including currency devaluation, reduced farm supports, and corporatization of markets. This new system not only devalues farmers and peasants in favour of the global market, but it also leads to a new wave of waste and consumption displacing small scale operations in favour of corporate companies. This system has also resulted in a new wave of peasantry: according to McMichael, peasantry is not disappearing but being re-envisioned, even as rural peoples are further marginalized. He focuses his work on a new form of *campesino politics* which questions the assumption that capital is the main referent within the agrarian question. Rather than focusing on economics McMichael examines a new form of social reproduction that is informing agricultural debate, criticizing development approaches whose efforts were really just perpetuating the concentration of social wealth within contained circuits of money and commodities, a process only made worse as globalization opened up new markets to be exploited. In these approached, labour too is demobilized and dependent on capital for employment, not vice-versa. He explores peasant revitalization as it is informed by the involution of capital and the dispossession of rural peoples.

McMichael cites theorists who suggest that peasant culture becomes a "petty commodity production" when involved in the global food system. This becomes problematic as it raises many questions about the nature of peasant production in conjecture with the global market. McMichael suggests that the peasant movement is defined both by a return to traditional cultural values, and by the integration of new alliances and visions unifying diverse and autonomous struggles worldwide. Rather than defining peasant identity simply through the lens of capital accumulation, the article

looks at peasant identity through its social, historical and political implications. In this work McMichael speaks of agrarian relations with the corporate food system, which has disrupted rural land holdings through a number of methods. He speaks of the need to mobilize the peasantry, replacing the state with a self-governing, or non-governmental organization that seeks to reassert land rights and ethnic autonomy. He also refers to various indigenous movements that have sought to reclaim their sovereignty over state corporatization, characterizing their vision in actions such as seed saving, sharing of knowledge and harvests, a cooperative community-based approach, integrated traditional technologies, and kinship based relationships.

**“Indigenous Nutrition: Using Traditional Food Knowledge to Solve Contemporary Health Problems” by Michael P. Milburn. In *The American Indian Quarterly* 28:3, 2004. 411-434**

This article is an interesting perspective into food sovereignty from a Native perspective, describing how rural Mi'kmaq people of Cape Breton Island have become displaced from their traditional food sources through the imposition of European-style diets as well as ecological disruption of their historical hunting, gathering and fishing sites. The author works for the University of Cape Breton in a program called Integrative Science (*Toqwa'tu'kl Kjjitagnn*), developed to bridge Aboriginal and Western perspectives. Milburn's main focus is on the epidemiology of diet-related disease and nutrition of modern versus traditional diets, and he talks a lot about the effects of colonization on nutritional health and community vitality.

Milburn cites the work of Denis Burkitt and Hugh Trowell, who discovered that the high incidence of disease among some African peoples was largely due to a change in diet caused by the imposition of European foods. Similar situations occurred throughout Canada as Indigenous populations were displaced and their food security threatened by land encroachment and increased dependency on settler populations. The article states that diet-related diseases and disorders have increased dramatically through the changes made to the global food system and are especially high among Native populations: he cites data stating that “Canada's Aboriginal people have rates of diabetes some three times the national average and higher rates of other chronic diseases. A study of northern communities showed that 29-percent of young people and 60-percent of women were obese. Sandy Lake First Nation, an Ojibwa-Cree community in northern Ontario, has a diabetes rate of 26-percent, the third highest rate in the world and some four to five times the national average” (Milburn 2006:414). He suggests that in order to reverse this a change in lifestyle (featuring improved diet, more exercise and increased community involvement) must be brought upon by increased education and awareness of food issues.

While much of the article focuses on the scientific process of assessing nutritional health, there is a large section also devoted to Indigenous nutrition and how this information was disseminated among settler populations through education from the Natives. McMichael describes how Indigenous populations are educated through participatory, community-based learning based upon empirical observations derived from the senses. Elders play a great role as educators, and their teachings are respected and integrated. McMichael explains how Indigenous peoples worked to educate European immigrants, particularly regarding the prevention and treatment of scurvy: their nutritional knowledge was information they shared readily so that all people could benefit from this land-based knowledge. Indigenous people also hold a great deal of wisdom concerning the land they live on and how to use it to its best and most sustainable

advantage. This knowledge was shared with community members and settlers alike, such as the integration of crops with a symbiotic relationship like corns, beans and squash.

As traditional communities shared knowledge to improve their agricultural yields and nutritional health, so does Milburn advocate for a more culturally relevant nutritional education and food policy. He suggests that, "For Aboriginal communities, the path of the ancestors represents both a means of cultural renewal and a solution to the problem of diet-related disease" (Milburn 2006:426). He calls for the editing of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's four-food-group approach, which reflects a Eurocentric diet tradition and excludes Native traditional foods. Milburn also suggests that the current incarnation of the Food Guide reflects inherent cultural and economic biases, such as in the continued inclusion of milk products: while dairy has been proven to be indigestible by a large percentage of the population, it is also a huge North American industry and continues to be endorsed by corporations and governments. Milburn encourages a return to traditional diets and the endorsement of this through cultural nutrition policies and advocacy paired with educational initiatives: he refers to Kibbe McGaa, an Oglala Sioux nutritionist who employs the Sacred Medicine Wheel as a culturally relevant symbol signifying the four directions and four food groups as defined by her Nation. This article concludes by again underlining the importance of involving both community and government actors in changing public policy to advocate for better lifestyle choices: as traditional Indigenous communities educated themselves and settlers, so must modern educational initiatives come from communities and reflect cultural values.

***Good Crop, Bad Crop: Seed Politics and the Future of Food in Canada* by Devlin Kuyek. Published in Toronto by Between the Lines, 2007.**

This book provides an excellent Canadian perspective on the seed industry and industrial agriculture in Canada. Kuyek gives a detailed history of agriculture in Canada, describing the shift from seeds as public domain to seeds as a privately managed commodity to be bought and sold based on multinational interests. This book also explains how the face of Canadian agriculture overall changed after World War II from small family farms servicing locally to a consolidation of vertically integrated corporations where the agribusiness runs farms using industrial scale principles, with farmers acting as little more than underpaid middle managers (Kuyek 2008:18).

In his book, Kuyek writes about the history of agriculture from a chronological perspective. He begins by describing how Canadian food production looked at the end of the nineteenth century. After settlers began arriving in North America, they brought their seeds with them- and soon began the process of experimentation to try to develop crops that were better suited to a new climate. Farmers working with seeds developed a sharing network that has formed the basis of Canadian seed exchange, and the Canadian government played a great role in supporting this by establishing federal research farms, supporting public breeding programs and providing free seeds. However, until the end of World War II this research and experimentation was farmer led and driven, supported by the government but certainly not controlled by it. What the postwar period did for agriculture was to centralize and standardize agricultural research, with the farmer-to-farmer model being replaced by a one-way technology transfer from scientist to farmer, which resulted in farmers being pushed out of the research stage and paved the way for further loss of farmers' autonomy. Kuyek describes how state control of agricultural research affected farmers' decisions on what they could grow: from 1920 to 1940, the production of wheat (one of the most heavily researched crops) more than doubled, while



the production of buckwheat, once a standby in Canadian crops, dwindled to the point where some varieties were almost made extinct.

Canada's national seed system is built upon the *Canada Seeds Act* of 1923, designed to protect farmers from seed distributors selling poor quality seed. The Act requires the registration of all seed for sale in the country. At the time of its inception, the Act was seen as a protective measure for farmers, and a way for them to be directly involved in the seed industry: the main institutions of the registration system were the Registration Recommendation Committees, in which farmers played a pivotal role. However, registration was also difficult to achieve and few farmers wished to go through with the timely process, meaning that fewer varieties were being registered, thus not being sold, leading to a decrease in crop diversity. This phenomena is easy to witness even now, as crops become less and less diversified. Once designed to protect farmers, the Canada Seeds Act now serves to protect corporate interests and uphold controversial procedures such as patenting, genetic modification and corporate concentration of the market. Kuyek's book looks at commodification that is achieved through patenting (while patents on plants are illegal in Canada, it is not illegal to patent individual genes and this is how corporations work around that), contracts between corporations and farmers using their seeds, the advocacy of plant breeders' rights and regulations in favour of multinationals. While Kuyek does believe that through grassroots organizing and policy change the seed system can be reclaimed by small scale farmers, he also warns that we are dangerously enmeshed in a large scale corporatization of the key to food sovereignty: if we cannot free our seeds we can never free ourselves from the global food system.

***Food Is Different: Why We Must Get the WTO out of Agriculture* by Peter Rosset. Published in Black Point, Nova Scotia by Fernwood Publishing, 2006.**

*Food Is Different* is a really concise, clearly written and practical guide to the global food system, written in a way that is approachable and comprehensible to the average person. This book basically describes the historical context of food insecurity and explains how it came to be this way, also giving a good perspective into resistance and resurgence that is occurring around food issues. A large focus is given to the role played by the World Trade Organization in controlling the food industry, and how this intervention is in direct opposition to the very notions of food sovereignty. The book begins with a poem dedicated to Lee Kyung Hae, the Korean farmer who took his life during the 2003 WTO summits in Cancún as a protest against the injustices committed by international organizations against farmers and peasants worldwide.... This book is a testament to Kyung Hae, and thousands of others like him, who have suffered at the hands of the global food market for too long. It is a shocking look into what so many people take for granted, a reminder that food is so important for so many reasons and that to lose autonomy over one's food production is to lose culture, history, heritage, economic independence and political power.

In the introduction, Rosset asks the question, "What is food? What is farming? Is food like any other commodity, like steel, or a microchip, or a pair of running shoes?" He answers that the very nature of food makes it different: because it has such cultural and historical implications, because it invokes feelings of family and community, because it is linked to spirituality, because it means so much to the people who produce it, because it is a direct link of people to their environment... because of all these reasons, and more, it is important to look at food as more than just another commodity, but a special interest requiring a lot of thought and sensitivity (Rosset 2006:8). He uses the image of a maize

tortilla to compare family and industrial farming. A family eating tortillas from locally-grown maize will be consuming a “flavourful and nutritious variety grown on ancestral land, using millennia-old farming techniques that rely on little or no pesticides, and that conserve trees and a mosaic of cultivated and forested land in the local landscape”, while a family who buys imported tortillas would be consuming genetically modified maize usually used for animal consumption, for which an American farmer was paid much too little to produce (Rosset 2006:8). In this system, both producers and consumers lose out, as less developed nations are forced to rely increasingly on imports, to the detriment of their own markets, and in exporter countries such as Canada and the United States, while corporations grow rich, local farmers suffer.

The book begins by providing some useful historical background surrounding the global food system, starting with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade of 1948, which was a trade regulation body with very little power of enforcement established after World War II. In Chapter I, “Trade Negotiations and Trade Liberalization”, we learn about the chain of events that led to such a highly manipulated global food system. Structural adjustment programs and other mechanisms to liberalize trade (such as removing tariffs, trade barriers and subsidies to local farmers) The Uruguay Round negotiations of 1986 to 1994 heavily discussed the idea of trade liberalization, allegedly with hopes of expanding international commerce. With the establishment of the World Trade Organization in 1995, there was now a “global commerce agency” based on free market principles, whose official role was to improve economic development with enforceable trade regulations. It had two basic concepts: to reduce trade barriers, and to apply non-discriminatory rules. This was allegedly to open up markets for less developed nations, ensuring that more affluent nations did not have power over less developed nations... “allegedly” being a key word, since the WTO’s main role seems to be to keep powerful nations on top.

The historical context of the book also gives information on key recent events, including the development of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994 and the various WTO Ministerials. This book also outlines key issues in trade negotiations, considerations that have consistently (and which continue to be) heavily discussed and argued. In Chapter 2, Rosset outlines these concepts, extremely important issues that have been very helpful in my understanding of the global food situation. Market access is the first point he talks about: industrializing nations in the G20 want trade liberalization, but with concessions... basically they want greater access to world markets but they want an advantage over affluent countries like the United States. There is the criticism that these nations such as China, Brazil, and India, have “switched horses” by pushing so hard to be included in the global food system, as peasants and rural farmers strive for more emphasis on domestic markets. Domestic Subsidies, different from supports, are government payments and services to farmers and agribusiness. Rich countries are obviously in a better position to provide these services, leading to criticism that this creates an unfair playing field for less developed countries. While there is in the WTO distinctions made between trade distorting and non-distorting subsidies, the EU and US often try to blur the lines between the two. Farmer organizations make an important distinction between “inappropriate and wasteful” subsidies, and environmentally, economically, and rurally beneficial subsidies. Export Subsidies are also discussed by Rosset: particularly in the US and the EU, large agribusiness exporters (heavily trade distorting) are awarded massive subsidies, heavily criticized by other nations. Dumping, where products are exported to poor countries at prices lower than production costs, is the fourth key point discussed in this section. In this scenario, local farmers simply can’t

compete with the cheap imports. Market Concentration, where monopolies and oligarchies comprised of several large companies buy most of the product in key commodities and sell it quite cheaply, is also discussed here. Here we see a de-emphasis on supply management (to reduce overproduction) and price support (which would establish a “price floor” to control how low prices could go). He also talks about Special and Differential Treatment in the form of special products, any staple that a country produces that would be protected from cheap imports, and special safeguard mechanisms, which would invoke special tariffs if there were any major import surges in ANY product, special or not. Rosset also talks about the importance of food quality and safety, particularly as it relates to the US stance on genetically modified foods, and the growing criticism over Intellectual Property Rights, in the form of US-style patent protection.

Based on the historical background, Rosset gives a really good overview of a very complex issue. Developing nations have been oppressed by the global food system, but so have small scale farmers in developed nations such as our own: government subsidies to large corporations and the free trade system itself are intrinsically counterintuitive to food sovereignty. In Chapter 2 he also discusses briefly some “Alternative Paradigms”, multifunctionality and peoples’ food sovereignty, which compliment each other. Multifunctionality discusses agriculture as being more than an economic or even necessary consideration, instead looking at its multiple functions in society. In this perspective, mostly championed by farmers in the EU and members in the G10 who rely heavily on food imports, there is a push for government regulation of world markets, and for the establishment of an agricultural regime that preserves landscape, livelihood and tradition while promoting food security. He also discusses briefly the notion of Peoples’ Food Sovereignty as described by La Via Campesina at its World Food Summit in 1996, which states that food and farming is about more than trade. They call for greater focus on local and national markets, with the elimination of subsidies, dumping, cheap prices and overproduction. They also call for the move toward an agrarian reform based on smaller farm sizes, local resource control and a ban on seed patenting.

Chapter 5 also gives greater detail on “Alternatives for a Different Agriculture and Food System”, outlining a number of policy options that would help address inequalities in the global food system and help small scale farmers gain more control over their economic and social wellbeing. In this chapter he calls for more protection of less developed countries against unrestricted market access of richer nations, advocating the end of dumping in exchange for fairer prices. He also calls for the regulation of overproduction, a fairer division of market concentration, a more appropriate division of subsidies (less to agribusiness, more to small farms!), the addressing of pertinent WTO issues such as property rights and genetic modification, and an improved coalition among food producers all over the world. His conclusion states that “Another Food System is Possible”: although the WTO and other players in the world food market have created a system that intrinsically denies less developed nations the right to food sovereignty, this can be changed, both by working within the world food system and by working from a grassroots approach. Rosset suggests that we CAN establish a food system where land rights are protected, where food is cultural appropriate, healthy and delicious, where farmers and peasants have control over their production and earn a decent living, where rural living is promoted and valued. He states that the first step to this resurgence is to reverse uncontrolled trade liberalization and to give every person and nation the right to design their own food and agricultural policies.

## FOOD SOVEREIGNTY INITIATIVES: Examining Similar Models in Canada

There are a number of organizations that operate from a food sovereignty perspective with similar principles to those of the Spoon. This section will list some of these organizations and compare their efforts to those of the Spoon, showcasing their accomplishments and suggesting how the Spoon could integrate their practices to better improve our own Education and Outreach component.

### **The Midnight Kitchen at McGill University, Montreal**

The Midnight Kitchen (MK) operates out of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor kitchen of the Shatner Building at McGill University. Established by students rallying against corporate food service provider Chartwell's in 2002, MK began serving meals made from slightly damaged locally produced food donated by farmers, and in 2007 grew substantially after the approval of a \$2.50 student levy that allowed for the creation of paid student jobs, better kitchen equipment, and greater diversity of food choices. Now they are open Monday through Friday, serving lunch by donation at 12:30pm. MK operates under the Student Society of McGill, meaning that they are financially tied to this organization but able to operate out of the university's kitchen for free. As part of their obligations they are required to serve the entire student population. The cafe is run by a volunteer Collective (similar to the Seasoned Spoon's Board of Directors) and its mandate is as follows (*emphasis added*):

The Midnight Kitchen is a non-profit, volunteer-run collective dedicated to providing affordable, healthy food to as many people as possible.

We aim to empower individuals and communities by providing a **working alternative** to current market-based systems of food collection and distribution. We oppose privatization, corporatization and other processes that actively **disempower** people by obstructing their access to resources and independence.

*We will provide education on food issues, both inside and outside of the collective, and provide a space for the **exchange of ideas** within the community.*

We recognize that much of the politics surrounding food production and distribution are part of a larger system of oppression. By **reclaiming control** over the distribution of food in our community we are acting in the pursuit of social and environmental **justice** and we will support others who share these goals.

We will organize and act according to principles of **anti-oppression** (The Midnight Kitchen 2010).

Within this mandate are a great many links to concepts of food sovereignty including references to anti-oppression and the power structures that guide the food system. The Midnight Kitchen realizes its educational mandate by providing educational opportunities through four volunteer positions (Food Pick-Up, Cooking, Serving and Clean-Up) and by organizing conferences and workshops held at the university. Their first conference, "What Are We Eating?" was a discussion-based, participatory workshop

held in February 2006. Their main effort in 2010 was in conjunction with the People's Potato at Concordia University, a week-long food activism conference called "Put Your Politics Where Your Mouth Is". The conference featured a variety of lectures, workshops, film screenings and discussions in both French and English. Discussion topics included concepts like "Food and the Military" and "Neocolonialism in the Agricultural Industries of Quebec", and workshops covered topics like indoor gardening and fermentation. MK also offers outreach opportunities through its Outreach Committee, which seeks to expand and improve upon the café's initiatives. Like the Seasoned Spoon, MK also boasts a lending library of food-related works and offers links to similar organizations on their website.

### **The People's Potato at Concordia University, Montreal**

The People's Potato operates out of Concordia University as a vegan soup kitchen looking to address student poverty and food issues. Their website states that "We are committed not only to serving food to hungry students, but to broader goals of social justice and environmental sustainability" (The People's Potato 2010). The café operates as a collective, with members volunteering to procure, prepare and serve food. There are two paid staff who act as administrators. In addition to daily kitchen work and food runs, each collective member signs on to coordinate one of 8 portfolios meant to address organizational and "special topics" aspects of their mandate. Portfolios include administration, education/accessibility, finance, kitchen, policy, solidarity/streetserving, economic sustainability, and volunteers. I spoke with Lili, coordinator of the education/accessibility portfolio. Lili stated that

Our educational mandate focuses on the "why we do what we do" and "how to do it yourself." It contains both an internal and external component. That is, we work on the education of the collective (through such workshops as first aid, board training, and how to run an AGM), as well as educational workshops for our volunteers. This year, these workshops have included: canning, fermentation, cooking 101, tempeh-making, pasta sauces and soup stock. In addition to the practical workshops, we also organize more "big picture" food politics workshops. For example, this week, we are collaborating with the Midnight Kitchen (a similar food collective based on McGill Campus) to put on Food Politics Week: Put your Politics Where your Mouth is. Our contribution to the week's events will be a screening of "The Fight for True Farming" and a talk by Marco Silvestro on Neo-colonialism in Quebec agriculture. These are just a few examples of what we have organized this year (Watson 2010).

Workshops are organized and facilitated by volunteers, but the People's Potato has a budget of approximately \$200 annually. While the workshops are generally held in the kitchen, occasionally organizers will choose other locations on campus such as the School of Community and Public Affairs or the 2110 Centre for Gender Advocacy.

### **The G-Spot, Carlton University, Ottawa**

Operated out of Carlton University, the G-Spot (or Garden Spot) is a café that operates on a "pay what you can" basis. The G-Spot has

“a four point mandate, one of which may be considered educational:” food security, environmental sustainability, anti-poverty and skills sharing. Skills sharing is achieved when volunteers for our organization follow through with a role and learn from other volunteers; from cooks in our kitchen to those who work in financial portfolios. Throughout school semesters, we hold volunteer orientations into our organization and thorough training for the variety of available roles (cooks, cleaners, drivers, servers, financial portfolios, volunteer coordination, promotions, kitchen maintenance, community outreach, conflict resolution, food donation coordination, fundraising, and possibly more) (Starr 2010).

The G-Spot operates from a \$2 levy (attached to the consumer price index) collected from students’ tuition payments, and rents a kitchen and serving space from the university. Ashton Starr, an employee of the G-Spot, told me that the cafe doesn’t really host too many workshops. The last one, “Healthy Transitioning Into Vegetarianism”, occurred in 2009 and, like most other workshops through the G-Spot, was hosted in conjunction with the University’s Health & Counseling Services and was hosted in a classroom. They also provide some opportunity for education through their well-frequented Facebook page, where members discuss local food issues, share recipes and tips, including instructions on how to butterfly a chicken... Ashton also told me that volunteers are encouraged to attend anti-oppression and consensus training offered by Carlton OPIRG and UOttawa GRIPO.

### **People’s Republic of Delicious, University of Ottawa**

People’s Republic of Delicious (PDR) in Ottawa operates as a non-hierarchical organization which, according to PRD volunteer Matthew, “isn’t a café or anything permanent at this point. We just squat in a kitchen on one of the residences on campus and serve lunch once a week” (Kitt 2010). PRD also operates on a PWYC basis, which is supplemented by catering events to organizations who fit under its mandate, which is to “increase awareness of issues surrounding food security, healthy eating, and vegan cooking. To accomplish this, the PRD is committed to offering students alternative, healthy vegan meals” (Kitt 2010). The organization lacks the funds to provide a permanent space, being funded almost entirely through OPIRG Ottawa. They receive \$600 annually from OPIRG and is now eligible for up to \$1000 in funding through their membership to the Undergraduate Students’ Federation. PRD does not really have an educational mandate, and does not offer seminars or workshops but instead provides learning opportunities through hands-on volunteer experience.

### **Hot Yam! University of Toronto**

Hot Yam! operates as a volunteer-driven “lunch party” serving a weekly vegan lunch buffet for \$4.00. The café operates every Thursday from 12-2pm at the university’s International Students Centre. The café runs on a non-hierarchical basis using funds obtained through a student levy. As it is only in its second year, Hot Yam! does not have an official mandate and operates via a volunteer Board of Directors. They offer educational opportunities by providing students with the chance to work directly in the kitchen or in whatever area of the café interests them (i.e. advertising, food procurement, finances, etc.). They offer opportunities to learn about vegan cooking through hands-on experiential learning, and also by publishing all their recipes as well as tips on cooking

techniques online on their blog, giving customers the chance to try out fabulous recipes at home.

I was not able to get in touch with Hot Yam! coordinators and the website is lacking in detailed information... it would be interesting to learn more about the history and inception of this initiative and to speak more about educational opportunities at the café.

### **The Stop, Toronto**

The Stop originated over 30 years ago as one of Toronto's first food banks and now operates at two locations as a "thriving community hub where neighbours participate in a broad range of programs that provide healthy food, as well as foster social connections, build food skills and promote engagement in civic issues" (The Stop 2010). Its services include drop-in, food bank, perinatal program, civic engagement, bake ovens and markets, community cooking, community advocacy, sustainable food systems education and urban agriculture. The Stop also runs a Green Barn, a sustainable food production and education centre with a greenhouse, food education programs, sheltered garden, community bake oven and compost demonstration centre. Incorporated as a non-profit in 1982, The Stop is operated by a number of staff and volunteers, governed by a Board of Directors, and funded by foundations, individuals, corporations, special events, donated food and government funding. The Stop believes that food is a basic human right, working for food sovereignty and poverty empowerment from an urban aspect while promoting self-help and participatory education. The Stop's members, low-income and marginalized peoples, are directly involved with the operation of the organization, and in exchange for using food access programs members have the opportunity to learn skills and participate in community-building.

In its mission statement, The Stop states that it refutes an identity as a charity, it is instead a community food centre offering educational and activist opportunities, including weekly cooking workshops and educational film screenings. Members are able to work in the kitchens, in the gardens, on advertising and research, doing clean-up and serving, and in a variety of other roles. The Stop offers a myriad of workshops and children's programming, including a year-long grade five curricula where students are able to participate directly in farm activities as well as study in-class material. They also provide after-school youth cooking workshops and provide counseling and nutrition education for young families through their Healthy Beginnings and Family Support program. The Stop offers civic engagement opportunities through a Speakers' Bureau and the Bread and Bricks Davenport Social Justice Group, a working group of concerned citizens who plan actions and events throughout Ontario. The Stop will also provide community advocacy for people experiencing poverty or oppression.

### **Food Share, Toronto**

Food Share was established in 1985 as an initiative by then Mayor of Toronto Art Eggleton and others seeking to address hunger and stop the growth of food banks. Originally mandated as a coordination of emergency food services, procurement and distribution, FoodShare initially operated as a volunteer-run referral service for people to help people find aid in their own communities. Now the organization runs with a large number of staff and volunteers to strive to provide educational opportunities and service learning for people using their services, advocating for equity and the diminishment of

stigmas against low-income people. FoodShare works toward the end of food banks, stating that they are not a suitable response to hunger but a stop-gap, short-term, ineffective resource. The organization is funded by a variety of organizations: 16% of their annual revenue comes from the government, 15% from individuals, 11% from United Way, 22% from foundations, and 33% from program sales (the organization runs a Good Food program and a catering business, Field to Table).

FoodShare's policy is to explore self-help models such as co-operative buying systems, collective kitchens and community gardens that would have the potential to address short-term issues of household hunger, while also providing longer-term benefits by building the capacity of individuals and communities. Their philosophy is to address the underlying causes of poverty and hunger while looking at the entire global food system and its effects on marginalized peoples, and their goal is to implement the "right to food" from theory to practice. As well as being involved with advocacy work (FoodShare has developed an integrated "Food Policy" with recommendations to the varying levels of government), FoodShare also provides a great deal of educational opportunities, from experiential learning through volunteer work to workshops, training and resource sharing. In accordance with its community-based politics, the organization has helped establish numerous community kitchens where users can come and cook collectively, sharing recipes and tips. As well as facilitating these collective kitchens they also give information on how to organize one, and provide cooking workshops as well, including a four-part "Cooking Outside the Box" series that is geared toward agency staff and volunteers. FoodShare also organizes training workshops for the Toronto community as well as through a partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Agency, and provides networking opportunities through linkages with other organizations.

FoodShare's Learning Network is where a great deal of these educational initiatives can be located: in addition to hands-on workshops, the agency also hosts online workshops. Monthly newsletters containing recipes, information, and cooking hints are also available online, as well as an online resource library featuring links and suggestions for further education. On their website there is also a "Toolbox" featuring articles on different basic topics and information on how to employ it at home: subjects such as making your own baby food and container garden are discussed from a theoretically perspective to explain their significance to food sovereignty and nutrition, then recipes and step-by-step instructions are clearly written so they can be followed by users.



## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH AT THE SEASONED SPOON

As part of my project I was asked to coordinate five workshops for the Seasoned Spoon, a non-profit organization first established in 2003 by OPIRG's Food Issues Group (FIG) to address issues of food sovereignty at Trent. In its inception the Spoon operated once a week as the Stone Soup Project, serving soup on a by-donation basis, and has now expanded to include a new location, a manager, a coordinator, and 15 kitchen staff, all of whom must be Trent students. The Spoon's mission statement is

“to serve healthy, organic, locally grown, affordable food; be a student-run, not-for-profit cooperative; offer student learning opportunities through paid staff positions, volunteer work, and Community Based Education courses; encourage the diverse use of preexisting student space on campus; strengthen university links with the Peterborough community; support community organizations, businesses, and agriculture; and increase community awareness of food issues through educational outreach.”

This project was an effort to fulfill the Seasoned Spoon's educational mandate, as there were no funds this year to hire an Education and Outreach Coordinator. My role was to examine Food Sovereignty and Popular Education from an analytical perspective and figure out how this manifests itself in a practical way at the Café, facilitating workshops and seeking feedback from participants. This section will provide an overview of what I did this year including a description and evaluation of each workshop.

I planned four workshops, with a fifth to occur sometime in the next few weeks as part of a summer session. All workshops were held in the Seasoned Spoon café and were advertised in the Arthur, on myTrent communications page, in posters in the Spoon and around campus, and via emails sent to the Spoon membership mailing list. Workshops were also advertised through the organizations that helped fund them- the Foods for Love workshop was advertised through the Trent Queer Collective (TQC), and the Indigenous Cooking workshop was advertised through the Indigenous Studies department as well. Materials for workshops were largely provided by the Spoon, except in cases where other organizations were involved: the TQC funded the groceries for Foods for Love, while the Indigenous Environmental Studies program provided an honorarium to the workshop facilitator and arranged for the provisions of food. Funds procured from the workshops (which weren't a lot!) were given back to the Spoon's Education and Outreach fund.

The focus of the workshops was based around theories of Popular Education in which participants are directly interacting with the materials they are learning. So, instead of having someone stand and talk to the group, we tried to get participants involved, hands-on, with the teachings. This gave participants the option to give their input as well- all of our facilitators welcomed information sharing amongst participants and tried to avoid a traditional top-down teaching approach. Thus we had people working side by side, teaching and learning from each other, which is thought to help with information retention and enthusiasm. Based on my survey findings, this seems to have worked effectively!

### ***First Workshop: Yoghurt Making (Tuesday, January 26 2010)***

Facilitated by Hanah McFarlane and Jane Atkinson, the yoghurt making workshop was a hands-on introduction to making yoghurt using a small starter culture, milk, and flavouring. There were 11 participants who were able to observe Hanah's instructions and actions in completing the initial stages of yoghurt making, then try their hand at stirring the mixture, testing the temperature on their wrists to feel what it should feel like and filling their own jars full of the culture. The jars sat overnight (this wasn't a process where participants could observe ALL the actual events, unfortunately!) and students were able to pick them up the next day. We asked for a \$5.00 donation, which most of the participants willingly parted with.

Most of the participants were extremely interested in the subject and listened attentively to the information being given. Hanah and Jane had also prepared a comprehensive handout detailing all the steps, which was extremely helpful as participants rushed home to try out their own yoghurt cultures. Feedback was extremely positive: everyone I spoke with felt like they had learned a really valuable skill that was a lot easier and less complicated than they had imagined. They were also quite excited to end up with a free sample, which is interesting because a lot of the samples ended up sitting in the Spoon kitchen for a week... it's difficult to gauge the efficacy of a workshop when the end results are not ready right away, but most people seemed to understand what they were doing and the handout helped immensely.

### ***Second Workshop: Foods for Love: Aphrodisiac Cooking (Tuesday, February 9 2010)***

I facilitated this workshop with the help of Jane Atkinson. We developed this workshop in partnership with the Trent Queer Collective (TQC) as part of their Self-Love Week, and it was extremely well-attended... we had anywhere from 12-15 participants (some left early, some came late, in proper Trent tradition). The focus of this workshop was on healthful eating for vitality and wellness, which was of course made more exciting by the aphrodisiac component. Together Jane and I planned a meal using aphrodisiac ingredients that were also extremely beneficial to one's physical health. We began our workshop with a brief introduction and discussion of food and sensuality, then divided our large group into teams and had them cutting, blending and stirring a delicious meal. As we cooked together with our groups we shared information about the ingredients we were using, and how they benefited one's overall health.

We also asked a \$5.00 donation for this workshop but perhaps because the TQC advertised it as free, we made absolutely no money. However feedback was extremely positive: everyone really enjoyed cooking together and learning about the food. It was nice to teach in such an informal setting and people really enjoyed the chance to interact so directly with their food and with each other. It was helpful that we coordinated this event in conjunction with the TQC, which has such a large member base and mailing list and was able to advertise for us. Self Love Week is also a very popular event at Trent and a lot of people were brought in through that interest.... It would be beneficial for future workshops to be held as part of larger activities put on by other organizations.

### ***Third Workshop: Gluten-Free Baking Workshop (Tuesday, March 9 2010)***

This workshop was an interesting attempt... facilitated by Evan Brockest (whose girlfriend has Celiacs disease and can't eat wheat) and Jane Atkinson (Spoon baker with a

gluten allergy), the purpose of this workshop was to introduce participants to the basics of gluten-free baking and have them try their hand at baking several recipes. Unfortunately, perhaps because of the unseasonably warm weather (it was one of the first very warm days of the year, where people just can't seem to leave the podium) turn-out was low... people must have been breaking out their bicycles, and it was a little warm to be hanging out inside a kitchen. Two people showed up to attend the workshop, both of whom were friends of Evan and Jane's. We waited for about half an hour to see if anyone else would show up, then decided to head back to Evan and Jane's to bake in their kitchen, which has better light and better music... but just as we were heading out media people showed up to take promotional photos and ended up organizing an impromptu Trent photo shoot that we felt it very difficult to extricate ourselves from! So, the baking workshop didn't happen, and we received no feedback from participants other than it was quite strange to participate in a workshop where they were only pretending to bake, for cameras!

I think that the low turnout was certainly related to the unseasonably warm weather... advertising for this event occurred as it had for the other events, so it could be that people were too busy or too excited by spring to come out. Gluten free baking is usually a very popular topic and one that we are asked about quite frequently, so rescheduling one for next year would certainly not be amiss. Comprehensive handouts for this workshop were created and will be placed on the website with the others.

#### ***Fourth Workshop: Indigenous Cooking (Thursday March 18 2010)***

Last year the Spoon, in conjunction with Dan Longboat of the Indigenous Environmental Studies (IES) program, prepared an Indigenous Feast that featured traditionally prepared foods such as wild rice, locally grown beans and vegetables, wild venison and moose meat. For the first event, food was prepared by local chef Wendell **WHAT IS HIS LAST NAME** with the help of Spoon board members. To expand upon the theme of Indigenous cooking, we decided to prepare the food during a workshop that would be open to all students. This workshop was less well-attended than the others: this is perhaps because of confusion in the planning of the event, which taught me a lot about the difficulties of planning an event with outside organizations! We didn't actually receive confirmation from the folks in the IES department until quite soon before the event and didn't have as much time to advertise as we would have liked, but in any case we did have seven people out to attend the workshop which was quite a good turnout considering the lack of advertising.

The workshop was excellent. Most of the participants really enjoyed the opportunity to learn such unique skills and it was really beneficial to have someone so well-versed in cooking Indigenous foods. It was interesting because there were quite a few Spoon staff members there, which was great because it gave them insight into cooking different types of foods and certainly was a learning experience for them, almost a form of training! It was also a really hands-on workshop: with all of us crowded in the kitchen it was a little hectic but lots of fun as Wendell gave demonstrations and teachings about how the food was obtained and processed and how it should be prepared, as well as providing cultural and historical background related to the dishes. Wendell did not want to provide us with a handout, saying that the proper Anishinaabe tradition was to listen and observe, rather than to learn through the written word... so we deferred to his cultural practices and certainly didn't insist. The feast too was really great and a chance for other students to come and enjoy the food while listening to a visiting speaker discuss sustainable communities (including food production) in Japan. While it has proved

slightly difficult working with the Indigenous Environmental Studies program (they can be quite disorganized and tend to work wonders at the last minute!) it was also a very successful partnership in that there is a built-in community of people who don't always frequent the Spoon, but who may be interested in learning more about it.

***Fifth Workshop: Gardening and Soils (date TBA)***

Unfortunately by the time we were thinking of planning a fifth workshop, my supervisor and I decided that it was too soon to exams and probably not worth it to plan another workshop, particularly as the weather gets so warm and it gets harder to lure people inside. She suggested that we defer the fifth workshop until the summer or even next fall... then I was approached by board member Kirsten Thompson, who is also completing a TCCBE project related to soil. One of the components of her work will be to lead a workshop on her findings, and we are in the process of figuring out a date for this workshop... she needs to be sure that all three of her thesis advisors can make it, a harrowing prospect this time of year... however, we anticipate a good turnout as we plan to hold the workshop outside, perhaps downtown, and advertise it to the greater Peterborough community. As connecting with the downtown community is part of the Spoon's mandate, we felt it important to do one workshop that would reach people outside the Trent community.

# EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SURVEY

As part of my project I surveyed some of the workshop participants to hear their views on the workshops as well as regarding Education and Outreach at the Spoon. Via phone and email I interviewed **HOW MANY** workshops attendees. The surveys are included below, with a discussion to follow.

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## **Education and Outreach at the Seasoned Spoon**

Hello loyal Spoon members! My name is Robyn Smith and I am a cook at the Spoon, as well as a student completing a research project through the Trent Centre for Community Based Education. My work has been around the Spoon's Education and Outreach mandate, which requires us to offer educational opportunities for the Trent and Peterborough Communities. Please help me by filling out this quick survey—you can help us by giving your feedback, so that next year we can offer even more great learning opportunities.

Feel free to respond with as much, or as little, as you need to.

**Your name:** Jason Latremouille (Workshop participant, survey via phone)

**Your major and year of study:** 2nd year Indigenous Environmental Sciences

**Which workshop did you attend?** Indigenous Cooking workshop

**How did you hear about the workshop?** by email, and word out mouth (classmate was going)

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** it was awesome...I didn't know it would be so hands on. The kitchen was great, it was good to experience where the food in the Spoon comes from. Wendell was a great facilitator; he has a good rapport with the participants, especially some of the younger ones. The food was delicious too. I really liked how he gave us samples of each dish, especially just in its pure form without the seasonings... that was really great, to get the real essence of, say, moose meat or wild rice.

**What is it that made you come to the workshop?** Mostly the indigenous food component and the fact that it is related to my major. I was excited to learn how to prepare traditional foods; it was neat to learn a skill you couldn't learn elsewhere.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** Yeah, the advertising was good for the workshops this year... I got emails for a bunch of them and saw posters around too. This particular workshop could have been better advertised but that is understandable given the circumstances!

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon?**

**(Creativity is appreciated!)** They have been good, gluten free baking was a good one to cover different areas of interest. I'd like to see a general cooking workshop focusing on vegetarian cooking and healthy living. I'd also like to see more indigenous components to the workshops, maybe having Wendell back to show us how to prepare corn with lye!

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?** Garden Jane in Toronto, could give really great gardening workshops.. Wendell could teach more workshops too, and perhaps other Elders/cooks in local indigenous communities here.

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)** Proactive, progressive topics- just the fact that you do anything, that you have an educational mandate, is great.

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**Your name:** Kristin Laroque (Workshop participant, survey via phone)

**Your major and year of study:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Cultural Studies Major

**Which workshop did you attend?** Foods for Love Aphrodisiac Cooking Workshop

**How did you hear about the workshop?** Through a friend

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** I really liked the circle introduction at the beginning, it was really good to share with people like that, it helped to establish a sense of community. I liked splitting into smaller groups, that helped us learn better and establish more intimate interactions. I thought that the end was a bit rushed maybe, like there should have been more of a conclusion... it could have been longer as well, that kind of thing you can spend a whole afternoon doing!

**What is it that made you come to the workshop?** I was interested in the topic, food and sexuality... it seemed like a comfortable setting to talk about things that aren't normally articulated.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** Yes, I would say so... emails and posters pretty much covered it, and I saw some postings on MyTrent too.

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)** I would like to see more to do with food and sensuality... food in massage, the texture of food too... there's interesting things to look at beyond consumption, food as therapy would be interesting to explore.

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?** Brian Nicholls would be a great person to talk to about food, he has a therapy background and a strong knowledge of food systems in

Africa.

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)** It's really great to see educational initiatives being explored at the Spoon... it's a really great space for it, I like the idea of using the café for something other than just making food. It's a good approachable space, especially for first year students—downtown can be somewhat intimidating and it's really great to have a space to learn these kinds of things on-campus. In general, I appreciated the Spoon's educational initiatives and I hope to see lots more!

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**Your name:** Jane Atkinson (Workshop facilitator/Spoon staff, survey via email)

**Your major and year of study:** 4<sup>th</sup> Year Indigenous Environmental

**Which workshop did you attend?** Foods for Love Aphrodisiac Cooking Workshop, Gluten Free Baking workshop, Yoghurt Making workshop (all as a facilitator)

**How did you hear about the workshop?** I led them ☺

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints...)** It was really nice to be able to share skills like that... the Spoon space is perhaps not ideal for cooking with a large group, and I think that I felt a little flustered... I just need more practice leading workshops. It seems like maybe we need more than two hours for workshops, as well. I think everyone really enjoyed themselves though.

**What is it that made you come to the workshop?** N/A

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** I think that we could have done a little more advertising... maybe chalking on the bridge, and getting staff to talk it up more during the shift prior to the workshop?

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)** Sprouting, food production, make your own tempeh, healthy eating on a students' budget, fermenting, health and beauty products... etc. It would be really great to see a buyers' cooperative established through the Spoon and have meetings where we exchange recipes, maybe one person could present each week on a different health food product?

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?** Hanah McFarlane, Gisele who provides us with greens, Rochelle from Food Not Bombs

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)** It's too bad, Rob, that you only did this in second semester

because this is something the Spoon really needs to strengthen! It's a really great space and if we had more people working at it, or at least a paid employee, we could provide a lot more of these opportunities. I think we need a better system, maybe every other week there could be a workshop, on a set date, so that people would just know that workshops happen at this specific time and can do the ones they feel are most interesting... that way at least there's some consistency.

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**Your name:** Julie Stresman (Workshop participant /Spoon volunteer, survey via email)

**Your major and year of study:** French/English double major, first year

**Which workshop did you attend?** Aphrodisiac cooking workshop, at self love week

**How did you hear about the workshop?** A friend (Kipper)

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** I really liked the casual atmosphere, and that the cooks were still professional but also approachable, and were well informed about the ingredients and food preparation.

**What is it that made you come to the workshop?** I was already interested in the Seasoned Spoon, and was curious to see what it was about. Also, I wanted to learn more about cooking, so it was perfect.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** I think that word of mouth is the best way to advertise something like that, and that is how I heard about it.

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)**

I've only been to one, and another one just like it next year would be awesome.

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?**

I don't know very much about that.

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)**

I think that the Spoon does a fabulous job, it's just generally a great place to be.

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**Your name:** Charlie Randall (workshop participant, survey via email)

**Your major and year of study:** First Year Politics student

**Which workshop did you attend?** Foods For Love



**How did you hear about the workshop?** Self-love week promo

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** sweet! It was hands-on, there was great food, good conversation... it was really awesome that we got to make the food then sit down and eat it together, and i liked how jane and robyn gave so much background info on the ingredients we were using, relating them to overall health etc... great!

**What is it that made you come to the workshop?** I went to a lot of the self-love workshops and felt that this one would be interesting.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** Seems pretty good... I'm not on the spoon mailing list and I don't really eat there so I don't get any updates but I often heard about the workshops from friends. Maybe it would be good to try and advertise more throughout campus?

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)** General cooking/eating healthfully workshop... I'd also like to see workshops dealing with student poverty i.e. how to eat well on a very tight budget... a dumpster diving workshop would be awesome. More hands-on applications of food issues and how they manifest in the community would be sweet.

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?** Not really. Unless you want to do biking stuff, I'd have contacts for that, but it's not really food.

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)** It seems great... I'm not too involved but it's good to have an educational mandate, people really benefit from that.

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**Your name:** Gemma Grayson (Workshop participant, survey via email)

**Your major and year of study:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Biology

**Which workshop did you attend?** Yoghurt Making

**How did you hear about the workshop?** In the Spoon and through members' email

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** it seemed a little disorganized, which was ok since the setting was informal, but I prefer more structure. It was good to have hands-on experience, and the handout was really helpful.

**What is it that made you come to the workshop?** I saw the poster and it fit into my schedule, I've been trying to learn more about making my food from scratch.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how**

**was this lacking/how could we have improved?** More professional posters would be beneficial in advertising events.

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)**

“Cooking for a Crowd” would be a good one. I would like to see more around food growing too, both indoor and outdoor.

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?**

Tom Hutchinson, Paula Anderson, KWIC, Sustainable Trent

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)**

It could be better organized. Having a set time (e.g. every Tuesday) for workshops would be useful and would ensure that students know when events are happening.

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**Your name:** Jeanine Clark (Workshop participant, survey via phone)

**Your major and year of study:** Not a student

**Which workshop did you attend?** Yoghurt Making

**How did you hear about the workshop?** Through a friend attending the workshop

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** It was great! I've wanted to learn how to make yoghurt for a long time so this was awesome! I did it at home and it worked perfectly.... It was really great to have that mix of hands-on direction and written reminders.

**What is it that made you come to the workshop?** Like I said, I've been wanting to make yoghurt for a long time! I've tried before and failed so I made myself come to this workshop.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** Yes... maybe it would be good to expand a bit more, maybe advertise through the Arthur? A lot of my friends who don't go to the Spoon hadn't heard about it. I'm not a student either and only spend one day a week on campus... maybe it would be good to advertise more in the general Peterborough community to get more of a variety of people out.

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)** Cheese making, bread making, canning, general baking workshop... something to do with pastry? I would like to see also a sourdough workshop, working with bacteria and probiotics would be interesting.

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful**

**in planning further educational initiatives?**

Hmm... no individuals but I guess Sustainable Trent, KWIC, Transition Town Peterborough, and Peterborough Green Up would be good places to start. Maybe networking with departments such as ERS would be a good idea as well.

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)**

It seems like the Spoon targets a pretty specific group of people, and it would be good to extend educational opportunities to people outside that community. Maybe this could be helped by holding workshops in other, highly visible places on campus i.e. on the podium. Otherwise it is really great, the Spoon is awesome and we're lucky to have these educational opportunities!

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**Your name:** Kate Uffelmann (Workshop participant, survey via phone)

**Your major and year of study:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Cultural Studies/Anthropology

**Which workshop did you attend?** Yoghurt Making

**How did you hear about the workshop?** Through a friend, poster at Spoon, email sent to Spoon membership

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints...)** The workshop was really fun and educationally beneficial. The facilitators were really friendly and knowledgeable, and the Spoon is a really great space in which to hold a workshop.

**What is it that made you come to the workshop?** I am interested in learning more about food preparation and I love yoghurt.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** Yes, I think it was well advertised.

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)** More around baking would be good. I missed the gluten free baking workshop but that would have been good to learn about... I'm especially interested in gluten free, vegan cooking options so more on that would be great. I'm also interested in learning more about wild edibles and wildcrafting, herbalism, etc... it would be great to learn more about things that you can eat in the forest or in your backyard.

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?** Not really, maybe the people at Food Not Bombs would be a good resource. Also Transition Town Peterborough would be a good place to check out.

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms,**

**compliments suggestions?)** The Spoon is a really great place and it's awesome that they have an educational mandate. I would like to see more workshops in the future.

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**Your name:** Aimée-Leah Lavoie (workshop participant, survey via email)

**Your major and year of study:** Indigenous Environmental Studies, 3rd year

**Which workshop did you attend?** Aphrodisiac cooking

**How did you hear about the workshop?** The Arthur

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** It was great! The recipes were delicious and were feasible for students to make at home. The coordinators knew what they were doing and made an effort to ensure that participants felt comfortable.

**What is it that made you come to the workshop, or if you have not attended workshops, why not?** The theme of the workshop was intriguing, and the price (free!) was right!

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** I think they were. It's sometimes hard to compete with everything else going on on campus. It might help to have a chosen location where upcoming Spoon events are regularly posted.

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)** More wildcrafting and canning workshops. Maybe do some themes by month or what is in season. Workshops that encourage people to look at food in a different way, ie as cosmetics, as medicine, the whole life cycle of the plant/animal.

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?** It would be great to partner with the Indigenous Studies department. Many ceremonies surround specific foods, they often hold potlucks/feasts. Maybe those in con.ed. who are planning on working with children could look at kids' snacks/nutrition....?

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)**I think the Spoon holds a fairly central position within the school community. They have a good group of passionate and involved people who take their education and outreach responsibilities to heart. They are always trying to innovate and act as an organization with a conscience. I love it

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**Your name:** Nate Jones (Workshop participant, survey via email)

**Your major and year of study:** Third-year Environmental Sciences

**Which workshop did you attend?** Indigenous cooking workshop

**How did you hear about the workshop?** Email from Indigenous Studies dept.

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** I really liked the hands-on aspect of the workshop and the informal setting. It was a really interesting, unique opportunity. My only complaint is that it wasn't a particularly practical topic, the food was not something you could really make at home

**What is it that made you come to the workshop, or if you have not attended workshops, why not?** I don't really come to the Seasoned Spoon and was interested in checking out what was going on.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** I think so, I heard about this workshop from several people and had heard about others on MyTrent

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)** I'd like to learn more about general vegetarian cooking, I think a basic cooking workshop for younger students with no money would be a really good one.

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?** Maybe networking with the ERSC department and organizations like KWIC and Sustainable Trent

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)** I don't know a lot about the Seasoned Spoon but now that I've been to a workshop I'm pretty impressed, it's a nice space and people are really friendly, It was great to learn more about Indigenous cooking and now that I've been there I'll definitely go back!

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**Your name:** May Zaw (Workshop Participant, survey via email)

**Your major and year of study:** Nursing

**Which workshop did you attend?** Yogurt Making

**How did you hear about the workshop?** Email

**What was your general opinion on the workshop(s)? (what you liked/didn't like, suggestions, complaints....)** I have made yogurt with my family growing up and it was so nice to be together with other people and to share the experience. What I really liked about this workshop was the extra teachings that went with yogurt making. For example, I did not know that it would help with growing moss or using it as a treatment for the skin :) Thanks for providing it on paper for us to take home :)

**What is it that made you come to the workshop, or if you have not attended workshops, why not?** I enjoy cooking! I also love the Spoon so I get excited with any event that the Spoon is hosting really :) It's too bad that timing always works out for me to miss the events. Luckily I was able to attend one out of the whole year but I would suggest having the workshops available maybe in two different times (If that is possible... I am aware that students work at the spoon and have busy lives themselves :) ), but it would be lovely if we could have the option of choosing which time works best for our schedule.

**Do you feel that workshops at the Spoon were adequately advertised? If not, how was this lacking/how could we have improved?** I check my email very often so I always receive the emails from the Spoon. I think this is a good way to do it but other students who are not on the email list may miss out. Maybe having a chalk board outside the spoon to advertise may work as that hallway is a busy place and students can spot the board easily? Since the spoon already has chalk and an awesome artist who decorates the board every morning, I think this would be great! :) Putting the advertising up early will allow students to mark it on their calendar and not make other plans to attend the workshops :)

**What are your ideas for future workshops or educational initiatives at the Spoon? (Creativity is appreciated!)** I would have loved to have been able to attend the workshop where you taught students how to cook Indigenous traditional foods. Having more guest chefs would be awesome! I'd love to learn more about the Indigenous foods.

Since we are living in Canada, and there are many Indigenous peoples living here, it would be nice to learn from them :)

- Growing a garden workshop? Or maybe growing herbs in your residence room would be more beneficial. I.e. learn how to care for plants and herbs.

- Dream tea? How to make it? Or other herbal infusions for the health. I.e. drinks and foods that can be a stress reliever for students. Things that will be soothing or healthy comfort foods.

- Painting workshop... everyone coming in to paint and to décorate Trent. (I feel that Trent may look more bright and colourful with paintings.

- International potluck day and show and tell (i.e. talk about the dish you brought and its relevance to your life or culture?)

- More workshops that allows for certification (i.e. food handlers course, basic baking, and cooking). This would be helpful for students looking for jobs as a baker or a cook, etc.)

- Picking a certain grain or Ingredient and learning the benefits of it and learning how to cook it in different ways (i.e. quinoa - it is an amazing ancient grain :) - I only know how to make a few dishes... learning other types of dishes would be great).

- Picking a theme ( such as Japanese foods, Indian food, Thai food ), and learning more about it. For example, learning the way of eating, the way of preparing, etc. and then trying to make one or two dishes to try and then eating it the way they would normally do (i.e. eating with chopsticks, eating with the fingers :)

- Learning about GREEN CLEANING :)

- Teaching students how to compost :)

- Oh my gosh.... I want to learn FRUIT CARVING !!! :D Check this website you Robyn ([http://www.templeofthai.com/fruit\\_carving/carving.php](http://www.templeofthai.com/fruit_carving/carving.php)).

**Can you suggest any potential facilitators or organizations that would be helpful in planning further educational initiatives?**

- "Come cook with us" at Peterborough City County Health Unit (PCCHU) ?
- Trent International Students?
- Professors?

**What are your general thoughts on Education and Outreach at the Spoon? (Do you think that it is adequately addressed? Do you have any specific criticisms, compliments suggestions?)**

- Maybe advertising to everyone rather than the email list would reach out to other potentially interested students and locals?
- I have heard from some people that they do not feel comfortable in going into the spoon...I am not sure why. Are they intimidated? Are they worried about something? I am not sure. I feel that the Spoon is very open to everyone. Some students do not know about the spoon at all. When I give tours to potential Trent Students, I make sure to talk about the Spoon so they will know about it. Maybe reaching out to student dons can help spread the word.

Thanks Robyn! You are doing such a great job! I am so happy that the Spoon is growing and improving every time (thanks to you and your other dedicated colleagues!)  
Good luck with everything and hope to see you soon!

## ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH AT THE SEASONED SPOON

Based on personal observations, discussions with workshop participants and results of the survey, it seems that Education and Outreach is an extremely important aspect of the Spoon's mandate. This is echoed in literature throughout my research, which stated that consumers must be empowered about their food choices and educated on how to enact change. Education is one of the most important aspects of the Spoon's guiding principles, and one of the main reasons we exist.... the Spoon does not simply serve lunch and coffee to people, rather it opens up a world of thought and discussion surrounding what we eat, where it comes from, and how something as simple as a lunch café can embody food sovereignty and advocacy. In this section I will evaluate workshops based on my opinions as well as those from survey participants, and will conclude by offering a general assessment of Education and Outreach at the Spoon by comparing it to similar organizations I studied.

Of the workshops that did happen, all three were extremely well attended and received positive feedback. Students really enjoyed the combination of discussion and experiential learning, and appreciated the hand-outs which gave them some concrete directions that they could follow at home. Students also really enjoyed not only learning skills (i.e. preparing yoghurt) but learning background information as well (i.e. other uses for yoghurt as a health and beauty aid, historical info, etc.). Generally, the topics were popular: participants enjoyed that the workshops showcased skills that were easy to do at home. One participant complained that the Indigenous Cooking workshop was somewhat impractical as the recipes were not easily recreated: however, several of the students in the workshop might have had access to traditional foods, and that same respondent did also state that he appreciated the subject matter and was interested in learning more about Indigenous cooking.

Students really also appreciated the general atmosphere of the workshops: aside from one participant who said that she preferred a more structured approach, most people really liked that they were so informal and encouraged discussion and interactive learning. People liked the feeling of community that developed in the workshops and appreciated learning and sharing with one another: I spoke with several participants after the Foods For Love workshop who said they were impressed that the facilitators didn't just stand there and talk, but welcomed others' opinions and offered the opportunity to share the role of teaching. In speaking of the aphrodisiac, one survey respondent, Kris, said that she appreciated having a space in which to discuss topics that are normally not that freely discussed- she stressed the benefits of having a safe environment in which to hold meaningful discussion. The facilitators received positive feedback as well: one participant responded that she appreciated that the cooks were "professional but also approachable, and were well informed about the ingredients and food preparation". Many survey respondents wrote about their workshop facilitators, stating that they interacted well with the participants and had a good grasp of their subject matter, clearly explaining it to those in attendance.

As previously stated, Education and Outreach is invaluable in the Spoon and must be maintained, even expanded, for the Spoon to continue to thrive. Students really appreciate these educational opportunities and it is through workshops that many students are exposed to the café. As one student stated, it is important to continue to branch out by networking with other organizations on campus: this will not only ensure that our events



are well advertised and promoted but might also help us reach people who don't know about the Spoon. Offering a wide variety of workshops is essential to ensure that we are reaching a broad demographic: another respondent, May, stated that she feels there is a stigma surrounding the Spoon where many students are "afraid" to eat there: expanding our Education and Outreach would bring more attention to the importance of having places like the Spoon, and would bring more people interested in specific topics.

Some survey respondents thought that advertising for workshops could have been improved. Some offered suggestions that had already been implemented, so it is possible that they just didn't see the advertising. I do think that more use could be made of chalk, and perhaps establishing a permanent space in the Spoon on which to advertise events. Another extremely helpful suggestion was to establish a set day (weekly or biweekly) on which the Spoon is known to hold events, so that students can come to know that they happen regularly. The Traditional Teachings in the Indigenous Studies department are a good example: all discussions are organized at the beginning of the semester and advertised throughout the year via posters, emails and on the website. This way students can plan to attend the sessions they are particularly interested in, or just drop by any Wednesday because they know a talk will be happening. This might be a good thing to implement at the Spoon. There could also be more use made of college and TCSA email lists, which had not occurred to me until later in the project. Advertising downtown and through other organizations (Peterborough Green Up, KWIC, Sustainable Trent, OPIRG) would also help attract more participants... although as we saw in the workshops, perhaps that is not what we want as it is a lot easier to connect with a small group.

One of the facilitators, Jane, also spoke of the difficulties of holding a workshop in the existing space: especially when we needed to use the kitchen, it could be quite cramped. Perhaps looking into spaces used by other organizations (i.e. a larger, brighter commercial kitchen) would be beneficial, and if it was downtown it would also help to draw in participants from the larger Peterborough community. However, as several respondents stated, it was also really nice, especially for students living in residence, to offer these activities on campus. Another option would be to, like FoodShare, provide online workshops. Posting workshop handouts and recipes is a good idea as well.

For future workshops, students gave many helpful suggestions. A lot of participants wanted to see more Indigenous-related topics, and many suggested linking with international students' organizations (a demographic not really represented at the Spoon) to do global cooking workshops. Networking with other organizations would be a great way to share resources and contact bases, and to get ideas for potential workshops: as seen by the great turnout for the Self Love week workshop, it really helps to work in conjunction with another organization. What follows is a list of potential workshops, and a contact list of potential facilitators.

### **Potential Workshops Suggested by Respondents:**

**Basics:** Eating healthfully on a budget, cooking for a crowd, vegetarian cooking, gluten free/vegan baking and cooking, canning, sprouting, fermentation, tempeh making, cheese making, bread baking

**Advocacy/Politics:** Dumpster diving (freeganism!), theoretical workshops about food sovereignty and advocacy

**Gardening:** General gardening, container gardening, composting

**Wildcrafting:** Wild edibles, herbalism, tea making, food as medicine

**Health and Beauty:** Make your own health/beauty products, green cleaning

**Certification Courses:** Food Handlers' Course, SmartServe, etc.

**International:** International Potluck/Show and Tell, Global cooking workshops organized around a cultural theme

**Indigenous:** How to prepare corn with lye, ceremony-based workshops featuring traditional foods, indigenous worldviews of food and growing

**Miscellaneous:** Fruit carving, ingredient-based workshops, painting workshop, food as therapy

### **Potential Facilitators and Related Organizations**

#### **Basics:**

Aimee Blyth (Canning, growing and harvesting) [aimeeblyth@trentu.ca](mailto:aimeeblyth@trentu.ca)

Peter Pauls (Starch free cooking) [peetrapauls@hotmail.com](mailto:peetrapauls@hotmail.com)

Evan Brockest (gluten free baking) [ebrockest@gmail.com](mailto:ebrockest@gmail.com)

Jane Atkinson (gluten free baking, yghurt making etc) [janey.joy@gmail.com](mailto:janey.joy@gmail.com)

Hanah McFarlane (gluten free, yoghurt, food advocacy) [hanah.banaza@gmail.com](mailto:hanah.banaza@gmail.com)

Ian Giesbrecht (fermentation, hemp, lots of other things!) [iangiesbrecht@gmail.com](mailto:iangiesbrecht@gmail.com)

Ellen Bentzen (Plants in Society, Use of Hemp) [ebentzen@trentu.ca](mailto:ebentzen@trentu.ca)

Dawn McKenzie (Raw food, basic vegan cooking) [dawnmckenzie1@hotmail.com](mailto:dawnmckenzie1@hotmail.com)

Jan Laurie (Sprouting) [janet.laurie1@gmail.com](mailto:janet.laurie1@gmail.com)

#### **Advocacy/Politics:**

Justin (Food Not Bombs) [cosmo.guffa@gmail.com](mailto:cosmo.guffa@gmail.com)

Tom Hutchinson (farming, global food systems, gardening) [thutchinson@trentu.ca](mailto:thutchinson@trentu.ca)

Paula Anderson (professor, Canadian Food Systems) [paulaanderson2@trentu.ca](mailto:paulaanderson2@trentu.ca)

#### **Gardening:**

Jill Bishop (Community Gardens): [jill.pcg@greenup.on.ca](mailto:jill.pcg@greenup.on.ca)

Danielle Prophet (Vermicomposting) [danielleprophet@trentu.ca](mailto:danielleprophet@trentu.ca)

Carmelle Sullivan (Vertical gardening) [carmie6@hotmail.com](mailto:carmie6@hotmail.com)

Jay Perkins (composting with soldier flies) [perkins515@gmail.com](mailto:perkins515@gmail.com)

Trent Rhode (Transition Landscapes, Permaculture) [info@transitionlandscapes.com](mailto:info@transitionlandscapes.com)

#### **Wildcrafting:**

Nicole Ayres (Wild Edibles) [nayres@dmwills.com](mailto:nayres@dmwills.com)

Troy Glover (Identifying Wild Fungi) [troyglover@grindstoneacademy.org](mailto:troyglover@grindstoneacademy.org)

#### **Health and Beauty:**

Jesse Jacobs (Acupuncture) [jessegjacobs@gmail.com](mailto:jessegjacobs@gmail.com)

Renee Purdy (Naturopath) [purdy.renee@gmail.com](mailto:purdy.renee@gmail.com)

#### **Indigenous:**

Dan Longboat (Director, Indigenous Environmental Studies) [dlongboat@trentu.ca](mailto:dlongboat@trentu.ca)

Shanni Kimewon (Anishinaabe sacred medicines) [wikyraingrl@hotmail.com](mailto:wikyraingrl@hotmail.com)

#### **Non-Food, Environmental-Related:**

Nathan Burnett (Survival skills) [naterburnett@hotmail.com](mailto:naterburnett@hotmail.com)

Bennett Bedoukian (Bicycle skills and maintenance) [bbedoukian@gmail.com](mailto:bbedoukian@gmail.com)

## **Networking Organizations**

Sustainable Trent [sustainabletrentu@gmail.com](mailto:sustainabletrentu@gmail.com)

OPRIG [opirg@trentu.ca](mailto:opirg@trentu.ca)

KWIC [kwic@trentu.ca](mailto:kwic@trentu.ca)

Transition Town Peterborough [gaiancf@nexicom.net](mailto:gaiancf@nexicom.net)

Peterborough Green Up [greenup@greenup.on.ca](mailto:greenup@greenup.on.ca)

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE SEASONED SPOON? CONCLUSION

My research into food sovereignty initiatives, and my practical experience by working at the Spoon, gave me a great deal of insight into how the Spoon might expand its educational services. By examining some similar organizations we can see the similarities and the differences in our approaches toward food sovereignty. I think it's a really good idea to, as People's Potato member Lili suggested, develop a network of these kinds of food services so that we can better help each other and support each other's efforts. It is extremely important that the Seasoned Spoon continues to offer educational initiatives. Hopefully this manual will serve as background information and relevant practical data for future implementation of workshops and seminars. While it would be ideal to have funding for an Education and Outreach Coordinator, there are also ways to get around this- one participant suggested having a co-op member volunteer to do this position; maybe it could be a specific position on the Board of Directors.

The Seasoned Spoon will always offer educational opportunities in some sense: even in its very existence the Spoon is educating community members of the benefits of local, organic vegetarian cuisine. Simply by being, the Spoon is helping its customers consider global and local food systems and is helping them challenge agrarian capitalism. By providing better good choices and an alternative to corporate food systems, the Spoon is a proud proponent of food sovereignty and is striving as hard as it can to fulfill that ideal, based on what it means to us.

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