**Serving the Public: Book Panel Discussion**

**Feb 6, 2025**

Panelists

Kevin Morgan

Moe Garahan

Joshna Maharaj

Debbie Field

Moderated by Alison Blay-Palmer

**Alison BP** [00:00:00] Thank you everybody for being with us. This is an uplifting event that I've been looking forward to for quite some time now. We're very, very lucky to have Dr. Kevin Morgan with us and an esteemed panel that includes Moe Garahan, Debbie Field and Joshna Maharaj to talk about and launch in Canada, Kevin's new book, Serving the Public, the Good Food Revolution in Schools, Hospitals and Prisons. And it's really my delight to be able to do this. Kevin is an incredible colleague and also I'm happy to say, I'm lucky to say that he's also a friend and a mentor to me. So I'm really excited to be doing this, as are all the people on the panel as well, I should say. So this event is being hosted through the UNESCO Chair. I'm the UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity, and Sustainability Studies and we're really delighted to be able to bring this presentation to you in this book talk. Liz Miltenburg has been doing all of the background work and is making sure that the technology is working. So Liz, thank you so much for being the facilitator for this. Just a couple of housekeeping, excuse me, details before we get started. First of all, as you will have noted, the webinar is being recorded. So if you don't want to be identified, please turn off your camera. In terms of the way that the event is going to unfold, first of all, we will hear from Kevin Morgan, who's going to present an overview of his book. Kent, could you mute yourself? Thanks. In terms of the way that we're going to unfold the webinar, Kevin is going to make a presentation and provide us with an overview of the book so we can get some context. If you haven't had a chance to read it yet, it's really excellent and I strongly encourage all of you to get a copy. Then our panelists are going to introduce themselves and their work before we head into a moderated question and answer. So if you have questions, please put them in the chat and we'll get to them to as many of them as we can. We'll be moving into the Q &A in about an hour. And I think those are all of the logistical things that I need to talk about, the housekeeping details. So what I'd like to do, first of all, is just provide sort of a very big overview of where we are in the Canadian context with respect to serving or not serving the public. Until recently, Canada was one of the only OECD countries without a nationally harmonized publicly funded school meal program. So as you will hear from the work that Kevin has done, we have a lot of catching up to do. However, in some places Canada has, setting that factoid aside, Canada has played around the edges of public procurement as both an income stabilizing opportunity for farmers, but unfortunately with little follow through. And here I'm thinking of the Ontario Local Food Act and also has experimented with things over the years like the Joyceville Prison Farm, which was a leading example of innovation in its time. Unfortunately, we suffer many of the same deficiencies that have been experienced and are being experienced in the UK. So we have a neoliberalization context. We have global food system pressures that are constantly pushing prices down and that is likely to accelerate now. There's a lack of coherent policy between federal, provincial and municipal governments. There's a need for transparent and clear assessment of legal issues that impact how we can serve the public through public procurement. There's also been a downloading to cities and towns from upper levels of government. There's a need for infrastructure training and knowledge that's also lacking in Canada. And there's also a role that the public can play and that we can help the public get up to speed in terms of public awareness. And so there is leadership that's needed to overcome the inertia that's in the system and the lock -in that we're experiencing in terms of the trajectories that we're all dealing with and looking for ways to move this inertia and find a way forward. And that's really what we're here to talk about today. There is an opportunity right now to keep this on the agenda with elections brewing in the background. Here in Ontario, we have an election coming up and other things are taking shape in other levels of government. And also, of course, we would be remiss if we didn't mention the threatened 25 % tariffs that are being threatened in terms of imported items from the United States. And this resurface conversations about how to build a more resilient food system and the role of public procurement and how we can leverage that to move the conversation forward. So that's sort of the context that we're all dealing with in Canada. I just wanted to share something with you from Lori Stahlbrand. Dr. Stahlbrand couldn't be here with us today, but the book has been dedicated to Wayne Roberts. And she wanted me to share a little note with you. So I'm just going to read her words right now. She's very sorry that she can't be with you all today for the Canadian launch of Kevin Morgan's new book, Serving the Public, the Good Food Revolution in Schools, Hospitals and Prisons. The panel is exciting and she looks forward to watching the recording. Kevin has been a mentor and an inspiration to her. She was honored when he agreed to join her Phd committee and she has learned so much from him over the years. This is unsurprisingly a beautifully written book. It's clear, comprehensive and passionate and a tremendous argument for the power of good food and thoughtful and intentional public procurement to improve health, address the planetary crisis and be a source of joy. Lori was very touched when Kevin contacted her to let her know that he wanted to dedicate the book to her late husband, Wayne Roberts. Wayne was a great admirer of Kevin and she sees him as kindred spirits. Wayne would have been so honored by this lovely dedication. Lori would like to congratulate Kevin and wish him every success with this important book and looks forward to the day when a public duty of care is embedded in food procurement across the globe and when we have a food system that brings health, joy and justice to all. So I think that that's a lovely segue into the book and to Kevin's presentation. So I'm just going to give a brief overview of Kevin's background for those of you who aren't familiar with his, the very large and important presence that Kevin has now and has had over the years in terms of this idea of public procurement, but also regional economic development and the place that food can, the role that food can play there. Currently, Kevin is a professor of governance and development at Cardiff University and recognized for his expertise and place based innovation strategies and sustainable development. He's collaborated with many, many different organizations, including the European Commission, the OECD, both urban and regional governments across Europe, which was one of the important perspectives that he brings to bear in writing this book. And he offers in strategic insights to advance equitable and sustainable growth. His research spans innovation, spatial development, food sustainability, devolution, governance, the foundational economy and civic and social enterprise, and has a number of different funders, including the ESRC, the British Academy, and the European Commission. And he has contributed significantly to advancing policy and practice in both local and global contexts. And I think that all of those things are very obvious in his book, Serving the Public. So if it's OK with you, Kevin, I'm going to hand things over to you. And we look forward to getting some insights from your perspective about your book.

**Kevin M** [00:08:35] Many thanks, Ali. I'll try and share my slides now.

**Alison BP** [00:08:42] All good. And I should say, while you're putting your slides up, a big congratulations. This is a hugely important contribution to the literature, both on the academic, but also on the practitioner side. And I'm really grateful to you for writing this book. So thank you very much.

**Kevin M** [00:09:01] Thank you very much, Ali. And good day to you all. And many, many thanks for joining the call with us today. And thanks to Alison and Liz at Laurier for convening the discussion today. What I want to try to do in the next 15, 20 minutes is try to cover three things. First of all, I'd like to set some context about the book, where this work on public food provisioning, where it began, when and where it began, as it were. And secondly, I want to very, very briefly try to summarize the key themes and arguments of the book. And then finally, I want to try to distill the implications of the analysis for what I call the good food movement and to pose some questions that the movement faces wherever we live and work. These are generic questions that challenge us wherever we are based. So that's what I'm going to try to do in the next 15, 20 minutes. So to begin at the origins of the book really go back to the year 2000, I guess, when I began to, excuse me, become engaged with a small rural project called the Powys Food Links Project. Powys is a small, smallish in world terms, of course, rural county in mid Wales, and a group of stakeholders in the county, farmers, municipalities, health service workers had got together with a rather unpretentious but laudable goal of trying to get local food into a local hospital. And to cut a long story short, they failed at every point. At every turn, it was a total failure. But as with most failures, there are lessons if we care to take the time and the trouble to learn from them. And this is what we try to do. So as a food policy rookie, if you will, this was the very first food engagement I ever had to try to understand what on earth went wrong in Powys and what were the barriers to the project succeeding. And these were the main barriers. Perceived European Union procurement regulations. I say perceived, by the way, because they were more apparent than real, as it turned out. Tendering procedures then on the part of the procurement agencies that were far too time consuming and complex for local suppliers, public catering preferences that favored large corporates because that reduced transaction costs. And then, as I say, for a rookie like myself, what was most shocking of all was the fact that National Health Service audit conventions found it difficult, if not impossible, to account for the health gains of nutritious food. I found that most surprising and most shocking. And that's where I began my interest in public food provisioning, because I thought this just can't be right. This simply can't be right. So I guess the simple but important premise of the whole book is that the social significance of the public plate, the public plate, by the way, is simply shorthand for public food provisioning and public food provisioning in turn is more than public procurement. To be effective, public procurement, I argue, needs to be embedded in and aligned with policies to support both the production of sustainable food and the consumption of sustainable food. So public procurement is being set up to fail if it's treated as a silver bullet, as a single policy priority, which tries to tap or deploy the power of purchase on its own. And the social significance of public food, I argue, stems from the special nature of the beneficiaries. The people who feature in my book, the pupils, the patients, the prisoners, they're all radically different people. We know that. But they have one thing in common, and that is that all highly vulnerable people, all for different reasons, but they're all highly vulnerable people in need of a nutritious diet. So very, very briefly, in terms of my second point, the themes and arguments of the book. Let me run through this very, very quickly. Hopefully then they'll make make more time for us to discuss this in a more deliberative fashion. So part one of the book really tries to scrutinize the nature of what I call the agri -food polycrisis. The polycrisis really refers to the multiple but interconnected crises in which the food system is deeply implicated. The crises that we know very, very well, climate change, biodiversity loss, and the epidemic of diet related diseases. And I argue that reclaiming the public plate, you know, deploying the public food procurement system in a more purposeful manner can really help us to address this polycrisis if we are deploying this policy with professional competence and political purpose to create a fairer, healthier and more sustainable food system. And part of that challenge lies in substituting what I call a values based procurement system for a neoliberal approach which allows low cost to masquerade as best value. Something I think that we all know about and which we can discuss later. So that's that's part one of the book. In part two, the empirical heart of the book, I guess, is where I try to offer these these these deep dives into these three public food provisioning systems. We tend to think of the public sector as a homogenous whole. But of course, institutionally and in cultural terms, each has its own nuance. And I try to show this in these analyzes of schools, hospitals and prisons. I really try to scrutinize what's called school food reformers call the whole school approach. Basically, this means trying to align the pedagogy of the classroom with the provenance of food in the dining room, to align those two sites within the school, which in the UK, especially, have become horribly disconnected, where pupils would learn about well -being in the classroom, only to end up in the dining room, consuming turkey twizzlers, ultimate expressions of ultra gross, ultra processed food. So that's a clear disconnect. So the whole school approach tries to align this and have a more holistic approach. And and I look at the food for life system developed by the Soil Association as a practical example of the whole school approach, because I consider the food for life system to be the gold standard of public food provisioning in the UK. And then having made that opening argument, trying to establish that the societal significance of school meals by arguing that the school meal is a litmus test for the values of a society. It's as big a deal as that. I tried to look at two mega trends that are sort of sweeping through global school food policy. I see these as not just country specific, but this is a global phenomenon in school meal reform. Number one, the trend towards universality, stigma free, universal free school meals for all children. This is a movement that is taking off. And I analyze how it's taking off in the UK currently to all state funded primary schools in Scotland, in Wales and in London. And there's a big challenge for England, as I'll show in a moment. And I take Malmo in southern Sweden as a as an international beacon of good practice in terms of universal free school meals, because Malmo, I argue, is a strong performing city in a strong country where the national school food system is funded from general taxation. And that's a goal for school food reformers everywhere, it seems to me. And the second mega trend is the rise of more plant based menus. The movements. I work with an organization called Provege, which argues that more plant based menus, not anti meat, but balancing plant based protein with meat protein can be cheaper, healthier and more climate friendly. And as they say, what's not to like? So that's the argument in schools moving quickly along to hospitals. The key argument is that hospitals are also being set up to fail in fast food nations where ultra processed food is becoming the norm. Unfortunately, they're being set up to fail. Why? Because they are being asked to provide a clinical solution to a societal problem. And I argue that this is a truly Sisyphean task. I couldn't think of a more compelling metaphor to describe this challenge than poor old Sisyphus. You'll remember from your Greek mythology that Sisyphus was condemned for eternity to push a boulder up a hill only to see it roll back down again. And for all of eternity, he was condemned to repeat that task. And it became a metaphor for futility. And that's what I see our hospitals who are being asked to to provide clinical solutions to societal problems. And then I look for the chinks of light, the chinks of light in the system where there are organizations, local social innovations, usually consisting of a public health trust working in concert with a civil society organization like Sustain or the Soil Association. And together, they are crafting more sustainable food systems in hospitals. And I give practical examples of these social innovations to show that other worlds are possible, but they are emerging despite the system rather than because of it. And our challenge is to move the system so that becomes the norm and not the exception. And then moving quickly on to prisons, the true Cinderella's of the public sector prisons just an extraordinary state, particularly in the UK and the US, the two unique countries in the global north, because they are the most profound examples of mass incarceration. And that's why I look at the UK and the US and in both countries, I focus in on a truly dramatic experiment in each country where nutrition was at the heart of the experiment in the UK. What I call the Alesbury mystery, taking Alesbury Young Offenders Institution, the most violent institution in the UK and their nutritional program was introduced with these young guys. I say guys because 96 percent of prisoners are men in the UK. A nutritional experiment which had truly dramatic effects, the violent behavior dropped by over a third in these young men when they were given access to good nutrition. But the key point of the story, hence the mystery, is that successive governments never followed up on this nutrition and these nutritional findings, largely because they felt prisoners don't deserve it. That's basically my argument. And then quickly in the United States, an even more shocking nutritional story emerges around the struggle, the political struggle around neutral loaf. Many of you will be familiar with it, but for those I wasn't familiar with it. And that's why it was so shocking as if it had come out of the pages of Michel Foucault's book on discipline and punish, where neutral loaf is a loaf of unrelated foods cooked in a dish, in a meatloaf dish, which allegedly meets nutritional criteria. And it's a gross confection that makes prisoners ill. And it was given to prisoners as punishment. And I look at the struggle around constitutional reform around this. It's been banned now in 14 states, but it's still being served in certain prisons. And then I shift the focus to look at, again, the chinks of light. Those prisons that are doing something truly innovatively in terms of social innovation with respect to using food as a means of bringing hope and dignity to prisoners to allow them to rehabilitate themselves. And I take the Clink restaurant in the UK as the best example of this, where they they've opened restaurants in prisons to teach prisoners cooking skills, chefing skills, front of house skills to ensure that they gain gainful employment on release and they don't reoffend. And Clink students have the lowest reoffending rates in the country. That wouldn't surprise us. Moving quickly on, because I'm taking too much time here, Ali. The part three is about the Good Food movement, which I guess we'll talk about more later. At the heart of the Good Food movement are civil society organizations working in concert with governments and public bodies like public health trusts to promote fairer, healthier and more sustainable food systems. And I focus in the UK on two of the most consequential food NGOs, Soil Association and Sustain, because I argue they've changed the cognitive landscape about food. That is to say, how society views and values food. They have literally, even though they're under resourced, they have played this role where they've punched way above their weight. And we can discuss that more later. Here they are. These are two of the best examples, the Soil Association's Food for Life program with this Good for All report, which I'll say more about later, and then Sustain, one of Sustain's most successful programs. And what's so compelling about the Good Food for London strategy is it pioneers a methodology which is available to food movements all over the world. That is to say, Sustain had the idea of putting hitherto unknown information about a municipality's food performance into the public domain. And suddenly, that got a widespread airing among local politicians. And it created a ripple effect that ended up being a race to the top because it raised awareness, it galvanized action and it catalyzed change. And it's a consequential program that we can all learn from and we can all use. Very briefly, in the UK today, Universal Free School Meals is a lottery. It's a real smorgasbord pioneered by Scotland, Wales and London boroughs. England is now a laggard. It's not rolling it out to primary schools nationally and instead the Labor government, I'm very sad to say, is now hiding behind the policy of offering free breakfast clubs instead of going for free lunch programs, as if they're nutritionally equivalent. When they're not, breakfasts are important, of course, but we mustn't set them against lunches so that we're beginning to fracture the movement, even more fractured than it is today. To finish, let me show you two faces of school food in England and then I look at Scotland and Wales. On the one hand, in more than a meal, the mayor of London has pioneered an incredibly impressive free school meal program for all 33 boroughs in London. It's a masterclass of how to design and deliver a school, a free, a stigma -free free school meal system which delivers multiple dividends in terms of behavior, health benefits, educational benefits, as well as meeting the cost of living crisis. So that's a master class in London. And here we turn to poor old Oldham. You'll see from the very first page of my book, I extol Oldham as an example of an award -winning school meal system in what was dubbed the poorest town in England, proving that even poor municipalities can deliver first class services if you've got professional competence and political purpose. And since my book was published, I'm very, very sorry to say that Oldham is closing its service. It's shutting up shop because of rising prices on the one hand and falling school roles on the other. It was caught in a pincer movement that was simply fiscally unsustainable. And I contrast the fate of Oldham, a local authority living in a national system where the system undermined it with Malmö, which thrived and flourished because a national system enabled it to flourish. And that's why national systems are so important. And that's the theme of my final slide. In Wales and Scotland, Scotland pioneered the best legislation in Europe, in my view, for good food, creating the Good Food Nation Act, which allowed all bodies to try to meet the standards of this act. In Wales, we failed to pass it the first time, but we're now trying again. And in lieu of that, we've got the well -being of future generations legislation, which puts seven well -being goals at the heart of all public policies. And that's enabled us to craft a universal free school meal system, which we are incredibly proud of because we've rolled it out to all primary schools, whereas Scotland held back from the final two classes. So Wales currently is the only nation in the UK to have rolled out universal free school meals to all primary schools. And that's an issue on which we are incredibly proud of. The implications, of course, create questions for us in the food movement, wherever we are based. How do we embed good food policies so that they don't get churned over by a new set of leaders, either in government or in health boards or in municipalities? How do we put the movement on a more sustainable footing? Because oftentimes they are funded from charities and foundations, and they live from hand to mouth on a wing and a prayer. And that's not the way to fund the most important movement, social movements in our society. And then finally, how do we scale up good practice from a local innovation so that it becomes the national norm rather than the exception? Thank you very much for your attention.

**Alison BP** [00:32:03] Thank you so much. That was a really inspirational overview of a really complicated set of issues. And you provided us with so many things to talk about, Kevin. So we're really grateful to you for writing the book and also for presenting it to us. What I'd like to do now is hand the conversation over to our panelists. I'm delighted to share that we have Moe Garahan, Debbie Field, and Joshna Maharaj, who in their own ways are all Canadian pioneers and are shifting and changing the Canadian landscape, the cognitive landscape that Kevin has talked about in different ways, but are here to talk about their expertise in various facets of the Canadian food system. So I'm going to turn it over to you first, Mo, and thank you all for being with us today.

**Moe G** [00:32:59] Thank you, Alison, and thank you, Kevin. That was a wonderful overview. And I want to start by saying that the term good food is shared with you as a concept in Indigenous Territories Canada, referring to food that is accessible, affordable, culturally relevant, nutritious, ecologically produced, as local as possible and within sustainable, valued livelihoods. So good food is not to be used as a shaming term, as all of us, for different reasons, eat things that don't fit onto this list, but it is used as a term

of recognition of what builds good health vitality, justice, sustainability in our bodies, in our communities, our economies, and in the environment as the focus of our work of building these food systems together. So, Kevin, you outlined some of the most highly vulnerable people in our communities whose well -being depends on others providing a good food diet to them. And you also outlined the current poly crisis in the book and in your synopsis here that makes good food systems change an issue for all of us and why the food systems that we build with public funds, our public prisons, our public schools, our public health care system set the pace for our broad food systems that touch every one of us every single day, including a significantly rising number of us who cannot access good food or any food on a regular basis. So who are the ‘we’ that are who are building these food systems? You outlined examples of local community action as a successful starting place. And you also outlined examples of national or federal policy as a successful starting place. And the lessons learned from both these efforts. But a main lesson that I took away is that both of these starting places are inadequate. The key actors coast to coast to coast are local groups, local groups that you identify and are shared here who are operating with scant resources, desperately short of finance, largely working with unpaid volunteer and underpaid staff. And you note in your book that the great irony is that it's these local food groups struggling to survive on the margins of financial viability, most highly reliant on short term funding cycles of charities and foundations that it is our local groups that are nevertheless addressing some of the greatest societal challenges of the 21st century with good food interventions on the front line when it comes to combating food insecurity, malnutrition, supporting a new generation of new entrants into farming, fishing and processing and climate change. So you also note that while there is a lack of consistent financial investment at a local community level is obviously a serious barrier to progress,

that this problem of local fragility need not be fatal if we do two things. One, if we network as local groups and form public social partnerships in our communities with municipal governments and public health boards with a view to generating local revenue streams from the delivery of good food services as social enterprises that use surplus to provide inclusive free access for those most vulnerable. And two, we can reduce these barriers and be successful. The fragility of our local groups can be mitigated through forging,

you say national and on these lands we would say coast to coast to coast networks to acknowledge the dual governance of Indigenous and settler governments here, but to forge coast to coast to coast networks to share resources, to learn from each other, be more engaged in upper tier food policy setting, noting that federal and provincial territorial policy, genuinely enabling policy is essential. And you warn that without these networks that local food action can easily degenerate into a form of gentrification where some of our communities have sustainability, sustainability for a few and not the many. So what I love is that you identify that food systems change is currently a massive social movement as it is here, coast, coast, coast. Yet it has not yet received the attention it deserves. And as you say, Kevin, our community work, our network building, our public investment can meet this appetite for change. There is a continued narrative that we need to invest in institutionally cheap food and community food banking solutions to meet the pressing needs and that investing in anything else is just not practical. But your book contributes to shifting the narrative to one that the only practical, non -futile thing to do is invest together in good food solutions to meet this moment of great need. Thank you.

**Alison BP** [00:37:56] Thank you, Moe. We're going to turn it over to Joshna now, please. And then, Debbie, if you want to pick up after Joshna, that would be great. Wonderful.

**Joshna M** [00:38:06] Thanks so much, everyone. Thank you, Mo. Thank you, Kevin. Thank you, Allison. It's lovely to be here even at a distance. You are all, most of you are in Canada and I am here in Dublin, in Ireland. And it's wonderful that technology allows us to chat and to be together this way. So, Kevin, congratulations. This the book is really I was delighted about it because I've actually written a very similar book, but from a very different perspective, from the perspective of someone on the ground, literally in the kitchen, trying to make the change that you've been talking about. And so it was really nice for me to read about we are very deep allies with a lot of deeply shared philosophies and values about how this kind of change needs to happen in these three sectors of institutions. So I'm going to just talk through a couple of bits that really resonated with me. And as everybody is saying, and I think it's a point important enough to be underlined many times the piece right at the start of the book where you talk about affirming the public duty of care. This is the thing, the something this from my work in community food security in general, over and over again, I see the need to reiterate the fact that the new vision for our food system at any level cannot exist if it does not support everybody involved, right? If it only exists for those who can afford it or those who can access it, it does not work. And so but that vision and that philosophy seems to be the most difficult trick to pull off, right? It continues to confound us. It continues to be just a little bit further away. I think it's exactly the thing that we have to continue fighting for. But it is it's fascinating to see that this theme is as recurrent as it is, right? When we are looking, we're just looking at steadily rising numbers of food insecurity on all levels, right? I have most familiarity with Canadian numbers, but this is an issue being faced by people all over the world. So that is that is something I really share with you and that this work has to be done for everybody or it does not work. The other thing that I think is really fascinating and this is around the area of procurement, which is something Moe touched on is you, you, I'm quoting you where you say that public food procurement is being set up to fail unless it is part of a food system approach that integrates the interdependent domains of purchasing production and consumption. And this is I just in class yesterday discussing these issues. I was emphasizing the fact that an integrated approach is the only way that this works. Right. We were discussing the idea that we can deal with hunger over here and then sustainability over here. And I was like, I respectfully disagree with you. Right. We think about hunger and we think about food. But what food are we going to buy? Where is it coming from? Who's growing? And here's the excitement is that when it's when it works, when you have a scenario and I've worked to build these institutional food procurement policies, the beautiful gift that we can have with food is you can build a win, win, win, win scenario. Right. I don't believe there's any other place. But in the world of food where we can, in fact, build ourselves win, win, win, win. We can set up systems that serve vulnerable populations, delicious, wholesome, nutritious, joyful food. We can pay people well to do the work they do on farms. You know what I mean? In dairies to make this food. And we can support and engage the folks whose hands are working to actually cook and serve that food out. Like it's it is possible. But one thing that I that that really that I was remembering so much when I was reading your book is this idea. I learned this. Oh, my God. I learned this the hard way. Institutions are built to do one thing one way. And if you want to make change, you have to be ready to change the whole beast. Right. You pull a thread and everything upsets the cart so that I have that entire hospital with my face on a dartboard for sure. Right. Waiting for the moment where I packed my knives and get out of there because I was causing so much trouble for everybody because I wanted to put Ontario potatoes that we cooked ourselves, you know, in the hospital, on the plates. So that that piece is really, really huge. And to and to understand that if we want to take this task on, the entire institution needs to be ready for change. The final piece I'm going to touch on and then I'm going to hand this to Debbie is the joy and the delight of what is possible. Right. The the most important thing here is that when we get it right, the possibilities of good food and you talked about them, about impact on recidivism in prisons. But I have seen I have seen people, communities, kids, school kids come to life with access to really good food. It is not just a far away dream. I've watched it happen. I've seen joyful farmers at the idea that their food is actually being served to sick people in a hospital. Right. And they write notes and take pictures of the team with signs in the field about like, we hope you feel better soon. And like there's the community and the connections that are possible are are are still, you know what I mean? Just a little bit far away, but they are there. And once we wade through this madness, again, we have this beautiful opportunity to build a win, win, win, win. So thank you for continuing, for moving the, you know what I mean? For moving the peg on this discussion just a little bit further along so we can continue this push and this fight to to to make these win win win situations happen. Thanks, friends. Debbie, over to you.

**Debbie F** [00:44:19] Great. Well, it's pleasure always to talk about all of this with so many great people. And there's a lot of people on the call who, you know, have walked with us through the journey that we've been on in Canada. But for Kevin, I'll just very quickly explain that after decades of no presence from the national government, we won basically a grassroots victory. And I'm going to come back to Kevin's points about networking and civil society over and over again in these next few minutes. So our coalition and there are many members of the coalition on the on the call are 350. Again, going back to Kevin's point about sustain and the soil association, those kinds of organizations, you know, from grassroots, small organizations delivering a meal program in a small community to heart and stroke and national, Indigenous and education and health organizations and all of us over a really long time and in a concerted way for 10 years did this particular kind of networking. Again, Kevin talks about it so much in his book. And I want to come back to that throughout again and again and again, because we're living through some pretty trying times around government and some pretty confused times politically where almost everybody I know is completely demoralized because all they can see is the crack up of government. And what I want to draw our attention to with school food and all of our issues, both the three issues we're looking at here, hospital prisons and school food, but really everything, child care, education, which is to say that we only have what we have at a grassroots community level. Government is a reflection of the movements. It is not what creates the movements. And Kevin sort of says this, but I think you and it feels like you're coming to it a bit over decades. And I think we actually had this debate last time we were on a panel together. I think we're thinking 10 or 15 years ago. You know, the Scottish model, though one of the best funded in the world, is actually not the best school food program in the world. It does not engage students. It's not that culturally diverse. It tends to be, from my experience, not having been there. So correct me if I'm wrong, a bit of a top down model. Whereas what we are in Canada are trying to do is a bottom up community based model in which one school will serve caribou and another one will have halal and another one will be vegan and very responsive to community tastes and community culture. And very much, as Kevin has said and Joshna has said and Moe said, universal. So, you know, how do we move? I put two things in the chat. The first one is this great article from Austin et al a few years ago where they basically lay out the three stages of school food programs. The charity phase, the healthy food phase and the systems change phase. And we're now moving in Canada in all three phases at the same time because the government's commitment, which was a billion over five years, 200 million years, is not enough money for even the charity phase, let alone the universal all children eat phase. So how do we stay focused at the grassroots level? How do we integrate health, as Kevin has said, because that's the point, obviously, in all of our conversations. How can anybody be healthy if they're not eating healthy food at school? How can we understand the impact? So the second article I put in the chat is Amberley Rutz et al's latest study, which is amazing. The economic rationale for investing in school food and it rests so heavily on the Swedish work. So can we look back and say, as they can in Sweden, that if we invest in our kids now, they will be healthier, taller, literally have lifetime higher earnings if they eat quality food at school. So how in the middle of a collapse, not just of neoliberalism, but neoconservative policies, can we ensure that the things we care about in terms of a local food system and a healthy food system maintain themselves? And I would argue it's only through flipping the coin. It's not about what we advocate to government. It's about what we create in reality all the time. And with, you know, I mean, as we go through this thing and I'll end here with a potential, you know, 25 percent tariff on imported food from the United States. And, you know, it's off the table now for a month, but it's definitely coming back. It's a real challenge for us to create a local food system that could supply the food we want to eat. You know, the thing we import most of from the United States in vegetables and fruit, it's potatoes. It's not even the leafy greens. It's potatoes. So how do we use school foods and prisons and hospitals to be the place because they are big volume places to create the new food system? And I would challenge a little bit on price point because I think that is part of the challenge and crisis, which I don't think it has to be more expensive, Mo. I think that's part of a trap that we talk about that doesn't need to be there. I mean, locally grown potatoes conventional potatoes all across the country are obviously a pretty affordable item. So maybe in the conversation we can talk about affordability, health and the joy of local and healthy food.

**Alison BP** [00:49:47] Thanks so much to our panelists for getting our dynamic conversation kick started. We've got some different perspectives at the table and we have lots to unpack. So that's always exciting. Debbie, you mentioned a couple of articles

that you put in the in the chat. I'm not seeing them, so maybe you could repost them if you don't mind because they sound like they're really interesting. In terms of this idea, as Joshna said, of win -win situations, win the triple wins and, you know, how do we do this

from coast to coast to coast, recognizing the incredible beauty of the diversity that we have within Canada from Indigenous founding communities and to the diversity that we call Canada today. How do we build on the synergies that can be captured through food systems lenses? And I think that that's really one of the things that we're interested in thinking about. And I'd like to put this question to the panel and also to Kevin, if you'd like to chime in, or what are some of the promising opportunities and lessons learned that we can bring to the table to move the ball forward? So maybe we'll talk about this for the next five or 10 minutes. And then we have one more follow up question. And then I think I'd like to open it up to to our audience who we're very grateful to for joining us today. So who would like to get started with that question?

What are the promising solutions that you see, given the constraints that we're all facing?

**Moe G** [00:51:28] Yeah, I can just say that on the specific of today's public procurement topic, I'd want to start by saying that the people who buy food in any program, whether it's a large institutional program, whether you're a small community based food program, that buyers everywhere need to see themselves as part of a larger food systems change mandate. And Debbie, I wasn't saying that I agree with that narrative, but I am saying that that narrative of affordability is the one that I feel we've witnessed a lot of resistance from people that purchase food that think they say that they must take the lowest cost on each item. And instead, I think that the mandate has to be building a coherent good food solution that integrates the components, as we've been talking about, of the good food definition. And that leadership needs to enable their food purchasers to engage in this mandate as the actual lower cost for our health, our long term environment and economic viability. And the only other thing I'd say is to meet this, we also need investment into community production, processing, distribution and storage infrastructure so we can deliver publicly procured good food at the community level and reap those community economic development benefits that come with this. That's what I think

is transformative.

**Alison BP** [00:52:45] Yeah, so I'm hearing synergies around the table and looking at things really from a food systems perspective so that we can really realize those all the multiple wins at the same time across the food system. And it's really like one of those Jenga towers, if you pull out the wrong thing, everything collapses, right? But if you don't, you've got a very interesting tower that's left. Joshna, would you like to respond to that? Or Debbie, do you have anything that you'd like to add?

**Joshna M** [00:53:15] Sure, I've got two bits and the one piece is I think it echoes a lot of what Mo was saying that one of the one of the only pieces that I found that actually enabled me to purchase the kind of food that I wanted to serve patients and students was by constantly pointing to the values mandate that we had created. And I literally put it in a poster on a wall behind my desk so that I, you know, because I constantly had to say, remember, we all agree. And I and I got the director of food services, the president of the university, like I got them to sign a contract saying, yes, we all agree that this is what we're doing. And in the beginning, I think people thought that I was just a maniac and that it was a bit of nonsense, pomp and circumstance. But I knew exactly the fight that was coming and that was ahead of me. And so every single time I got some pushback on the way I wanted to spend money or who I wanted to buy from, I'd be like, remember, we had a deal. Remember, this was our plan. But it was like we like the diligence and the tediousness of that was was nothing to shake a stick at. The one other piece that I think is really important to consider, and it's perhaps less exciting. But in my experience in public institutions, some of the most revolutionary and brave work that can be done is the reclassification of food services and where it lives and how it breathes. Because right now they sit because often purchasing money goes out and money comes in. Often food service remains locked in the context of ancillary services, right? In schools, at least on post -secondary campuses, it's with security and the bookstore and the post office in hospitals. It is with maintenance and facilities when it really should live with patient care, with pharmacy, you know, in a, you know, it should be the food. Food needs a seat at the table in these contexts, right? We need to think about the fact that food in a school, the point of food in schools is actually to support academic excellence. It's not just about filling the tanks of the students. The point in a hospital is to actually encourage health and wellness. And in a prison, the point of food is to support rehabilitation, right? And if we actually believe that those bits were true, food services in each of these institutions would have very different roles to play. And that opens things up because I get a lot of doors closed in front of me because they're like, that's not my department. I don't deal with that. You got to go talk to somebody else. So right. And the two pieces, the doctors and the cooks in the, you know what I mean? Down always in the basement. They never seem to connect. So those are two ideas that I think could really help to open up our options and our possibilities.

**Alison BP** [00:56:10] Thanks Joshna, for making that so clear and elaborating those connectivities and giving us really specific examples of how things need to change. Debbie, would you like to respond to what you've heard? And Kevin, maybe you can take a couple of minutes after Debbie to wrap up this question.

**Debbie F** [00:56:28] I want to talk about the joy and the pleasure of good food and the good smells. And, you know, Joshna has always inspired us to really think about it in that way. And that's, I think, what is driving a lot of this movement and will need to drive a lot of this movement as we move forward, as well as just the economics of large scale procurement. Kevin mentioned the amazing work that is going on with the mayor of London, England. And in Canada, the mayor of Toronto, Olivia Chow, has just embarked on the same journey. She has just declared and got support of council to make Toronto have a free universal free lunch, you know, quality lunch program by the year 2030. And that's joining Berlin, which just made the same decision in September and Sewell. And you might know New York. So we're getting these great cities around the world that are saying a great city feeds quality food to its children throughout school, which is such a huge moment. And one of the things that Olivia did yesterday was talk about just the amount of food that's going to be when the city of Toronto buys food for, you know, the the hundreds of thousands of children, as well as the shelters. And the daycares and the after four programs and the community centers. That's a lot of procurement. What if that's all locally sourced? You know, what happens? And we were lucky enough to live down the street from the Ontario Food Terminal. So it's actually technically even we can visualize it. But what's going to drive that is a revolution in taste buds of all classes. And this is, again, this challenge of, you know, Joshna said, you know, the revolution can't just be for some. It's not a revolution if it's just for the wealthy. But we have to flip our thinking in terms of who is the target of school foods or even hospital food. Prison is a little more complicated because we're probably not going to get middle class people to identify with hospital food needing to be great. But they are certainly going to need to be part of our journey of convincing everybody in the whole society because they go to hospitals and their kids go to school. But it has to be the best food. And what's very exciting, I think, about Kevin's book is it lays out this idea of the experimentation and the numbers involved in this public food system. We can use the public food system to experiment with quality, healthy, delicious, locally sourced food.

**Alison BP** [00:59:12] Thanks, Debbie. Kev, would you like to respond to what you've heard so far?

**Kevin M** [00:59:18] Well, there's so much to to to discuss there, Ali. I couldn't possibly do justice to it all. But can I, for the sake of discussion and constructive argument, can I maybe pick up on something that's a useful difference of opinion between me and Debbie? Because I was very struck by when she said that Canada is a bottom -up country and Scotland is a top -down country. If I understood you correctly, Debbie, in terms of thinking about, you know, the agents of change and where the momentum for change in the food system is coming from, I thought you were saying that, you know, Canada was biased to a very grass roots driven bottom -up system. And that may be true to a certain extent. But, you know, I think we really need to settle this debate that there are promising opportunities from below and from above. And it's unproductive politically, it seems to me, to juxtapose the local and the national because if we really want sustainable food system change, then we have to orchestrate food strategies which draw on local energy, ingenuity and knowledge with the enabling conditions that can be created by federal or national policies. Because local innovations need to be defended nationally and ultimately globally, of course. And that's why we need that's why the Scottish legislation was in part driven, I would say, largely driven, Debbie, by really forceful, imaginative grassroots action in the form of the Scottish Food Coalition, which is a grand coalition, a national coalition of locally based food organizations. I don't believe Scotland would be enjoying the Good Food Nation Act today without all that energy and purposeful campaigning on the part of those local bodies. So it was a double act, if you will, Debbie, of national enabling legislation being the result of sustained local activism. I don't know whether I've made myself clear, Debbie, but I'm trying to engineer an argument here. And maybe I haven't been successful.

**Debbie F** [01:02:10] No, you have for sure. And of course, apologies to imply that it wasn't a grassroots movement that got it there. But it's more a question of delivery as well. So I agree with you completely. I mean, I'm I work for a national coalition that is all about trying to change federal policy and funding because we need that piece. But what keeps it in place will be the mobilization of and also what happens at the delivery level. And again, being rude because I haven't visited programs. But as we puzzle it out and we see mistakes being implemented in Canada right away with some provinces doing some top down stuff that isn't working because they're not bothering to consult with parents, kids, families. So that's the lesson, too, which is how do we get the responsiveness if it is only a question of legislation?

**Alison BP** [01:03:05] Yeah, I think what we're hearing what I'm hearing, at least from everybody so far, is there needs to be interaction and uptake from all the different levels ultimately for we for us to have success. Right. And we're all in process and we have sort of Joshna's North Star behind us on our walls of where we know we want to go. And those North Stars are negotiated hopefully with our communities and our grassroots participants and the people who, but they also need to be part of the national and the provincial and municipal Debbie, as you were saying, with Olivia Chow, all of the zeitgeist and bring the public along and make sure that we're reflecting the various diversities and all of the needs that exist within our various food systems. So I think that one of the things that's very important about it, this is how place based it is and I think it's really important to recognize that. So with that in mind, we have another question for our panel and then I think I'd like to open it up because we're moving along in time. So, what's needed to achieve good food movement goals. So some of the goals that we were just referring to and how can we implement these changes, and how can we make food systems work for us so maybe what I'm going to do is just go around the table. Maybe, Kevin, the questions are in the chat. Maybe it would you like to take a stab at this first or should I turn it over to the panel first what do you prefer. And I'm going to ask everybody to take one minute to speak to this. It's very complicated, but pick your best point. Okay.

**Kevin M** [01:04:46] Okay, I have a quick stab at the question, Ali, which I took to be, how do we actually deliver or implement good food movement goals.

**Alison BP** [01:04:57] Exactly.

**Kevin M** [01:04:58] Okay. I think I draw on what Debbie has just said, you know, real social innovation comes from local engagement, simplifying things now, where, where parents are working, working in concert with school governors and teacher, teacher unions, bringing in farmers so that farmers can be engaged in that direct conversation. So you're creating a local food ecosystem in which, in which each, each player from farm to fork, if you will, feels a sense of shared destiny that they are bigger than just their own silo. And this is the problem with the industrial food system. Each player becomes locked in their own silo. Their perspective is entirely, that is their world. Whereas sustainable food systems, as we all know, it's all about connectivity and interdependence and trying to become part of a transformation system. But you can't do it in any one silo on its own. And that's why we need to connect from, from farm to fork. But, you know, the power of purchase can really begin to shape, can become a catalyst of change. Because as we've seen in places like Copenhagen, setting new standards for food to say, this is the kind of food that we will be procuring over the next X years, sends a powerful signal to producers and farmers to supply and gives them a degree of certainty. Sorry to go on, Ali.

**Alison BP** [01:06:41] That's okay. That was very helpful context, Kevin. Thank you, Mo.

**Moe G** [01:06:46] Can you build on that? Just to say as, as part of bringing those groups together, I really believe that food system facilitation facilitators need to be invested in, in every community so we can roll up the community expertise to all levels of government and enact an integrated food policy and solution structure that's effective and ongoing rather than fragile groups and networks and a federal advisory council that isn't connected to any of them. So critical importance of networks like food communities networks that links informal and formal groups, coast to coast to coast that work at a community level. Food policy groups at your own local levels, provincial and territorial food system networks in and of themselves and then rolled up through Foods Care Canada. All of these are providing food systems wide network services to support collective impact. So linking groups to share ideas, information, challenges, solutions, so we can learn from each other and build effective solutions further, faster. That's, that's what I think is needed.

**Alison BP** [01:07:50] Thanks. Thanks, Mo. Debbie, do you want to take it up next? Just really quickly one point and Joshna, next.

**Debbie F** [01:07:56] Agreed of course with everything everybody's saying but just adding the taste buds of those who are participating right so we, we talked a little bit about the need for these inter, you know, cross Sectoral organizations of farmers and parents and teachers and administrators but haven't talked quite I think enough about students and patients and prisoners taste buds and understanding, you know that food is an intimate commodity and that people have to want to take it into their mouth has to taste good smell good and there are so many great ways of making that kind of engagement, the center of a quality food program.

**Alison BP** [01:08:38] And you did an excellent job of that in your role at Food Share, Debbie. I remember being in your kitchens and how amazing that was. So yeah, and Joshna, I think you've just given Joshna the perfect segue. So thank you. And Joshna, just before you get started, I'm going to invite our participants to post questions in the chat so that we can engage with you as well. So Joshna, over to you please.

**Joshna M** [01:09:04] Okay, thank you. What an honor to have a final word here. Definitely building on everything that's been said so far, the taste and joy piece, as you will know is definitely always at the top of my list. But one of the things that that has really struck me is that we, one of the things that we don't, we the big collective we not just those of us on this call is we don't really get the role of food. We don't get how, how, how vitally necessary it is, how magically transformational it is, and how wildly interdisciplinary it is. Right. And I'm going to take some advice here from the lovely folks at the Toronto Food Policy Council. I got this nugget of wisdom like, I don't know, 15, 20 years ago, likely from Wayne, I'll be honest, which is good food policy automatically means good health policy, good agriculture policy, good labor policy, good everything else policy. And what in a moment in time, where so many things in front of us feel so critical, and it feels like there's so many problems to be addressed. What I feel is that we need to be brave enough to recognize what food can do for us, and that if we follow the food and build that system well, other systems will fall into place. I've seen this on macro levels. I've seen this just in individual people's lives, in communities, in public institutions, but this will work in cities, countries, like it will work. We have this evidence. We know it to be true. We really just have to be brave enough to take those steps in that direction.

**Alison BP** [01:10:43] Yeah, that's a really excellent point, Joshna, is that idea of leadership that Kevin talks about very much in his book. And I would say that all the people sitting around this table are providing that. But it's a big mountain to climb. So I think the question that we have from Mustafa, who has joined the call, so thanks for being with us, is how can we ensure continuity? Many programs can be terminated by new governments, for example, Zero Hunger Policy. Are there good examples for protecting the public good at the political level? So maybe, Kevin, you could start with that and then the panel can take that question up as they would like.

**Kevin M** [01:11:24] Thanks, Ali, and thank you, Mustafa, for a truly excellent question. And it's a question that occurs consistently in my empirical analysis of different food movements. Where the fundamental challenge at an institutional level is how do we embed the social innovations that have been made by, let's say, a particular team, a particular person. We sometimes refer to these people, these individuals, as forces of nature, where they are totally committed to doing something new, to radically innovating and creating a sustainable, fairer food system. And the problem is that when they retire, as they did in Oldham, for example, as they did in the National Health Service in my health chapters, the past takes over. In that vacuum, in that new vacuum, post that innovator, the old routines kick in again and the challenges isn't attaining a sustainable standard. The real political challenge is retaining it over time. And that's the challenge. And that's when we have to embed these new practices in the warp and weft of an organization. So it's already in their DNA, as it were, so that when new teams come in, they feel somehow bound. But going back again to Debbie's point, unless you've got civic actors in the local community who are vigilant and scrutinizing these system changes, one can easily revert to the past. And new politicians can come in with a deregulatory neoliberal agenda and change things again, as we saw in Rome. So the point is, there's no simple way to answer Mustafa's question. We have to retain progress, Ali, sustain sustainability, if you will, by being vigilant, being well organized and engaging and committing to these new practices whenever they appear. Thank you.

**Alison BP** [01:13:50] Thank you for that. And I'll let folks follow up as they like. I think building on the work that founded FoodShare and goes back many decades, I think Brazil is a great example of how things can be embedded. The PNAE, so the public school procurement and the public socalo, the markets and the public restaurants, did get undermined somewhat during the Bolsonaro government, but they've been picked up again and they have had resilience because of this embeddedness that you're talking about, Kevin. So I think that while there are not enough examples around the world, there are some few things that we can point to and learn from.

**Debbie F** [01:14:33] I will jump in just really quickly because the point about all of this is what can we make sure that there is a broad public consensus for? And I often talk about the politics of the 70%. You know, can we say, for example, that 70 % of Canadians will want the next government of Canada, whoever they be, to continue to put money in for school food or not? Because if they don't, we will have lost it. Because the way the agreements actually went is there are three -year agreements, but there's only money for the first year. And until an act of parliament, until a vote happens sometime in 2025, there isn't even the $201 million for year two for a national school food program. So legislation, I mean, Kevin is luckily giving us some of those great examples like Scotland, like Brazil, you know, Finland, Sweden, Japan. I mean, if you get things going for many, many decades, you get then broad consensus that they need to be continued. But other than that, they can be very, very vulnerable. And it's true that we face, I mean, you know, again, we're all completely freaked out about what's going on in the United States. Will the national school food program survive in the United States? Will Trump use the fact that there are posters talking about equity behind the cafeteria to cut funding? That's looking probable. If it doesn't happen, it'll be because significant forces will push back. It wasn't just the stock market that convinced Trump to pull back the tariffs. It was the governors of states on the border, right? So how do we build and understand that we have nothing in government legislation unless we have that massive, constant mobilization of talking to people who don't agree with us and convincing them?

**Alison BP** [01:16:36] I think those are all really important points, Debbie, and very germane right now, especially I think we're all feeling a lot of angst around those points. We have a very specific question from Ian Callan, who would welcome any reflections now or in the future about the potential role on the supply side of the growing field of impact investing in social finance and supporting scaling, replicating solutions from community -led just food projects to thriving social enterprises to different kinds of innovations. If there are any examples and cautionary tales, maybe Mo, I'll ask you to start off answering this question. And it's in the chat because it's a really long question, so you might want to refer to it. It's just above the contribution by Flavia Lucio -Perera from the Ministry of Solicitor General in Ontario. And there's an interesting comment there that you might want to look at as well. Not a question, just a comment. So Mo, if you'd like to pick up on the reflections that Ian is trying to provoke, thanks.

**Moe G** [01:17:46] I appreciate, Ian, that you've said that comments are welcome after, so I will also reflect on this a bit more and look to my colleagues as well. But, you know, I really appreciate Kevin's integration and the rest of the panels of production. And also the comments that I made, given the middle processing infrastructure is now quite missing in most of our communities. And these pieces have to be rebuilt. And there is a massive role for social finance and impact investing. There's been interesting smaller examples of communities investing in new farmers, communities investing in community processing hubs. One of the cautionary tales I would say we've learned from the United States is that in the process of rebuilding capacity for production and processing, oftentimes there can be a real pressure from a scaled up, from a buyer to a scaled up producer, a scaled up community food hub to bypass that social enterprise that has actually assisted in developing the capacity there and go direct to the buyer. And we've seen that cautionary tale through community food hubs, for example, that our social enterprises and have been invested in at community levels quite heavily. And so, you know, maintaining the value set, as Joshna and you identified, and ensuring that decision makers on these projects are staying true to the initial community economic development benefits is really critical. But I do feel we have a lot of great examples to draw from at a small level that can be scaled.

**Alison BP** [01:19:38] Yeah, so as we've been talking about, well, thanks for that, the grassroots moving up, but also the support from the various government levels, creating the right kind of environment. Does anybody else want to chime in on this question?

**Joshna M** [01:19:54] I'd love to, please. Oh, and thanks for that question. I've got two bits as somebody who is a frequent recipient of these kinds of curiosities and investments. One is to open up to the idea that the money from a social finance perspective, in my experience, it comes with way too many strings. And what needs to happen is we need to trust that the people running the projects on the ground know what they're doing, and all they need is more resources to keep doing what they're doing. And so if you want to actually have an impact that is going to move us all in the right direction, just consider giving the people the money and not having to build your own frameworks on what it has to look like. Trust that they've built their visions and they've entrenched their values and they have built systems and processes that work for the communities that they are serving. And all they need is just more gas in the tank, right? We just need more support to keep moving. And what grows from here is a potentially contentious thing, but I really feel like it needs to be said in the face of things like social finance and community enterprise. Much like I think what Mo was just saying, is in my guts, I really reject the need for us to focus on generating profit from feeding people properly, right? It is one of the biggest juggernauts that we have to navigate around all the time. And people are constantly asking me for the business plan on institutional food, and they're like, as soon as you have that ready, let me know. And I was like, you will never hear from me. I will never give you a plan or a project that enables you to generate profit off of feeding sick people well, supporting kids at school. Like these should be about our interest in taking care of ourselves, right? And paying people fairly to do the work required to make that happen. The constant need to drive profit and pull profits from this effort is part of what's standing in the way, right? Because it always has to make business sense. The number of times I have heard, yes, Joshna, these ideas are great, but you have to be real now because this has to make business sense. And my argument is, no, it doesn't. This is one area that does not have to make business sense and should not have to make business sense. So if you wanted some advice, consider this bit and think about maybe other, you know, some innovative ways that we can meet each other in the middle on issues like this.

**Alison BP** [01:22:41] Very well said, as Sarah in the chat said. Debbie, I'm going to turn it over to you and I'm going to ask you as part of what you're going to say to make your final closing point, because we only have five minutes left. And then I'll turn it over to others.

**Debbie F** [01:22:56] I was just going to give a really good example of a positive way in which the private sector can participate in the new public system from school food. So we have tons of evidence, as Joshna has just described, of examples. Chartwells, for example, was called out by the Nova Scotia Auditors General for poor quality and more expensive food in lunch programs. And yet at the same time, the movement is not ready in Canada completely to run school food through the public and community sector because we have to scale up quickly. And so the coalition has developed a space document for where there's a good role for the private sector to deliver programs, but under a guidance structure that is developed by the public and community sector. And I think that works well, too, for some of these other conversations that we're having here, which is yes, we need private sector partners. Lots of farmers are private sector vendors. But we need to have it done within the framework of the public good. And it can be done then in partnership in a more respectful way. I'm happy to end there. I know there's very little time.

**Alison BP** [01:24:09] Awesome. Mo, maybe you can go next, then Joshna, then Kevin, you can wrap up with a final word. And you literally each have one minute.

**Moe G** [01:24:17] I'm fine. I'm good. I would love to pass that to Kevin. Okay.

**Alison BP** [01:24:21] Well, I know that you put business sense equals sustainable livelihoods, not profiteering. So thanks for that final thought, Mo. Joshna, what would you like to wrap up with? Mine is quick.

**Joshna M** [01:24:31] I feel like I've had this to drop all the things I wanted to say. But really, just remember that all of this, while it feels like a huge set of challenges and obstacles and things to coordinate, it is entirely possible. I know the folks on the panel and many of the lovely faces I see in the crowd are all eager, awesome folks working and happy to offer their bits to make this work and to find better food futures for all of us. So we have lots, although we got major challenges in front of us. You got a bunch of folks who are deeply committed to making it happen. And so this is very possible. Do not throw in the towel. It is absolutely possible for us to pull this off. Yeah, it's going to be harder, but hey, man, we will not shy away from a hard task. So I look forward to more discussions about how we're going to build this all. Thanks, Joshna.

**Alison BP** [01:25:29] Good words to hand over to Kevin.

**Kevin M** [01:25:34] Two quick points from me, Ali. Number one, it's always worth us remembering that all institutions have food policies. Not just some. Some practice it by default, by ignoring it, which means they have a bad food policy and they lack a public duty of care. This was the main topic of conversation I had with Wayne Roberts when we first met. How do you get organizations to acquit their public duty of care? And the second point is this, Ali, that it's always good to look at beacons of good practice because it changes the conversation. It's no longer about is such a thing possible? They show it is possible and the question becomes it's working there. Why isn't it working here?

**Alison BP** [01:26:23] Yeah, I think that's an excellent point to try and wrap things up on. Policymakers, in my experience, like to seize examples of success. They're not innovators. They don't take a lot of risk. So if we can show them examples where things have worked, that's a good way forward. I'm just looking around the table and thinking about all the people in the room. And together, literally, we have hundreds of years of experience together in dealing with these issues. And collectively, as a movement, we bring all of these things, all of the work that we've done for such a long time to bear when we're thinking about these problems. And Kevin, your book really, really is a beacon of hope for us as you provide some guidance on how we can all work together and create a really powerful good food movement in all the different places where we live. So thank you to you very much for writing this book. Thank you to our panel, Josh and Debbie, for such an incredibly deep and rich conversation. Liz, thank you very much for enabling the technology and all of the stuff that made this happen. And thanks to the enthusiasm and participation of all the people on the call. It's been really wonderful to engage with you somewhat. And we hope that you can use the recording that we'll make available in the future for teaching and other kinds of purposes. So thanks to everybody and enjoy the rest of your day. Go home or go wherever you're going and enjoy some good food. I hope you're able to do that. So take good care. Thank you very much.