Urban Farms Everywhere

Implementation Guide
METRO WORKS runs two farms in NSHA Central Zone:

Common Roots Urban Farm (CRUF) is in central Halifax adjacent to the Halifax Infirmary, and Back To Our Roots Urban Farm (BTOR) which is on the grounds of the Nova Scotia Hospital in Dartmouth. They are pieces of health infrastructure with the desired impact of “People interacting with the health care community in Central Zone NS are nourished, valued, and engaged with nature”.

Photo: Ryan Rideout

CONTENTS

1. Vision 4
2. Context 6
3. Urban Farms & Community Gardens 10
4. Online Resources 12
5. Land Use Agreement Road Map 14
6. Budgeting 20
   6.1 Top Fund Development Tips 23
   6.2 Fundraising Activity Ideas 25
   6.3 Grant Funding Streams 26
7. Design Patterns and Principles 28
   7.1 Key elements to keep in mind while you design 32
8. Tips on Practising Social Inclusion 34
9. Programming 38
   9.1 Programming ideas 40
10. Resources 44
1. VISION

We share a vision of urban farms everywhere, connected by edible greenbelts.

Imagine boulevards and all the little spaces between the sidewalk and street growing food. There are flowers, shrubs, fruit trees in yards and in the little traffic circles. In all the wide open spaces, anywhere there is sun, there is a farm. Some are veggie farms. Some are flower farms. Some grow herbs and teas. Some grow fruit. Some grow art supplies, like pigments and fibres. Some are mixed and even include animals. Many of them have farm stands. You can buy some fresh produce, talk with the growers, bathe your eyes in green, contemplate a bumble bee.

We believe that the elements that will help us joyfully survive an uncertain future occur in community urban farms, especially if there is an abundance of them: one in every neighbourhood.

Sharing this passion to see more urban agriculture in our landscapes, Susan Fitzgerald, a professor at the Dalhousie School of Architecture, teaches a course on urban agriculture, with a studio component in Cuba. With the help of her students and F&M Architecture she offered to create a drawing/map of our area. This serves as an inspirational illustration, an inventory-map of urban agriculture, as well as a tool to locate new sites.
This booklet was born through a funding agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia as part of the Poverty Reduction Government Initiative. The grant was received at a time when Common Roots was making a leap from one organization to another, as well as from one site to another. The funding allowed us to develop new programming with MetroWorks, our new parent organization, and share those learnings through a resource guide that encourages more urban farms to help reduce poverty in Nova Scotia / M’ikma’ki, the unceded territory of the M’ikmaq People.

The urban farm work we do in Nova Scotia is in M’ikma’ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the M’ikmaq People. This territory is covered by the “Treaties of Peace and Friendship” which M’ikmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized M’ikmaq and Wolastoqiyik title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

In our original funding application, we described the activity of creating this resource guide:

Common Roots received an increasing number of requests from across the province for support in developing inclusive and accessible urban farms and community gardens. The new partnership with MetroWorks will provide the support necessary to create a resource package for emerging community gardens and urban farms across the province on how to use these spaces to foster positive mental health and economic inclusion for newcomers to Canada. Being able to share our best practices and expand our networks will bolster other urban/community farms in Nova Scotia in their capacity to support folks with mental health challenges, and to develop programs that increase access to employment.

In this document, we make some assumptions about who you are. We assume that you want to co-create an urban farm. You have some knowledge of gardening and farming. You have some sense of what it takes to build a community group. You found this PDF, so you are doing research and you’re probably fairly knowledgeable, and well-read. There is some basic information in here, also tips from experience, advice from various team members, and gathered resources.
There are multiple voices in this document. The lead coordinator of this deliverable was Jayme Melrose, the first coordinator of Common Roots. So many people contributed, edited and proofread! That was a great team effort. MJ Valiquette wrote much of this document, based on her Masters Without Borders group work at Dalhousie University, with the goal to enhance social enterprise revenues at Common Roots-BiHi. Thanks for her research and academic rigour. The “Advice from Others” chapter, and interviews with staff about inclusion practices, were done by Yewen Li, a Dalhousie College of Sustainability intern. Big thanks to Valiquette and Li for their efforts and skillfulness. Hillary Lindsay, Coordinator of Common Roots-Woodside, Sara Burgess, Coordinator of Common Roots-BiHi, and Nora Macnee, MetroWorks CFO, all edited and contributed. Maggy Burns contributed editing time. Rachel Derrah illustrated the Development Road Map. Heartfelt thanks to these rad people.

The deepest vision of Common Roots is of urban farms everywhere, connected by edible greenbelts. We would love to see our world with gardens and farms everywhere with people marketing and value-adding locally grown products. People working together. Connecting with nature. Helping each other. Making unlikely friends. Producing something to give or trade. What kind of a creative world would result?

We hope you share this vision in some way, and want to co-create an urban farm. We hope there are some great tips in here, and that you look it. We hope your team has lots of little celebrations. We hope you get to create another urban farm, that sometimes brings tears of love when people talk about it.

If we can be of help, we’d love to be. (Unless it is during the mania of spring: any months but April/May!) Feel free to send an email through the CommonRootsUrbanFarm.ca website.
The terms urban farm and community gardens are often interchanged. Both of these operations may contain a mixture of individual allotment gardens, greenhouses, public areas, and market garden spaces. They are often in public spaces and collectively managed by member-volunteers and hired coordinators.

The distinction we make at Common Roots, in terms of the difference between a community garden and an urban farm, is that an urban farm is part farm, meaning it sells agricultural products. People are working together to produce a quantity of something(s) for sale (or donation).

Around here, community gardens are generally the allotment model, where people/families grow what they like. People don’t sell produce out of their plots (they are too small).

When we built Common Roots, we had heard and observed that community gardens don’t always create community – the private property model of allotments meant that people didn’t always interact or connect with each other. We were also hearing that a major determinant of health is social connectivity. We wanted to build a place where people could connect and learn from each other about gardening and other things. We’re also interested in the poverty reduction potential of urban farming, through its food production, the educational opportunities of working together, the social connectivity, including employment opportunities.

What we did was a combo of the two. We had a ¼ acre market garden surrounded by a community garden. Having a market garden adjacent to the community gardens gave all the community gardeners some education, offered some direction, and provided something to compare to. The folks working in the program also got plots, and got to know many people. Hospital patients and families could walk through a vibrant, colourful, productive urban landscape.

Another real benefit of the urban farm model is having knowledgeable staff and volunteers available to the community. Lots of gardeners dropped by the urban farm for help solving a problem. This is a great, accessible resource for people trying to increase their food security by growing food.

Also, having a functioning market garden is a great educational tool, even passively, through observation. We used a lot of row cover, which many home gardeners hadn’t considered, and found greater success in using it. Things that happened in the market garden gave many of the community gardeners and home gardeners ideas to use and conversations to have, such as various vegetable spacing techniques and mulching.

Another nice thing that an urban farm might be able to afford are nibble plots – beds that anyone can harvest from or plant into. We had these bordering the main pathway, which allowed people to nibble and participate.

The Definition!

Urban agriculture is the overarching word that encompasses all forms of growing food in the city, whether public or private, tiny or expansive. It also includes veggies, mushrooms, flowers, and animal agriculture.

A peri-urban farm is a form of agriculture that is more removed than urban farms, with a lower level of social involvement. Scholars describe peri-urban farms in many ways, including stating that peri-urban farms are farms located away from central downtown areas or farms closer to the outskirts of a city. Rural farms are generally much larger than urban farms and occur in regions with a population density of fewer than 150 people per square kilometre.
Here are related documents made by others. They are other parts of the puzzle that can help your farm.

Model Urban Farm/Community Garden Guides and Resources

Urban Farming Guidebook
The Urban Farming Guidebook from the EcoDesign Resource Society is written to help planners from small and large communities in British Columbia gain a better understanding of best practices for growing and selling food within urban boundaries. It provides examples of cost estimates for produce and case studies on exemplary urban farms.

A Guide for Community Garden Organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador
This is a model community garden guide replicated in provinces across Canada with straightforward advice and helpful website links to create and maintain community gardens. Many forms of advice for community gardens can also apply to establishing an urban farm site meant to sell produce.

Community Garden Handbook
These rules and procedures are the Halifax Regional Municipality’s process to create a community garden. This is the process through which Common Roots applied for Municipal land for Common Roots-BiHi.

Scaling Up Urban Agriculture in Toronto
This document provides an extensive overview of urban agriculture considerations in Toronto related to scaling operations. It provides a range of helpful advice, from talking about spreading simple growing practices and involving more people in urban farms, to enhancing productivity and commercial scale agriculture.

Urban Agriculture Toolkit
From the United States Department of Agriculture, this guide provides advice on key aspects of an urban farm, including costs, accessing capital, production strategies, market development and training and mentoring individuals in urban agriculture.

Inclusive Urban Farms

Inclusive Community Gardens: Planning for Inclusive and Welcoming Spaces in Vancouver
This document’s aim is to understand inclusivity in the Vancouver urban agriculture landscape, investigate current attributes of community gardens and their members, and help leaders in the creation of more welcoming and inclusive urban agriculture.

Municipal Policies Affecting Urban Agriculture

Opportunities for Growth: An Urban Agriculture Toolkit
This brief toolkit is designed for planners and municipal government representatives interested in making policies to increase urban agriculture, while pointing out examples of policies and partnerships that support urban growing.

Global Database for City and Regional Food Policies
The database stores PDFs of adopted and/or enacted policies, regulations, and ordinances on a range of food systems topics, from production to waste management.

Soil Management Guides

Low cost composting training manual
This downloadable manual provides descriptive advice on cost-effective soil amendments.

Types of Composting and Understanding the Process
The United States Environmental Protection Agency’s helpful and easy to understand advice about composting basics.

Volunteer Opportunities

Alemany Farm volunteer role list

Certification or Incorporation for your urban farm/non-profit

Nova Scotia Organic Certificate
If your urban farm is interested in being certified organic this link has information about regional certification in NS.

Resources for Non-Profit Organizations and Volunteers in Nova Scotia

Society incorporation in Nova Scotia

Accessible (Free) Online Courses

Canadian Organic Growers
This national organization provides resources, courses, and webinars related to various topics in organic growing – ranging from permaculture to seeds and propagation.

Growing Insights: Urban Agriculture & Local Food
A massive online course from the Alberta Land-Use Network dedicated to teaching the public about urban agriculture and local food practices in Alberta. This course provides resources and learning opportunities for varying levels of knowledge and interest in urban agriculture.
How to start an urban farm — the title of an article we found by Yewen Li. Makes it sounds so easy, hey? One major set of hurdles omitted by this handy how-to is how to get a formal agreement to use a piece of land.

Getting agreement to use a piece of land, especially a big one, is complicated. Here’s our incomplete and sassy guide and advice on how to secure a land agreement for your community urban farm.

**HOT TIP #1**

**How to start an urban farm**

There are two rows to hoe, so to speak. To further indulge in another critical understanding is to know that within government:

- Key priorities are and show how your project aligns with their goals. Strategies and policy statements. Your goal is to know what their provincial and municipal politicians this can be found in their current mandate letters. For federal politicians this can be found in their mandate letters.
- Motivation of the individual and institution that you’re working with.
- His TED talk. The key point I took from that book is to try to learn the E/uniFB00ective Citizen: How To Make Politicians Work For You” or watch an encouraging article about writing an MOU.
- End goal is a Memorandum of Understanding (or an MOU). Here is how to secure a land agreement for your community urban farm. The complicated. Here’s our incomplete and sassy guide and advice on getting agreement to use a piece of land. Welcome to the adventure!

Using Google Earth is a good way to scope out big sunny areas in your city. As are driving, walking and cycling around.

When we were looking for our new site we got the wider community involved. To hear more about how the community helped build our list of needs, here is a summary of the public engagement and here is more detail on the event. Then we ran the community’s set of needs through a mapping process. Lindzay Bedard was a Common Roots volunteer who did a GIS course right when we needed it and did a mapping project for us. You can see her process and results here.

The major elements required by a good urban farm site (for us anyway) are: big and sunny, on public transit routes, and accessible to all. Access to water is critical. Using Google Earth is a good way to scope out big sunny areas in your city. As are driving, walking and cycling around.

Another critical understanding is to know that within government: there are two rows to hoe, so to speak. To further indulge in metaphor, there is topsoil and subsoil which are distinct and interrelated: these are the elected politicians, and the (senior) bureaucrats. To get an MOU on public land you need to have support at both levels. Keeping all parties informed is a must.

**HOT TIP #2**

A Land Use Agreement needs to be signed between two legal organizations: your landowner + your organization. Your urban farm group needs to be registered with the Registry of Joint Stocks, have a business number, and ideally, a financial history. If you can be a project of another, bigger, reputable not-for-profit (NFP), that makes it easier for government and business people to trust you. Access to water is critical. Using Google Earth is a good way to scope out big sunny areas in your city. As are driving, walking and cycling around.

**HOT TIP #3**

You’re helping them get their work done. Another critical understanding is to know that within government:

- Key priorities are and show how your project aligns with their goals. Strategies and policy statements. Your goal is to know what their provincial and municipal politicians this can be found in their current mandate letters.
- Motivation of the individual and institution that you’re working with.
- His TED talk. The key point I took from that book is to try to learn the E/uniFB00ective Citizen: How To Make Politicians Work For You” or watch an encouraging article about writing an MOU.
- End goal is a Memorandum of Understanding (or an MOU). Here is how to secure a land agreement for your community urban farm. The complicated. Here’s our incomplete and sassy guide and advice on getting agreement to use a piece of land. Welcome to the adventure!

Using Google Earth is a good way to scope out big sunny areas in your city. As are driving, walking and cycling around.

When we were looking for our new site we got the wider community involved. To hear more about how the community helped build our list of needs, here is a summary of the public engagement and here is more detail on the event. Then we ran the community’s set of needs through a mapping process. Lindzay Bedard was a Common Roots volunteer who did a GIS course right when we needed it and did a mapping project for us. You can see her process and results here.

The major elements required by a good urban farm site (for us anyway) are: big and sunny, on public transit routes, and accessible to all. Access to water is critical. Using Google Earth is a good way to scope out big sunny areas in your city. As are driving, walking and cycling around.

Another critical understanding is to know that within government: there are two rows to hoe, so to speak. To further indulge in metaphor, there is topsoil and subsoil which are distinct and interrelated: these are the elected politicians, and the (senior) bureaucrats. To get an MOU on public land you need to have support at both levels. Keeping all parties informed is a must.

**HOT TIP #4**

You are constantly trying to grow the circle of influence, through all channels possible. You want to create a buzz around your idea, so much so that it feels like it is happening. With enough buzz it kind of reaches a tipping point — or collective consciousness, and it feels like it is going to happen. Grow your network. Be inquisitive and see who knows some of the people you want to connect with.

Find out who is a champion, who’s on the Board, who might know who, and slowly build your network… Don’t let up. You gotta keep at it. You gotta keep figuring out who you need to be talking to. There’s something you can do every day. We learned a great deal from the leader of a big project in town. His project required a lot of money and many agreements, there was lots of red tape, and there was a timeline. He called all the politicians and all the bureaucrats every day. He called to build relationships, to figure out what next steps were coming, to gauge the progress of funding and conversations, and to keep his project top of mind for everyone.

**Alright, you have a team and vision**,

now you need a piece of land. Welcome to the adventure!

Using Google Earth is a good way to scope out big sunny areas in your city. As are driving, walking and cycling around.

When we were looking for our new site we got the wider community involved. To hear more about how the community helped build our list of needs, here is a summary of the public engagement and here is more detail on the event. Then we ran the community’s set of needs through a mapping process. Lindzay Bedard was a Common Roots volunteer who did a GIS course right when we needed it and did a mapping project for us. You can see her process and results here.

The major elements required by a good urban farm site (for us anyway) are: big and sunny, on public transit routes, and accessible to all. Access to water is critical. Using Google Earth is a good way to scope out big sunny areas in your city. As are driving, walking and cycling around.

Another critical understanding is to know that within government: there are two rows to hoe, so to speak. To further indulge in metaphor, there is topsoil and subsoil which are distinct and interrelated: these are the elected politicians, and the (senior) bureaucrats. To get an MOU on public land you need to have support at both levels. Keeping all parties informed is a must.
Municipal land is probably the most likely land you’ll spot: at the community centre, the library, part of a park...

If your municipality has a How to Start a Community Garden process, follow that.

**HOT TIP #4**
Make a great relationship with your municipal staff person. If this relationship is rocky it will be much harder to get help with any changes or challenges. If you can create a helpful relationship with this person you can do more together.

Create a project presentation that you can pitch to Municipal Committees such as the Regional Committee, or the Planning & Design Committee - whatever they are called where you are. Make a visual presentation that shows how your team is going to help them meet their strategic priorities. Show that your team is trustworthy and reliable. Come to them with a question: do they have any recommendations on how to proceed?

**HOT TIP #5**
There's lots of fear around how 'messy' and unattractive urban farms can be (I don't get it either) so pay attention to aesthetics. Work with a landscape designer/architect if you can.

**HOT TIP #6**
Keep your Councillor and Mayor informed as well as the relevant senior bureaucrats and your provincial Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). They will be part of your circle of influence.

**HOT TIP #7**
Another potential requirement by the Municipality, and essential thing to do regardless, is to hold a community consultation to meet with neighbours and listen to their thoughts, concerns and desires for an urban farm. Even if there is push back because the neighbourhood values that space in a certain way and has fears about what an urban farm might bring, communication goes a long way. Our strategy of holding space for conversation (including difficult conversation) and working together to address concerns through regular, open and responsive communication has worked so far. We also communicate on a variety of platforms: Facebook page, Facebook Group, Instagram, email list, flyers, a phone tree, on farm meetings, an on-farm communications book and chalkboards on the farm.

The Province owns all the schools and hospitals. They have some big urban properties.

We hope you have an awesome MLA and constituency office and that there is a great policy/agenda alignment that helps them help you.

In our experience the Province is complex to navigate funding and permissions. The subsoil and topsoil (as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter) both really matter. Figuring out who is important to have on-side and getting them on-side requires asking a lot of questions and asking around.

**HOT TIP #8**
The site manager is probably going to be a senior staff in the Department of Transportation and
Here are a few more general tips:

Get creative with finding alignments to create strategic partners. Is there something that they need or that you can provide? Partnerships between the not-for-profit and for-profit are powerful signals of sustainability to the professional class - including politicians and senior bureaucrats.

Working with government you have to check all the boxes. It takes work to figure out what the boxes are. Keep asking about what steps are next and you will find the path to success.

Read and understand the terms and conditions for funding programs. These really matter. Often this information is not obvious. Be curious, ask questions, make phone calls.

Find moments to celebrate as much as possible.

Develop an elevator pitch so that you can describe your project in really simple terms. Develop your “asks” into elevator pitches so that you can ask for what you need in clear ways.

Find moments to celebrate as much as possible.

Develop your responses to concerns, and have them ready.

Unsightliness is the main concern raised by the public, especially in winter. Rats, vermin and smell are another set of concerns. Soil contamination and air pollution are other concerns cited. Theft and vandalism are also concerns so have a group position and response developed to respond to these issues from the community.

HOT TIP #9: Make sure the Deputy Minister stays informed.

GOOD QUESTION: Is there development plans for the site? How will those plans be impacted by an election?

GOOD QUESTION: What other government departments should be involved? Health, agriculture, education, community services, diversity & culture? Having staff allies in these departments is super helpful. Applying for grants is another way of speaking to government priorities and is an opportunity to share your vision.

GOOD QUESTION: Don’t assume your person in government knows all the things. Just because they have a title, or are senior, doesn’t always mean they know all the answers. It pays to ask questions kindly, inquisitively - and to get details and check. Helpful questions include: How has this been done before? Can you give us an example?

TIP #32: Zoning and Building Codes are often Municipal responsibilities and structures on Provincial land are not required to abide by the same rules. Knowing which level of government is responsible can be very helpful for building sheds and greenhouses.

TIP #33: There is funding out there that isn’t necessarily in a funding stream, meaning there is no grant for it but your project might just qualify if you can find the right person in government and pitch to access it.

If you are interested in Federal land, start with your MP. I hope they have awesome staff people in their office to lead you through the labyrinth. Many of the same hot tips in the Provincial section apply. Accessing federal land is similar, just more complex.

Most of the city land is privately owned by individuals, institutions or corporations. The few Crown lots are often owned by land developers. There might be apartment buildings, townhouses, big backyards, and even churches.

Figuring out who and how to get in touch with the landowner is tricky. Maybe you have to knock on the door. Maybe it is the office of a developer. Figuring out who to talk to will likely take some social connectivity and networking.

Create two documents: a brief overview and a longer project proposal. Offer the brief (1-2 pages maximum) first. It will be emailed around so make it a PDF document and make it aesthetically appealing. Show alignment, give core details and build trust. This can be followed with a longer project description once interest is shown. Core details include budgets, goals, timeline and activities.

TIP #14: Your project has something to offer a developer. Your urban farm or garden might help with their tenant retention by making their apartment more appealing, giving them free advertising through good news stories, or getting brownie points with the municipality for being socially engaged.
6. BUDGETING

The key to a budget is to map out all your anticipated expenses and potential revenues. You can only spend the money you have, and it is tricky to come by, especially with urban farming. Farming is not profitable to begin with, and then add volunteer management, theft potential, and the time and resources spent on community engagement. But urban farming meets a lot of public priorities: healthy eating, physical activity, community engagement, social connectivity, environmental education, sustainable development, healthy and livable cities, welcoming newcomers, intercultural & inter-generational learning, increasing employability. The trick is to figure out where the pockets of money are that you can align with.

A budget is basically a map of revenues and expenses. We found that we would run two or three budgets: the lean machine, the middle path, and in-our-dreams. This was a good exercise to determine what our priorities were and what we’d ask for after the basics were covered.

Our process parallels Outcome Mapping’s “expect to see, like to see, love to see.” Outcome Mapping is a great tool to use to build a group vision and shared understanding. A well built budget will feed into and support your Strategic Plan. Keeping the core decisions of the farm coherent builds trust.

When budgeting we find it helpful to map out one year in detail, then multiple years in summary. We created a version of the budget that showed what we had confirmed, what was projected, and what we still needed funding for.

Forecasting revenue can be difficult. Urban farm business models are diverse and the ways they generate revenue vary. Ways to earn revenue can include revenue from crop sales (e.g. market sales, sales to local grocery stores/restaurants, programs like community supported agriculture), government funds for social programming, revenue from grants and donations, and revenue from hosting workshops or consulting/teaching.

To forecast revenue from crop production, ask some local farmers. What high-value crops would they recommend? What might you expect per bed foot, for revenue? Try some pilot projects. And always, ask around.

HOT TIP #1
Crop Planning for Organic Vegetable Growers is so useful we use it every year to forecast revenue for programming.

Forecasting expenses might be easier and also terrifying. To determine the costs of farm supplies call a farmer. Maybe call a couple of different farmers. Ask them about what tools they would recommend, what supplies they would buy, where they get compost, and how much would they get at the beginning of the season.

Keep in mind that farmers are incredibly busy and generally aren’t well paid for their work. When asking for a farmer’s expertise try to do as much groundwork ahead of time so you’re asking less of their time. If their time and advice is a key role in your project, write an honorarium for them into your budget line, pay them to offer a workshop or offer a work trade or thank you of some kind.

The major cost of an urban farm is always staffing. It can be hard to find money for staffing directly. Often it needs to be built into multiple grants to piece together a position. This is awkward, but hopefully in time you can build stability.

HOT TIP #2
Keep your eyes open for government funding that subsidizes or fully covers hourly wages for a period of time. These often exist for people who are unemployed or underemployed, newly in the workforce or facing barriers to employment.

Other important expenses include marketing and public relations: you need to be part of the community to be successful with grants and funding. Your project is more likely to get money if it’s in the public eye and creating positive news coverage for funders and partners. You just have to invest in this to succeed. Think of it as part of your programming around public education. Part of creating buzz.

Administrative costs are also real. We recommend working with/under a larger and older (more experienced and established) NFP which has an HR Department and accountant: so helpful! There is a cost to this that the project has to contribute to. Often this is ~10% -15% of grants.

It is good to budget for staff and volunteer support. Urban farms really grow people and helping out with cell phone costs, bus tickets, food, and other support can make a big difference to your volunteers.

Insurance is another tricky one. If you are with a big organization your project can tap into theirs. If not, ask for a lot of quotes. You’ll likely need to include it in your admin budget lines in grant proposals.

Even if you are with a bigger NFP, keeping track of various detailed costs from social enterprise activities with organized and dedicated spreadsheets is a great idea.
This example provides a broad overview of the sources of revenue and expenses similar to those that may impact your urban farm. As you can see below, the majority of revenue comes from Common Roots involves donations, partner revenue, and service delivery often focused on educational programming, and much of the costs go towards staffing for its programs. You will have to create a budget for your initial building year and that requires researching the cost of infrastructure such as a shed, raised beds, soil, pathway materials, tools, water supply and contracted machinery.

There are different components within an urban farm budget that can also contain more detail. For instance, the net profit from market garden sales can be individualized by item (and projected by calculating how much crop might be sold per yield).

Be creative in your budgeting. Funds raised towards one thing-like supplies-might allow you to shift funds to something else-like staffing-or vice-versa.

6) Partner: Maybe more than one organization/individual wants to see your farm take flight. Partnering with other organizations can help in large and small ways, from running operations to advertising and organizing an event. You can save more time, resources, and help promote your cause. Sometimes a partner/stakeholder cannot contribute funds but they can help address another need. Contact Local Schools/Businesses/ Organizations for as many donations as possible (like raffling or auctioning items). Their contributions can help serve as great fundraisers and provide more exposure for their business/activities. A partnership can also ensure that your group can apply toward different funding streams. Partnering with a registered charity allows access to more grant funding streams.

7) Every no is an uneducated yes: Or “No you already have: yes, you can get” or “Go over, go under, go through”. Or

### SAMPLE BUDGET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUE</th>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales of products and services</td>
<td>Farm Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot fees</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil amendments</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost</td>
<td>$1,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce sales and delivery</td>
<td>$16,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower sales</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant sales</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise sales</td>
<td>$1,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>$1,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sales</td>
<td>$3,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Expense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Program Delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal grants</td>
<td>$11,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial grants</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal grants</td>
<td>$2,375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Foundations and 

| TOTAL REVENUE | $268,585 |
| Admin and fundraising expense | |
| TOTAL EXPENSE | $176,585 |

1. **Prioritise & match priorities:** Your team needs to know what it really wants to do, what programs you want to try. Read about what worked for others. Read about all the funds out there, and what the local funders are prioritising. See if there are ways to make your program work within the funds available. Keeping a spreadsheet of funds and their parameters is helpful, followed by the fund’s budget and the budget of every grant written.

2. **Generate some revenue:** Do some social enterprise activity. Grow some crops for sale. Ideally high-value ones. Run some programs. Sell some merchandise. Our initial ambitious goal was 20% of expenses covered by revenue. We are closer to 16%, but we will continue to use 20% as our target.

3. **Constantly search for grants:** Keep that spreadsheet updated, always be on the look out, get on the email lists, constantly dig deeper for other funders. It is crucial to research and keep track of potential sponsors/grant funders/partners. There are endless resources available—including documents and online software—that can assist in identifying the best options for urban farm grant funds.

4. **Be creative:** There are MANY funding streams available and fundraising ideas. For example, if your urban farm plans an event the event can include several modes of fundraising from raffles and silent auctions, to snack stalls and photo contests. And, be creative in your budgeting. Funds raised towards one thing-like supplies-might allow you to shift funds to something else-like staffing-or vice-versa.

5. **Network and ask:** There’s money available that is not advertised. Successful organizations often find pots of money that others didn’t know to ask for. Somehow they found a way to ask the right person for the right thing.

6. **Partner:** Maybe more than one organization/individual wants to see your farm take flight. Partnering with other organizations can help in large and small ways, from running operations to advertising and organizing an event. You can save more time, resources, and help promote your cause. Sometimes a partner/stakeholder cannot contribute funds but they can help address another need. Contact Local Schools/Businesses/ Organizations for as many donations as possible (like raffling or auctioning items). Their contributions can help serve as great fundraisers and provide more exposure for their business/activities. A partnership can also ensure that your group can apply toward different funding streams. Partnering with a registered charity allows access to more grant funding streams.

7. **Every no is an uneducated yes:** Or “No you already have: yes, you can get” or “Go over, go under, go through”. Or
Remember that media attention does not simply happen in response to print communications in order to write press releases, marketing campaigns, and an employee/volunteer should have skill in volunteer work or donations. An employee/volunteer should be skilled in taking good photographs to add to an organization (either with volunteer work or donations). An employee/volunteer can work with local media to promote the community by having a dedicated communications/volunteer, and are impressed by people willing to ask and listen.

Gathering the support is one thing, maintaining it is another. There needs to be ways for people to contribute, give feedback, and feel that their contributions matter. A robust evaluation plan is part of this. Surveys, community gatherings and communicating back are all required.

10) Create buzz: Raise awareness of what your urban farm offers to the community by having a dedicated communications/marketing employee. This employee can work with local media to ensure there is information about how people can contribute to your organization (either with volunteer work or donations). An employee/volunteer should be skilled in taking good photographs to add to marketing campaigns, and an employee/volunteer should have skill in print communications in order to write press releases. Remember that media attention does not simply happen in response to good work! It takes work to gain media attention by reaching out to them and distributing press releases. Press releases should be engaging, informative, and a well-written piece that local media outlets will want to use.

With any written communications it is important to use storytelling and write for a general audience. It is also important to use various forms of media to engage individuals. Carry hard copies of fundraising/organizational information with you and contact as many people as you can. The more you talk about your organization, the more people will want to share in that excitement and its mandate. You can create online newsletters that contain updates on your farm, fundraising, and reminders on how to support your efforts. You can even add donating information in your email signature or voicemail.

11) Campaign Online: If you’re social media/tech-savvy, spread the word through social media websites. Or, consider creating a webpage to showcase your organization/fundraising campaign. Many websites’ primary function is to run fundraising web pages for non-profits. But, keep in mind that there are many different formats, fees, and processes to use crowdfunding.

12) Play by the Rules: For an organization to generate revenue legally it must be incorporated as a non-profit society. Partnering with an existing non-profit is an option if you don’t want to register. Certain activities also require following policies and regulations, such as selling food. Fundraising activities also require following rules. Following the province’s gaming regulations, if you are hosting an activity like a raffle or casino night. Moreover, ensure that your fundraising event follows municipal bylaws and policies, such as those respecting noise. Lastly, when applying to a funding program, be sure to read and re-read guidelines to fill documentation correctly.

There are lots of great kinds of fundraising activities. Here are some ideas:

Market Stand:
We had a market stand on the farm and we sold to restaurants. At the market stand we sold veg, flowers, soil amendment, composted manure, merch, and seedlings. We grew the veg and flowers. The manure we bought from a local farmer. The soil amendment is a mineral fertilizer mix we often call a soil multi-vitamin which is supposed to increase the nutritional value of the food. We mixed using the recipe from Steve Solomon’s The Intelligent Gardener. The seedlings we sold were propagated from our perennials.

Plant a Tree of Hope: Ask a tree nursery to donate saplings. Sell the saplings to supporters that will plant and watch their Tree of Hope grow!

Guest How Many: Fill a jar with peas (or some version of vegetable/seed) and have people pay to guess how many there are in the jar. If they guess it right, they can win the jar!

Scavenger Hunt: Teams donate an entrance fee to compete in completing tasks around the area (e.g. make them bus from one community garden to another or eat a dish at a local restaurant) for a grand prize. Teams can take photos to evidence completing a task.

Seed/Bulb Drive: In the spring, canvas local gardeners, garden centers, or a wholesaler for donations of seeds, seedlings or bedding plants and host a day of sales.

Art Show: Ask local artists to donate a piece of art to your cause and hold an outdoor show to sell the works.

Photo Contest: Choose your subject (gardens, produce, landscapes, etc.) and get people to submit their photos for a prize. People can pay one dollar to cast a ballot for the winner.

Host a Concert: Hosting a concert can prove lucrative for an organization raising money. Try to keep costs low. If a local artist can perform at a small cost, that’s great!

Holidays are a wonderful time to get together with family and friends. Celebrations can be even more meaningful by raising funds for your society/cause.

Earth Day (April 22): Spring is a wonderful time to sell green-related items such as bulbs, seeds, saplings, or compost.

Mid Summer’s Day/Eve (June 21): Mark the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, with a garden party including Art Show:

Host a Concert:

Photo Contest:

Holidays are a wonderful time to get together with family and friends. Celebrations can be even more meaningful by raising funds for your society/cause.

Earth Day (April 22): Spring is a wonderful time to sell green-related items such as bulbs, seeds, saplings, or compost.

Mid Summer’s Day/Eve (June 21): Mark the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, with a garden party including various fundraising activities.
A few tips around grant-writing:

Have a spreadsheet to inventory all the grants out there you can find, with their deadlines and goals. January-February is prime grant-writing season. Have a team and meet regularly. Behind the master grant spreadsheet we had the farm budget(s) and behind that the budget for any grant written.

HOT TIP

The focus of the grant is the funders’ priority(ies). Really get to know what that is. Constantly refer back to those priorities in your goal, activities, budget, and how you will measure success. They only fund you if you are getting their work done. Whoever is awarding grants needs to see that the project is meeting the grant criteria, needs to believe the project is doable within the budget, and wants to be inspired and excited by the project.

If you need partners and letters of support, get on that ASAP. Often these need to be approved by Executive Directors so it takes a while to get emailed around. Generally we advise sending draft content of the letter of support to a contact person at the partners organization so they don’t have to do too much work for us. Make it easy and give some time for them to complete it; this too builds trust.

6.3 GRANT FUNDING STREAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORG/GRANT NAME</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture Innovation Fund</td>
<td>Nov. 20, 2019</td>
<td>Our broad and diverse culture includes the arts, music, heritage, languages, cultural identities, diversity, recreation, museums, libraries, traditions, food, spirituality and much more. Innovation in the scope of this grant is daring, collaborative, and new. The Community Food Literacy and Access Fund supports food literacy initiatives that help older adults share food and nutrition skills and knowledge with younger generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Food Literacy and Access Program</td>
<td>Nov. 20, 2019; May 21, 2019</td>
<td>The Community Food Literacy and Access Fund supports food literacy initiatives that help older adults share food and nutrition skills and knowledge with younger generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TD Friends of the Environment</td>
<td>Jul. 15, 2019</td>
<td>The program supports a range of environmental initiatives, with a focus on education/green space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotia Bank Community Fund</td>
<td>90 days for a response</td>
<td>The fund supports registered charities or non-profits that can display measurable impact and a record of achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.D. Irving, Limited (JDI)</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>JDI supports the communities where they live and work through charitable donations and sponsorships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson Foundation Ltd.</td>
<td>Apply once per fiscal year</td>
<td>The foundation helps registered Canadian charities achieve by providing funding that will enrich the lives of the people in the communities they serve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other useful fund development links:

- Selling your Ideas to Funders
- Resources from the Grantsmanship Center
- Canadian Subsidy Directory
- Canadian Social Enterprise Guide
Designing a new site is tricky. Every site we’ve created (3) we have hired a designer to work with staff and community to create a printable, share-able site design. Common Roots H.I. was designed by the Cities and Environment Unit (CEU), a community planning and design group based in the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Dalhousie University. Common Roots-BiHi was designed by Samantha Battaglia, MSc Ecological Design.

**HOT TIP #1** We wrote grants for this work to be done by skilled professionals. The grants included multiple community meetings to gather input and engagement. Having an accurate, thoughtful, beautiful, legible design is worth it. Ensuring that you hear all the wisdom from the community is worth it too.

We started the design process for Common Roots-BiHi with the information gathered in a community meeting. This was a big community meeting that helped us define what was required in a new site. That summary can be read here. We went through the whole crazy process of securing a site, as per Chapter 4: Land Use Agreement Road Map. Once we settled in on BiHi Park, we held a community meeting at a neighbouring church. You can read more about that community meeting here.

With that info and the programming plans of the staff, we sat down with the designer. Both staff and the designer spent some time observing the site for how sun, water, wind, people and animals moved through it. We ended up with three drawings. One analysis. One site design. And a phasing plan...

### Summary Analysis

**Observed Patterns and Implications**

- Clusters of trees and shrubs along the property edge provide shade, shelter and a barrier from vehicular traffic. Gaps in between this vegetation could be filled to provide a more secure and continuous barrier to traffic.

- Safe pedestrian access to the site is limited to an existing path from the south-facing park along Samuel Walker Dr. This path connects the south and the north side of the park and abruptly ends with a circular asphalt landing on the north side. There is no obvious destination or delineated gathering space on the north side of the park. There is opportunity to improve the connection between both sides of the park and create more desirable gathering spaces on the north side.

- The southern corner of the site is the main pedestrian entrance and connection to the south side park. This area features a circular asphalt landing, frequent water build-up, saturated soils and summer shade from deciduous trees. Species planted in this area must tolerate full shade and ponding. Replacing the circular asphalt landing with vegetation and/or applying appropriate stormwater management BMPs could help limit ponding. Any alterations to this space must prioritize pedestrian access.

- The southern side of the site is a steep north-facing slope along the side of the highway. This slope is difficult to access and the most significant change in elevation on the site. With limited accessibility the slope holds potential for less time-intensive farming practices (meadows, perennials) and water storage/gravity feeding.

- The east half of the site is divided from the west by an old off-ramp paved area and a few trees. This tapered east-end is narrow and sandwiched between fast vehicular traffic with minimal vegetative barrier from the street. Defined access and appropriate barriers could create a more safe, sheltered and welcoming space. This area is far from the center of the farm and may be more suitable as market garden space, meadow or perennial crops rather than community space.

Overall the site has a small amount of open space in full sun, an awkward tapered shape, and a handful of infrastructural obstacles (storm drains, utility boxes, old off-ramp). There is limited space to grow market crops in long continuous beds. To limit encroaching on valuable cropland, the farm’s gathering space and common plots can be predominantly located in partial-full shade areas where trees are present.
In terms of design tips...

Permaculture design is a helpful framework with some great guiding principles. Common Roots’ Bi-rhino Coordinator Sara Burgess took a permaculture design course before Common Roots’ big move to a new site. The course helped her get better equipped to participate in the design process and respond to realities once on site.

Also, the book Edible Forest Gardens - Vol 2: Ecological Design and Practice for Temperate-Climate Permaculture, has some valuable suggestions and design patterns, as does the book A Pattern Language by Christopher Alexander for Ecological Democracy by Randolph Hester is full of inspiration and tips too.

In terms of design tips...

Permaculture design is a helpful framework with some great guiding principles. Common Roots’ Bi-rhino Coordinator Sara Burgess took a permaculture design course before Common Roots’ big move to a new site. The course helped her get better equipped to participate in the design process and respond to realities once on site.

Also, the book Edible Forest Gardens - Vol 2: Ecological Design and Practice for Temperate-Climate Permaculture, has some valuable suggestions and design patterns, as does the book A Pattern Language by Christopher Alexander for Ecological Democracy by Randolph Hester is full of inspiration and tips too.

PHASING PLAN
COMMEN ROOTS URBAN FARM
Phasing Plan

There are multiple pathway widths. The main paths need to be wide enough for a wheelchair to pass a wheelbarrow - a min of 3’. Paths through the market garden are the narrowest: we found 16” to be good. Pathways between community garden plots alternate between 1’ and 2’. Every second pathway is wide enough to get a wheelbarrow down. We did this to maximize growing space.

We made our community garden boxes 4’x12’. This was the biggest we could affordably make them. We bought boards 12’ long. We didn’t have to make many cuts. Four feet is about the widest you can go without someone needing to make a path to get into the plot.

We prefer not to encase the market garden beds in wooden boxes. Farmers don’t so we didn’t want to either. It is a lot of cost, robs nitrogen from the soil, and makes it harder to cultivate the soil. In the early years we had 4’ wide beds but later switched to 30” wide beds as per the Market Gardener method, which is more ergonomic and therefore more efficient. This is another argument for not boxing the beds: it was possible to make changes.

We created a colour/shape system to differentiate the three kinds of garden beds: community plots, market garden and commons. The commons beds anyone could garden in and harvest from. In the community garden plots and market garden random harvesting and helping was discouraged. We tried to make this clear with signs and symbols that anyone could understand.

A central gathering place is key. A front stoop, front porch stairs, the kitchen table, if you will.
**Compost:** Compost is tricky. In the city it needs to be tidy and rodent free. Volunteers often throw weeds with seeds into the compost. Because urban farm compost generally lacks manure/nitrogen it doesn’t get hot enough to kill the weed seeds. Finding a volunteer who compost obsessed and wants to create gorgeous, miso-like compost for the urban farm would be ideal. Finding a way to chop the compost finely is very helpful. Soaking seedy weeds in water for 2 weeks helps to kill the seeds but it can smell. Compost needs to stay moist to decompose. In the ‘love to have’ column of the budget is a compost blanket to help keep the heat in the compost pile and moderate moisture.

**Budget:** Is a compost blanket to help keep the heat in the compost pile and moderate moisture.

**Water:** So important and so easy to take for granted. Climate change is making this more crucial. Water is not free in most urban places and access is not certain. For a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly solution an urban farm should invest in rainwater harvesting systems - ideally in systems where water comes off adjacent roofs. Rainwater capture is an affordable way to gather water but there are logistical challenges and some health risks to take into consideration. Municipalities have strict policies around rainwater collection to ensure food safety for urban farmers. Many municipalities require urban farms to submit soil tests or only allow produce to be grown in raised garden beds with imported soil to reduce the risk of soil contamination. Raised beds on urban farms that use imported soil help protect gardeners from contaminated soil underneath. In addition, if the raised beds are closed at the bottom - and you have the equipment to move them - they can be moved from site to site. There are two kinds of soil tests: the ones done by the Department of Agriculture that test NPK and soil organic matter. (Around here they are $25 and very helpful if you have someone who can help you read them and make soil fertility prescriptions. A great book on this is The Intelligent Gardener: Growing Nutrient Dense Food.) The other is a soil contamination test is done by a laboratory. We tested for heavy metals and VOCs (volatile organic compounds = petrochemicals). These tests are expensive (like $350 each), but it is important to know. Here’s some good information on soil contamination and urban agriculture.

**Vertical Farming:** We haven’t done this yet ourselves but plan to. Urban farms use simple vertical farming structures to maximize space and resources and grow as much produce as possible from raised or in-ground garden beds. Vertical farming can optimize an outdoor space with the ingenious use of vine-growing plants and galvanized steel trellises or fencing. Greenhouses: Greenhouses allow for longer-season food production and expand productivity. They also provide a unique opportunity to host educational programs and employment training throughout the year. While a greenhouse can add a lot of value to an urban farm or community garden, it is important to be aware of barriers to obtaining them. Along with the high cost and extra labour required to build and operate greenhouses, many municipal bylaws prohibit organizations from building permanent structures. Municipalities that allow permanent structures may have size restrictions or they may restrict certain greenhouse operations and certain produce grown in the greenhouse. Prior to purchasing a greenhouse, a community garden/urban farm should undertake certain steps:

1. Undertake a feasibility study similar to the one presented in the NWT Can Grow: Greenhouse Feasibility Guide. It is important to be confident of the local produce demand to ensure that your capital venture is sustainable.
2. Organizations should treat greenhouse structures as a significant capital purchase, especially if the organization intends to pay for a new irrigation system, heating unit, lighting and ventilation. It is important to take all necessary precautions while raising capital funds, such as implementing a funding plan and asking for more funds than you need from a banker, investor, or grant funder – as seen in Chapter 5: Land Use Agreement Road Map.
3. In order to implement greenhouse infrastructure it is important to receive public acceptance – such as permission from the local municipality to build a greenhouse; or public acceptance from individuals living around the farm site.
8. TIPS ON PRACTISING SOCIAL INCLUSION

For many reasons, Common Roots has always asked how we could include a diverse range of individuals and communities in the urban farm. We’ve thought about this from a physical accessibility perspective, working to make the garden accessible to folks using wheelchairs or with a visual impairment. We’ve thought about how to make the farm accessible and appealing to folks with privilege as well as folks experiencing poverty. We have participants from many many racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds, as well as socio-economic diversity.

This chapter includes some tips of things we’ve done that have been helpful for increasing the inclusion of diverse people in the urban farms. We interviewed some of our key participants and partners to glean specific advice to share. Thank you to Heather Aibil who works as the community garden coordinator through Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia for the past 6 years. Thanks to Hillary Lindsay who coordinates volunteer work/volunteer on the farm. Even just seeing the various languages and cultures helps to build a culture of inclusion. To see an example of farm signage and promotional posters. Common Roots-BiHi makes present helps to build a culture of inclusion. To see an example of

HOT TIP #1: It takes time. Sometimes it takes more time than predicted.

This is true in the coordination of volunteers and participants. Explaining things can take time especially when working with folks who speak multiple languages and/or who come from diverse backgrounds. Explaining the tasks takes time. Checking in throughout the activity to make sure that people have understood and are comfortable takes time. If one of the goals is increasing social connectivity, then taking the time to create a culture of inclusion and care is part of the good work.

Get comfortable with taking more time, noticing what needs more time and why. There is time spent building relationships. There is time that you can’t focus on productivity. People come to the farm for so many reasons. For many of them those reasons are social. Many people are socially isolated so come to the farm for community connection. This is part of the impact and outcomes: the good work.

Common Roots works with many newcomers which requires thoughtfulness about language. To communicate, often various methods needed - in person, by phone, signs in multiple languages. Hire interpreters. For an interpreter to pass along a message, methods needed - in person, by phone, signs in multiple languages. It is also helpful to find a community member that will volunteer to communicate with folks in their community. In this case, writing down the clear message you want passed along is good practice.

HOT TIP #2: Budget for inclusion. Some of the things we work into our grant budgets include: childcare, bus tickets, taxi chits, grocery gift certificates, food/snacks and interpretation services. (Note: We use the term interpretation instead of translation to acknowledge the improvisational communication that that role requires. It is rarely a term translation.) We hire interpreters for workshops, events, on-farm signage and promotional posters. Common Roots-BiHi makes signs for their farm beds in three popular languages for people that want passed along is good practice.

HOT TIP #3: Haircuts by children. Inspired by the art project, which you can see here, we embraced this idea of the imperfect, wabi-sabi nature of a community farm. People did things for the first time, so of course it wasn’t perfect. That’s fine! We encouraged everyone to take on this attitude of adventuring, to relax into play and participation. It’s okay to make mistakes. Sometimes it is even awesome!

Tips around Accessibility:

An urban farm needs to be accessible by public transportation. Thinking about how blind and wheelchair-using participants can use the site is important. We had a blind friend help us improve the site for access for blind and visually impaired people. When doing our second site design we incorporated her suggestions and feedback in the design process. Same with wheelchair users. Being able to include everyone has really helped to build good feelings at Common Roots. If you need support in creating accessibility, the Rick Hansen Foundation might be a great starting point.

We worked really hard to become accessible. Common Roots-Hi was on the doorstep of the Emergency Department. There were many wheelchair users around, so we worked hard to find the funds to create wide crush/dirt pathways, appropriate for wheelchair, walkers, strollers. We provided benches every 50’ or so, for those short-of-breath to take a rest. We also build beds at various heights to make the garden more comfortable for various bodies. Some beds are wheelchair accessible, some good for sitting on the edge of, some knee high, some lower.

A note of the cost of interpretation: assume $25/hr. Many interpreters charge for a minimum of 2 hrs.

**URBAN FARMS EVERYWHERE**

34

**URBAN FARMS EVERYWHERE**

35
Some tips from Milena about being more accessible to the blind and visually challenged community:

When considering signage and print, use plain language with a high colour contrast. Use large print for signs. The pathways inside the farms should always be clear of debris. Making sure to have some pathways that are made of a distinct surface, that someone with visual challenges can feel, is important for navigation. It is a good idea to encase plots in boxes so that it’s easier for people to navigate to their own plots by counting how many plots are on the way to theirs.

Gardening brings people fresh produce and fresh air. It is important to give everyone, including people with disabilities, an opportunity to connect with nature. So many aspects of our society exclude people living with differing abilities. Community gardens can provide the space an opportunity to find a new passion or simply take a break and relax in nature.

Some tips from Hillary, from working at Common Roots-Woodside on the grounds of the Nova Scotia Hospital:

Gardens are a great space for people from all sorts of backgrounds and ability levels to come together. People can work together and be social, or work separately and be contemplative. In terms of working with the hospital, it is extremely important to have a farm champion who works inside the hospital and can make introductions, build relationships, and brainstorm ways of connecting the farm to programs and services. It was important that people in all areas of the hospital knew what we were doing outside and how they could be involved (from housekeeping to administrators). Recreational Therapists (RTs) have become important allies as they can most easily engage patients with the garden. The garden programming for patients started small, with the RTs that were most keen, and has expanded every year since then, including branching out into indoor programming with plants.

In terms of community engagement, simply walking around the neighbourhood with flyers and talking to businesses and organizations and community groups is a great way to get the lay of the land and understand better how you can engage with and serve the community you are surrounded by.

Some tips from Heather and Nanook:

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) has a community program that supports newcomers to be more included in Canadian community. In this work there are two levels of inclusion: the first level is to reduce the discrimination within the community; the second, higher level of inclusion is to build connections within community.

It is important to try to bring down barriers to participation in community gardens. An essential first step is including everyone in decision making. Building leadership is a key activity required to meet this goal. A main challenge of much social programming aimed at increasing social connectivity is that the leadership team is not diverse. Ideally, a community garden/farm can give a broad range of people from diverse cultural background opportunities for employment, as well as the chance to experience leadership.

Some other tips include:

Have shared leadership resources and provide leadership training for everyone. Create space to show the skills that people have. Work for a culture of supportiveness when new members are joining the group. Get to know everyone’s background and the language they speak.

When it comes to conflict among members and feelings of discrimination, the key is to create space to communicate with respect for all perspectives. Instead of making decisions for the members it’s better to ask how the members want to solve the problems.

From a research perspective, a common theme throughout literature describing urban agriculture is its ability to provide cross-cultural learning in the form of building place-attachment and social capital. For many immigrants, community gardens can provide a sense of cultural continuity by providing the regular practice of growing food and a bonding space with people from the same background. It can also be a bridging space to help grow, learn, and connect with neighbours in their new home. Scholars who explore different types of social capital say that long-established and collaborative farms display significant amounts of ‘bridging’ (connection between groups or intra-group connections) and ‘bonding’ (within group or intra-group connections).
Urban farms like Common Roots operate with an important social mandate. Our mission statement is “to promote healthy lifestyles and landscapes through hands-on education about growing and eating healthy food.” We achieve our mission by providing individuals with employability skills and business training, offering at-risk and marginalized individuals increased access to fresh and nutritious food, delivering educational programs and offering community garden spaces.

Individuals who participate in our programs have the opportunity to gain conversational English skills through community interactions and acquire entrepreneurial skills by working as a part of the market garden team. The underlying goal of Common Roots is to fight food insecurity and social isolation by providing space in which individuals can gather together, learn from each other and share.

With help from sponsors and partners we offer numerous programs, workshops and services, including:

Community Garden Plots
Many urban farms (and community gardens) offer community plots, market beds and common beds. Common Roots accepts varied donations for the use of individual plots, and maintains community plots for public use.

Market Garden and Sales
We grow produce for sale to businesses and the public to help maintain and grow our farms. We sell to a variety of organizations across the city including Stone Heath Bakery, Birds Bakery, the hospital cafeteria, the Loaded Ladle and Props Floral. We also run a regular stand to sell our wares at or near each farm. These activities help Common Roots earn revenue, promote urban agriculture and reach new community members.

Skill Development for Newcomers
Common Roots offers employability skill development, including English in the workplace for newcomers, through our Deep Roots program. Through helping in the market garden, participants develop their understanding of Canadian workplace expectations, culture, and vocabulary.

Farm Stewards
Every day from 3-6pm, there are 3-6 volunteers on the farm who have an area of farm commons to garden. These are our Farm Stewards. Volunteers take one shift a week. We train them in April, and from May through October, this group of volunteers does a tonne to help other gardeners, facilitate social connections, maintain the space, and act as ambassadors for the project.

Farm Tours
Urban farms can offer site tours to businesses, school groups, day camps and other institutions for a suggested donation (we suggest $50 - $100). This can be expanded into a professional development opportunity with the help of some skilled facilitation.

Workshops
Common Roots offers a variety of educational workshops to the public, often taking donations for their offerings. Workshops have covered topics such as gardening 101, wreath-making and preparing sauerkraut. Educational workshops are key to the Common Roots’ business model as they help promote the farm, engage volunteers and promote growing local produce. Workshops provide participants with the skills needed to start their gardens or explore other creative and therapeutic outlets.

HOT TIP
Partnering with other organizations can be really helpful for the spring workshop series. The year that we partnered with The Loaded Ladle, and ISANS was our best year ever in terms of attendance and satisfaction.

Community Events
Common Roots hosts free community events for all ages. Annual events such as spring/summer concerts and the Harvest Hoontanny invite community members to come to the farm to share food, enjoy music and dancing, smash pumpkins (for fun and to amend soil) and take part in silent auctions and other activities.
9.1 PROGRAMMING IDEAS

HELPFUL TOOLS: This is an example of a logic model for a workshop series targeted to children. Your organization could use this planning tool (among many others) to help design and run a successful educational program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs (Resources)</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-term Outcome</th>
<th>Long-term Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Garden Coordinators (2)</td>
<td>Create a series of robust/outdoor workshops/activities that target various audiences of interest, consistent with guidance from Ecology Action Centre Curriculum, Nova Scotia School Garden Guide, and educators across the city.</td>
<td>Coordinators and coordinate with other community garden/farms, schools, community offices, and departments in downtown Halifax for workshop activities.</td>
<td>Enhance student and youth ability to grow healthy and affordable produce.</td>
<td>School-aged children gain practical horticultural knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational supplies and tools</td>
<td>Collaborate and coordinate with local businesses and other community gardens/farms to provide access educational support through online resources and handouts resources for workshops.</td>
<td>Organize and run 9 workshops to teach beginner gardening practices.</td>
<td>Enhance community and holistic skills and knowledge.</td>
<td>More children develop gardening skills and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Garden Education program funding (~$35,000)</td>
<td>Establish 15 new raised beds on various school sites.</td>
<td>Create and distribute informational handouts for each workshop.</td>
<td>Strengthening community and Holistic learning opportunities.</td>
<td>More children gain educational experience in nutrition and healthy lifestyles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More helpful tools: An annual workshop series could follow a format similar to the one below. Other examples are found in the Ecology Action Centre’s twelve-part workshop curriculum, Antioch University’s Community Garden Connections year-round manual, and Miller and Arnold’s proposed Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Title</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Presenter/Partner</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
<th>Hands-on Experiences / Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasting local produce</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives, as well as a local green/white house expert</td>
<td>Why we grow local food</td>
<td>Welcome and icebreaker discussion about farming/gardening experiences with local produce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning A Garden</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>How to grow food in Canada and what is grown elsewhere</td>
<td>Sampling heirloom vegetables, fruits, and foods from local produce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning B Garden</td>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Teaching container gardening and indoor planting for crops that require longer growing periods and more heat</td>
<td>Create a growing calendar by using plant images and placing them onto bristle boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composting in the Garden</td>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Methods behind using an identification key</td>
<td>Fabricate a composting activity (for everyone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting the Garden</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>What we grow in Canada and what is grown elsewhere</td>
<td>Teaching container gardening and indoor planting for crops that require longer growing periods and more heat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting the Garden</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Weeding activity</td>
<td>Participants will receive a trowel/spade to help with future garden maintenance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant Identifi- cation (ID)</th>
<th>June/July</th>
<th>Urban Farm Coordinator</th>
<th>Basic plant family characteristics and plant ID</th>
<th>Photo scavenger hunt (for everyone)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and partner with mas-</td>
<td>Methods behind using an identification key</td>
<td>Build a mobile app to help participants find and navigate websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ter garden program</td>
<td>How to access online resources and applica-</td>
<td>Help participants use smartphone apps and websites help partners find and navigate websites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Title</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Presenter/Partner</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
<th>Hands-on Experiences / Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasting local produce</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives, as well as a local green/white house expert</td>
<td>Why we grow local food</td>
<td>Welcome and icebreaker discussion about farming/gardening experiences with local produce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning A Garden</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>How to grow food in Canada and what is grown elsewhere</td>
<td>Sampling heirloom vegetables, fruits, and foods from local produce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning B Garden</td>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Teaching container gardening and indoor planting for crops that require longer growing periods and more heat</td>
<td>Create a growing calendar by using plant images and placing them onto bristle boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composting in the Garden</td>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Methods behind using an identification key</td>
<td>Fabricate a composting activity (for everyone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting the Garden</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>What we grow in Canada and what is grown elsewhere</td>
<td>Teaching container gardening and indoor planting for crops that require longer growing periods and more heat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting the Garden</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Weeding activity</td>
<td>Participants will receive a trowel/spade to help with future garden maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting the Garden</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Photo scavenger hunt (for everyone)</td>
<td>Build a mobile app to help participants find and navigate websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composting in the Garden</td>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Methods behind using an identification key</td>
<td>Fabricate a composting activity (for everyone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting the Garden</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>What we grow in Canada and what is grown elsewhere</td>
<td>Teaching container gardening and indoor planting for crops that require longer growing periods and more heat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting the Garden</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Weeding activity</td>
<td>Participants will receive a trowel/spade to help with future garden maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting the Garden</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farms/community garden representatives</td>
<td>Photo scavenger hunt (for everyone)</td>
<td>Build a mobile app to help participants find and navigate websites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Title</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Presenter/Partner</td>
<td>Topics Covered</td>
<td>Hands-on Experiences / Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting Crops Part 1</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farmers’ community garden representatives</td>
<td>• Knowing when to harvest, keeping track of photos for discussion</td>
<td>• In-class harvest toss with examples of mature vegetables on your calendar and ways to vegetable Extending the growing season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting Crops Part 2</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farmers’ community garden representatives</td>
<td>• Seed harvesting techniques</td>
<td>• Seed Harvest Party and local growers can take two bags of seed (dependent on variety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Party</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Urban farm coordinator partnering with other urban farmers’ community garden representatives</td>
<td>• Cooking culturally relevant plants</td>
<td>• Two chefs will demonstrate their staple dishes with local in-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How to put your garden to bed</td>
<td>• Participants will be asked to bring recipes to this event and write them on recipe cards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, California</td>
<td>Large outdoor urban farm</td>
<td>Educational programming</td>
<td>Food security, social and environmental education; Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational school programming; Encourages cross-cultural learning; Educational programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Oakland, California</td>
<td>Cross cultural learning</td>
<td>Educational youth programming</td>
<td>Increases students gardening, and business-related skills; Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational youth programming; Social and environmental education; Encourages cross-cultural learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
<td>Vertical indoor infrastructure</td>
<td>Educational programming</td>
<td>Teachers students gardening, biology, economics, and food literacy; Vertical indoor infrastructure; Educational programming; Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational youth programming; Encourages cross-cultural learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
<td>Cross cultural learning</td>
<td>Educational programming</td>
<td>Cross cultural learning; Educational youth programming; Social and environmental education; Encourages cross-cultural learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga, Ontario</td>
<td></td>
<td>Educational programming</td>
<td>Teaches nutrition and how to cook healthy meals; Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational youth programming; Social and environmental education; Encourages cross-cultural learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreal, Quebec</td>
<td></td>
<td>Greenhouse</td>
<td>Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational youth programming; Educational programming; Encourages cross-cultural learning; Educational programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver, British Columbia</td>
<td>Vertical Indoor Infrastructure</td>
<td>Educational programming</td>
<td>Increased farm access to resources (ex: land, water); Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational youth programming; Social and environmental education; Encourages cross-cultural learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton, Alberta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Educational programming</td>
<td>Increases growing spaces; Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational youth programming; Educational programming; Encourages cross-cultural learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iqaluit, Nunavut</td>
<td>Iqaluit greenhouse</td>
<td>Indigenous cross-cultural learning</td>
<td>Uses intergenerational learning by partnering with Elders to teach traditional ways of planting, harvesting, cooking and ceremonies; Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational youth programming; Educational programming; Encourages cross-cultural learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories</td>
<td></td>
<td>Educational school programming</td>
<td>Increases students gardening, cooking and food literacy skills; Cross cultural Indigenous learning; Educational youth programming; Educational programming; Encourages cross-cultural learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>