

Food sovereignty requires that older generations pass on their knowledge and skills to younger generations.

ELIZABETH PENASHUE, SHESHATSHUI, LABRADOR



"I am an Innu woman living in Sheshatshui, Labrador. For many years I have committed my life to protecting the environment for my children and grandchildren. For 13 years I have led a canoe trip and spring snowshoe walk for my people. Nothing stops me because "nutshimit" (the bush/country) is very important for our culture. Before I'm gone I want to see some change, I want to help my people and teach the children. I don't want them to lose their Innu identity, culture and life."

Most years, Elizabeth leads a walk through the bush for 1-3 weeks. Upon return, a young walker commented that, "The adjustment back is quite difficult. During the first week back I saw life in town in startling clarity which was accompanied by a great sadness. Elizabeth said she feels this sadness every time she returns to the community. I can understand at a new level, the pain Elizabeth and Francis' family, along with many others, experienced when they were forced to move from the nomadic life on the land to town life. The two experiences are so different it is challenging—and can feel impossible—to find ways to bring the two together."

- In the 1950s the nomadic Innu were forcibly taken from the land (Nitassinan) to enable exploitation of minerals and hydro development
- The dislocation from the land and thus culture, combined with terrible living conditions in the settlements have led to many of the problems we see today: alcoholism, glue-sniffing among children, and scandalous suicide rates.
- NATO's low-level training flights over Innu territory have had negative effects on the people and on the animals, particularly the caribou.

Food sovereignty values and builds on existing knowledge and skills.

SRI SETHURATNAM, GUELPH, ON



"I migrated to Canada with my family in May, 2004 confident that my agricultural engineering degree, years of program management experience and a lifetime of farming would serve me well in the Canadian job market (since these expertise are high on the list of immigration qualifications - wording). Despite wanting to enter the farming sector here in Canada, it became very clear that this was close to impossible for someone like me unless I wanted to sell pesticides or seeds. Most of the settlement councilors that I met pushed me towards the services industry and had no sound advice for me about how to get into farming. By God's Grace, I met a professor who supported me in applying for a masters' in rural extension studies at the University of Guelph. Thanks to this degree, I was able to obtain a job with Farmstart. Now I support new immigrants to do what I wasn't able to do – get a start in agriculture here in Canada. We provide them with land, some money, tools, training and advice so that they can pursue their passion for farming here in a new land."

- Canadian immigration practices fail to make use of the knowledge and skills that immigrants bring to Canada.
- The policy of industrializing farms over the past 40 years has meant the de-skilling of farmers. Instead of making decisions about crop rotation, use of land, fallow, etc., now they just add fertilizer and pesticides, diminishing their relationship to the land.
- Civil society organizations, like FarmStart, are filling the gap in training new farmers.



STORIES OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

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The People's Food Policy Project links people from across Canada to find ways that ordinary people can reclaim decision-making power in our food system. This is the core of food sovereignty, and the base of our project to create Canada's first comprehensive federal food policy. The People's Food Policy will reflect and support the work of Canadians to create a food system based on care and respect for humans and the natural world.

This pamphlet is one in a series from the People's Food Policy Project. It illustrates one of the interlinked principles of food sovereignty.

BUILDS ON KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS



Please share your food stories of hope and struggle with us at: www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca as well as your policy recommendations for a food sovereign Canada.



Pour une politique alimentaire populaire

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