

# Cross-country Kitchen Table Talks

A guide to being a  
**People's Food Champion**



People's **Food**  
**Policy** Project

Pour une **politique**  
**alimentaire** populaire

July 2010

# Table of contents

<b>Our story</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Our vision</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Who we are</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our goals</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Why you should get involved</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Three Kitchen Table Talks to Choose From</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What happens after this?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Before you start</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Register Your Kitchen Table Talk on line!	
2. What are you going to talk about?	
3. Diversity – Who to invite and where to hold your Kitchen Table Talk	
4. Teleconference – an option to meeting face-to-face	
5. Facilitators and resource people	
6. Process for your Kitchen Table Talk	
7. Recording and reporting	
8. Food	
9. Money and funding	
<b>Options for hosting a Kitchen Table Talk</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Digging into Food Policy	
2. Assessing a piece of the People’s Food Policy pie	
3. Hosting a Food Story Circle	

The People's Food Policy Project is a pan-Canadian network of citizens and organizations that is creating Canada's first food sovereignty People's Food Policy.

## Our Story

Back in 2007, a number of citizens deeply involved in shaping our food systems, decided that Canada needed a big shift in how it deals with food. After decades of farming crisis after farming crisis, rising obesity and hunger, and the continuing degradation of the environment through food production, it has become clear that **the government needs our help in solving these complex problems**. The People's Food Policy Project was conceived as a way for us all to be involved in shaping food policy – a way for us to pool our knowledge, experience and desire for a food system that fits with our values. Since we started in 2009, we've had conversations with over 1 000 Canadians about the food system they want. These conversations have been summarized in the Discussion Papers (that will eventually become the People's Food Policy in 2011) that you can find on our website ([www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](http://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca)). In the coming months and years, we hope to continue these very important conversations to deepen and further develop the People's Food Policy.

## Our Vision

The People's Food Policy grows from a vision of a society in which nobody goes hungry and everyone has a strong connection to the sources of their food, where food sources and food providers are honoured, and where people shape the policies that govern the food system through an inclusive, democratic process.

**The time is NOW for citizens to unite our voices!** The Liberal Party, the NDP, the Bloc Quebecois, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and others are talking about a National Food Strategy for Canada, and we think that citizens should have a place in this discussion. So, we are asking people to contribute to **the most important public policy development since Medicare**, to be a part of the food movement, to be a **People's Food Champion** by:

- Having conversations and thinking together.
- Imagining what a food system based on your values would look like.
- Sharing stories of struggle with the existing food systems.
- Sharing stories of hope about the food system you want.

**A food system** includes all processes involved in feeding a population: growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consumption, and disposal of food and food-related items. It also includes the inputs needed (fertilizer, pesticides, oil, etc.) and outputs generated (green house gases, pollution, etc.) in each of these steps.

We invite you or your organization to be a People's Food Champion by hosting one or several Kitchen Table Talks in **October or November 2010**.

## Who 'We' Are

We are citizens, people from all corners and walks of life including farmers, community/health workers, eaters, cooks, academics, policy wonks, fishers, business owners and more. We all feel that the time is now to unite our efforts to change our food systems. Over 110 people currently invest their time and energy voluntarily to make this project a reality, and we hope you will become one of us!

## Our Goals

We are creating a citizen-based food sovereignty policy for Canada that we hope to see adopted by government in the future (for more information on food sovereignty, see our website). Part of this involves talking with as many Canadians as we can, and thinking together about what a food policy might look like that reflects our values. Through this project, we are weaving together a united vision and basis for action amongst the many local, regional, provincial food groups across the country that will be summarized in the **People's Food Policy** (Release: Winter 2011). Once released, we will present the People's Food Policy to governments and work towards implementing this policy to the greatest degree possible in the hopes of shifting Canada's food system to one that is just and sustainable.

We use "**Kitchen**" as a symbol of a place where we come together, disagree, compromise, make decisions, celebrate and nourish each other through food and conversation.

## Why You Should Get Involved

The time is ripe for a change in the way we grow, cultivate, distribute and eat food. Food is our most intimate relationship with our environment, and hunger one of the most painful realities of poverty and injustice. If you choose to be a People's Food Champion and host a Kitchen Table Talk you will:

- Be a part of the growing food movement across Canada.
- Help to educate others in your community about food, food policy and food sovereignty.
- Contribute your voice and that of your community to developing Canada's first national food sovereignty policy.
- Participate in the global food movement of the Via Campesina ([www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)) which rallies around the same principles of food sovereignty.
- Have an excuse for a great conversation!

### Be a People's Food Champion ~ Host a Kitchen Table Talk!

We should all have a say in food policy. To make sure that the People's Food Policy truly reflects a broad spectrum of opinions, *we need citizens like you to contribute your ideas, values, time and efforts.*

PEOPLE'S  
FOOD  
CHAMP



## Three Kitchen Table Talks to Choose From

Here are **three suggested Kitchen Table Talk processes** to help guide your discussions. (They are outlined in more detail on the following pages.) Please choose one that suits your personal or organizational interests, or make up your own!

### 1. Digging into Food Policy

What does the food system you want look like? During these Kitchen Table Talks, we will imagine the food system we want and talk about whether the People's Food Policy reflects your hopes. A general pamphlet containing some *appetizing questions* have been prepared to get you going.

### 2. Assessing a Piece of the People's Food Policy Pie

The goal of this conversation is to understand, critique, diversify and deepen the People's Food Policy. Choose one policy, one section of a discussion paper, or an entire discussion paper and have a conversation about it. Then let us know what you would change, add or remove.

### 3. A Food Story Circle

We all have stories to share about food. The goal of this conversation is to document food stories of struggle, hope or revelation. Around the table, share what isn't working in our food system and the innovative ways that people have overcome the limitations of our food system. Share the moments of change in our own lives when we realized that something had to change. These stories will be used to support our policy proposals, to give a grounded reason why the policies we propose are needed.

## What happens after this?

Your policy suggestions and stories will be given to our Policy Writing Teams. (There are ten teams, each responsible for one of the discussion papers.) In November, 2010, the comments and stories submitted will be summarized, presented and discussed at Food Secure Canada's assembly in Montreal. Revisions to the People's Food Policy will be made during the Winter 2010-2011 and a final version of the policy will be launched along with our first campaign later in the Winter 2011. Then begins the work of moving the People's Food Policy into reality – work that we envision continuing for many years to come!

## Timeline

<b>Summer 2010</b>	A series of discussion papers will be made public on our website.
<b>October 11-16, 2010</b>	Between Thanksgiving and World Food Day (Oct. 16), be a part of <b>The Cross-Country Kitchen Table Talks</b> - a cross-country event when people and organizations will be hosting their Kitchen Table Talks simultaneously. If at all possible, we ask that you organize your conversation during that week to help make this event a success!
<b>October 17-November 26, 2010</b>	Kitchen Table Talks will continue to take place across the country.
<b>November 26-28, 2010</b>	Food Secure Canada's Assembly (Montreal, QC) where the People's Food Policy will be centre stage.
<b>November 30, 2010</b>	<b>Deadline</b> to submit the results of your Kitchen Table Talk in order for it to be considered for the People's Food Policy.
<b>Winter 2010</b>	Release of the People's Food Policy.

The deadline for submitting your comments or stories is **November 30, 2010.**



## Before You Start

Please consider the following *before* the event – to help you plan and have everything in place to make your Kitchen Table Talk a success.

### 1. Register your Kitchen Table Talk Online

Let us know that you are part of the People's Food Policy Project! Tell us about your event! If it is open to the public, this will help others to learn about your event. If it is closed to the public, at least we'll know that you are on board. You can register your Kitchen Table Talk at [www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](http://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca).

### 2. What are you Going to Talk About?

As outlined above, there are three different formats that we propose for your kitchen table talks, but you need to decide on the *content* of these discussions, particularly if you choose to tackle a piece of the People's Food Policy Pie. You will need to take a good look at our discussion papers online and decide which piece is of interest to your community.

### 3. Diversity – Who to invite and where to hold your Kitchen Table Talk

In order for this policy to truly reflect a pan-canadian diversity of perspectives we hope to have people from different sectors (private, public, non-governmental) as well as from diverse populations (different cultures, class, age, genders, professions, etc.) at the table. We all have a stake in the food system and should all have a say in food. In order to achieve this goal, think through the following questions:

- **Who and how will you invite people to the conversation?**

In order to get a diversity of people at the table, you will have to do **outreach** that will reach different kinds of people. Business councils, conservation groups, farmer's unions, book clubs, libraries, post offices, etc. have networks, bulletin boards, and websites where you could ask to have your event posted. You might send a personal invitation to your MP, MPP, town councillor or other politician followed by a phone call to ensure they are coming. If you want the private sector present, you might consider contacting the local business council to organize the event with you. Collaborating with organizations that work with the population you want at your event is the best way to ensure you will get those people to the event.

#### Kitchen Table Talks in your Kitchen!

You may simply want to host this event at your own home with friends, family and colleagues. These intimate discussions are every bit as valuable to the PFPP, and they are cheap and easy to organize!

- **Indigenous Peoples** – It is surprising how frequently Indigenous peoples are forgotten, overlooked or not invited, despite the fact that we are all neighbors. We have been working in close collaboration with Indigenous peoples across Canada on this project, and we sincerely hope that you will take this opportunity to do the same. On our website, you will find: **First Principles Protocol for Building Cross-Cultural Relationships**, a two page document outlining some principles and practical tips for working with Indigenous peoples in your community.

- **Where will you host the Kitchen Table Talk?** Where you host your Kitchen Table Talk will determine who comes to your event. Consider carefully when choosing a place: who already uses that space, and who doesn't? Is the space accessible to people with disabilities? Can people get there using public transportation? The space also needs to fit with the process you decide on. (e.g.: Will it be possible to move chairs and tables around to fit the process you have chosen?) Of course cost may also be a consideration, and may leave you with few options.

#### 4. Teleconference – An option to meeting face-to-face

For some of us, hosting a kitchen table talk over a teleconference call may be an interesting option for:

- Overcoming time constraints (it takes less time to organize a one hour teleconference, and busy people may be more likely to attend).
- Overcoming geographical constraints (maybe the people you want to reach are spread out throughout your province/territory or the entire country).

There may some costs associated with teleconferencing that you will have to assume yourself (or find an organization who will). We have been working with Network Telsys (1-877-650-9090 or [www.networktelsys.com](http://www.networktelsys.com)) and there are countless other options for you to consider, some with costs, and other for free (e.g.: Skype). Other than the difference of location, you can follow the rest of the instructions.

#### 5. Facilitators and Resource people

**Will you facilitate the event, or will someone else?** You may wish to find an experienced facilitator (possibly with experience in dialogue and deliberation techniques) if you are not comfortable facilitating. If you succeed in getting the sought-after diversity at your Kitchen Table Talk, it is likely that people will not agree with one another. It will be important to have an experienced facilitator to ensure that the conversation stays on track, that individuals don't dominate the conversation, that all have the opportunity to speak and that some kind of reflection back to the audience is made.

**Do you want to invite resource people to the Kitchen Table Talk?** The subjects covered in each of the chapters are vast. You may or may not be an expert in these areas. We encourage you to invite people with expertise in the topics covered to be **resource people**, people that can be called on if there are questions about facts, history, the current state of policy, etc. When inviting resource people, make it clear that you do not expect them to make a presentation, but rather to answer questions that may emerge through the conversation and of course, to participate in the conversation!

#### Going for the Stars

If you want to attract lots of attention, find yourself a star – a radio/TV journalist, a TV/music star, your local Olympian – your imagination is the limit! Ask them to support a good cause and tell them about what we are doing. We can provide you with an official letter if you need it.

## 6. Process for your Kitchen Table Talk

**What will be the format/process of your conversation?** The space you choose, the time available for the conversation, the number of people you expect for the conversation and the number of policies/ sections/discussion papers you choose to discuss will all contribute to your decision about a format for your conversation. We draw on the rich practice of citizen engagement, dialogue and deliberation for Kitchen Table Talks. Below, we provide a very basic process that you can choose to follow, or you can explore your options using the list of resources on our website.

**Opening and closing with respect and thanksgiving.** We suggest that you bring the sacredness of food into your event by giving collective thanks for all the forces of nature that allow us to eat and prosper on this earth. It can be as simple as saying, “We give thanks to the sun, the earth, the water, the fish, the animals, the plants, the people and all beings whose existence and hard work makes it possible for us to eat.” Out of respect for the Indigenous peoples in the room, we suggest that you ask one of them (before the event, ideally) to open and close the Kitchen Table Talk.

### Checklist of materials

It is easy to forget to take materials to a meeting. You can make your own list starting with the following materials, which are always helpful:

- Flip chart paper
- Markers / pens
- Coloured cardboard
- Scissors
- Tape
- Sticky dots (for voting)

## 7. Recording and reporting

**How will you record the conversation?** In order for your conversation to contribute to the next version of the People’s Food Policy, you need to let us know the results of your conversation. Notes, audio, pictures, video - each require different materials and a different person to do them. Regardless of the way you record, you will need to:

- **Identify a recorder and find them the right equipment** BEFORE the Kitchen Table Talk.
- **Get consent** (a written way for people to say – *Yes – it’s OK for you to take pictures of me*) from all people in the room if you are doing anything more than taking notes.

### A Few Options for Recording your Kitchen Table Talk

- **Written notes:** This is the simplest and least intrusive way to record what happens during your Kitchen Table Talk. You will need to **identify one or more note takers BEFORE THE EVENT**. We have provided a **Reporting Template** (available on our website) that will be particularly useful for the conversation “Assessing a Piece of the People’s Food Policy Pie”.
- **Pictures:** We would love to see your pictures from your event! Upload your digital photos to our website along with names, location and ideally with some written notes on what you were talking about.
- **Audio:** This is a dying art in the age of easy videos, but it provides a much less intrusive way of recording word-for-word the conversations or stories of your Kitchen Table Talk. Digital recordings will make it easier to share with us – make it a Podcast. Audio recording may be the best way to record **food story circles**. Please edit your recording before submitting it to us.
- **Video:** Most people get shy in front of a video camera, so you will want to think about this option before going ahead. You may use your Kitchen Table Talk as a way of identifying people in your community that you would like to interview later, and capture their story and share this with us. Please edit your video before submitting it to us.

**Identify who will report/upload results to the PFPP:** Either yourself or the recorder will need to enter the results/comments or upload your audio/video recording. You may want to spend some time with one or more people going through the notes and summarizing the points you want to send us, especially if your event is large and has multiple small groups working on the same item.

## 8. Food

**To feed or not to feed...** Having food during your event is a great idea... and completely optional. You may choose to offer some coffee, juice and cookies. Or you could ask everyone to bring their favourite dish and make it a potluck. (Try a local food potluck!) It will be important to ask everyone to label their dish with all ingredients. You will also need dishes, cutlery and clean-up.

## 9. Money and Funding

Like so many projects, the People's Food Policy Project is being run on a shoestring thanks to the effort, time and resources provided by people across the country. **We have no money available for the Kitchen Table Talks**, but invite you to creatively fundraise the money you will need from your community. This can include asking community organizations to donate space, a grocery store to donate food and drink, a print shop to donate a few prints of your poster, your MP or MPP for discretionary funds... the possibilities are endless! By getting the support of these members of your community, you are also educating them about the project and about the food system.

### Questions/Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, contact:

- Your regional animator (list available at <http://peoplesfoodpolicy.ca/animators>).
- Amanda Sheedy at [peoplesfoodpolicy@gmail.com](mailto:peoplesfoodpolicy@gmail.com) or (514) 342-5291.



## Kitchen Table Talks to Choose From

The following outlines **three different types of Kitchen Table Talks**. Please note that these are offered as *guidelines* and you are welcome to adapt, change or start from scratch to create your own version of a Kitchen Table Talk!

### 1. Digging into Food Policy

#### Objectives and Context

The goal of these conversations is to engage people in talking about food, the food system and how our values are (or aren't) reflected in the food system. It will also help to inform people about the PFPP, our process, food sovereignty and food policy. We hope that people will get excited about making policy from the ground up!

#### Duration

30 minutes to 2 hours

#### Group Size

3-15 people

#### Materials / Tools

The following materials are provided as an **optional** starting point for conversations and are available on our website ([www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](http://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca)) for you to share with people ahead of time, or at the table:

- **The People's Food Policy** - a general pamphlet that describes the PFPP and our vision, and offers some appetizing questions to get a conversation going.
- **Stories of Food Sovereignty** – a series of seven pamphlets that tell people's stories about food from across Canada.
- **Pens, paper, markers and flip-chart paper** (depending on what you want to do during the session).

#### What to record

You may want to prepare flip chart paper with the following titles on the wall (where you or the note taker will capture ideas while people are talking):

- **Questions about food**
- **What we want in our food system**
- **What we don't want in our food system**
- **Values we want/don't want in our food system** (one page divided in two)
- **Other ideas**

#### Capture the 'Aha' Moments

Try to capture moments when there is a breakthrough in understanding, interesting moments in the conversation, or anything that differs from what you find in our pamphlets or other material.

Submit a brief written summary (one or two paragraphs) on our website along with photos of the event if you like. (For more details, see **Before you start.**)



## Leading the Activity

### 1. When everyone is seated, introduce the Kitchen Table Talk:

- Introduce the PFPP (use the first 2 pages of this guide).
- Tell everyone why you decided to host this event.
- What is the goal is for the conversation.
- Set some ground rules (see box).
- Specify that this is a conversation amongst citizens, not representatives of groups or organizations.

### 2. Start with an easy ice-breaker.

Use one of the following to do a go-round. Make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak.

- What is your name, and why did you accept the invitation to this event?
- What is your name, place of birth and favourite meal?
- What is your name, and your personal food policy (what are the rules you follow when buying food, e.g., I buy local food from my province and from small grocers when I can)?

### 3. Hand out the materials.

Give everyone 5 minutes to read the pamphlet and write down some reactions, ideas, examples, etc.

### 4. Open the discussion with one or two questions

- A possible first question: ‘What are your questions about food, where it comes from and how it is produced?’ (Capture these questions on a big piece of paper.)
- Consider the questions on the back of the pamphlet (see *Materials/Tools* above).
- Ask the group to choose a question to consider (either from the group or the back of the pamphlet). If there are 8 or more people, you may consider breaking into smaller groups that can each choose a different question.
- The conversation may flow from there, or it may need you to introduce questions (those already mentioned) if the conversation slows down.
- You can also use the pamphlet – Do you agree or disagree with something in the pamphlet? Why or why not? What do these ideas mean in your life?

#### Suggested Ground Rules

- Speak to ideas, not people.
- Don't cut others off.
- Keep your intervention brief to allow others space to speak.
- Listen and keep your mind open to other's ideas, especially if you disagree.
- Try to build on other's ideas; everyone's ideas and experience are equally valuable.

### 5. Leave 10 minutes at the end of the conversation, to reflect back

what you've heard and ask people to speak up if they disagree with anything you say.

### 6. Closing:

- Thank everyone for their participation.
- Invite them to host their own kitchen table talk and to continue the conversation with friends.
- Next steps: Encourage them to write letters or speak to their MPs, MPPs, etc. about the PFPP. Tell them that Canada needs a Federal Food Policy that reflects what the public wants (give them our pamphlet). Tell them that our website has more details on the letter writing campaign and sign up to receive updates.
- Remind them that their ideas will contribute to the next version of the People's Food Policy.
- Do a last go-around and ask people for feedback on the event.
- Closing Thanksgiving (see **Before you start**).



## 2. Assessing a Piece of the People's Food Policy Pie

### Objectives / Context

The goal of these conversations is to deepen and elaborate the People's Food Policy by speaking with a wide diversity of people. We want to know *your* opinion about the food policies we are proposing. These opinions will be incorporated as much as possible into the next version of the People's Food Policy. *We recommend that you do this with some institutional support (i.e.: your local community centre, food bank, business association, farmers' union, school, etc.).*

#### Duration

1-3 hours

#### Group Size

3-15 people

### Materials / Tools

The following materials are provided as a starting point for conversations and are available on our website ([www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](http://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca)) for you to print and share with people at the table:

- **Main Course Policy Proposals**– These policy proposals emerge straight from the People's Food Policy discussion papers, and will provide an easy starting place for a discussion.
- **Discussion Papers #1 - #10** – You may choose one of the following as the subject of your Kitchen Table Talk:
  - \* one or several papers,
  - \* one or several sections of these papers, or
  - \* one or a few policy recommendations.
- **Pens, paper, markers and flip-chart paper** (depending on what you want to do during the session)

### Preparation

See **Before You Start** for a more general guideline to prepare your Kitchen Table Talk.

- **Choose the discussion paper/section/policy/questions that you want to discuss.** There are 10 discussion papers that will eventually make up the People's Food Policy, each covering a wide range of topics (e.g., health and food). Are you and your community interested in one issue around food in particular (e.g.: how to keep young people interested in farming, OR, obesity in children, OR, collapsing fisheries)? Find the section of our policy that is most relevant to you and your community.
- **Decide on the format/process for the event.** Below we propose a very simple process, but there are a wide variety of ways for you to organize your Kitchen Table Talk (see resources listed on our website). Consider how many policies/sections you would like to cover, how many people you expect, how long your event is, etc. when choosing a process.
- **Circulate the above (policy, section, discussion paper, etc.) before the event.** Due to the complexity of these issues, it may be helpful for people to read the material ahead of time. You can refer them to a specific place on our website where they can find this material.



## What to record

Please use the People's Food Policy *Reporting Template*, available on our website. If you break the group into smaller groups and/or if you are talking about many different sections, you will want several copies of this template. **It is very important to capture which section of which discussion paper the comments are about.** Meet with your note taker(s) before the Kitchen Table Talk to go over the reporting template with them.

## Leading the Activity

### 1. When everyone is seated, introduce the Kitchen Table Talk:

- Introduce the PFPP (use the first 2 pages of this guide).
- Tell everyone why you decided to host this event.
- What is the goal is for the conversation.
- Set some ground rules (see box).
- Specify that this is a conversation amongst citizens, not representatives of groups or organizations.

### 2. Start with an easy ice-breaker. Use one of the following to do a go-round. Make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak.

- What is your name, and why did you accept the invitation to this event?
- What is your name, place of birth and favourite meal?
- What is your name, and your personal food policy (what are the rules you follow when buying food, e.g., I buy local food from my province and from small grocers when I can)?

### 3. Hand out the materials (if they have not circulated it ahead of time).

### 4. What do people want to talk about? Based on the material/policies you provided, brainstorm ideas for the conversation for no more than 10 minutes, then decide what the group will discuss:

- **If the group is 8 people or less** – make a decision together about what is most important to all of you and start there. You may get to the other issues later.
- **If the group is over 8 people** – Break the group down into smaller discussion groups. Brainstorm the different subjects/policies that people would like to discuss (write them down on paper on the wall so all can see). Name a key person for each subject and have people move to that person if they want to discuss that subject. For a more complex version of this process (where everyone gets to discuss every topic by rotating tables see [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)). Leave time at the end for each group to report back to the entire group (5 minutes per group).

### 5. Closing:

- Thank everyone for their participation.
- Invite them to host their own kitchen table talk and to continue the conversation with friends.
- Next steps: Encourage them to write letters or speak to their MPs, MPPs, etc. about the PFPP. Tell them that Canada needs a Federal Food Policy that reflects what the public wants (give them our pamphlet). Tell them that our website has more details on the letter writing campaign and sign up to receive updates.
- Remind them that their ideas will contribute to the next version of the People's Food Policy.
- Do a last go-around and ask people for feedback on the event.
- Closing Thanksgiving (see **Before you start**).

## 3. Host a Food Story Circle

### Objectives / Context

The People's Food Policy Project wants to hear your food stories! The goal of this Kitchen Table Talk is share our stories of struggle and success about food and the food system. We hope to learn from these stories and create food policy that responds to them. These stories will be used as a source of policy inspiration, to support our policy proposals and eventually to teach others why the policies we propose are needed.

**Duration**  
1-3 hours

Stories are a popular and fun way for us to communicate with each other. It's a technique that spans cultures and ages. Stories can be told by one or many people, with words, actions, or images. From our stories emerge themes that may bear importance for us as a community, as a society. Stories of struggle point to places where we may need to act collectively to change things. Stories of hope may point towards an inspiring response to struggles that others could learn from.

Story telling also provides a fun and creative way for us all to engage in policy development!

### Materials / Tools

- **Your own food story**
- **Optional: Stories of Food Sovereignty:** a series of pamphlets available on our website ([peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](http://peoplesfoodpolicy.ca))
- **Optional: A food video/film/documentary.** If this is the case, you will also need equipment to show the video (TV, DVD player, projector if it is in a big room, etc.)

### Preparation

See **Before You Start** for a more general guideline to prepare your Kitchen Table Talk.

- **Prepare your own food story.** Think about a food story in your own life that you want to share with others – a story of struggle, a story of hope, or a story of revelation (the moment when you realized something profound about our food system, that may have changed your behaviour, your analysis, or your life path).

OR

- **Choose a food video.** Watch the video ahead of time and jot down some questions to help start the conversation (i.e., What did you like/dislike about the film? What did you find difficult/shocking/exciting about the film?)
- **To record or not to record? How to record if you do record?** You may choose to hold a food story circle and not record anything, simply enjoying the richness of the moment! However, in order for these stories to contribute to the People's Food Policy Project, you will need to record these stories and upload them to our website. There are many innovative ways of capturing information! This might be a question that you raise at your Food Story Circle – How do we want to share our stories? (see **Before You Start** for more information).

## What to record

This will require some creative thinking. Are you going to directly record the stories by audio or video? Are you going to record the stories in writing and give them to us with pictures? Will a play-back theatre recount the stories after they are told that you can record? Do you want to later interview the story teller and create a little documentary/story? The options are endless, and depend on the audience and your goals for your story telling circle.

## Leading the Activity

Some of us come from a strong tradition of storytelling and will not need the following suggestions. We invite you to infuse your story circle with your own traditions, culture and creativity. A Food Story Circle can be big or small, at your home or in a community centre, with friends, family or community members.

### 1. When everyone is seated, introduce the Kitchen Table Talk:

- Introduce the PFPP (use the first 2 pages of this guide).
- Tell everyone why you decided to host this event.
- What is the goal is for the conversation.
- Set some ground rules (see box).
- Specify that this is a conversation amongst citizens, not representatives of groups or organizations.

**2. Start with an easy ice-breaker.** Use one of the following to do a go-round. Make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak.

- What is your name, and why did you accept the invitation to this event?
- What is your name, place of birth and favourite meal?
- What is your name, and your personal food policy (what are the rules you follow when buying food, e.g., I buy local food from my province and from small grocers when I can)?

**3. Tell your own food story.** It should be a personal story that is either a story of hope, of struggle and/or of revelation (an 'aha' moment when something clicked in your mind that changed your perception of food, the food system and your role in it). This story will set the tone for the entire story circle. **OR Show a food video.**

**4. Invite people to tell their stories of struggle, hope or revelation with the food system.** You may want to ask people to let the story come to them, not to search too hard with their minds. Don't be shy about letting the room fill with silence before someone decides to share. Be respectful of the stillness and the silence that gives birth to great ideas. **OR Have a conversation about the video.** This may happen naturally, or you may need to start it off with a few questions (see *Preparation* above). Depending on the film/video that you choose, you could also have people share their stories as above.

### 5. Closing:

- Thank everyone for their participation.
- Invite them to host their own kitchen table talk and to continue the conversation with friends.
- Next steps: Encourage them to write letters or speak to their MPs, MPPs, etc. about the PFPP. Tell them that Canada needs a Federal Food Policy that reflects what the public wants (give them our pamphlet). Tell them that our website has more details on the letter writing campaign and sign up to receive updates.
- Remind them that their ideas will contribute to the next version of the People's Food Policy.
- Do a last go-around and ask people for feedback on the event.
- Closing Thanksgiving (see **Before you start**).