

# ACRD System Change Project

## *Expanding the Influence of Regional Agricultural Support*

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Year 1 Report (June 2021 - June 2022)



The Alberni-Clayquot Regional District's (ACRD) 'System Change' project - *Expanding the Influence of Regional Agricultural Support* is a 3-year project with primary funding from the Vancouver Foundation. There are two project streams, one internal to the region, where we aim to strengthen our regional agri-food system, and one external, where we reach out across the Province to learn and engage with others. This project 'tests' out a few actions that may help contribute to systemic shifts in how agri-food systems are supported in BC.

Primary outcomes for the ACRD so far include:

- Improved structural connections with other organizations, producers, and governments within ACRD;
- An increase in amount of collaboration between our region's agri-food organizations;
- Improved structural connections and consistent engagement with the BC Ministry of Agriculture;
- Development of a network of regionally-based agricultural organizations (RAS) from across BC;
- Increased connection with other agricultural organizations and regional districts from across BC;
- Stronger linkages with Nuu-chah-nulth communities; better understanding of how to be a good ally.

Some next steps:

- A focus on technical extension and research support, through year 2 RAS network discussions
- Work towards permanency for ACRD agri-support programs, including the Council for Agricultural Water Supply or a similar table;
- Continue to work towards food sovereignty solutions, in partnership with Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and with Nuu-chah-nulth communities and as requested;
- Deepen engagement with District A Farmer's Institute and take a closer look at the role of Farmers Institutes and how they can be better supported;
- Host an in-person gathering to bring together partners and collaborators from across BC and with a focus on producer extension and research support;
- Continue to explore how to bridge agriculture and health perspectives, as relevant to regional production and regional food systems;
- Update agricultural info on ACRD website and communications channels.

*The ACRD's food system work is grounded on the traditional territories of Hupacasath First Nation, Tseshaht First Nation, Hesquiaht First Nation, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, Toquaht Nation, Ahousaht, Yuulu?il?ath, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Ditidaht, and Uchucklesaht First Nation. We offer gratitude for our uninvited presence here and the Nuu-chah-nulth's stewardship of these lands over time immemorial.*

“The ACRD’s System Change project sets out to test a regional model for food system and agricultural support. Strong regional structures will influence Provincial frameworks and ensure accommodation of the unique contextual realities of BC’s various geographical regions and producer populations.

By bridging and supporting local organizations, building a BC-wide network of other regionals-driven organizations, and engaging in targeted education and resource development, we will support change in the way producers, Indigenous stakeholders, and communities are supported within Province-wise agricultural frameworks, ensuring efficacy, long-term sectoral growth, and diverse cultural relevancy.”<sup>1</sup>

### Primary Activities and Results, Yr 1 (June 2021-June 2022)

Focus Area	Description and Successes
<p><b>Core Funding and Mentorship - within region</b></p>	<p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributed core funding to local agri-food organizations and governments:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberni Farmers’ Institute (AFI) - \$4000</li> <li>• Alberni District Fall Fair (ADFF) - \$4000</li> <li>• AVTTS Alberni Valley Food Security Group (AVFSG) - \$7500 (matching Island Health)</li> <li>• Eat West Coast (EWC) - \$7500 (matching Island Health)</li> <li>• Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) - \$2500</li> <li>• Tofino Community Food Initiative (TCFI) - \$4000</li> <li>• Hupacasath First Nation, Tseshaht First Nation, Hesquiaht First Nations, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, Toquaht Nation, Ahousaht, Yuułu?if?ath, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, Ditidaht, and Uchucklesaht Tribe - \$2000 each</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provided mentorship and support to help organizations to increase capacity and impacts</li> <li>• Sponsored an Agri-food Grant Writing Workshop, with 19 local attendees</li> </ul> <p><b>OUTCOMES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of the ‘Guide to Farm Stands in the Alberni Valley’ (ADFF);</li> <li>• Transition from contracted staff to permanent staff (CBT/EWC);</li> <li>• New jobs (bookkeepers, administrators, summer students, managers) EWC, TCFI, AVFSG</li> <li>• increased wages and skill set for managers/coordinators;</li> <li>• Restructuring and clarification of Board and organizational processes (TCFI, AVFSG)</li> <li>• Increased participation in ACRD’s networks and committees, with subsequent partnerships and collaboration evident in grant applications and programming (all)</li> <li>• Increases in other sources of long term/stable funding (TCFI, AVFSG)</li> <li>• Formalizing non-profit status (TCFI)</li> <li>• Strengthened donor and volunteer appreciation programs</li> <li>• Impact report generated (TCFI)</li> <li>• Distribution of honoraria for producer participation in ACRD committees (CBT, AFI)</li> <li>• Formally partnered with the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) to work towards food sovereignty solutions and support the reconnection and stewardship of the land and marine-based food systems</li> <li>• Engaged with the NTC’s new Food and Nutrition Sovereignty Network to allow opportunities to learn and hear food perspectives from the 14 Nuu-chah-nulth Nations</li> </ul>

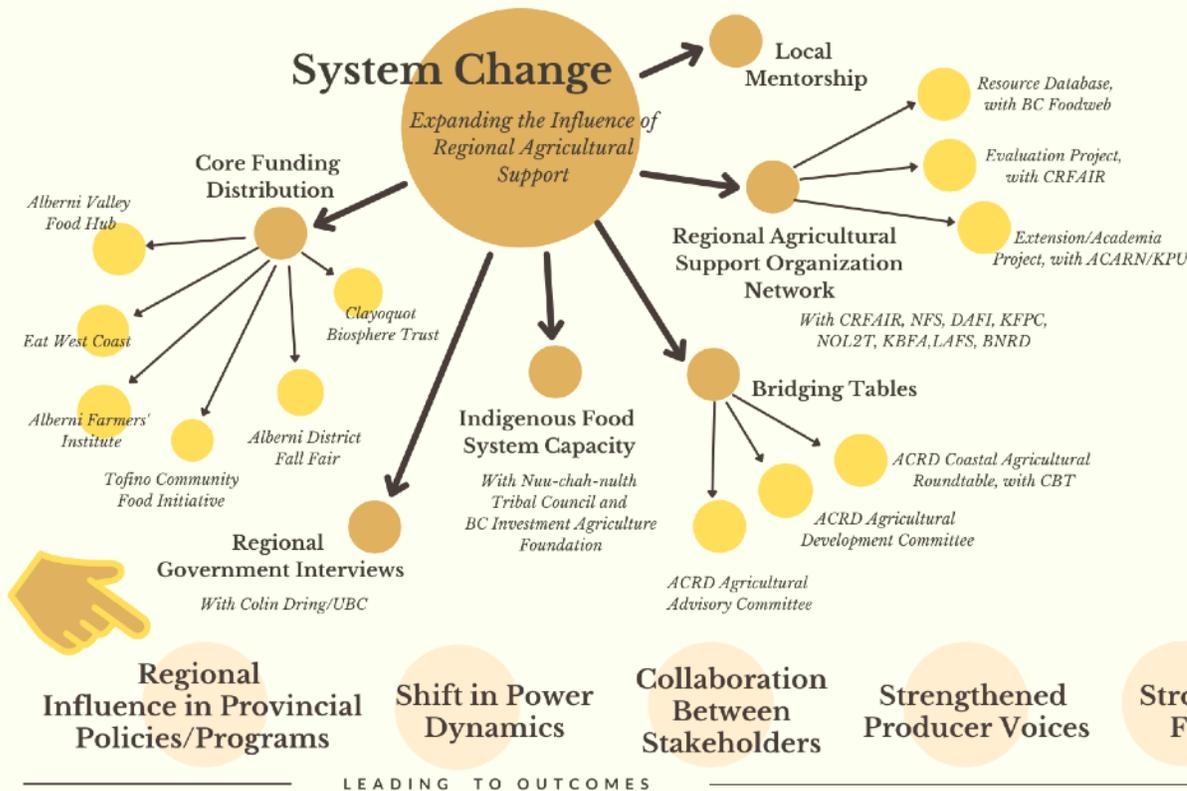
<sup>1</sup> System Change project’s public statement, 2021

<p><b>Engagement with organizations across BC</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established a 'Core 8' group of Regional Agricultural Support organizations (RAS) from across BC (Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society (LAFS), Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative (CRFAIR), Kootenay-Boundary Farm Advisors (KBFA), Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN), North Okanagan Land 2 Table Network (NOL2T), Kamloops Food Policy Council (KFPC), District A Farmers' Institute (DAFI), Nanaimo Foodshare (NFS)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distributed honoraria of \$250 to each Core 8 organization (increasing to \$750 in yr. 2)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Hosted 2 public conference calls and 2 Core 8 conference calls on the topic of evaluation, total of 47 participants and 33 organizations represented</li> <li>Hosted 1 public conference call with <a href="#">four presentations</a> on the topic of technical extension and research support - 29 participants, with 21 organizations represented</li> <li>Published a report "<a href="#">Demonstrating the Value of Regional Agricultural Support</a>" including 4 public tools to support RAS evaluation process</li> </ul>
<p><b>Regional Government Interviews</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged UBC PhD candidate Colin Dring to plan and undertake a series of interviews about agri-planning perspectives with representatives from 19 Regional Districts</li> <li>Presented findings via conference call and presentation; written report in progress</li> <li>Submitted a session proposal for a UBCM presentation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement w/ Province of BC</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MAFF staff visits to Alberni Valley: 3 (Regional Agrologist x 2, Agro-ecologist x1)</li> <li>Scheduled meetings with MAFF staff (phone or online): 5</li> <li>Number of times MAFF staff participated in ACRD agri-committee meetings: 4</li> <li>Meeting with MLA Osbourne (ADC, AAC &amp; AFI): 1</li> <li>Supportive correspondence on behalf of Minister of Health, Adrien Dix: 1</li> <li>Number of times MoH participated in agri-committee meetings: 8</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACRD's Internal Structures - Review/Adapt</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged Colin Dring to facilitated a multi-committee workshop and discussions to analyze and improve structures for ACRD's two Alberni Valley agri-committees (Agricultural Development Committee (ADC) and Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC better informed and involved in agri-planning activities and discussions</li> <li>AAC members explicitly invited to ADC meetings and cc'd with Minutes/Agendas</li> <li>More routine meetings between staff and agri-support coordinator</li> <li>Summary report drafted and shared internally and with ADC/AAC committees</li> </ul> </li> <li>Strengthened structures for Coastal Agricultural Roundtable, with co-host CBT</li> </ul>
<p><b>Honoraria and Increasing Equity in Participation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulation and distribution of the 'Our Home, Our Food, Our Resilience' Alberni-Clayoquot photo-book to committee members and other partners</li> <li>Alberni Valley producers to receive total of \$1250 in Honoraria for participation in meetings</li> <li>Participants in Coastal Agricultural Roundtable (CAR) offered participation honoraria as per Clayoquot Biosphere Trust's policy (via funding to CBT)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Partnerships and Collaborations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received additional funding from Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) to help bring Indigenous perspective to ACRD agricultural planning programs</li> <li>Assisted the AVFH to apply for a 2nd, 3rd, &amp; 4th round of their Food Box program (about \$14,000 worth of local produce, meat, grains, seafood distributed vulnerable hospital discharges and other food-insecure populations per round)</li> <li>Assisted Shelter Farm and AVFSG to successfully apply for a United Way grant</li> <li>Worked with Alberni Valley News to publish the 2022 West Coast Growers' Guide</li> <li>Wrote letters of support for a Tseshaht Food Sovereignty initiative, an Alberni District Fall Fair Covid recovery grant, and a Shelter Farm training program</li> <li>Supported development of partnership between INEO and Yuułu?i?ath, resulting in funding for a supervisor and employees at Yuułu?i?ath's community garden</li> <li>Shared grant information and convened stakeholders to develop partnership applications</li> </ul>

**Other ACRD Agri-planning Activities**

- Worked with TCFI to deliver ‘Growing Resilient Coastal Gardens’ (with funding from CBT)
  - In-person garden consultations at 7 coastal community gardens
  - 2 live virtual workshops, recordings posted online; resource sharing; and networking
  - Signage at each garden for visual reminder of shared goals and mutual support
- Partnered with North Island College, Shelter Farm, and Dock+ Food Processing Hub for a fully-funded Farm Worker Training Program and a Seafood Processing Training program
- Continued monitoring for True Armyworm via 11 pheromones traps across the Alberni Valley, with support from Ministry of Agriculture and a local youth.
- Created a virtual booth as part of the Alberni District Fall Fair
- Produced the 2021 Virtual Family Farms Day, adding 4 new videos to an online collection
- Launched ACRD Council for Agricultural Water Supply / Producer-Led Monitoring Project
- Assisted in connecting producers with technical extension and research support
- Made a total of 9 presentations and 2 press releases about the System Change project
- Shared agricultural information and opportunities with public and producers via [email](#), website, newspaper, and [social media](#) channels; response to inquiries

PROGRAM



ACRD - Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District  
 CREAIR - Capital Region Food And Agriculture Initiative Roundtable  
 ACARN - BC Agricultural Climate Adaptation Research Network  
 KPU - Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
 NFS - Nanaimo Foodshare  
 DAFI - District A Farmers' Institute  
 KFPC - Kamloops Food Policy Council  
 NOL2T - North Okanagan Land to Table Network  
 KBFA - Kootenay-Boundary Farm Advisors Program  
 LAFS - Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society  
 RDBN - Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako  
 CBT - Clayoquot Biosphere Trust  
 UBC - University of British Columbia

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 Indigenous engagement funding by

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 IAF PARTNERSHIP Canada

Gratitude to the many organizations involved in this work over the past year, including: Ahousaht, Alberni-Clayoquot Health Network; Alberni District Fall Fair; Alberni Farmers' Institute; Alberni Valley Food Security Group; Alberni Valley News; BC Agricultural Climate Adaptation Research Network; BC Cooperative Association; BC Food Web; BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food; BC Ministry of Health; Capital Regional District; Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative Roundtable; Center for Seafood Innovation; City of Port Alberni; Clayoquot Biosphere Trust; Climate Adaptation Initiative; Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot; Comox Valley Regional District; Country Life in BC; Danford Consulting Department of Fisheries and Oceans; District A Farmers' Institute; District of Saanich; District of Tofino; District of Ucluelet; Ditidaht; Dock+ Food Processing Hub; Eat West Coast; Hesquiaht First Nations; Hupacasath First Nation; Huu-ay-aht First Nation; INEO Employment Services; Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC; Institute of Sustainable Food Systems; Island Health; Kamloops Food Policy Council; Keefer Ecological; Kootenay-Boundary Farm Advisors; Kwantlen Polytechnic University; Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society; Maaqutsiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society; Ministry of Agriculture and Food; Ministry of Health; Nanaimo Food Share; North Island College; North Okanagan Land to Table Network; Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council; Tseshaht First Nation; Qathet Regional District; Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako; Regional District of East-Kootenay; Regional District of Nanaimo; Richmond Sharing Farm; School District 70; Shaw Spotlight; Shelter Farm; Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations; Tofino Community Food Initiative; Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild; Toquaht Nation; Tropospheric Measurement Systems; Uchucklesaht Tribe Government; Ucluelet Local Food Society; University of British Columbia; University of the Fraser Valley; Young Agrarians; Yuułu?if?ath; various organizations, governments, and staff from within the ACRD; individual agri-food producers and processors; and others.



# van<sup>∞</sup>ouver foundation

