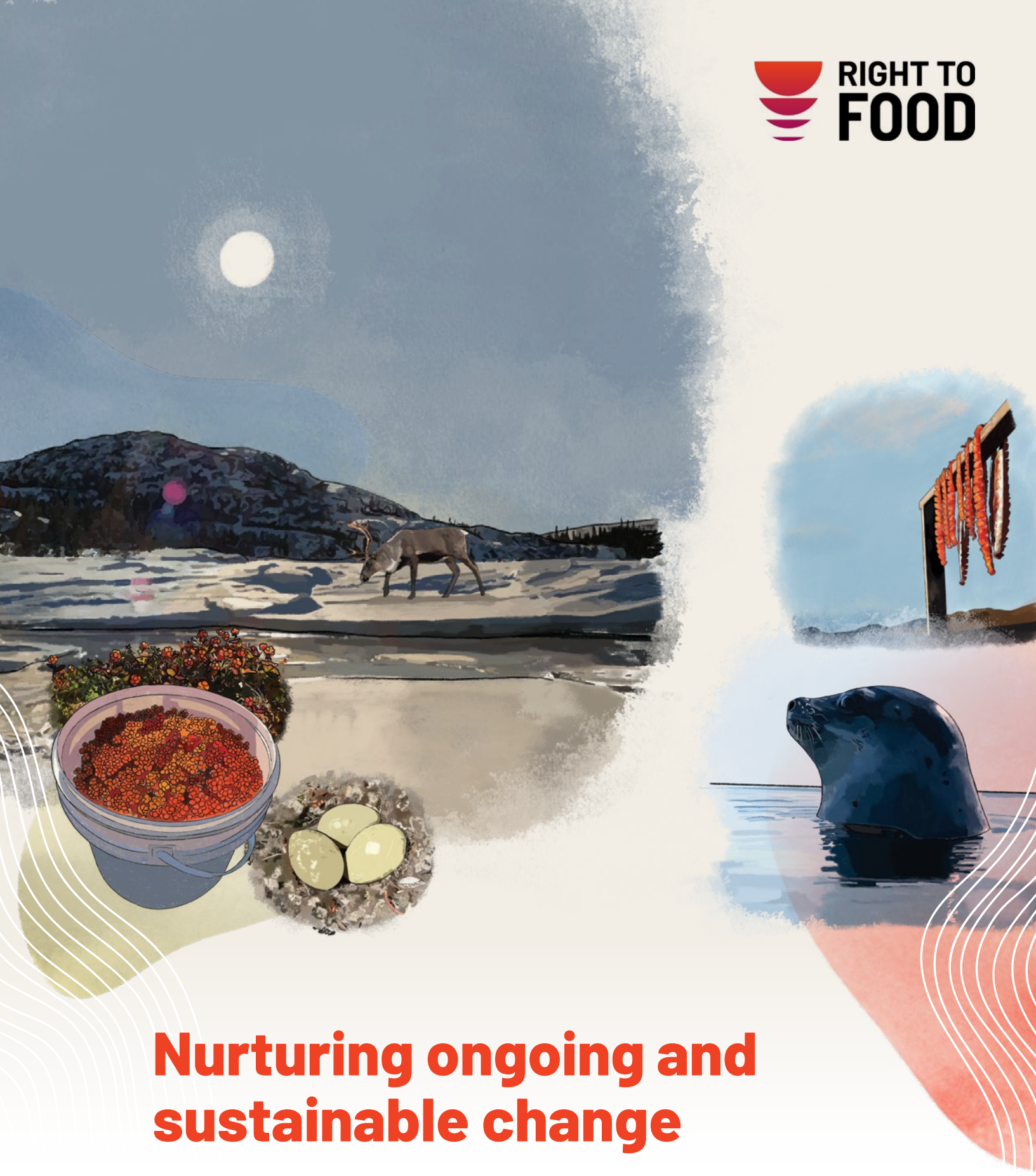
RIGHT TO FOOD



Nurturing ongoing and sustainable change

Right To Food's Reconciliation Action Plan

(Created November 2024)

Illustrations by Erica Jacque

As we present this Reconciliation Action Plan, we are honored to feature the work of Erica Jacque, an Inuk artist whose creative spirit deeply enriches our journey. Hailing from Postville, Nunatsiavut, and now rooted in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Erica weaves together a vibrant tapestry of mediums—from acrylic and watercolor painting and digital illustration to intricate jewelry and the deeply traditional practice of stick and poke tattooing.

Her art goes beyond the aesthetic; it serves as a profound acknowledgment of our vital partnership with the Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre in Iqaluit, Nunavut. We are deeply grateful to showcase her unique vision, which lends both beauty and cultural depth to this plan, while also honoring Inuit Nunangat and one of our four Indigenous-led Community Food Centre partners.

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Introduction

Right To Food (formerly Community Food Centres Canada) is an independent, registered charity with a vision "where the right to food is realized for all and where every community has a place for food that nurtures health and well-being, belonging, and social justice" and a mission to "resource and strengthen the community food sector and mobilize with our partners for progressive policy change."

We operate and partner with food organizations from coast to coast to coast, which are the lands of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis who have been and continue to be in a reciprocal relationship with the lands, waters, and all beings. This relationship has been embedded in gratitude and respect since time immemorial. The national office of Right To Food is in Toronto, on the territory of the Wendat, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas of the Credit. It is now also home to many Indigenous Peoples.

Together with our partners, Right To Food strives to build inclusive, culturally responsive Community Food Centres, share knowledge and convene the community food sector through the Good Food Organization program, create health-focused programs, and advocate for equitable policy change.

Right To Food operates within a system shaped by the impacts of colonization, including genocide, displacement, resource extraction, food insecurity, and the perpetuation of racist norms. As an organization, Right To Food acknowledges its place within this system and is committed to fostering reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities. By challenging these harmful structures, Right To Food seeks to support the restoration of relationships and balance on these lands through collaborative efforts towards a future rooted in solidarity.

All individuals residing today on Turtle Island share a collective history, shaped by Canada's past actions. Despite the ongoing impacts of colonization, Indigenous Peoples continue to lead in the reclamation of food sovereignty and cultural food practices, and advocacy in the efforts of protecting these. Right To Food upholds the belief that access to food is a fundamental human right and acknowledges the systemic barriers that persist in challenging this fundamental right.

"Indigenous peoples are at the forefront of addressing food insecurity and promoting health within their communities and Right To Food is fortunate to be an ally in this effort."

"There has been a ban on hunting the George River caribou herd in Labrador due to the steep decline in their population.This illustration conveys the hope that the caribou population can return to what it once was, for the sake of the animal, and also for the preservation of harvesting culture and traditions."

–ERICA J.

Right To Food's history with reconciliation

Since committing to a focused approach with Indigenous Peoples in 2016, Right To Food has recognized that there is no right way, only way, or pre-defined path forward.

At times, as the organization entered into relationships and program partnerships, there were fears and intimidation around making mistakes. Every relationship—from partnering to building a Community Food Centre in Turnor Lake & Birch Narrows, to Right To Food funding a flagship program in an Indigenous community—has been a unique journey that required time, resources, and sustained effort with space for Indigenous Peoples to lead in a strengths-based approach.

It is crucial to acknowledge the truth: Right To Food's organizational objectives and values were not initially formulated with sufficient consideration for Indigenous perspectives.

In the process of learning and unlearning, Right To Food acknowledges the importance of being a respectful partner, a process the organization continues to navigate alongside Indigenous Peoples and communities.

As Right To Food continues to partner with Indigenous organizations, we want to ensure that we are working in a collaborative, reciprocal, and reconciliatory manner.

In recent years, Right To Food has committed to implementing an interactive and iterative process to ensure core organization changes—including communications and strategic plans—have been in consultation with and informed by Indigenous partners. Right To Food has done this by listening, learning, and embracing the principles of self-determination and drawing on the strengths of Indigenous Peoples and communities.

The journey of building relationships has been instructive, requiring Right To Food to slow down and adopt an iterative process of implementation. Not all interactions have been successful, and mistakes have been made along the way. While Right To Food's efforts in recent years may not have been formally termed a "reconciliation action plan," the organization has begun the work and learning, and remains committed to building upon past learnings and achievements.

This new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) exists because the organization believed it was critical to document how a settler-led organization is working with and plans to continue working with Indigenous Peoples and partners. The RAP is Right To Food's commitment to approaching work with Indigenous Peoples in a way that is inclusive of Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing and doing.

Right To Food's RAP is also a commitment to be transparent with all partners, collaborators, stakeholders, and funders. It has been developed to map and guide actions that Right To Food can take from 2024 to 2026 and beyond to pursue truth, reconciliation, and justice while aligning with the goals of our partners: the Indigenous-led and Indigenous-serving community food organizations that Right To Food works with.

"The RAP is Right To Food's commitment to approaching work with Indigenous Peoples in a way that is inclusive of Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing and doing."

The Reconciliation Action Plan process

The RAP has been developed to address a priority identified in Right To Food's EIRA (Equity, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Anti-oppression, Anti-racism, and Accessibility) strategic framework:

INSIGHT B:

It will be important for Right To Food's E & I strategy to be connected to our new Reconciliation Approach and Action Plan.

A consultant was hired, and prior to creating the RAP, an assessment was conducted, resulting in a preliminary report titled: *Relational principles and Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP): A commitment towards working with Indigenous Peoples.* This report contains:

- an external organizational assessment
- a reflection on Right To Food's engagement strategies
- recommendations and considerations to implement a Reconciliation Action Plan from 2024 to 2026.

A working group was established to work with the consultant and to develop the RAP from the recommendations that came from the initial assessment. This document is the result of a collaborative process that we embarked on from August 2023 to November 2024. It has been informed through Right To Food staff, Indigenous partners, and external collaborators.

"This is a bucket full of juicy, ripe aqpiit, or cloudberries. Aqpiit are often difficult to get, as they grow in marshy areas and are picked in the hot summer months, making them an especially sweet and tart treat. This illustration is to convey gratitude for how bountiful the land can be, and how it provides everything we need–even dessert"

–ERICA J.

Framing of the Reconciliation Action Plan

The RAP is a living document that will continue to grow and evolve. It is not a set of deliverables to be used as a checklist. Rather, the document represents a commitment to continued learning, an accountability to action, and a guide to moving us forward in this work.

Right To Food will use both external and internal principles to infuse the recommendations and themes of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

EXTERNAL SOURCES THAT GROUND OUR WORK

Right To Food roots our RAP in pre-existing engagement work completed by **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**, **The right to food and Indigenous Peoples** (by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (#92)**, and further situated within **Resetting the table: A people's food policy for Canada**.

The central themes that will guide our relationship with Indigenous Peoples and align with UNDRIP include:

- the right to self-determination
- the right to be recognized as distinct peoples
- the right to free, prior, and informed consent
- the right to be free from discrimination.

Alongside these themes, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (CTAs are tools that have guided our efforts and will continue to guide us at every level. Given that Right To Food works with all Indigenous Peoples—including First Nation, Inuit, and Métis—we affirm that actions around reconciliation must be distinctions based, wherever and whenever possible.

Specifically, our actions will contribute to CTA 92—and expand into CTAs 18 and 19—as further outlined in the recommendations below:

> CTA 92: We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:
>
> i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
>
> ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
>
> iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*,Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015)

We are committed to practicing truth and transparency with all partners, collaborators, stakeholders, and funders.

All of the above are examples of reports that advocate for relationships rooted in Indigenous food sovereignty and contain recommendations that are directed by Indigenous peoples.

KEY INTERNAL SOURCES THAT INTERSECT WITH AND GUIDE THE RAP

In 2023, Right To Food developed an EIRA strategic framework. The EIRA framework includes a commitment towards the development of the RAP.

The EIRA strategic framework specifically states:

- INSIGHT B: "It will be important for Right To Food's E&I strategy to be connected to our new Reconciliation Approach and Action Plan."
- "Centring an anti-racist/anti-oppressive, intersectional and reconciliation lens to our E & I strategy" (as one of several focus areas).

Right To Food upholds that as it continues to engage with Indigenous partners, the organization must ensure that the work is collaborative, reciprocal, and carried out in a reconciliatory manner with these organizations and communities.

Informed by the EIRA strategic framework, Right To Food's strategic plan for 2024-2027 affirms the organization's commitment to fully integrating the RAP recommendations into our ways of working, including our strategies, activities, policies, and procedures.

Our strategic plan specifically speaks to:

- our values: Equity, Integrity, Relationship-focused, and Courage
- **Strategic priority 4: Maximize Organizational Strength**
  - **M01:** EIRA framework is deeply integrated through all our strategies and activities, including: recruitment, onboarding, decision making, consistent data, evaluation/KPIs, tailored training, responsive policies, collaborative staff engagement, regular reporting, and audits.
  - **M02:** Reconciliation approach and action plan recommendations are fully integrated into our ways of working, including strategies, activities, policies, and procedures.
- In addition to the existing frameworks and plans, the RAP will intersect with **Right To Food's Good Food Principles** and *How We Work in Partnership with Indigenous-led and Serving Organizations* .

THESE PRINCIPLES WILL ALSO INFORM THE RAP:

Community-driven relationship: To be in a relationship when you are asked and invited.

With truth and transparency: Strive towards trust based relationships where there is clarity and a full understanding of Right To Food's role.

Committing to a distinctions based approach: Recognizing the unique culture, territory, history, strengths working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and partners based on their terms.

Based upon reciprocity: Avoiding transactional relationships (funder/fundee) and prioritizing reciprocal partnerships.

Focused on deepening relationships: The relationships we develop with Indigenous partners are nurtured and long lasting.

The Reconciliation Action Plan

THEME ONE: RENEWING COMMITMENT

"This is a young harp seal surfacing for a quick breath. Seals are very plentiful back home and are a main source of wild meat. In Inuit culture it's tradition to use every part of the animal as a sign of respect, and seals provide foundational components of Inuit cultural practices."

–ERICA J.

ACTION 1:

Establishing a Foundation for Reconciliation

Recommendation 1.1:

Root and inform Right To Food's reconciliation framework through pre-existing engagement work done via **UNDRIP**, **The Right to Food and Indigenous Peoples**, the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action** (#92), and specifically from **Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada's working group**.

Work with the external and internal sources noted above to embed the RAP actions into all operational and strategic initiatives of the organization.

ACTION 2:

Fostering Equitable Partnerships and Engagement

Recommendation 2.1:

Develop communication guidelines on how Right To Food communicates about its work with Indigenous partners. This is to ensure respectful and accurate representation of Indigenous partners across all Right To Food communication channels and platforms.

Recommendation 2.2:

Challenge power dynamics in granting through respectful relationships and flexible practices.

Recommendation 2.3:

Support the Indigenous network and Indigenous-led and serving CFCs and GFOs in advocacy efforts for equitable policy change.

The Reconciliation Action Plan

THEME TWO:

STRENGTHENING INTERNAL CAPACITY

ACTION 3:

Committing to Ongoing Learning and Training

Recommendation 3.1:

Develop an onboarding and internal staff training process to maintain a foundational understanding of Right To Food's commitment to reconciliation.

ACTION 4:

Integrating Reconciliation into the new 340 Gerrard Site

Recommendation 4.1:

Engage with Indigenous communities in the downtown-east (DTE) and conduct community engagement to include diverse Indigenous perspectives in 340 Gerrard programs and partnerships.

Recommendation 4.2

Incorporate key Indigenous cultural elements into the practices and operations of 340 Gerrard.

Pitsik – hanging dried fish – is one of my favorite things to illustrate. I love the delicious reds and oranges of the salty sections of dried meat. I think Pitsik is a wonderful example of how Inuit adapted to their environment, and also thrived. Since it's my favorite to draw and to eat, I included it.

–ERICA J.

The Reconciliation Action Plan

THEME THREE:
NURTURING SUSTAINABLE LIFE CYCLES

ACTION 5:
Enhancing HR Policies and Processes

Recommendation 5.1:

Ensure Indigenous Peoples are represented among Right To Food staffing, leadership, and programming, with support and retention processes in place.

ACTION 6:
Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms

Recommendation 6.1:

Deepen engagement with Indigenous Peoples by embedding the RAP framework into Right To Food areas of programming and partner engagement by creating brave and vulnerable spaces to learn and grow together.

ACTION 7:
Upholding Data Sovereignty

Recommendation 7.1:

Affirm Right To Food's commitment towards Indigenous data sovereignty by co-creating metrics (and processes by which these metrics will be gathered and measured) with Indigenous partners for every project.

"These are eider duck eggs in their cozy feather nests. They're best to gather in early June back home in Nunatsiavut (Labrador), and are delicious when boiled and topped with butter and a pinch of salt. It's important to be respectful of the land and animals when going "egging" so as not to discourage further laying by the ducks. There are rules for how many to pick when there are a certain number of eggs, and when to leave a nest alone when there are too many. This illustration conveys appreciation to the delicate balance between harvesting carelessly and ,fdcharvesting sustainably and respectfully.

–ERICA J.

RIGHT TO FOOD

STAY CONNECTED

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