

An illustration of a dining table with various dishes, hands holding plates, and food containers. The table is set with a white plate of rice and vegetables, a bowl of soup, a plate of chicken, a plate of rice and meat, a plate of bread and fruit, a plate of rice and meat, and a plate of rice and meat. There are also several bowls of soup and a glass of water. The background is a light wood-grain pattern.

Transforming School Food Politics around the World

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Discussion and Activity Guide

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for anyone who reads the open-access book [*Transforming School Food Politics around the World*](#) or portions thereof. We have included discussion questions, activities, and further resources for each chapter of the book. These materials were created with an adult audience in mind (specifically a college class or practitioner book club), but they can be adapted for different education levels and stakeholder needs. Please feel free to use the resources in this guide as designed or make them entirely your own through creative reimagining!

How should I use the guide?

Use your imagination, your group's goals, composition, and time to decide how best to engage in discussion questions or classroom/book club activities. For example, you may be using this guide for a large college course, or you may be a small group to begin with, so breaking into smaller groups may or may not be necessary. We're curious to learn how you're using it and what works/doesn't work, so please drop us a line! If we're available, we would be happy to schedule a Zoom call with your class or group.

What overarching questions might I return to throughout the book?

While each chapter has discussion questions, activities, and further resources that are specific to the topical and theoretical emphasis of the chapter, some users of this guide may wish to have overarching questions that they can return to across the collection. The three questions we suggest are:

1. Who feeds whom, what, how, and for what purpose?
 - a. This question is helpful for articulating the overall features and underlying priorities of a school food program or system.
2. Where do you observe policy protagonism in action within this chapter?
 - a. This question is helpful for focusing attention on the key stakeholders, their collective agency, and the strategies they use.
3. How does this chapter help us better understand the relationship between school food and care?
 - a. This question is helpful for highlighting care work, care-centered politics, and care infrastructure in relation to public food programs.

How can I contribute or give feedback?

This discussion and activity guide is a living document. We also created a [Google slideshow](#) that includes additional photos from the book's contributors. We'd love your suggestions and additions to both resources. This could be related to the countries we cover in the book or new content related to countries that enhance our understanding of school food politics around the world.

How can I reach the editors?

We can be reached at (Jennifer Gaddis: jgaddis@wisc.edu; Sarah Robert: sarah@buffalo.edu).

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FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION

Discussion Questions

1. What interests you about school food systems? Where do you see “politics” play out within your local or national school food system? Which of these examples of school food politics are particularly hot topics in your country?
2. The images on the cover are based on photos of actual school meals from around the world. Do you recognize any of them? Do they reflect culturally relevant food or locally produced food from your community or region? What food item or meal is emblematic of school meals in your community? Share your reflections.
3. As highlighted in the foreword, this collection draws connections between school food systems and social reproduction by discussing care work, and the gendering of who does the majority of care work globally especially food-related care work. In what ways, if at all, might transforming school food politics disrupt the privatization and gendering of social reproduction? What would a “care-full” school food system look like in your view? What sort of transformation of the current system would be required to get there?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Individually or in small groups, take a few minutes to reflect on your memories about school lunch. Describe the setting and experience from your role in that school food setting - sights, sounds, smells, and people that you interacted with; how you feel/what feelings you have.
 - a. Additional questions to consider if you are describing your experience as a student: Who do you interact with? Who made the food? Where was it made and how was it served to you? What was it? Who offered you assistance if you needed it? Was your experience positive or negative and how so? How were you involved?
 - b. When was this experience that you described? Where did it take place? Be specific! Has school food changed since your experience? How do you know that?
2. Select [one of the infographics](#) from the Global Child Nutrition Survey to examine in detail.
 - a. Which infographic did you choose and why?
 - b. How does it relate to your experience of school food?
3. Select a level or scale of school food systems and answer as many of the following questions as you can: who feeds whom? what? how? when? for what purpose? Share your answers.
 - a. Discuss similarities/differences in your responses, what you know / don't know (the questions you left unanswered), and whether your answers would be different if you were answering from a different stakeholder position in the school food system.

Further Resources

1. An [opinion piece](#) in The Guardian that summarizes the main points of this collection for the US audience.
2. The UN World Food Programme's report, [The State of School Feeding Worldwide 2022](#).
3. BBC's The Food Programme, [The Fight to Improve School Food in 2024](#).
4. A [webinar](#) from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization on sustainable procurement for nutritious school food.
5. The book [School Food, Equity and Social Justice Critical Reflections and Perspectives](#), which examines policies and practices related to food in schools across 25 countries.

1. A WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO SCHOOL FOOD POLICY IN JAPAN

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think food education (*shokuiku*) is a priority in Japan?
2. This chapter argues that school food is a powerful way to unite communities. Identify and discuss 2-3 examples from the chapter that provide evidence for this argument.
3. This collection talks about care work, and the gender gap in who does most of the care work globally, especially food-related care work. In what ways, if at all, might the Japanese approach of having students of all genders serve and clean up school lunch by themselves disrupt this dynamic?
4. Imagine you are planning a school lunch menu to introduce your own country's (or community's) traditional foods to the Japanese students and their families. What would you include? Why?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Divide the students or book club members into pairs or groups. Assign each group one of the seven objectives of the Revised School Lunch Act (pp. 10-11). Ask them to identify one way that this objective is already or could be enacted within their own country. Have them take turns sharing with the whole class the local application of their assigned school lunch objective.
2. Japanese children are taught food literacy and respect for the labor (and nature) involved in food preparation. What do you know about your food and the people who produce it? In small groups, brainstorm all the people involved in the production of a piece of fruit. What do they know about that piece of fruit (i.e., country of origin; when, how, and by whom it was grown and harvested; the shipping and distribution route; carbon impact; nutritional value)?
3. Make a monthly school lunch letter for the parents/caregivers of children in your community. Start by thinking about which topics you want to share with them and why.
4. Arrange a cooking lesson or classroom tasting with seasonal ingredients.

Further Resources

1. [Nourishing Japan](#), a film produced and directed by chapter coauthor Alexis Agliano Sanborn.
2. Dr. Katsura Omori's videos on the Japanese school lunch program: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), and [Part 3](#).
3. Short [video slideshow](#) on food education activities based on Japanese school practices.
4. A wide variety of informative text and images in the document "[The Japan that Japanese don't know: School lunch program](#)."

2. CENTERING CHILDREN, HEALTH, AND JUSTICE IN CANADIAN SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS

Discussion Questions

1. This chapter argues that children, health, and justice should be the key priorities of a national school food program in Canada. How, if at all, do these priorities map onto your country or local experience? Would you choose the same three priorities? Why or why not?
2. This chapter emphasizes that children are competent social actors who need to be taken seriously as key stakeholders within school food systems. What are some examples from the text or from your experience of children being respected as both receivers and givers of care within school food programs?
3. The version of health and well-being advocated by the authors of this chapter warns against the potential of nutrient-based standards being co-opted by manufacturers who design ultra-processed heat-and-serve items for the school food market. How do the Indigenous notions of health and well-being and the environmental health perspectives they incorporate into their holistic approach to “health” guard against such co-optation?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Watch one or more of the [short videos](#) Dr. Rachel Engler-Stringer's research team created in 2022 on the organization and characteristics of school food programs from exemplary countries - [Finland](#), [Japan](#), and [France](#).
 - a. Can you find examples of the chapter author's three school food system design priorities (i.e., centering children, health, and justice) in the short films?
2. Read the executive summary of [this 2023 report](#) on the economic rationale for investing in Canadian school meal programs. Using this framework as a guide, develop an economic rationale for strengthening school food programs in your community, state, or country.
 - a. Craft 3-5 brief sentences to summarize your rationale that you could pitch to a journalist or curious person or neighbor or fellow school food worker.
3. View the infographics in “[The Conversation article Beyond the cafeteria: The economic case for investing in school meals](#)”. Draw or use digital tools to create your own infographics to communicate the systems-wide benefits of the changes you'd like to see within your own school food programs.

Further Resources

1. The webinar series "[School Food Programs Around the World: Lessons for Canada](#).”
2. The 2024 article “[Opportunities and challenges for school food programs in Canada Lessons from the United States](#).”
3. The [youth corner](#) on the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's School Food Global Hub website.
4. This [article](#) describes how photovoice, a qualitative visual methodology, can be used to engage youth participants through photo-taking, with goals of enabling reflection, promoting dialogue, and facilitating school food systems change.

3. SCHOOL FOOD POLITICS, IDENTITY, AND INDIGENEITY IN THE PERUVIAN AMAZON

Discussion Questions

1. What are the pros and cons of extending *Qali Warma* into Amazonian Indigenous communities? Be clear about for whom those pros/cons might be attributed.
2. This chapter argues that school food politics are complicated by broader historical dynamics of inequality and that marginalized communities define and assert their values, identities, and dignity when navigating “the frontier of resistance and appropriation of colonial state programs.” Identify and discuss 2-3 examples from the chapter that provide evidence for this argument.
3. In Peruvian Amazon communities, mostly mothers are expected to volunteer their time and labor to prepare, serve, and clean up the school kitchen and cafeteria. How does this reflect or contradict expectations of who performs food and care work in your own country?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Review this map of [Indigenous Communities Around the World](#) or pull from a locally produced map. Is your community represented? Or what Indigenous Communities’ land is your school on or near? Can you share 2-3 foods or meals from your community or find reliable sources for learning about 2-3 foods or meals from a nearby Indigenous Community?
2. Food and sharing meals convey values, identities, and knowledge like in the Maijuna and Napuruna communities. Look at a school menu from your community and find out how long school meals are and how they are experienced. What and whose values, identities, and knowledge are represented? If time allows, create a visual representation of what your group finds.
3. This chapter shares multiple examples of both Maijuna and Napuruna mothers’ suspicion of canned tuna sent to their community. Can you identify and find images or media of an iconic item from your school meals that has raised suspicion? Share and discuss why especially in relation to local or culturally relevant foods.
4. In this book, we argue that transformation of school food programs requires a diversity of stakeholders at the table, defining the “problems” that school food should address. Draw a table of the Qali Warma program and include stakeholders. Share out your drawings to the whole group or in smaller groups and compare. How does this chapter change your perspectives on how policy “works”?

Further Resources

1. The 2024 book [Recovering Our Ancestral Foodways Indigenous Traditions as a Recipe for Living Well](#), which focuses on Quechua and Māori peoples.
2. The World Food Programme’s 2022 report, [The State of School Feeding in Latin America and the Caribbean](#).
3. [Qali Warma: Vals amazónico](#), a Peruvian government-produced song about Qali Warma labor.

4. SUSTAINABLE FOOD EDUCATION IN FINNISH SCHOOLS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PEDAGOGY

Discussion Questions

1. How would you define “food education”? What essential knowledge and skills do you think food education in schools should help build?
2. What do you think could be some of the benefits and challenges for collaboration between teachers and school food staff in schools to promote sustainable eating?
 - a. What collaborations exist in your school community or might be developed to incorporate sustainable food education between teachers of different school subjects (e.g., home economics, biology, physical education, environmental education or other) or different education workers (e.g., support staff, paraprofessionals)?
3. What are some of the benefits and challenges of implementing participatory work with students as a part of food education in schools?
 - a. What kind of skills and/or support do you think students would need?
 - b. What would be the key roles and responsibilities of the professional group that you most identify with?
4. What kinds of tools and support do you think that different professionals in schools would need for implementing sustainable food education in collaboration with each other?
 - a. Do you think that the tools and examples offered in the chapter are helpful and realistic to implement in practice? Why/why not?
 - b. What would be needed for achieving long-lasting change on the school level? Do you think the approaches and tools described in the chapter are helpful for achieving transformative change to school food? Why/why not?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Design a collaborative and participatory teaching unit for sustainable food education (e.g., teaching plan for one class, one course, or a combined activity across different class levels) by using the examples provided in the chapter as support and inspiration.
 - a. Identify which school subject/s the plan connects with (e.g., home economics, biology, physical education, environmental education), and how your pedagogical plan aligns with the National core curriculum (and/or school level curriculum) in your country.
 - b. Clarify whether you focus on individual or collective learning outcomes, or both; how the evaluation of learning outcomes will be measured; and what roles different actors (e.g., teacher, students) will have at different stages of the learning process.
 - c. Include justifications or responses to the question of why the plan is suitable for the chosen age group/school class level of students.
2. Brainstorm ideas for how to strengthen communication and buy-in among the different stakeholders involved in the process of collaborative pedagogy for sustainable food education. What workplace recommendations (or policies!) might you put it into place? How might you go about collaboratively developing those buy-in models?

Further Resources

1. The general description of the [Finnish National core curriculum](#) for primary and lower secondary (including description of home economics education).
2. A short [video](#) about the Finnish school lunch program.
3. The 2022 article [Exploring Sustainable Food Education as Multi-professional Collaboration between Home Economics and School Food Catering](#).

5. REBEL VENTURES AND YOUTH-LED FOOD INITIATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES

Discussion Questions

1. Identify a time when you were a young adult (or child) and did not feel heard at school and/or within other institutional systems of authority. How did this make you feel? If your voice had been heard, what ideas would you have implemented?
2. This chapter was written from the perspective of a US high school student who was a youth leader in Rebel Ventures. How, if at all, did her positionality and first-hand perspective make the story feel different to you than if it had been narrated by a neutral third-party adult?
3. Why do you think so few young people in the US engage in school food activism? What do you think are the most promising strategies for youth to shape their school food systems?
 - a. If reading beyond the US, are young people organizing for school food transformation? Which young people? How so?
4. Discuss the importance of including youth voice in governmental decision making. What systems beyond school food should “youth power” (see pp. 101-102) influence?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Research and summarize different examples of youth-led social change movements in your country related to food and/or education.
 - a. Compare and contrast the strategies used in these youth-led movements with Rebel Ventures' articulation of “youth power” (see pp. 101-102).
2. In small groups, design your own school food product using the nutritional guidelines, funding parameters, and sourcing requirements of the program operating in your community (or in a community you select). Groups take turns sharing their ideas and soliciting feedback.
3. Working in small groups, identify an issue you hear people talk about at your school (e.g., student behavior, academic achievement, teacher burnout, declining enrollments).
 - a. How does school food relate to this issue? What connections can you draw?
 1. For inspiration, visit the FEEST website, focusing specifically on their [school food organizing](#) webpage, and make sure to discuss their [school food map](#).
 - b. Identify 1-3 changes you would like to make that would provide a “dual solution” to a school food problem and another problem facing your local schools?
 - c. Collaborate to develop your case!
 1. How can we explain the desired school food change in relation to another issue the school/district is facing?
 2. What unique perspectives on these issues do we have?
 3. What evidence can we use to support our argument?
 - d. Integrate these points into a one-minute “pitch” and have each group take a turn presenting their case.

Further Resources

1. Rebel Ventures' 8-minute documentary “[Rebels with a Cause](#)” from 2017.
2. “[Rebels Against Hunger](#),” a 23-minute documentary from 2021.
3. Episode 3 of Left Over podcast “[Someone Other Than Us is Planning Our Meals Right Now](#)” highlights many youth perspectives and the school lunch justice campaign led by Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES) in Milwaukee (USA).
4. The US-based Good Food Purchasing Program developed a [toolkit](#) to educate and empower youth to be policy protagonists within their school food systems and beyond.

6. CREATING A MOBILE METHOD TO NOURISH CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES WITH THE “YUM-YUM BUS”

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss examples from the text of how the staff involved with the YumYum Bus engaged with other school and community stakeholders to address the care, food, and education needs of rural students.
2. Should schools offer free meals to children during the summer or during school breaks/holidays? Why or why not?
3. What are the potential pros and cons of providing households with school-aged children a grocery stipend to purchase food in the summer when school is not in session (i.e., [Summer EBT or Sun Bucks](#))?
 - a. Why might some states opt out of this federal program? Click [here](#) to see a list of the states that are currently participating.
4. Watch this [summer meals short video](#) about how to do mobile meals. What similarities and differences do you see between this example and the YumYum Bus?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Use the USDA's [summer meals for kids site finder](#) to locate the sites in your community (or a chosen community if you do not live in the US). Next, enter this same location into [FRAC's summer food mapper](#), which uses Census data to identify sites that are eligible to provide summer meals. Compare the data on these two maps.
 - a. Are there eligible sites that are not providing summer meals? If so, what might be preventing these sites from doing so? How, if at all, could these barriers be overcome?
2. This [map](#) shows the change in participation between summer 2014 and summer 2015 for all 50 US states. Brainstorm a list of factors that may impact state-level participation in summer meal programs.
 - a. Does the data make sense based on these factors and the context that you know of your state (or any of the states if you are not living in the US)?
3. Design a billboard or commercial to promote participation in the summer meal program in a community of your choosing.

Further Resources

1. No Kid Hungry's [resources and best practices](#) related to summer meals.
2. A short [news clip](#) explaining the Louisiana Governor Landry's decision to reject federal funding available for the Summer EBT (Sun Bucks) program.
3. The 2024 No Kid Hungry webinar "[Schools Bringing Summer Meals to Kids: Learnings & Promising Practices from Non-Congregate Feeding.](#)"

7. LOCAL AND NATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE UNITED STATES

Discussion Questions

1. What did school meals look like in your community during the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic? How did this change as time went on? Were schools closed? Did they implement safety practices like “silent lunches” in Japan or social distancing?
2. Review the USDA waivers summarized in Table 7.1 (p.129). Discuss what problem(s) each of these waivers was intended to address.
 - a. Are there any unintended consequences that you can imagine for these waivers? If so, think through how you might adjust the policy waiver to account for the concerns.
3. Recap how San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) responded and adapted their school food service operation during the pandemic. How does the local response of SFUSD compare with what happened in your community?
4. Imagine you were a school food worker in your community. Take a minute to empathize with how they may have felt while on the job, particularly in the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, then discuss your thoughts with a partner.

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Read this short [opinion piece](#) arguing for hazard pay and additional protections for school cafeteria workers at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. In small groups, brainstorm a list of 8-10 “essential” jobs that you think should receive additional compensation and worksite protections during a pandemic or emergency (e.g., extreme heat advisories).
 - a. Why these jobs and not others? Provide a brief rationale for each occupation.
2. Divide into pairs or small groups. Have each pair or small group read one of the sections of this No Kid Hungry report “[Innovations in Child Nutrition Programs During COVID-19 and Beyond](#)” and identify one of the “bold ideas” from their assigned section that they find especially promising for maximizing the public value of school food programs and/or systems. Ask each group to have one of their members briefly share out the following information with the full group:
 - a. What the bold idea is.
 - b. Why the group thinks it is especially promising.
 - c. Any ways they can imagine this “bold idea” being used outside of the pandemic or other emergency schooling context (under “normal” school and public health conditions).
3. Read this [brief article](#) about the growing movement for universal free school meals in Japan. Why do you think the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated this movement in both Japan and the United States? What similarities and differences can you find in the two cases?

Further Resources

1. Overview of best practices for the US from the Tisch Food Center: [Serving Students During the Coronavirus: Best Practices](#).
2. The Global Child Nutrition Foundation’s [website](#) features webinars, reports, and other resources about school feeding around the world during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. An [article](#) explaining the Brazilian Food at Home program, which provided students and their families with access to food during home-based learning and sustained established markets for local small-scale farmers.
4. A set of 2022 articles related to the “silent lunch” controversy in Japan during the Covid-19 pandemic: [June 17](#), [November 22](#), [November 30](#).

8. CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISM AND GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS IN INDIA

Discussion Questions

1. In this chapter, the author argues that “the active involvement of civil society actors plays a key role in influencing school food policy.” How so? Draw on examples from different stakeholder groups mentioned in the chapter?
2. What’s the difference between a welfare-based and a rights-based approach to school food (p. 156)?
3. The author asserts the mid-day meal scheme has “the potential to overcome subtle forms of prejudice and social discrimination” in India.
 - a. Where do these forms of prejudice and social discrimination show up in the Indian school food system?
 - b. What prejudices, discrimination, or disadvantages does your school food program address (or should it address)?
4. What is the difference between a civil society organization and a nonprofit organization in India? How does this difference matter for the author’s argument?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. There are many examples of creative public actions or events organized by civil society groups. Brainstorm how you would translate one example from this chapter to the context of your local or national school food program. Be sure to include the four aspects of policy protagonism. Share your idea with a partner.
2. Divide the group in two. Instruct one group to develop reasons for larger organizations to deliver the mid-day meal and the other group to develop reasons for smaller organizations to deliver the meal. Have the two groups debate which is the better model given the considerations the chapter raises.
3. Prepare a public service announcement poster to raise awareness of a change you advocate for within your school food program. Organize a [gallery walk](#) to review the posters.

Further Resources

1. A collection of Right to Food campaign [materials](#), including primers, pamphlets, posters, plays, and songs.
2. [Midday Meal Scheme collection](#) of law language, essays, maps, and commentary.
3. A 10-minute [video](#) story featuring behind-the-scenes footage of one of the “mega kitchens” run by the Akshaya Patra Foundation and a shorter [video](#) from National Geographic.

9. COOPERATIVE AND SMALL-SCALE FARMING THROUGH BRAZIL'S NATIONAL PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does the chapter show that school food is simultaneously of global and local interest?
2. The authors show that the National Program for Education PNAE is a program that cares about local sustainable development for communities, healthy and equitable food, reliable distribution to children, and broader social inclusion for farmers like Ana and João. Identify and explain examples of how the PNAE encourages care broadly speaking. (See the introduction for our discussion of care, carework, and a feminist politics of care.)
3. Brazil is considered a global model of a local economic-driver, sustainable, human-rights affirming school food system. It is studied and translated throughout Latin America.
 - a. Why do you think this model is successful?
 - b. What elements could translate to your national context or school community?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Create a timeline of Brazil's national school food program as depicted in the chapter. (Try this free and easy-to-use app: [Canva](#) or just use a piece of paper. Now create a parallel timeline for your (or a different nation, state/province) nation's school food.
 - a. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?
 - b. Are there intersections or are they intertwined at any points along the timelines? How so? Why?
2. Ana and João applied mandala technology, an Indian Philosophy, which produced sufficient food to feed their families, their workers, and to sell to schools in their arid climate. Their harvest improved over time due to observations (see page 175) and growing culturally relevant and sustainable crops and livestock. Draw a mandala. Sketch in what they cultivated. Underneath add in what would be grown in your community and for your schools. Share and discuss.
3. Ana and João were policy protagonists in this chapter. Outline the ways they engaged in policy protagonism (e.g., enacted the four parts of the concept), with whom, how, and why. Then, develop your plan for engaging in policy protagonism in your community.
 - a. What are some of the challenges you anticipate?
 - b. With whom might you enact policy protagonism?
 - c. With which groups might you try to work and learn across your differences as the farmers in this chapter did toward transforming school food for your community?

Further Resources

1. A [curricular guide](#) to develop a mandala garden with youth
2. An educational [video](#) from South Africa on how to create a permaculture school garden.
3. [NPR report](#) on Brazil's pandemic-era school food programming.
4. Images, recipes, and commentary in [School Feeding in Brazil: An Overview of Best Recipes](#).
5. [The Landless Movement's \(MST\) website](#) has articles, videos, and materials for further learning.
6. An [article](#) explaining Brazil's 2023 policy to restrict the availability of ultra-processed foods in schools.

10. AGROECOLOGY AND FEMINIST PRAXIS IN BRAZILIAN SCHOOL FOOD POLITICS

Discussion Questions

1. How is agroecology defined in the chapter? The authors assert that this definition reflects a feminist definition of agroecology. How so? Explain.
2. The authors argue and provide evidence for the connection between the transformation of schools into “healthy food environments” and the agroecological practices developed by rural women, specifically feminist agroecological farmers. Share 2-3 examples from the text.
3. In what ways is women’s work important for producing healthy school food in Brazil?
 - a. How does their work as agroecologists intersect with care work?
 - b. What forms of care work do women contribute to school food programs in your community?
4. What policy tools are in place in Brazil to support women’s contributions to school food?
 - a. Can you identify policies in your school community that encourage agroecological practices? women’s participation in and contribution to school food systems? promote sustainability whether in food sourced or packaging/waste?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. In small groups, discuss this question: what do the authors mean when they refer to the pedagogical dimensions of the agroecological work of feminist farmers and its connection to a culture of healthy school feeding?
 - a. Identify 2-3 stakeholder groups in your school food community that are engaging in pedagogical work that links to a culture of healthier school feeding.
 - b. Be sure to note whether there are linkages between the groups and explain.
2. In the book’s introduction, several big ideas, or concepts, are introduced including the “infrastructure of daily life” or “feminist politics of care for food and education.” Using this chapter, create a [concept map](#) for one. Tease out their meaning and examples.
3. Learning to eat healthy and sustainably should be an essential part of education that includes knowing where your food comes from and who produces it. Specifically, it can involve valuing the work of all women, farmers, cooks, teachers, managers, and educators who produce agroecological, healthy, and sustainable food for schools. After reading the chapter and watching at least one of the documentaries (below), collectively decide to write a letter, record a small video, or prepare a podcast to send to the women (in the documentaries or that you identified as a stakeholder group, see activity 1) who have been producing/preparing/serving healthy food for schools. What will your message be? How might it figuratively feed your school community’s evolving efforts to transform a school food system?

Further Resources

1. A four-part documentary, *Women and Agroecology*, in Portuguese with English subtitles.
 - a. [Doc 1: Without Feminism there’s no Agroecology](#)
 - b. [Doc 2: Agrarian Popular Reform in the Contestado Settlement](#)
 - c. [Doc 3: Agroecology – a Pedagogy of Caring for Life](#)
 - d. [Doc 4: Agroecology with Gender Democracy](#)
2. A [documentary video](#), *The Seeds* (2015), on women’s empowerment, cooperativism, feminism, and agroecology.
3. A [video](#), *Vida em Mutirão*, featuring [women who preserve the territory and traditional quilombola](#) practices and knowledge specifically related to agro-ecological food production and building a supportive marketing network.

11. DIRECT URBAN-RURAL SUPPLY CHAINS FOR SOUTH KOREAN COMMUNITIES

Discussion Questions

1. South Korean students do not have a choice between meal options - one set “menu” is served each day, but these meals are freshly prepared and vary from day-to-day as shown in this [TikTok video](#). In your opinion, what are the pros and cons of this approach? How is it different from your own country?
2. Referencing Figure 11.1 (p. 209), talk through the various stakeholders and relationships in the Urban-Rural Coexistence Public Meal Service.
 - a. Can you imagine something like this working in your community? Why or why not?
3. Browse this [article](#) about South Korean school lunches, noting the emphasis on fresh preparation and local sourcing. Parents are able to view photos of the school lunches each day. Looking at the photos of school lunch trays in the article, discuss how such transparent visual communication between the school food program and students’ parents may help or hinder policy protagonism in South Korean communities.
 - a. What do you imagine might happen in your community if a similar system was put in place?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Compare and contrast an image of a South Korean school lunch with a typical school lunch from your country. What similarities and differences do you notice?
 - a. Looking at the differences, make a list of things you like about the South Korean school lunch. In pairs or small groups, discuss your lists and brainstorm what policy protagonism might be required to turn the items on your lists into reality.
2. This chapter argues that cities can and should be leaders in food systems transformation and demonstrates how public food programs can be redesigned in ways that promote environmental sustainability, rural prosperity, and healthy food access in urban communities. Working in groups, develop a food action plan for your own local government, making sure to take the geography of your community into account (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) when thinking through the primary role of the local government and potential partners.
3. Make a monthly school lunch letter for the parents/caregivers of children in your community. Start by thinking about which topics you want to share with them and why.

Further Resources

1. A 2020 [article](#) explaining how the South Korean government pivoted school lunch supply chains to support local farmers during the Covid-19 school closures.
2. A 2020 [article](#) that discusses how the implementation of universal free school meals in South Korea is associated with a significant decline in behavioral incidents, particularly physical fights, in schools.
3. A 2022 [article](#) discussing the impact of universal free school meals on students’ physical and mental health.
4. Recent news articles covering hot topics in Korean school food politics: [vegetarian options](#), [labor shortages](#), and [worker strikes](#).

12. USING STORYTELLING IN THE UNITED STATES TO BUILD EMPATHY FOR CHANGE

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think storytelling builds empathy and contributes to building support for a cause? Why or why not?
2. What stories (or storytellers) do you think have the most potential to change the school food system? Why?
3. What response (intellectual and/or emotional) did the composite vignettes presented at the end of the chapter provoke for you? How, if at all, did they help you further understand the complexity of school food systems and the stakeholders who are involved?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Visit the [Food for Thought website](#) from the Baltimore Museum of Industry.
 - a. Listen to any three of the [interview clips](#) (each is about 1 minute long) of the school nutrition workers featured in the exhibit.
 - b. Discuss the emotional reactions you had to the photographs and audio snippets. How, if at all, did the use of visual and audio storytelling contribute to these reactions? Think, for example, if you had instead read a transcript of the audio and not seen a portrait of the worker.
2. Review each of the stakeholders (“players”) in the interactive platform “[School Meals: Who’s at the Table](#)” developed by the US-based National Farm to School Network.
 - a. If you were building a similar platform for your own country, which “players” would you choose to highlight? How might their roles be similar or different to the “players” at the US school food table?
3. Choose 3-5 stakeholder groups whose perspectives matter within your local school food system. Do a bit of research – what can you learn about these stakeholders’ experiences and perspectives? You may wish to consult academic literature, media stories, or oral histories; have personal conversations; or limit this exercise to the stakeholder group with which you self-identify.
 - a. Using the composite narrative approach outlined in this chapter, develop your own school food vignette (see pp. 227-229 for examples).

Further Resources

1. The FoodCorps project mentioned in this chapter led to the publication of a report, “[Reimagining School Cafeterias: A Human-Centered Study on the State and Current Future of School Food.](#)”
2. [Video shorts](#) from *The Labor of Lunch: Why We Need Real Food and Real Jobs in American Public Schools* (2019) tell stories about different aspects of the US school food system using interviews with school nutrition workers.
3. The Institute for Child Nutrition has collected over [250 oral histories](#) of US-based child nutrition professionals.

13. FACILITATING THINK TANKS TO GUIDE ACTION AND ADVOCACY IN CANADIAN TEACHERS' UNIONS

Discussion Questions

1. This chapter provides an overview of food security from reports and from teachers' experiences with their students. Find and discuss the examples provided.
 - a. Why food security – instead of food *in*security?
 - b. What do you know about food security in your school community (during the COVID-19 pandemic and/or now) both in terms of available government or organizational reports and from experience?
 - c. Why is it important to develop an understanding of an issue that includes both?
2. The BCTF is a social justice union (p. 235), well-known and respected globally. This chapter aims to fill the gap in teachers and their unions' role in school food politics.
 - a. Does their approach as described here fulfill that aim? How so?
 - b. In what ways does this approach elevate the caring role of teachers and schools to communities?
3. Identify the broad principles for action (pp. 239-243). Which, if any, resonate with or might be adopted as your communities' school food principles of action, or platform, on which a more just food system should be grounded collectively? Explain.

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. In preparation for the food security “issue sessions,” the BCTF put out a call to all teachers from across the province involved in food security advocacy, community stakeholders, and the union. Brainstorm your school food issue sessions that involve teachers and their union.
 - a. Determine the focus of your issue sessions. What is a school food issue that affects teachers' work? This could include food security, food sovereignty, school mealtimes and experience, universal school meals.
 - b. Who are the community stakeholders, teachers, or in-house union researchers or officers who could provide knowledge on that issue?
2. In this section of the book, authors generously share successful tools and actions for collectively engaging in school food politics. Prepare a visual representation (e.g., concept map or outline or chart or draw the dialogue like the artists' examples) of the BCTF's approach to “transforming challenges into opportunities.”
3. If you are a teacher, think back to the first months of the pandemic. If you are not a teacher or were not then, imagine teaching or recall teachers in your community. Take a minute to empathize with how they may have felt while on the job, particularly in the early months of the pandemic, and how they might have provided care to the classroom or community. Craft an op-ed or a letter to acknowledge that care work, especially examples of providing food to students and their families. Consider sending to a local newspaper, union, or school district.

Further Resources

1. For further information and materials on social justice teachers' unions and how to organize one see Rethinking Schools' [special issue](#) on the topic.
2. This edition of [The Conversation](#) focused on explaining factors that shift US teachers' unions toward social justice.
3. [The Solidarity Center](#) is a website with materials from fact sheets, podcasts and videos on social justice focused teacher's unions around the world.

14. THE CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY'S APPROACH TO SCHOOL FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE IN THE UNITED STATES

Discussion Questions

1. What are the nonprofit organizations in your community that work on school food-related issues? How does their approach compare with the Center for Ecoliteracy's work described in this chapter?
2. Explore the state advocacy strategy for Healthy School Meals for All that led California to be the first state to make school meals free for all K-12 students (see pp. 267-268 for a summary of the six strategies). If your school or country does not offer universal free school meals, discuss whether the strategies used in California would work in your state or country. Why or why not?
3. Discuss the role of program development, such as the California Food for California Kids program, in facilitating systems change.
4. The Powered by School Food Professionals [website](#) and multimedia campaign materials created by the Chef Ann Foundation to "shine a light on the skill, creativity and commitment of school food professionals powering better meals for kids across California." How, if at all, does viewing these materials shift your opinion of school food labor?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Using sticky notes or a [free online timeline maker](#), create a basic timeline of the Center for Ecoliteracy's work on school food systems change from 1995-2023.
2. Review each of the stakeholders ("players") in the interactive platform "[School Meals: Who's at the Table](#)" developed by the US-based National Farm to School Network. Identify how, when, and where each of these players showed up in the California Healthy School Meals for All campaign. Assign each person or small group one player to focus on; take turns sharing your insights about each player with the full group.
3. Read this brief [article](#) about the relationship between universal free meals and student discipline. Next, trace out the steps in this [theory of change](#) that youth activists in Seattle, Washington (USA), developed to illustrate the links between school food and the "school to prison pipeline."

Further Resources

1. [Civil Eats article](#) on how California is leading the way in low-carbon school meals.
2. The Who's at the Table [California case study](#) from the National Farm to School Network.
3. A [summary of the benefits](#) of universal free school meals.

15. DEVELOPING SOLIDARITY COALITIONS FOR UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS AND LOCAL FOOD IN THE UNITED STATES

Discussion Questions

1. How could the action circles model be used to organize around other issues or sectors within the food system?
2. The Vermont campaign generated tri-partisan (Republican, Democratic, and Independent) support from lawmakers. What about the coalition's approach made this possible?
3. How might you apply the action circles model to a school food issue that you care about? Start by articulating your “happy ending.”

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Imagine you are giving public testimony in support of free school meals for all children in your state or province. Draft 3-5 talking points (brief, one sentence/idea bullet list) for a 3-minute presentation. In small groups or pairs, take turns giving your testimony to a partner or fellow group members.
 - a. What common themes and unique insights can you identify in your mock policy protagonism?
2. Read this [article from The Nation](#) about the policy protagonism that led to the passage of free school meals for all in New Mexico, a US state with a majority Hispanic population. Compare and contrast this with the Vermont case you read about in this chapter.
3. Taking inspiration from the “This Farm Feeds Vermont Kids” yard sign pictured in this chapter, design your own yard sign to support school food systems change. If yard signs are not common in your country or cultural context, create a poster or flier instead. Consider the following questions as you’re creating the design:
 - a. What is the “happy ending” you are working toward?
 - b. Which stakeholder group(s) are you trying to influence?
 - c. Who might display the materials?
 - d. What will the materials say?
 - e. What imagery might you use?

Further Resources

1. The Who’s at the Table [Vermont case study](#) from the National Farm to School Network.
2. A [webinar](#) from National Farm to School Network about the common thread between farm-to-school and successful universal school meals campaigns in the US.
3. A FRAC [webinar](#) about lessons learned from the early Healthy School Meals for All campaigns including California and Vermont.
4. A [podcast episode](#), *Food with Marc Bittman*, that discusses free school meals for all campaigns, including the successful campaign in New Mexico.

CONCLUSION

Discussion Questions

1. What surprised you or sparked your curiosity when reading about school food politics and systems from a global perspective?
2. How, if at all, are the school food programs you read about advancing sustainable agriculture, worker justice, and human rights? Which chapters stand out or impact you the most at the conclusion of the book?
3. What critical, intersectional, and/or decolonial approaches to school food research and policymaking are needed to move the field forward in productive ways?

Classroom or Book Club Activities

1. Create a visual representation or outline of what your own policy protagonism may look like within your school food system. Find examples that illustrate each of the four parts of the concept. Share your findings.
 - a. Make sure to also research who is already doing this important work that you might learn from or support.
2. Complete a free write or prepare a reflective journal entry responding to the following: What (still) stands out? What are you curious about and wish to learn more about? What do you want to do about school food in your community? And what is your next move? (i.e., how are you going to act as a policy protagonist?)
3. Read Box 2.2 "School Feeding Programmes: A Triple Dividend for Feminist Climate Justice" on p. 27 of [this report](#) from UN Women. What examples from the book reflect this report of how different countries are enacting policies that make school food systems more caring and ecologically sustainable.