

## **Creating capacity for collaboration in food systems and public health practice: The Food4Health Project**

### **Objective:**

Food – from its production to consumption to disposal -- is a complex issue that influences personal, social and environmental health simultaneously. Food4Health was a proof-of-concept project aimed at applying systems thinking to social innovation and knowledge translation to increase capacity for learning and action on food systems health.

### **Target Groups:**

Food4Health took a systems focus and sought to bring together food producers and distributors, educators, scientists, community members and policy makers together to create a dialogue centred on generating new ideas and opportunities for engaging youth and different sectors in promoting a healthy food system.

### **Activities:**

Food4Health used a multi-platform strategy to identify and engage a diverse community of stakeholders by leveraging a unique partnership between with the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, University Health Network, and University of Toronto. A one day 'unconference' provided face-to-face interaction between groups, which was supported by a social media and evaluation strategy that employed Twitter, Facebook, and youth-focused websites to engage the community online.

### **Deliverables:**

The principal outcomes were improved awareness among the various stakeholders of the roles that each organization played, new or increased collaboration opportunities between sectors, and overall participation by individuals and organizations. Over the span of 8 months, four unconference events were held and more than 37 organizations engaged. Online the project attracted thousands of unique visitors to the project website, 155 blog posts, 55 Facebook 'members' and over 175 follows to the project's Twitter feed.