

THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR, FOOD INSECURITY AND THE RESOURCE CURSE FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Utility or resource corridors lead to worse food insecurity outcomes for impacted Indigenous communities in Canada. To prevent a health and human rights emergency due to high food insecurity elevating further, an Indigenous-led food strategy, rather than a resource corridor, must be the priority so that Indigenous food insecurity can be brought to functional zero. The suggestions below indicate food security is attainable within a decade if priorities shift.

1. Restore jurisdiction over essential services to Indigenous communities from the colonial government to ensure needs and human rights are met for food infrastructure, road access, hospitals, banking and telecommunications.
2. Remove Indigenous-specific systemic racism to Indigenous people's food security, health and self-governance.
3. Address income as a key determinant of food security by applying poverty reduction strategies in Indigenous communities, including basic income, paid training/education programs and community-led development jobs.
4. Invest in Indigenous food systems in each Indigenous community, including the infrastructure, services and programs. Promising programs to scale up and out include: on-the-land traditional land-use education programs (hunting, fishing, farming, stewardship, etc.), Arctic Co-op and community food centres on reserve.
5. Fund Indigenous community-led post-secondary education to enhance food harvesting and employability, including on-the-land programs, protected areas, land guardianship, regenerative agriculture, permaculture training, community development, watershed planning and cooking apprenticeships.
6. Shift subsidies, such as the Nutrition North Canada subsidy, from colonial stores to Indigenous food co-operatives and Indigenous people in all reserves, removing the 'middleman' and replacing the cost of the northern food basket as a success indicator with an indicator that considers health.

7. Reject the colonial approach to building utility corridors based on non-sustainable extraction of resources and instead prioritize human needs and rights of Indigenous communities for development. Establish a future-proof infrastructure to withstand climate change, accommodate distributed renewable energy and foster a zero-carbon, sustainable future. An Indigenous-governed and owned northern corridor that serves Indigenous communities' interests holds possibilities but needs a legal analysis, considering colonial control over resources and land, the Indian Act, systemic racism, and Indigenous jurisdiction for Canada's north. Ensuring First Nations' food security benefits from a northern corridor may require changes in legal standing, such as overturning the Indian Act.