



## A strategic plan to help Backpack Buddies bridge the weekend hunger gap in British Columbia

### Case Study: Backpack Buddies

One in eight families in British Columbia experiences food insecurity. Vulnerable students may take advantage of school food programs during the week, only to experience a weekend hunger gap when little support is available. A recent UNICEF Canada report predicts that the costs related to the post-pandemic economic recovery, the climate crisis, and other issues will increase food insecurity and child poverty in the years ahead.



**Backpack Buddies**  
Because Hunger Doesn't Take the Weekend Off

Founded in 2012, the Community First Foundation (CFF)—operating as Backpack Buddies—tackles the child hunger crisis in BC by providing bags of food for the weekend to students who need them. Recognizing the need for a new strategic plan to guide the organization's growth and development in this challenging environment, CFF engaged Junxion. This was the second strategic planning cycle Junxion facilitated for CFF.



This strategic plan equips us to move forward. It will be a vital touchstone for operational planning in the coming years, guiding our work, enabling crisp and clear decision-making, and charting our growth and development.

**EMILY-ANNE KING**

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER,  
BACKPACK BUDDIES

## The Challenge

The pandemic, the climate crisis, and rising inflation have shown how easily supply chains will be disrupted for the foreseeable future. Despite a new delivery model, warehouse, and more staff, Backpack Buddy's operations were running at capacity. With family budgets feeling the squeeze, CFF recognized that students needed other types of support, such as clothing and computer equipment, and were uncertain if and how they should respond by diversifying their project portfolio.

The new strategic plan balances CFF's ambitions for growth and impact with the very real limits and constraints of this post-pandemic moment in history and the organization's capabilities and capacity.

CFF needed to review its programme offer and determine the best way to develop its organization. They had reached a point where they need to assess and enhance their governance, management structure and the relationship between board and staff.

## How We Helped

Junxion designed an inclusive, workshop-based approach to ensure all voices were heard. We interviewed staff, partners and client stakeholders and carried out a materials review. This initial research phase surfaced key opportunities and challenges for CFF to consider and informed the subsequent two workshops we held with staff.

We acted as a critical friend throughout the process, supporting CFF while pushing them to help clarify their mission.

The new strategic plan enables CFF to harness their capabilities to maximize their impact in the current challenging environment. Clear, actionable, and written in plain language, everyone throughout the organization can use the plan in their day-to-day decision-making.

## Measuring Success

The statements of intended impact at the end of each section of the strategic plan articulate CFF's vision of success. This will help ensure that implementation of the strategic plan is measurable. Since publishing the strategy, Junxion has provided CFF with implementation and coaching support. Early data indicates that the clarity of the plan is helping Backpack Buddies making purposeful steps toward achieving their ambition to improve and grow the reach of their current programming.



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Are you ready to define your social purpose and embed it in your strategy? Reach out to [Mike Rowlands](#) in Vancouver, [Shayla Meyer](#) in Toronto, or [Adam Garfunkel](#) in the UK to start a conversation.