**The First Supper – Concept Note**

Background and Context

The future of our food systems will be shaped by today’s youth, yet young people often face profound challenges in engaging with this future. Around the world, youth are experiencing disengagement, lack of a voice in policymaking, lack of opportunities and funding, eco-anxiety, and grief as they confront climate disruption, biodiversity loss, and widening social inequalities—crises they did not create but will inherit. Despite their central stake, young people are too often excluded from meaningful engagement in shaping food futures.

*The First Supper* responds to this urgency by using art, storytelling, and participatory practices to engage diverse audiences, support dialogue across diverse voices, and spark collective imagination about food futures.

Developed as part of Bishop’s University Arts Festival through a transdisciplinary collaboration between students and faculty in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, Arts Administration, Drama, and Psychology, and other disciplines, *The First Supper* bridges science and culture to envision sustainable and inclusive pathways forward.

*The First Supper* is now being tested as a culture localization framework to engage youth in important dialogues around the future of food.

Short description

*The First Supper* is an interactive booth exhibition envisioning food futures in 2050 through “The Table of the Future.”

Created by researchers and artists at Bishop’s University, it blends art, speculative design, and dialogue to support youth engagement, foster inclusive dialogues, and embrace creativity in reimagining the future.

Aligned with *“Hand in Hand for Better Foods and a Better Future,”* it also presents *The First Supper* framework, a blueprint for institutions seeking to engage youth in reimagining sustainable, equitable agrifood systems.

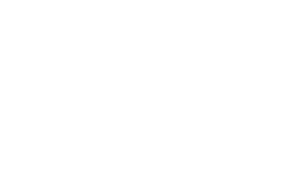
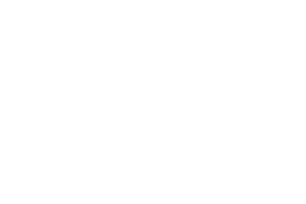
How will your exhibition actively engage and involve young people as both participants and contributors?

For the World Food Forum, *The First Supper* booth will showcase how creative practices can empower young people to connect with food as culture, justice, and climate action. By engaging youth through interactive exhibits, storytelling, and participatory tools, *The First Supper* invites them to reimagine—and take action to build—the futures they want for our food systems.

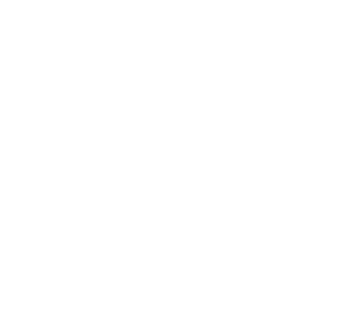
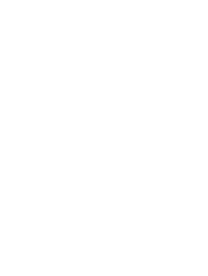
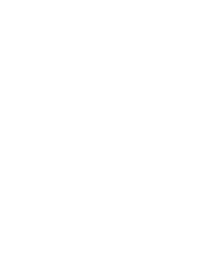
The exhibition is designed to foster active participation from young people by positioning them as co-creators rather than passive spectators. Dr. Valencia will animate the booth through facilitated dialogue and interactive activities, ensuring that youth visitors are directly engaged.

Dr. Valencia will explain to visitors what *The First Supper* is by drawing from the pilot experience. To help illustrate this, the **onstage screen** will feature a trailer showcasing the creative process behind *The First Supper* pilot, highlighting how researchers and young artists from Bishop’s University collaborated across technology, sciences, and the arts. This visual narrative will also feature key moments and events that inspired and shaped the project.

In addition, the booth will feature tangible materials from *The First Supper* pilot, such as menu cards and a sample from the First Supper beer (for display only). See pictures below.



The booth installation will also feature ***Seeds of Sound***, an interactive artwork that uses a programmed phone to play random excerpts from an audio archive of diverse voices and stories about food and culture, and messages and stories from agroecological farmers from the Eastern Townships in Quebec, both in English and French. Featured in the *First Supper* art installation and originally developed for the BU Arts Festival by Arts Administration and Computer Science students. This piece invites participants to engage with a mosaic of perspectives and experiences, offering a dynamic way to encounter diverse stories about our shared food futures. Below pictures illustrate previous installations of ***Seeds of Sound***.



In addition, a **digital time capsule** will invite young participants to contribute to their visions of 2050. Prompted by the question ‘What habit, action, or initiative will you commit to today to make that future a reality?’, participants will reflect on the actions that they may take today to reach their desirable future. If an email address is provided, participants will receive a one-time reminder in 2029 with their pledge. This will result in a living archive of possible food futures, thus making their insights an enduring part of the exhibition. Pledges will be entered by participants by accessing a QR code that will take them to the ‘Promise to Earth’ Website (1https://promisetotheearth.onrender.com/2). If an additional monitor is available, the website and pledges made will be displayed in real-time in the booth.

For an **analog engagement**, a *Better Futures* commitments book using artisanal paper pulp impregnated with viable seeds will invite participants to handwrite their pledge. The medium itself functions as the message: the physical object is a temporary vessel intended for ritual dissolution into the earth, transforming written promises of gratitude into biological growth and perpetuating the cycle of appreciation.

Finally, a short, **live conversation capsule** with the Ontario Global Youth Action chapter will center around what gives hope to the youth representatives that better food futures are possible. This short conversation will provide further opportunities for peer-to-peer exchange.

Exhibition Objective and Key Messages

|  |
| --- |
| * **Objectives**   + To create a participatory space where youth and diverse stakeholders can imagine sustainable food futures.   + To showcase innovative, cross-sectoral collaboration between art, science, and community.   + To demonstrate how creative practices can help bridge the gap between knowledge and action by engaging youth and other diverse communities across sectors, disciplines, and mindsets |
| **Key Messages**   * Creative practices: art, performance and storytelling inspire social change and reconnect us with each other, the land, and the futures we want to co-create. * Transformation begins not only with data, but with dialogue, imagination, and shared experience. * Inclusive dialogue today leads to resilient and just food futures tomorrow. * Food is a universal connector and an entry point for envisioning just, sustainable, and meaningful futures. |