

# Building Food Democracy Community-Based Research and the “Food Movement”

**Sarah Wakefield**

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**Collaborative Program in Community Development  
and the Centre for Urban and Community  
Studies (CUCS/UT)**

**Tuesday February 12, 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.  
OISE/UT, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Room 8-201  
(St. George subway stop)**

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Community-based research (or CBR) is conducted in partnership with community members to meet community needs. This approach allows academics to engage with communities to identify problems and develop solutions to those problems – in other words, to become involved in community development. Engagement with communities, however, often goes beyond research and connects academics, community partners, and community members in pedagogical and personal relationships that complicate the divide between “researchers” and “subjects.”

This presentation draws on Professor Wakefield’s experiences within the “food movement” – an alliance of disparate social actors mobilizing in resistance to various aspects of the dominant corporate-industrial food system. The presentation provides a brief overview of several food-related research projects that include elements of a CBR approach and offers lessons learned from these projects about the roles of academics in community development and the possible consequences of these academic-community relationships.

Sarah Wakefield is a professor in the University of Toronto’s Geography Department and Programme in Planning. Her research focuses on facilitators and barriers to citizen participation in environmental governance, and food security and food system sustainability at the local, provincial, and national levels in Canada.

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