

LFS 350 Proposal Report

Introduction

Our group is working with Vancouver Coastal Health to expand and improve the accessibility of kitchen access, community kitchen programs and food literacy workshops for community members in the Greater Vancouver area. This is done in the form of the Vancouver Food Asset Map (VFAM). The purpose of the VFAM is to provide a current and easy-to-use resource that community members and agencies can use when addressing issues of food insecurity. Our project also includes map trialling in the community, to gain feedback on how effective the VFAM is. According to Gerry Kasten (2006), the cause of food insecurity isn't lack of food, but the inability to access food due factors such as purchasing power and food prices. The VFAM provides a tool to support community members dealing with food insecurity, compiles locations of current food assets, and can be viewed and utilized strategically by community partners (Food Asset Map Vancouver, 2017).

Objective

Our main objective through this project is to improve the Vancouver Food Asset Map so community members are better able to view and utilize their community assets appropriately and strategically. This will be done by increasing the amount of information found within the map, as well as going out into the community to educate people on how the map works. It is important to educate the public as they are the group that will primarily be using the tool. We also aim to acquire feedback from the community to provide improvements and adjustments. Therefore, our goals for completing this project are to expand both the knowledge base of the community members in how and when to use this map, and to expand the Vancouver Food Asset Map so more information is available to the community.

Research Questions

Our research questions primarily focus on the accessibility of food and kitchen to community members, the type and adequateness of the resources available for use - inclusive of the state for food preparation, and the awareness of community members for the amenities available. Each of the research questions has a high importance to the continued awareness of food insecurity within Vancouver.

The first question inquires how user-friendly the current food asset maps are for the population it concerns - the citizens of Vancouver. The goal with this question is to improve the accessibility towards the food asset maps for community members whilst updating kitchen access within the community. The criteria also includes improving the way community members read the food asset maps.

The second question addresses the quality of the kitchens and food preparation stations within Vancouver. By updating the food access map, we will be able to reassess the state of

these kitchens and be able to reevaluate the levels of food insecurity within the different areas and communities of Vancouver.

Our third question ties both the first and second research questions together in that it acknowledges that community members must be aware of how to find the resources that make kitchen access available. The goal of this question is to assess whether levels of food insecurity meet the demands for kitchen access within the Vancouver community area.

Background and Context

Our research concerns the availability of kitchen access in the City of Vancouver, BC. The population of Vancouver is 2,313,328 people (Statistics Canada, 2012). Most people in Vancouver are in the working age range meaning 74.6 percent of residents are between 25-29 years of age. Most residents live in apartments and about 50% of residents have English as their mother tongue, which is lower than the rest of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2012). This gives us some information to begin addressing issues of food insecurity.

If most people live in apartment buildings, this hints at high property prices. Studies suggest that if people are spending the majority of their income on housing, they could be compromising costs on food (Will Valley, pers. Comm, 2017). If a high percentage of residents do not have English as their first language, it is important that ways to access food and kitchen facilities be available in other languages. From our reading "A warm meal and a warm bed," we recognized that Vancouver's disparity in incomes and the resulting wealth gap can also lead to disparities in food access. In the Downtown Eastside, a high concentration of "charitable food providers,... low-cost corner stores, and fast food restaurants" (714) exists. If food access is greatly determined by what is nearby, then this example would possibly restrict residents to access of diverse, fresh foods. Similarly, if there is a lack of kitchen access, residents are less likely to consume a diverse diet, and may be forced out of the home in search of food (711).

Food justice is the right for all humans to have adequate food for the health and wellbeing of themselves and their families. It involves a transformation of the current food system to break free from constraints that exist in our communities that may limit access to food (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010). Food insecurity occurs when members of a community are unable to have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy lifestyle at all times (Clapp, 2012).

When considering the issue of food insecurity in Vancouver, there are multiple factors and ways to address the issue. The effect of high housing prices, differences in language and background, and huge wealth disparities inhibit many individuals from accessing healthy foods in Vancouver.

Methods

Our primary methods will include map trialling within Vancouver to locate food assets, as well as developing current assets with updated or missing information. To gain understanding of the use of the VFAM, we will be administering forms and questions regarding the food asset map to community members. In compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, we will also

have UBC informed consent forms for community members to complete before evaluation forms. To ensure privacy, feedback forms and participant information will also be anonymous. If needed during map trialling, additional information and a food asset glossary is available.

References

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