

LFS 350 - Proposal Report - Group 3

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Introduction

The Hastings-Sunrise Community Food Network (HSCFN) is an organization that aims to improve food security of its residents by increasing accessibility by connecting residents with healthy and affordable food through programs offered for free or at an affordable price (“Who We Are”, 2015). In the past, food programs that have been organized by the Hastings-Sunrise area have had little community involvement. Currently in the Hastings-Sunrise area, there is a disconnect between residents and participation in local food workshops.

Aim

- To understand how HSCFN can encourage participation in their local food initiatives.

Objective

In collaboration with the HSCFN and our community partner, Joanne MacKinnon, we will complete the following objective:

- To collect information on why community members are not attending workshops and to determine ways in which other community organizations promote participation in their workshops

Inquiry Questions

From these objectives, the following inquiry questions emerged:

1. What are the motives behind the individuals that choose to attend the Hastings-Sunrise focus groups and what can be done to encourage other residents to participate?
2. What are other local Vancouver communities doing to stimulate focus group participation and how can these be implemented into the Hastings-Sunrise area?

3. What are the general barriers and themes that are currently plaguing the Hastings-Sunrise area and what can be done to alleviate such issues?

Background

Hastings-Sunrise Community Food Network was started in 2012 to bring greater food security to the residents in the area, which includes five neighborhoods, represented by their particular neighborhood house or community center. Hastings-Sunrise, Kiwassa, Frog Hollow, Thunderbird, and The Warehouse, are all unique areas with diverse histories in providing support to their residents through affordable social programs. (“Who We Are”, 2015).

The Hastings-Sunrise neighborhood is unique as it has residents from every part of the socioeconomic spectrum (Personal Correspondence with Joanne MacKinnon on January 18th). According to Vancouver city statistics, the area has a larger on average household size, alongside an average household income less than average (2001 Census). One challenge Joanne MacKinnon voiced was that people within the community do not tend to be the ones participating in the Food Network workshops (Personal Correspondence with Joanne MacKinnon on January 18th). At times, the community members would request certain workshops, but would not attend (Personal Correspondence with Joanne MacKinnon on January 18th). This issue highlights the need to evaluate the apparent barriers to resident participation in the Food Network activities and workshops (Personal Correspondence with Joanne MacKinnon on January 18th).

Significance

Community food security, as defined by Hamm and Bellows (2003) is “a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (pg. 37).

As discussed above, the aim of the HSCFN is to improve community food security and improve access to food by engaging the residents with their available resources. The aspects of community food security that will be addressed through this project are stability and accessibility, which focus on the strength of a system to withhold over time, and the acknowledgment that other social factors may inhibit people from obtaining the food that is available (Hamm & Bellows, 2003).

Asset-based community development (ABCD) is a framework that utilizes the knowledge and resources of community members, challenging the typical needs-based approach to development (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). In order to assess the barriers Hastings-Sunrise residents experience and work to improve stability and accessibility, we will refer to ABCD principles, with a focus on developing human capacity. It is important to determine what each community already has to offer, and what programs effectively reach people, in order to see how they might extend the success, and work towards community food security.

Based on a preliminary literature review, two studies in particular were significant to our project. A study by Mathie and Cunningham (2003) utilized the needs-based model of development to assess barriers, while a study by Wetherill and Gray (2014) identified barriers through the use of community focus groups, which is more in line with ABCD. It should be noted that the outcome of the Mathie and Cunningham (2003) study was limited by the needs-based model because they note in their conclusion that “using other methods, including lengthier

interviews with participants... may illuminate some of the unexplained patterns we identify here” (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). These studies highlight the usefulness of incorporating ABCD in our project by having the focus groups facilitated by dedicated and knowledgeable residents that can provide insights about the barriers that they are experiencing.

Methods

Procedure:

1. Attend facilitator training sessions to understand what the agency wants to get out of the focus groups.
2. Attend focus groups and collect primary qualitative data in the form of field notes, recording the raised concerns of the program and perceived barriers with the Network workshops and activities from both facilitators and residents.
3. Compile a report that notes the themes and barriers from the focus groups.

Tools:

- Contact with agency members and Joanne MacKinnon
- ABCD principles

Analysis and Interpretation:

- Consolidation of all qualitative data collected throughout the duration of the project.
- Analyzation of data for recurring themes that indicate residents’ barriers.
- Compilation of these themes into a written report outlining the themes and suggesting possible ways to combat the barriers to participation.

Ethics:

Possible ethical considerations in our project will revolve around confidentiality. As food access and barriers to access can be a culturally and socioeconomically sensitive and personal subject, keeping the data anonymous will aid in avoidance of possible ostracization and help reveal true and unaltered responses from the participants.

Success Factors

From the perspective of student learning, the success of our project can be measured based on the group’s ability to manage time effectively and produce concise and informative reports from the focus groups. Due to the scope shift, we will adjust and prepare accordingly to meet the objectives of the agency and focus groups that we will be working with. Our group also hopes to brainstorm potential interventions to overarching themes identified in the written reports.

From Joanne’s perspective, the success of the project may be measured by how well the facilitators are trained to run their focus groups, the number of people in attendance, and ultimately, whether the focus groups are able to reach the intended residents effectively. At the end of our project Joanne may use the information that we collect as a record of the Food Network’s progress, or it may be information that is pertinent to external audiences also making efforts towards similar changes in their community.

References

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