

PROPOSAL REPORT: SUSTENANCE FESTIVAL

**LFS 350
February 9th, 2018**

Proposal Report

Introduction:

The goal of this project is to document the story of the Vancouver Sustenance festival as it strives to help the local food movement become more ethnically inclusive in 2018. The goal stems from the question “why is the local food movement so white?”, a question that sustenance festival organizers from past years heard from past participants. Our way of documenting the festival's pursuit of this goal is through creating a series of podcasts that weave in recorded interviews of various community members from different ethnic groups in Vancouver, discussing their relationship with the local food movement and what assets they feel they have to offer. We will be working alongside the Vancouver Parks Board who organizes the festival and Stephanie Lim, a local activist who has been hired as an interculturalism coordinator to help achieve their goal of greater inclusivity.

This aim is well situated within The Vancouver Parks Board as they have a mandate to “provide, preserve, and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit all people, communities, and the environment.” (City of Vancouver, 2018). “All people” means including those marginalized groups who have a culture, context and history that puts them at risk of being socially-excluded. The sustenance festival's belief that food, being a universal need, is an exciting means to bring people together makes the festival one of the Parks Board's greatest opportunities to fulfill this mandate.

The festival itself is an annual multi-site arts, culture, and food festival held in the late summer/early fall of each year culminating with World Food Day, which this year is October 18th, 2018. Admission is free.

Significance

The food system is an incredibly complex entity. Especially now, in Westernized societies such as Vancouver, where the food system is situated in an atmosphere of uncertainty, gentrification, and pretension. Societal processes such as power discrepancies, economic inequities, and social inequalities reign, multiplying the many webs, processes, and interactions involved in our food system (iPES-FOOD, 2015). Our food system, in its multifaceted glory, is at cross-roads, where many citizen participants are asking questions about its equity. The idea of food access, a previously individual concept, is emerging into a political concept in which political agencies should support policies social justice, accountability, and non-discrimination (iPES-FOOD, 2015). In addition to the inclusion of political entities, a multi-sectoral approach must be considered, as it is key for the promotion of an equitable, accessible, and inclusive food system (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). As stated by Mathie and Cunningham (2003), Asset-based Community Development (ABCD), which is defined as “an approach, as a set of methods for community mobilisation, and as a strategy for community-based development”, is a central component in recognising the wide variety of community members, citizens, and unsung heroes of the food system that are often neglected or unrecognized.

This movement aligns with the goals of our community partner, the Sustenance Festival. In 2016, the Festival had a moment of awakening. Many members of the

Vancouver community asked the question “Why is the movement so white? Why is it so focused on consumer behaviour and the promotion of organic foods?”. These questions ignited an existential crisis for the Festival, which led to a year of quiet reflection. During this year, the Festival did not put on their usual events but instead, listened to the community. They built relationships with their community and found groups that self-identified as underrepresented in the food system.

Our role in this project, is to investigate the presence or absence of social justice within local food movements of underrepresented groups. Social justice involves “meeting basic human needs, freedom from exploitation and oppression, and access to opportunity and participation” (Allen, 2008). Within these community movements, social justice (in combination with other political topics such as accountability) is transformed into a food justice movement -- its focus: food access.

The challenge we face, then, is to show food justice activity among marginalized and underrepresented groups in a way that is relevant for all audiences. Using an ABCD approach, we recognized the importance behind the proper portrayal community’s own voice and opinions. Furthermore, the mode of delivery we used had to be easily accessible and easily relatable for people. Hence, in light of both, we will construct podcasts to best convey the festival’s message. These podcasts will feature interviews of the community members themselves. By allowing listeners to hear their stories directly, we minimize possible misinterpretation errors, by us as middlemen, had we decided to simply summarize what they said. With this, we must be careful in our editing process so as to not misrepresent their messages. In order to do this, we must further investigate the meaning behind food justice. Additionally, the element of conversation of these podcasts will contribute to its ability to relate to audiences. In short, our role in this project is not to transform their messages, but to facilitate their transmission.

Through this project, we hope to gain a clearer understanding of the complexities and interactions of food in social justice. In listening to their stories, we seek to recognize how one’s lifestyle, culture, neighbourhood, etc. can influence their view of food and its role in their lives. Finally, we look forward to witnessing the adaptability of the ABCD approach to this project, as our community partners continually strive to reach out to community members.

Objectives

- To create, document and share our experiences of the Sustenance Festival in Vancouver and our participation (March 2018) in it, through the creation of podcasts.
- To inspire inclusion within community during Sustenance Events held by city.
- To include underrepresented community groups and ethnicities via Asset-based Community involvement.
- To recognize pre-existing, undervalued community efforts in the food movement. Gather feedback and reflections from the core committee members who were involved in this process.

Methods

Create 3 podcasts (approx. 12 minutes each in length) each with a different theme related to the sustenance festival and it's goal for 2018 to be more inclusive of historically underrepresented ethnic groups in the Vancouver movement.

- The podcasts will include all five of our voices and be recorded at the Vancouver Public Library's Inspiration Lab.
- 5 C-1 condenser mics will be set up in the Terry McBride recording studio and Audacity or Garageband software will be used for editing.
- Our voices will be used to weave in pre-recording audio of interviews with community leaders from various under-represented groups.
- These groups will include the African Decent Society, South Vancouver Family Place and the Migrant Worker Dignity Association.
- The tone of the podcasts will reflect the asset-based (as opposed to need-based) approach of the Sustenance Festival by using language that draws attention and appreciation to the pre-existing examples of sustenance demonstrated by the various groups whose members are featured in the interviews
- Asking for more information and help from Learning Centre (ask Dunkin)

There will potentially be an opportunity to document a community event during the term put on by one of the community organizations and sponsored by Vancouver Parks. If an event goes ahead we will document it using audio recording devices rented from the LFS learning center.

- Who we interview and what questions we ask will depend on the nature of the event and who's involved, therefore it is to be determined.

References -- APA

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