

LFS 350

Gordon Neighbourhood House:

Community Food Hub Helpers Project Proposal

Group 13

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## **Introduction**

Services provided by charitable organizations may be categorized as short-term relief and many do not cater to the diverse health needs of individuals who need it. The Gordon Neighbourhood House's (GNH) Community Food Hub Program is a prime example of how both health and social benefits obtained through increased food literacy skills can contribute to community food security. Their goal is to help fortify community resilience through asset-based skill building which allows community members to take charge and make beneficial adjustments to their daily dietary practices. Physical barriers may prevent individuals from accessing charitable services. Therefore, having food literacy skills is a valuable asset that allows individuals to prepare food for themselves in the comfort of their own home. One of the main focuses of the food literacy workshops is on preservation methods because this will help community members to not only prolong the life of their produce but also save money as well by reducing the amount of food waste.

Based on the demographics of low-income households, GNH addresses the needs of community food insecurity by providing workshops to complement their Community Food Hub program. The West End, where GNH is located, is a densely populated, mainly residential area of downtown Vancouver, (City of Vancouver, 2012). As seen in Table 1, the West End has a much higher percentage of people age 20-39 compared to Vancouver. The average household size is also smaller compared with the rest of Vancouver. As such, individuals in this area may be faced with the challenge of preparing food for themselves and often without a support system to rely upon. Therefore, empowering these individuals with food literacy skills would be beneficial to their wellbeing.

2011	West End	City of Vancouver
<b>Age Groups</b>		
19 and under	6%	17%
20-39	48%	34%
40-64	34%	36%
65 and over	13%	14%

Figure 1. Comparative age demographics in the West End and Vancouver (City of Vancouver 2012)

### Significance

GNH strives to respond to the diverse needs of the community and contribute to their local food security as exemplified by the provision of a social space and educational opportunities for community members. A well rounded definition by Hamm and Bellows (2003) of community food security is “a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.” We can see that food justice is somewhat intertwined with the idea of community food security, as self-reliance and social justice are included in this definition. Food justice specifically focuses on sharing the benefits and disadvantages of a food system equally between all involved in it. The practicalities of planning managing, selecting, preparing, and eating food are considered food literacy, such as the preservation techniques our workshops will showcase (Vidgen & Gallegos, 2014). As you can see in Figure 2 (McCullum, Desjardins, Kraak, Ladipo, & Costello, 2005), the community food security continuum encompasses three stages. Many of the initiatives of the Gordon Neighborhood House can be recognized as part of the movement towards food security by classifying them with this table. For example, connecting urban agriculture with emergency food services is part of Stage 2: Food Systems in Transition. GNH clearly practices this through the Community Food Hub. The current literature does not concretely indicate which stage of the food security continuum food

literacy skill education falls under. However, we can speculate that it falls under the educational aspect of Stage 1 because introducing food literacy workshops will provide individuals with fundamental food literacy skills and increase their awareness of healthy eating.

Stage of continuum	Stage 1: Initial food systems change	Stage 2: Food systems in transition	Stage 3: Food systems redesign for sustainability <sup>a</sup>
<b>Strategies and activities</b>	<p>Counsel clients to maximize access to existing programs providing food and nutrition assistance, social services, and job training.</p> <p>Document the nutritional value of emergency foods.</p> <p>Identify food quality and price inequities in low-income neighborhoods.</p> <p>Educate consumers and institutions about the benefits of local, seasonal, and organic foods.</p>	<p>Connect emergency food programs with local urban agriculture projects.</p> <p>Create multi-sector partnerships and networks.</p> <p>Facilitate participatory decision-making and policy development through serving on food policy councils and organizing community-mapping processes and multistakeholder workshops.</p>	<p>Advocate for minimum wage increase and more affordable housing.</p> <p>Advocate for food labeling standards about product history (eg, place of origin, organic certified, Fair Trade certified<sup>b</sup>).</p> <p>Through participatory decision-making and policy development, mobilize governments and communities to institutionalize:</p> <p>(1) land use policies that facilitate large-scale urban agriculture;</p> <p>(2) market promotion and subsidies as a way to increase a community's food self-reliance and achieve nutrition goals; and</p> <p>(3) tax incentives and financing mechanisms to attract local food businesses to low-income neighborhoods.</p>
<b>Time frame</b>	Short term	Medium term	Long term
<b>Evaluation</b>	Data collection, monitoring, and evaluation are conducted at all stages of the community food security continuum.		

Figure 2. Stages of Community Food Security Continuum

**Objectives & Inquiry Questions**

- 1) Implement workshops that will showcase and emphasize the needed skills of the community food hub in order to improve food literacy and make knowledgeable choices.
- 2) Collect data from within the West End community in order to assess areas of need for further workshop implementation and improvement



Figure 3. Photograph of red peppers



Figure 4. Photograph of red cabbage

- Are the skills taught in the workshops at Gordon Neighborhood House truly making an engaging impact on West End's food security?
- How can the collected data and observations contribute to the amelioration of food security within the West End community?

### **Methods**

The six members of the Community Food Hub group are divided into two groups of three individuals. Each group will conduct one workshop spanning the duration of one Food Bank pickup Friday for approximately 4 hours (from 9:30am to 1:30pm). The first proposed workshop will teach community members how to dry herbs. The second proposed workshop will teach community members food storage techniques.

### **Data Collection**

Workshop participants will be provided with a feedback form (see Appendix) to be completed that include both general demographic and workshop feedback questions. In addition, one Community Food Hub group member will collect and record field notes utilizing the basic

pen and paper method. Field notes will include both quantitative and qualitative observations about the number of participants that attend the workshop, the number of participants who show genuine interest in the workshop, and the number of individuals who take workshop literature with them.

### **Data Analysis**

Responses from each question on the feedback form will be categorized and tallied. The results will then be entered into Microsoft Excel and a chart will be generated to illustrate the relative differences of responses received. Qualitative observations will be summarized and discussed in the Findings section of the final report.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations for both data gathered through the questionnaires and the observational field notes concern whether consent is required. Field notes are gathered by a non-participatory member of the research group. According to the Government of Canada's Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2) (2015), because the data obtained through both of these methods does not identify any specific individuals, thus, it does not require consent. In addition, according to TCPS 2 Article 10.3 (2015), the observation is conducted in an environment where individuals have a limited expectation of privacy.

### **Conclusion**

Through our research we hope to learn how food literacy can contribute to community food security, add to the current literature by defining at which stage of the community food security continuum food literacy is active, and how this education can be made the most accessible and useful specifically for the West End community.

### References

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## Appendix

### Sample Participant Feedback Form

1. Sex:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
2. Age:	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 – 24	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 64	<input type="checkbox"/> 65 and older	
3. How many people are living in your household?				
4. How many children (14 years and under) are living in your household?				
5. Are the resources provided by the Food Bank sufficient for your household until the next week/Food Bank event?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
6. How many times a week do you worry about your next meal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/> 1–3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4–6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7+
7. Did you find today's workshop beneficial/helpful?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	
8. Is language an issue in the workshops?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
9. What future workshops would you like to see?				
10. If you could change something from today's workshop what would it be?				