Riley Park “Potting Studio” Education Plan

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**Introduction:**

**Aim**:

Riley Park Community Garden, in agreement with the City of Vancouver, is permitted access to the pre-existing fieldhouse under the understanding that Riley Park will provide 350 hours per year of education programming for the community. The aim of this project is to contribute to the Riley Park Fieldhouse project by creating a framework for developing an education plan.The framework will describe a system in which the required 350 hours per year can be planned using assets from the community.

**Background:**

Previously, an LFS 350 group from 2016 worked on a related project at Riley Park. This group’s focus was on determining what the community wanted out of an education program at Riley Park Fieldhouse. The group created and carried out a survey for community members to participate in to identify barriers- especially demographic specific- and pinpoint benefits that a community education plan could include (Qi et al., 2016). Our LFS 350 project will utilize the knowledge generated by the previous group and incorporate it into a framework for developing an education plan.



**Context:**

The Riley Park Community Garden is located on East 32nd Ave east of Main Street. Nearby are many community amenities, including parks and sporting facilities. Main Street is also a cultural hub and is pedestrian-friendly with stores and restaurants. The Riley Park Community Garden focusses on the area within the boundaries of Knight and Cambie Street and between 16th and 41st Ave. In this area, the demographic varies widely among median age and also has a non—homogenous income level, with between 12.7% and 37.8% of households (depending on neighbourhood block) identified as Low Income Before Tax (Statistics Canada, 2009). The neighbourhood also varies in languages spoken, with parts having at most 52% of residents speaking English as a first language, which will be important when creating the education plan (Statistics Canada, 2009).

This project will follow the philosophy of Riley Park Fieldhouse “to create community space and social cohesion through participation, education, and events” (Riley Park Garden, 2017). The education plan is meant to bring community into a shared space, fostering social connections among community members. Appealing to the existing demographic in this community will be vital to finding success at the Riley Park Fieldhouse.

**Objectives:**

1. Identify potential community partners to give workshops at the Riley Park Fieldhouse by:
	1. Searching for and surveying local businesses and nonprofit organizations in the Little Mountain Neighbourhood
	2. Measuring responses to an application form placed on the Riley Park fieldhouse website
	3. Surveying community members at a community event such as a farmer’s market.

2. Identify barriers to community partners providing workshops and identify incentives that would overcome these barriers through the above mentioned survey methods.

**Inquiry questions:**

1. What community partners are willing and able to provide workshops at the Riley Park Fieldhouse and what types of workshops can they offer?
2. What barriers exist that prevent community partners from participating in the Riley Park Fieldhouse Education Plan?
3. What incentives would encourage community partners to provide workshops?

**Significance:**

*Impact of the Global Food System on Community Food Security*

Community Food Security is defined as “a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system” (Hamm & Bellows 2003).The growing distance between consumers and the food they eat has resulted in a diminished capacity to have agency over how food is produced. People of lower socioeconomic standing can have difficulty accessing local food, and by extension, the health benefits of these local products. (Schanbacher, 2014). Strengthening local connections to food, and shorter commodity chains, can therefore reduce some inequalities outlined above. This community-based food movement is not limited to farmers markets, it includes gardens and farms in spaces that are centered on accessibility by citizens (LaRiviere et al., 2003).

*Importance of Community-Based Food Organizations (CBFOs) and Community Gardens*

A CBFO’s role in local food systems is acting as an intermediary between various levels of government, NGOs and community organizations. This approach works by creating partnerships with businesses and community groups, and designing programs and policies for increasing food system access. (LaRiviere et al., 2003).

Community gardens are an important extension of CBFOs, and bridge gaps in how community needs are addressed and assets may be advanced. First, gardens help to transition food distribution from private to public places and have been used as an alternative model to the traditional Food Bank system (McCullum et al., 2005). Additionally, community gardens and associated public spaces can act as a vehicle to bring multiple stakeholders together in symbiotic relationships that further enhance community food security (McCullum et al, 2005). Finally, they allow for community engagement through activities to improve food security and policy and decision making involvement (McCullum et al, 2005). Organizations and spaces which strive to build the connections currently neglected by the contemporary food system help to build community assets and improve food security.

**Methods**:

* Create application form along with information sheet about what the Riley Park fieldhouse is searching for
* Actively contact community partners
* Evaluate interest of potential community partners
1. To answer *Question 1*, we will design an information sheet that will be uploaded onto the Riley Park Garden website, displayed in physical form on public bulletin boards at the Little Mountain Neighborhood House (LMNHS), and handed out at various community events. This information sheet will contain information about the Riley Park Garden and the new fieldhouse, and used as a means to 1) spread word of the new fieldhouse to community members, and 2) motivate interest in attending, and leading workshops. An application form will also be uploaded onto the Riley Park Garden website, available to interested community partners. Through these two forms, we aim to elucidate which community partners are willing and able to provide workshops, and the anticipated subject matter of each.
2. To answer *Question 2*, we will conduct inquiries over the phone and in person, at the aforementioned community events where the information sheet will be offered and passed out, in an attempt to gain an understanding to the barriers of hosting a workshop. During these inquiries, members of the research team will follow a script (please see Appendix 1). If the community partner rejects the opportunity to participate, we will ask them what barriers are preventing them from hosting a workshop.
3. To answer *Question 3,* we will end inquiries with a follow-up question, which will prompt suggestions as to how the Riley Park Garden or LMNHS can remove these barriers, and or, further incentivize participation for future workshops.

**References**

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Appendix 1: Script for Surveying Community Partners

Hello we are ( \_) from UBC and we are doing a quick survey on behalf of the Little Mountain Neighbourhood House. Little Mountain Neighbourhood House recently acquired a license to use the Fieldhouse in Riley Park. Under their agreement with the City of Vancouver they need to provide 350 hours of Education programming per year. Currently. Little Mountain Neighbourhood House is recruiting community partners to provide educational workshops in the Fieldhouse. We are doing a survey to help them identify community partners. May we ask you a few questions?

* Are you interested in providing a workshop in the Riley Park Field House?

If yes:

* What would the theme of your workshop be?
* How many hours/year of workshops are you able to provide?

If no:

* What prevents you from providing a workshop in the Riley Park Field House?
* Are there any incentives that would remove these barriers and encourage you to provide a workshop?

Thank-you very much for your time! If you have any more questions you may contact us at ( )