

Proposal Report: Sustenance Festival (Group 6)

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Introduction

The goal of this project is to document through film the research process employed by the Vancouver Parks Board in researching and determining barriers to participation and the under-representation of marginalized populations in the Sustenance Festival.

We will be working alongside the Vancouver Parks Board in the Sustenance Festival. The Vancouver Park Board is a municipal body in Canada and part of their mission strives to develop, enliven, enhance, and promote arts, culture, and cultural diversity in Vancouver (City of Vancouver, 2017). The Sustenance Festival is one of their annual events held to promote food, arts and culture. For the year 2017, parks staff are working on addressing the underrepresentation/exclusion of marginalized groups within Vancouver's broader "food movement" to strengthen Sustenance as a platform for intercultural food systems engagement. Often marginalized groups face the disproportionate effects of structural inequalities (such as racism and poverty) resulting in complex experiences of food insecurity (Sustenance Festival, 2017). The parks staff's current work strives to build on past successes of engaging culturally diverse groups and using asset-based exploration, as an alternative to needs-based development. This process includes appreciative inquiry and valuing social capital as a community asset (Sustenance Festival, 2017). Their work includes identifying barriers of participation, facilitating new project collaborations, and seeking out existing community food initiatives that have not been recognized in Vancouver's mainstream food movement. Our work is informed by two key concepts of food systems transformations – food sovereignty and food justice. Food sovereignty moves beyond the conception of food as a consumable commodity and includes a range of social justice concerns such as: food autonomy, ecological preservation, food system and policy issues, future generations, and gender and race equality (Noll, 2017). Food justice promotes a "transformation of the current food system, including but not limited to eliminating disparities and inequities", creating systems that reflect practices of decolonization (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010:xi). This project reflects the importance of integrating food justice principles and values into the Sustenance Festival, helping to strengthen cross-cultural community bonds and foster equity within Vancouver's food system.

Significance

Local food initiatives, concerned with promoting food sovereignty of marginalized communities, are increasingly becoming part of contemporary cities (Noll, 2017; Holt-Gimenez, 2011; DeLind, 2011; Guthman, 2011). Together food justice and sovereignty movements are committed to a specific goal of increasing local food community control of food systems and addressing a wide range of justice issues faced by marginalized communities in urban contexts, such as food deserts, biases in food system and food policy, and lack of urban spaces for food production (Noll, 2017; Holt-Gimenez, 2011). In relation to our project, understanding the complexities of these barriers and how they operate will allow us to strengthen ties between existing local food initiatives (Noll, 2017). By doing so, we hope to foster positive social transformation in Vancouver's food system.

Moreover, Allkon & Agyeman (2011) and Guthman (2011) highlight that many low-income neighborhoods and communities of color have been systematically excluded from these larger alternative food movements, which are being primarily led by white-middle class individuals (Holmes & Peterson, 2017). By documenting the Park Board's intercultural food systems engagement processes, we highlight the complex processes that can "allow for others to define the space and projects that will help spur the transformation to a more just and ecological way of providing food" (Guthman, 2011:276).

Through constructing networked partnerships that allow food justice groups to tell their stories to varied audiences and to create collaborative agendas, projects can meet the needs, interests, and visions of local residents (Broad, 2016). Broad (2016) argues that in order for food

justice movements to be optimally effective at the community level, in the policy arena, or in the market, more sophisticated digital media storytelling practices are necessary as food justice and food sovereignty movements are bound up with personal, spiritual and social identity. This project aims to address that gap in collaborative movement building through digital media storytelling by capturing and analyzing processes and narratives involved in community level relationship-building and the complexity of food injustice, its history, and its possible solutions (Broad, 2016). We see storytelling as a powerful tool for social change and further pay attention to the interpretive structures that may underpin how we hear and how we take up stories of oppressed groups (Razack, 1998).

Objectives

- To visually/video document a year-long process of research and relationship-building (December 2016-November 2017) that was undertaken by the Vancouver Parks Board specifically around the Sustenance Festival, to better understand and address the under-representation of marginalized groups in Vancouver.
- To attend and document sessions at the Vancouver Food Summit to tie the Sustenance Festival to the broader social movement for food system transformations in Vancouver.
- To gather feedback and reflections from the core committee members who were involved in this process.
- To create a video demonstrating and analyzing the developmental story of this process, this video will also be a means of recognizing and understanding the evolution of the Sustenance Festival. This documentation will be used as an example and a potential reference for intercultural food systems engagement processes.

Methods

- Video and audio documentation of speakers and attendees at the Vancouver Food Summit.
 - Two cameras positioned in the center of the room. One camera framing the screen and the speaker, the second camera framing more tightly on the speaker's podium.
 - During panel discussions one camera will be framing the entire panel, while the other frames tightly on the panel member who is speaking.
 - Shots of the room and attendees during breaks and lunch

This footage is for the benefit of the speakers and organizers of the Vancouver Food summit, and may not necessarily be directly used within this project, though it will be useful in terms of providing our group context for the project.

- Interviewing the coordinators and researchers at the Vancouver Parks Board- Rebecca Till, Brenda Racanelli, Stephanie Lim, Ian, and Jason - concerning their process of determining barriers to inclusion. We will be questioning the methods and the steps taken so far to reaching the outcomes of their research. Some pertinent questions here will be concerning:
 - how the inclusion/exclusion of certain communities was assessed
 - the grounds on which community leaders were selected to be research participants
 - the interview process undertaken by Stephanie Lim; the manner and setting of the interview, the mode of documentation, the questions asked
 - how the information gathered is being, or will be, integrated into Sustenance festival in order to increase inclusion.
- Analyzing the interviews of community leaders conducted by the Vancouver Parks Board contracted researcher, Stephanie Lim. Here we will be interested in participant's

thoughts and opinions on their respective community's barriers to inclusion. Comparing these interviews will give us a broader understanding of differing community perspectives on this issue, as well as the opportunity to find overlapping opinions.

- Aggregating video and audio footage, interviews, and other collected data into a video. This video will summarize the yearlong inclusion process that Sustenance Festival has engaged in, with all its successes and failures, in the hope that other community development groups can learn and benefit from the Parks board process when attempting to tackle similar issues.

Outcome(s)

- A video (5-10 minutes long) to showcase the process of relationship building and inclusion between the Vancouver Park Board and the under-represented communities through the Sustenance project.
- It will contain dialogue and reflections from the core committee members of the project, footage and pictures from the Vancouver Food Summit along with the audio interviews with the community member representatives.
- It will be used as a learning and reference tool for other organizations that might want to employ a similar approach.
- It could be published on the Park Board's website as a means to communicate the message to the general public.
- The video will be completed and delivered by the 3rd of December.

References

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