

Proposal Project

LFS350

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Introduction

The aim of this proposed project is to examine and address the issue of food insecurity among senior Afghan immigrants in the Burnaby Edmonds neighbourhood, through the identification of low cost, culturally appropriate food retailers within the community.

In recent years, the city of Burnaby has seen a considerable growth of 10% in population between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Over 50% of Burnaby residents were identified as immigrants and spoke a non-official language at home (Statistics Canada, 2011). According to Burnaby Public Library (2010), Burnaby was also the first place to settle for 23% of government-assisted refugees in BC. It is no exaggeration to say that Burnaby is a city defined by its diversity and multiculturalism. However, there are certain concerns associated with having a high number of immigrants. According to Sriram and Tarasuk, low income and having immigrant status are both risk factors for food insecurity (Sriram & Tarasuk, 2016), which is consistent with Health Canada findings that reported higher incidence of food insecurity in immigrant households (Health Canada, 2012).

This issue of food insecurity among immigrants raises particular concern within the Edmonds neighbourhood in Burnaby, where immigrants comprise of 59% of the population (City of Burnaby, 2006). Among them, senior immigrants are especially at risk of experiencing food insecurity, possibly due to lack of English skills, limitations in transportation, and being on a fixed low income, just to name a few. In this project, we focus our attention on the affordability and accessibility aspects of food security by attempting to identify low cost, culturally appropriate food retailers that can be accessed easily by public transportation.

The project is driven by Immigrant Services Society (ISS) of BC. ISS of BC is in charge of holding immigrant seniors “unheard voice” forum (2015), listening to their unique problems, taking steps ahead to help them solve those issues (being not familiar with the community, lack of availabilities to infrastructure, mobility issues) by advocating more language training programs, financial management supports, community capacity initiatives and culturally specific mental health supports, which could be realized with the collaboration of government, health authorities, community groups and seniors themselves.

Significance

Affordability and cultural differences are important aspects that are emphasized in this project. Affordability is closely related to food security. Most food insecurity problems originate from the lack of financial power to afford nutritious and sufficient food; which causes many physical, mental, and social health problems (Fact Sheets, n.d.). Researches

have found that food insecurity is associated with increased risk of lower nutrients intake, poorer health status, obesity, heart disease, hypertension, depression, behavioral problems, and suicide tendencies in children and teens (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015; Vozoris & Tarasuk, 2003)¹. Food insecurity has become a worldwide issues and many people and organizations are trying to solve this problem; such as FAO², USDA³, WHO⁴, and PROOF⁵.

Cultural difference is important and has to be considered because culture is a part of our identity that defines who we are and where we belong to (Weeks, 1990). In this project, we will be involved in a culturally and ethnically different community. As Ernesto Sirolli mentioned in his talk, “The first principle of aid is respect” (Sirolli, 2012). We have to respect the people we are giving help to by understanding and accepting the cultural difference between us. We are respecting their identity by helping them to discover food retailers that sell culturally appropriate food products.

This project focuses on Afghan immigrants, especially seniors, living in Edmonds neighbourhood in Burnaby. Most of them are supported by Old Age Security (OAS), which means they have a fixed income. However, the income they receive is not enough for their daily life. A lot of senior Afghan immigrants can only eat twice per day, thus they fall into the state of food insecurity. Providing them with information about affordable, culturally appropriate, and convenient to reach foods and food retailers will, hopefully, help them to become food secure.

Objectives

- To find and identify retailers that sell low-cost and halal products in the Burnaby Edmonds neighbourhood
- To prepare a recipe book and asset map for senior afghan immigrants

Inquiry Questions

- Where can low cost and culturally appropriate food products be found in the Burnaby Edmonds neighbourhood?
- How to record the data and how to analyze the prices of ingredients that obtained from each retailer ?

¹ For more information, see http://www.phsa.ca/population-public-health-site/Documents/Household%20food%20insecurity%20in%20BC_Fraser%20infographic.pdf

² For more information, see <http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>

³ For more information, see <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us.aspx>

⁴ For more information, see <http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/foodsecurity/en/>

⁵ For more information, see <http://proof.utoronto.ca/>

Methods

- A preliminary search on the internet will be conducted to identify stores in the Burnaby Edmonds neighbourhood that sell ingredients commonly found in Afghan cuisine.
- During October, our group members visited each store and searched for affordable products in order to determine if they meet the low-cost, easily accessible needs of the community.
- The prices of the target ingredients will be recorded and be summarized into a table by using excel. The availability of various ingredients and the price of each ingredient will be compared among the stores. We will also create bars and charts based on the analysis of data. These bars and charts, also the pictures, will be used afterward to present the results to the Afghan immigrants and others.
- A ranking list of the stores will be created. The store with wide range of least expensive items will rank higher in the list, and it will be more recommended to the Afghan immigrants. Also, the ranking list will be attached at the end of the asset map.
- Information collected will be presented in the form of an asset map, where the stores will be marked out on a map of the Burnaby/Edmonds neighbourhood, along with the relevant transit and average cost information. A recipe book of afghan cuisine will also be compiled, in both English and Dari.

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