



Nourishing Food Literacy, Community Health, and Sense of Place in Louisville, KY



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Background

The Food Literacy Project (FLP) has cultivated rich, experiential programming to address the lack of access to healthy nutrition opportunities in their community since 2006. In 2018, the organization received a 2-year, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grant to support programming and build community capacity in an area of Louisville, KY with health disparities.

Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the nutrition education and food system engagement programming, as well as the organization's ability to mobilize community capacity to address nutrition and food access challenges.



Methods

Qualitative data were collected through interviews and focus groups of program participants (youth who participated in summer and school-year programming and farming employment) and key stakeholders (community members, teachers, business owners, physicians, and legislators).

The interview and focus group sessions lasted approximately 30-60 minutes and were audio-recorded. Field notes of observations were recorded as well. All interview and focus group data were transcribed verbatim and compiled with data from field notes. Data were coded into emergent themes and discussion of the themes ensued until all researchers reached consensus.

Results

- ❖ A total of 15 individuals (7 youth and 8 key stakeholders) engaged in interviews or focus groups.
- ❖ **Emergent themes among youth included**
 - ❖ not realizing inequities regarding access to healthy foods in less affluent neighborhoods and
 - ❖ frustration with decision-makers not listening and addressing their needs.
- ❖ **Emergent themes among key stakeholders included**
 - ❖ significant concerns to avoid community mistrust and
 - ❖ an appreciation for The Food Literacy Project being a model program for youth development.



Conclusions

- ❖ The FLP is on-target to meet its overall mission of providing programming and building community capacity.
- ❖ Areas to focus future attention would be to
 - ❖ continue to offer excellent food literacy and leadership programming to give youth a voice and connect them with appropriate decision-makers and
 - ❖ include more community members in conversations and programming to continue to build community trust



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