

Identifying Opportunities for Collective Action Around Community Nutrition Programming Through Participatory Systems Science

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INTRODUCTION

- Higher nutrition-related health disparities in immigrant communities, exacerbated by food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic

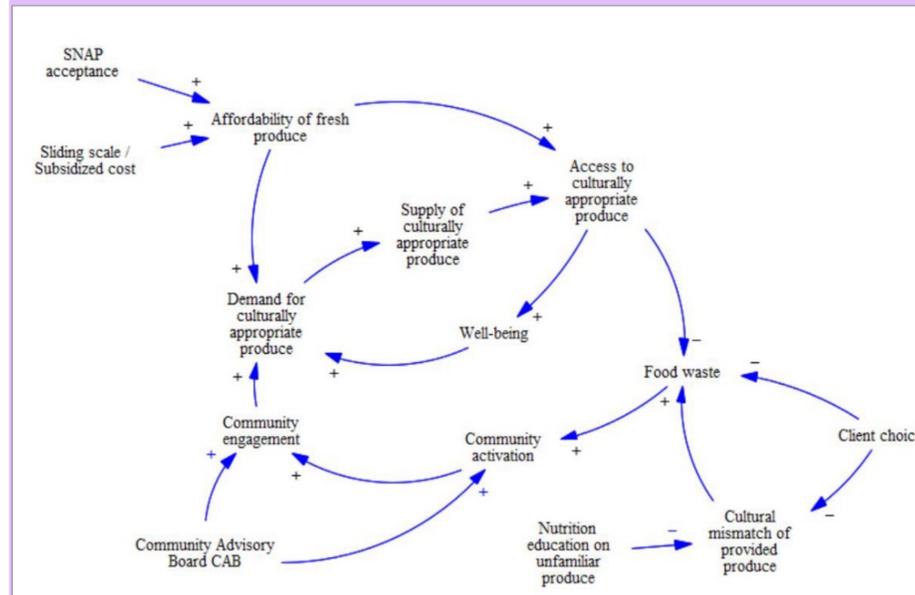
OBJECTIVE

- To apply principles of group model building (GMB), a participatory systems science approach, to identify barriers and opportunities for collective impact around nutrition programming in immigrant communities in an urban environment

METHODS

- Informed by GMB practice – four in-person sessions with 10 community partners organized around their program domains/goals:
 - 1) Community gardening
 - 2) Nutrition education
 - 3) Community-supported agriculture
 - 4) Future planning for food-related programming
- Participants prompted to collaboratively identify programmatic goals, challenges, and potential mitigating actions
- Generated a causal loop diagram (CLD) – a visual representation of hypothesized causal relationships between variables and feedback structures within a system – for each program domain
- CLDs validated, simplified, and refined with community stakeholder input

SIMPLIFIED MERGED CLD MODELS*



*GMB standard CLD representation was adapted to meet the needs of community stakeholders: causal factors were added to the CLDs to represent potential areas for intervention and help facilitate discussions around collective action

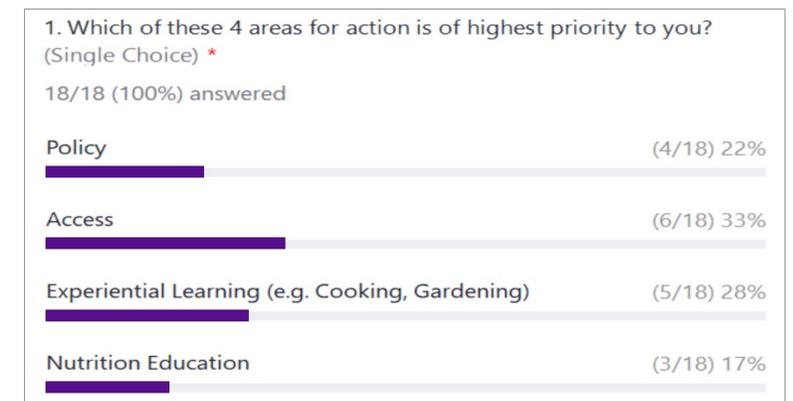
CROSS CUTTING THEMES AND OUTCOMES

Key Health Outcomes	Key Areas for Action
Food waste	Nutrition education
Food security	Policy change
Health & wellbeing	Food access
Community capacity building/empowerment	Experiential learning (cooking, gardening)

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RESULTS

- All CLDs synthesized into one comprehensive model to identify relationships between systems, shared challenges, and opportunities for collective action
- The GMB workshops pivoted to consider the CLDs in applied settings and allowed time for community partners to discuss how to translate the CLD findings into action
- Plenary session with community stakeholders: refine models and poll to identify key health outcomes and areas for action of highest priority



DISCUSSION

- Intervention priorities: embed cultural tailoring into all levels of the food system → requires coordinated actions around food policy advocacy, collectively identifying funding for culturally tailored community education and gardening, and community-academic research to support these actions.
- CLDs offer an opportunity for community partners to form relationships and strategically network with each other, and to translate GMB practices and CLDs to actionable goals