Building Healthy Communities through Food: An Overview of Community Food Systems

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Learning Outcomes: By the end of the day, you will be able to...

- Define a Community Food System.
- Describe five attributes of a Community Food System.
- Describe four ways that a Community Food System contributes to a healthy community.
- Describe three examples of community-based food projects.
Let’s Map Your Food System

- Start from the center of your paper.
- Start drawing the places where you get food.
  - Include all the places where you purchase, grow, procure, or eat food.
- Where would you get food if you had no money or couldn’t buy it?
Mapping Your Food System

- We’d like you to compare your map with your neighbor:
  - What are the differences and similarities?
  - What is the main source of food? (Circle this)
    - Where did the food come from? How did the food get here? Why did it happen this way?
  - What are the sources of healthy and unhealthy food? (Label these “H” and “U”)
  - What are the sources of local food? (Label these “L”)

Mapping Your Food System

- Big group Shout-outs
  - What did you notice about these maps?
  - What was the most interesting finding for you?
  - Do most of you know where your food is coming from?
Mapping Your Food System

What is your main source of food? Where did that food come from? How did the food get here? Why did it happen this way?
Mapping Your Food System

- What are the sources of healthy and unhealthy food? (Labeled “H” and “U”)
- What are the sources of local food? (Labeled “L”)
- How would you improve your food map/food system to make your community healthier?
Now you know your food system a little bit, what can make your food system healthy for you and your community?

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS
What do we know about CFS?

- **Community** = A unified body of individuals
  - People with common interests or a common characteristic
  - People living in a particular area

- **Food**

- **Food System**
What do we know about CFS?

- **Community**

- **Food** has many attributes:
  - physical -- eat to survive/very basic
  - cultural -- taboos and tastes
  - social -- parties, holidays, meals

- **Food System**
What do we know about CFS?

- Community
- Food
- Food System
  - the whole set of people, relationships, institutions and entities involved in how we grow, process, distribute and market the food we eat.
A community food system is...

- one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular place. It is a long-term goal toward which many communities are striving.

  Steven Garrett and Gail Feenstra. 1999.
Attributes of Community Food Systems

- Community-centered
- Relational
- Place-based
- Participatory
- Healthy
- Includes citizen-eaters
- Supportive of the Local Economy
CFS take time to build...

- Knowledge
  - how to grow, process, market, distribute and cook food that is connected to people in a particular place and time.

- Infrastructure
  - Rebuild and create
  - This includes everything from land, equipment, trucks, storage, and retail spaces to regulations, policies and education.
What are some possible projects to build CFS?

- Create a directory of sources of local food
- Teach eaters about regional diets
- Link local farmers with school food programs and other institutions
- Encourage farmers and consumers get involved in Community Supported Agriculture
- Establish farmers markets in low-income areas
- Build alliances between farmers, processors and grocery stores to feature local products
Outcomes of Community Food Systems

- **Better Nutrition and Health!** Increased consumption of nutrient dense foods coupled with a decrease in nutrition-related diseases like diabetes and obesity.

- **Improved Local Economy!** Increased number of viable farms, processors and stores contributing to the local economy.

- **Self-reliant, Food-Secure Community!** Decreased number of people needing emergency food provisions and increased consumption of local foods in all parts of the community.
For more information....

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