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Trinidad, A.M.O., Camden, H., & Coleman, A. (2015). Improving access to food systems among communities of color: a food justice issue. Portland, OR: Center to Advance Racial Equity, Portland State University.

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Improving Access to Food Systems Among Communities of Color: A Food Justice Issue

Report to the Oregon Food Bank

April 2015 Final Draft

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Research contract with the Oregon Food Bank.



Citation: Trinidad, A.M.O., Camden, H., & Coleman, A. (2015). *Improving access to food systems among communities of color: a food justice issue*. Portland, OR: Center to Advance Racial Equity, Portland State University.

Abstract

Food insecurity and access among communities of color is a major social and health issue. Limited studies rooted in Oregon exist to assist practitioners, policy makers, and scholars in understanding food insecurity and access among recent immigrants and refugees. Using a multiple qualitative methods approach, this study has three major aims: 1) to understand the food access issues, particularly barriers and opportunities, among refugees and immigrants; 2) to investigate the challenges and opportunities of immigrants and refugees in accessing systems that are culturally responsive to their needs and; and 3) to address the gaps of service delivery targeted for communities of color and explore potential opportunities for partnership and creating culturally responsive approaches. To address the first two aims, data was drawn from a photovoice with recorded dialog among youth-parent pairs and a “talking circle” with five refugee families. Additionally, to address the latter two aims, data was drawn from a service providers’ focus group, of five service providers in the Portland area and one individual interview with a city government worker. Content analyses were done with the photos and transcripts of the family dialogs and “talking circle,” service providers’ focus group, and the individual interview. Findings indicate emerging themes on the utilization of cultural resources in the community, stress and strain among refugee families, structural or organizational barriers or challenges to being culturally responsive, and opportunities for school and community-based partnerships. Implications and recommendations for culturally responsive approaches and ways to better serve communities of color pertaining to food security and access initiatives are provided.

INTRODUCTION

With funding by the Oregon Food Bank (OFB), the Portland State University's (PSU) Center to Advance Racial Equity (CARE) was tasked to conduct a small study on food access among immigrants and refugees. Oregon is a designation for many refugees. According to the Oregon State Department of Human Services¹, 61,431 refugees have resettled in Oregon since 1975. A great number of them come from Southeast Asia (42.7%) [e.g., from Vietnam (27.6%), Laos (9.44%), and Cambodia (5.66%)] and the former Soviet Union (31.46%). Other refugees came from Cuba (4.85%), Romania (3.36%), Somalia (3.05%), Bosnia (2.35%), Burma (1.73%),² Bhutan (1.20%), and Afghanistan (1.17%). According to Refugee Processing Center², the refugee arrivals in Oregon during the last year (fiscal year 2014 through September 2014) included 19.82% from Iraq, 12.66% from Thailand, 9.72% from Kenya, 9.62% from Nepal, and 8.73% from Ethiopia.

Many of them settle in Cully, Powell-Lent areas, the Jade District (SE Portland), and East Portland/Gresham. Based on the 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, these areas estimated that 20%-45% of its residents were foreign born (see Map 1: Foreign Born Residents in Portland Areas). Specifically, the Cully area (Census Tract 76) in Multnomah County estimated that 33.6% of its residents were foreign born. Among the foreign born residents (n=1192), 54% were born in Mexico, 13.2% in Kenya, 5.3% in other East African countries, 8% in Vietnam, 3.6% in the Philippines, 4.6% in Oceania (Pacific Islanders), and 4% in Russia (U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2015).

Likewise, the Powellhurst-Gilbert area (Census Tract 83.01) in Multnomah County estimated that 44.7% of its residents were foreign born (U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2015). Among the foreign born residents (n=1943), 32% were born in China, 17.7% in Vietnam, 10% in Russia, 9% in Mexico, 5% in other East African countries, 5% in the Philippines, 3% in Kenya, 2% in Cambodia, and 1% Saudi Arabia (U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2015³).

The local geographic environment or place in which immigrants and refugees live provide access (or not) to food systems. The 2014 Report Card on Racial and Ethnic Disparities identified three communities of color (Black/African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders [alone or in combination with another race], and Latinos [all races]) in Multnomah County that fared poorly in regards to geographic disparities related to food systems (Multnomah County Health Department, 2014). The analysis used the Retail Food Environment Index (RFEI) Ratio of less healthy food retail outlets to healthier retail food outlets. The RFEI captures the availability and access to food in a local geographic environment, which influences people's diets. Findings indicate Multnomah County census tracts that had at least 15% of total tract populations of those communities of color (Black/African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Latinos) had estimated RFEI scores that were 2-3 times higher (less healthy) than census tracts with 90% or more non-Latino

¹ see <http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/assistance/pages/refugee/data.aspx>

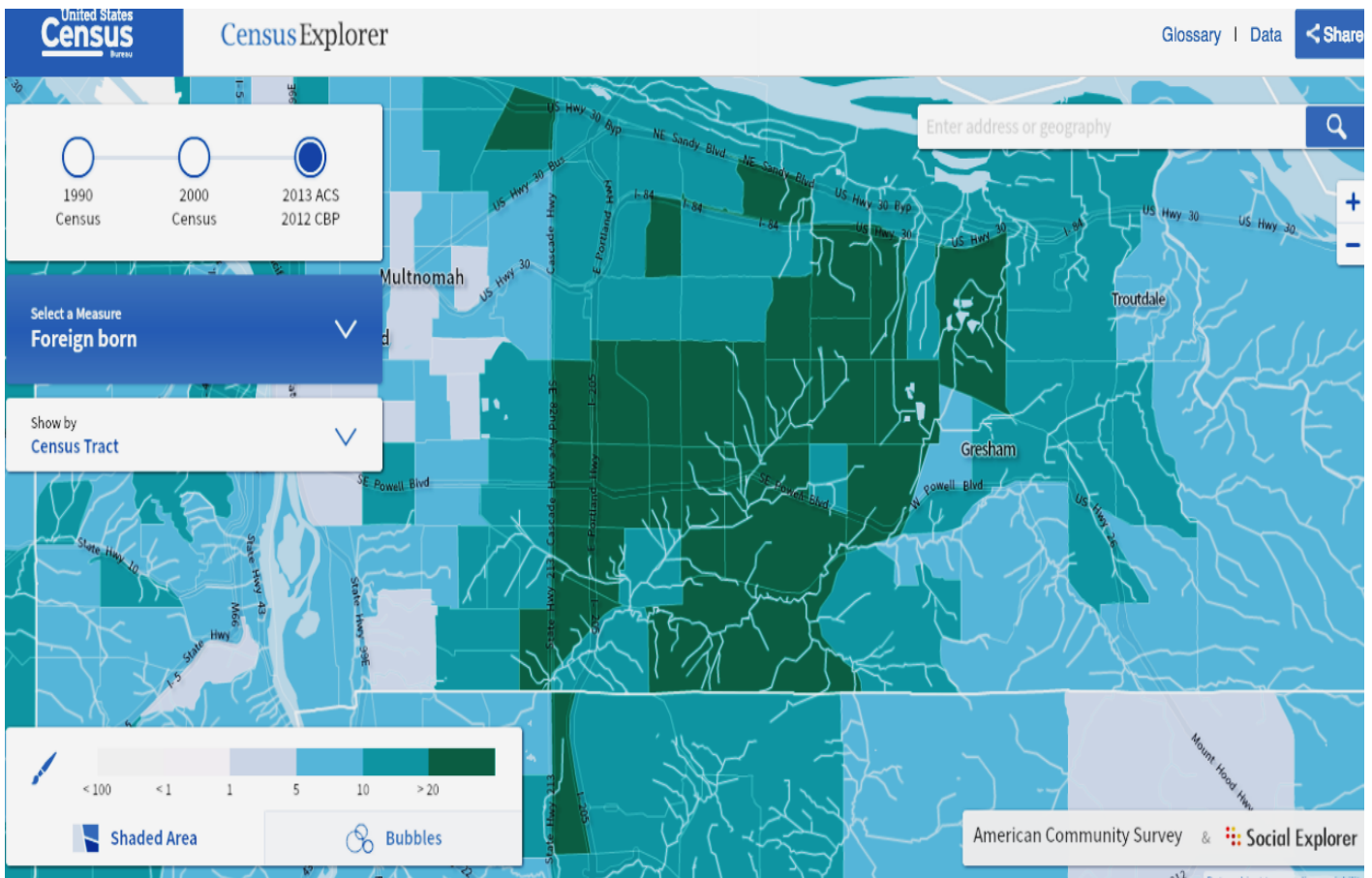
² see <http://www.wrapsnet.org/Reports/AdmissionsArrivals/tabid/211/Default.aspx>

³ Research team consulted with PSU's Population Research Center, and they were able to provide data only for only two census tracts (Cully and Powellhurst-Gilbert). Specific inquiries were unable to be done due to small sample sizes.

White populations. Specifically, census tracts with high proportion of Asian/Pacific Islanders are located in geographic areas with less healthy food environment--East Portland and NW Portland. Census tracts with high proportion of Latinos are located in geographic areas with moderately healthy to less healthy food environment--North Portland and east Multnomah County (Multnomah County Health Department, 2014).

The demographic rates indicate demographic shifts in Oregon, and present growing diversity and inclusion issues. Coupled with the analysis of healthy food environment, geographic disparities among communities of immigrants and refugees exist and is of major concern. The current food systems for such populations do not meet their needs. Hence, a call for services and programs to be more culturally responsive informs the study's aims to understand the needs of refugees and immigrants regarding food access and food insecurity issues (e.g., hunger). To better create programs or approaches that are more culturally responsive to the needs of communities of color, identifying the opportunities and challenges to food access by community members themselves is the focus of this study. Additionally, the same must also be captured by service providers, who are at the front line in creating potential change.

Map 1: Foreign Born Residents in Portland Areas



This report begins with a brief literature review on the issues that refugees and immigrants face in regards to food access and insecurity. The literature review informs the current research aims of the study. Data for this study was gathered using a multi-method qualitative research design. To examine how recent immigrant and refugee families learn, identify, and access cultural resources and/or programs in the community related to food, a youth-asset approach was utilized and included a family photovoice component, paired youth-parent dialog, and a “talking circle” for the families. To understand the opportunities and challenges that service providers face when serving recent immigrants and refugees, a focus group was conducted. Findings of this study provide insights on culturally responsive approaches to, infrastructural needs and organizational readiness in addressing the needs of refugee and immigrant communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Three bodies of literature inform this study. Past literature on food and culture provide insights on how food is deeply embedded in culture, cultural identities, and ways of being. Literature on the immigrants’ and refugees’ transition to life in the U.S. and their foodways (pathways to access food and food systems) highlights the need to examine how such communities perceive their rights, entitlements, choices, and quality of life in connection to perception of “membership(s)” to communities in a new geographic locale. Lastly, the literature on the refugee and immigrant experience and the challenges faced in addressing food insecurity shed light on the alarming impact of historical trauma as a social determinant of health.

Food and Culture

Food is an essential component of one’s culture and cultural identities, as well as a way of life. Levkoe (2006) indicates,

“Food is a social and cultural expression of individuals [and groups]. Through food we can better understand our histories, our cultures, and our shared future. Food connects us to the ecological systems and can teach us about the world we live. We also use food as a way to get in touch with our deepest desires or to examine political and social relations within society” (p. 89).

What we eat, how we eat, and when we eat reflect the complexity of wide cultural arrangements around food and foodways, the unique organization of food systems, and existing social policies” (Koc & Welsh, 2002, p. 1). Food plays a deeper role in one’s individualism and social influences. Food is a venue for creating and performing cultural norms and values, including food taboos and identification of “otherness” through food (Koc & Welsh, 2002). Patterns of change & resistance in food preferences offer insights about tendencies for acculturation, assimilation, adaptation, social distancing, integration and consequent improvements or risks to quality of life (Capella, 1993; as cited in Koc & Welsh, 2002).

Refugees' and Immigrants' Transition and Foodways

Refugees and immigrants move between geographic, cultural, psychological boundaries and spaces; they possess a transitional status as they engage with the dominant and other minoritized racial or ethnic groups. These dynamics influence food intake and consumption, as well as foodways. Literature indicates that food choices need to be analyzed through the use of a global framework that goes beyond the social and cultural contexts of the country of destination or country of origin ((Bouchet, 1995; Cook & Crank, 1996, as cited in Koc & Welsh, 2002). Literature also suggests that a need to examine not only familiarity but accessibility to food and food systems, as well as rights, entitlements, and choices as they impact the quality of life. These factors have effects on health and well-being. Additionally, literature demonstrates the need to understand how immigrants and refugees perceive their social membership to community and reconstruct their identities and social locations (Koc & Welsh, 2002). Food banks were not considered as a means of accessing food, and were at times viewed as stigmatizing and intrusive by recent immigrants and refugees ((Koc & Welsh, 2002).

The Immigrant and Refugee Experience: Historical Trauma and Social Determinants of Health

Food insecurity is “the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so” (Baker et al., 2001, p. 9). Unavailability or high costs of foods used in traditional diets, changes in lifestyle and working conditions, and pressures for integration to new culture results in dietary modifications and negative impact on health (Hung, 1995; Hrboticky & Kronl, 1984; Yi Ling, 1999; as cited in Koc & Welsh, 2002). For example, in a recent study of 49 Sudanese refugee families refugee in the U.S., 70% of the households had recent experience some degree of food insecurity and 12% reported child hunger within the last month (Anderson, Hadzibegovic, Moseley, & Sellen, 2014).

Immigrants and refugees pick up mainstream Western ways of eating while retaining certain features of their traditional diets are plagued by over-consumption, obesity, diabetes, hypertension and other chronic diseases (Lang, 1992; Pan & Huffman, 1999; Raj et al., 1999; as cited in Koc & Welsh, 2002; Tiedje, et al., 2014). Second and third generation immigrant youth are increasingly faced with obesity. A U.S. study reported a high occurrence of food insecurity among Latino and Asian legal immigrants. More than one in three immigrant households that suffered from hunger in varying degrees. Food insecurity among Asians and Asian Americans also led to health issues, by the over-consumption of the Western diet. Asian immigrant groups, except for Chinese and Filipinos, ate twice the proportion size leading to obese children from the first and second generation (Williamson, 1998).

As a sociopolitical group, immigrant and refugee families live with their traumatic experiences of humanitarian disasters, war, and human rights violations. In the process of relocation and acculturation, they face challenges in navigating through the food systems. Non-income, illiteracy, identity threat, cultural beliefs, religion, and family dynamics are stressors and barriers that immigrant and refugee communities. The few U.S.-based studies focusing on food insecurity, suggest that resettled refugees show high levels of poverty, commonly experience food insecurity, and describe difficulty navigating the food-related

environment (Hadley, Patil, & Nahayo, 201)). Such difficulty is manifested in several ways, which include challenges in identifying food in stores, knowing a range of recipes, and concerns over not knowing how to prepare a meal with “American foods.”

RESEARCH AIMS

Considering the literature review and the demographic shifts among the refugee and immigrant populations in Oregon, the research aims include the following:

1. investigate the barriers and opportunities in accessing the food systems in Oregon
2. identify the challenges and opportunities of recent immigrants and refugees in Oregon in accessing systems that are culturally responsive to their needs
3. address the gaps in service delivery targeted for recent immigrants and refugees
4. develop recommendations for food security initiatives that target the community-identified needs of immigrants and refugees

To highlight the voices of recent refugee and immigrant families and youth, the study utilizes a community-based approach to gathering information on how programs or services that link immigrant and/or refugee clients to food systems in the community. The primary goal was to gather information on how refugee and immigrant families and youth learn, find, and gain access to the resources and/or community programs related to food. Existing resources and/or programs were investigated to determine how they met the cultural and social needs of the community. Perceptions and insights of daily routines and practices within the community regarding food were the focus. Additionally, the role of community-based organizations, their programs or services, and their structure and processes leading to effectively linking and connecting immigrants and/or refugees to food systems were investigated. Most importantly, community partnerships that can be developed to provide culturally responsive food access for immigrants, refugees, and other communities of color were explored and recommendations were solicited to assist OFB’s strategic planning.

METHOD

The study involved a focus group of service providers who serve immigrants and refugees, a photovoice with recorded dialog in pairs comprised of a youth/young adult and older adult, and a "talking circle" for the pairs. The focus group of service providers examined their perceptions of organizational processes and structure regarding the linkage to the food systems in Oregon. Additionally, it examined the perceptions of opportunities and barriers to culturally responsive strategies for addressing food insecurity among communities of color, specifically recent immigrants and refugees.

Utilizing a community-based empowerment approach, the photovoice with recorded dialog, and the “talking circle” examined the lived experiences of members of the immigrant

and refugee communities, specifically a pair that consists of a youth/young adult and an older adult from the same family or racial/ethnic group regarding access to food systems in the community or neighborhood. The photovoice with a recorded dialog component examined the participant's perceptions on existing community resources and assets focused on potential culturally responsive strategies in accessing food systems in Oregon. Additionally, the photovoice and “talking circle” captured insights, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of daily practices and rituals surrounding food.

Demographic Questionnaire and Sample Questions

A demographic questionnaire for families/youth and adult service providers was administered. The guidelines for the photovoice, and sample questions in the paired dialog for youth and caregiver, family “talking circle,” and the service providers’ focus group are discussed below.

Demographic information. The study solicited self-identified demographic information such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status or class, highest level of education or schooling, language(s) spoken, religious affiliation, neighborhoods, and current occupation or job. This was collected from the youth, caregivers, and service providers before the family “talking circle” and service providers’ focus group.

Guidelines for family photovoice and paired dialog. Each youth and caregiver were provided a general overview of the guidelines for the photovoice component of the study. It was recommended by a community-based organizational partner, that to make the photovoice more relevant and meaningful, the research team should train the youth on the process of taking the photos and facilitating the paired dialog with a caregiver. With that suggestion, the team conducted a one-time training for the youth on the operation and use of the cameras and digital recorders. The youth were instructed how to capture places, resources, or things in their homes and communities that hold significant cultural relevance and meaning regarding food access. Examples such as favorite foods and places where they go shopping were provided.

Sample questions for the family paired dialog. The youth were then presented sample questions to use for the paired dialog with their parent or caregiver. The paired sample questions included the following:

1. Share 2-3 stories with each other regarding access to food in the community or neighborhood.
2. Where are your favorite places to eat, obtain, or buy food? Why?
3. Where are your favorite places to eat, obtain, or buy food that are part of your culture? Why?
4. Share with each other differences in what you cook and eat based on your culture, years you have been in the United States, or the generation (e.g., youth, adult, or elder, , 1st, 2nd, etc.) you are a part of as you make Oregon your new home.

5. *For the adult or elder:* Share essential or key information that you want to pass onto the next generation based on cultural or traditional values or beliefs regarding food.
6. What kind of traditional food have you and your family adopted into your practice or daily activities? What are they?
7. What do you see as important traditional foods to eat based on your culture? What are your thoughts on food that are popular in the U.S.(e.g., Western diet like hamburgers, steak, etc.)? What are your thoughts about preserving the cultural foods relevant or important to you and your family?

The youth were encouraged to ask the questions during or after the photovoice segment. They were trained to paraphrase the questions. The dialog was recorded and transcribed.

Sample questions for family “talking circle.” A week was provided for the youth and caregivers to complete the photovoice and paired dialog as a family. A family “talking circle” was scheduled the following week. The research team utilized the following questions as guidelines in probing the family’s perceptions of their lived experiences:

1. Please share the places you went. How far or near did you have to travel? Where are they located?
2. Please share the places that you identified as strengths or assets in the community or neighborhood that help you and your family access your traditional or cultural food. Where are they located? How did you learn about them? How did you find information about them?
3. What are the challenges or barriers you and your family have faced in obtaining access to your cultural or traditional food? How are you able to find ingredients or produce that are relevant to your culture? What are your thoughts on the expenses or costs of food relevant to your culture?
4. What has helped in the process and preparation of meals or foods relevant to you and your family?
5. What are some of the changes in diet and food you and your family have had to make? How have these changes impacted you and your family? Have you and your family had to change your food lifestyles? If so, how and what are those changes? Why or why not?
6. What are some of the special traditional foods that you used to prepare or cook, but can’t since living/moving to Oregon? From your perspective, what kind of habits, behaviors, or routines regarding food have you and your family had to change since living/moving here?
7. What are your thoughts on how to better access food relevant to your community and culture? How can the organizations or services provided to you improve to better meet your needs regarding food?

The “talking circle” included both caregivers and youth whose dialog was recorded, and transcribed.

Sample questions for the service providers' focus group. A service providers' focus group took place on a given day for approximately two hours. The following sample questions were used to probe their perceptions and experiences:

1. What is your organizational process in sharing information with recent immigrants and refugees regarding food? How does a recent immigrant or refugee/person of color you work with learn about the food resources in the community?
2. What is your organizational process in sharing information to recent immigrants and refugees regarding food relevant to their cultural (racial, ethnic, etc.) background? How do you link immigrants/refugees to food relevant to their cultural background(s)?
3. What are the strengths of the process or structure in which your organization serves immigrants and refugees/communities of color regarding food? What are the areas of improvements in the process or structure in which your organization serves immigrants and refugees/communities of color regarding food?
4. What existing partnerships in the community regarding food does your organization have in place? What are your recommendations to better coordinate or strengthen community partnerships regarding food systems that are culturally responsive to immigrants and refugees/communities of color?

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Recruitment

Recruitment strategies included email, phone call, or word of mouth. The research team collaborated with the OFB staff who assisted in identifying a broad spectrum of service providers and community members in Portland to serve as potential study participants. The research team contacted service providers and community members and solicited their participation into the study. With the leadership of a faith-based, community-based organization, five families (who identified as recent refugees or immigrants to Oregon) and their youth were successfully solicited to participate.

Study Participants

Family Photovoice, Paired Dialogs, and "Talking Circle." Five families (total of 10 individuals) who recently relocated to Portland participated in the photovoice component. The same families participated in the paired dialog. One family decided not to participate in the paired dialog, but was happy to have the youth participate in the family "talking circle." The youth and caregivers/parents were from diverse backgrounds. Three families were Africans (e.g., Ethiopian, Congolese, and Somalian), one Nepali, and one Karen (from Thailand). The youth were all females, with the average age of 15.4 years old. The parents/caregivers in the study included 3 females (mothers), and 2 males (one father, and the other an uncle). The average age of the parents/caregivers was 40 years old.

Self-identified occupations included janitor, housekeeper, and stay home parents. Religious backgrounds included Muslim (n=2 families), Catholic (n=1 family), and Christian (n=1 family). The average family household was 7.8 members.

Service Providers Focus Group and Individual Interview. Six service providers in Portland were part of the study. They included four females and two males. Regarding race and ethnicity, three self-identified as Caucasian/White, one Asian/Lao, one mixed Asian, and one African-American/Black. When asked how they identified in regards to socio-economic status, three identified as middle class/“living with enough,” two identified “living with more than enough,” and one identified as “working class.” When asked about the highest level of education, one identified having some college, one with an associate degree, one with a bachelor degree, and two with a master’s degree (e.g., social work) or professional degree (e.g., juris doctorate). In regards of language usage, half (n=3) spoke English only and the other half (n=3) spoke English and other languages. When asked what type of organizations or agencies in which they are employed, five participants indicated faith-based organizations, and one indicated city government. All held positions in middle management or coordination.

Content analysis

The content of the photos and transcriptions of the family paired dialogues, the family “talking circle,” and the service providers’ focus group were analyzed using a combination of inductive and deductive techniques aimed at building working conceptual models. Open and axial coding, constant comparison, and conceptual framework sampling procedures from an interpretive method called *grounded theory* were used to construct categories and identify major relationships in the analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Building on a symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective (Hollander & Howard, 2000; Stryker, 1987), a critical indigenous interpretive stance (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; L. Harvey, 1992) was used to interpret the participants’ implicit and explicit meanings and experiential views on their contexts.

FINDINGS

Family Photovoice, Paired Dialog, and “Talking Circle”

Triangulating the data from the family photovoice, paired dialog with youth and caregiver/parent, and “talking circle,” findings indicate three major themes that emerged from the voices of recent refugee and immigrant families in Portland (see Figure 1 below): 1) utilization of cultural resources; 2) strain and stress; 3) opportunities for school and community-based partnerships.

Figure 1: Emerging Themes from Family Photovoice, Paired Dialog, & “Talking Circle”



Utilization of Cultural Resources

Findings indicate that all of the families who participated in the study were not aware of the Oregon Food Bank and the various programs it has in the communities. Both youth and caregivers or parents cited the various places in which they purchased their food. They included the mini-markets in close proximity to their geographic community, particularly ones that sold halal meats and other culturally relevant foods and ingredients. For example, a middle-aged male caregiver (an uncle) shared,

And when you are here for the first time, you are going to Priests Court street and 42nd. There is a store there, and I don't recall the name. There we are finding the banana, and some malino, and sometimes some pan bola, because we eat cassava leaf, and we find that over there. So you can drive or if you don't have your own car, and if you are new, you take bus. And if the bus doesn't come to you or is far from your home, you take your luggage or your... So we used to do that before we bought our own cars. So then it is when you are used to the city and asking people that will tell you so you don't have to go that far and you can just get bananas this time. But even though they sometimes [don't have] the quality of the food; you can't find everywhere. So you have to search to find other ones.

Additionally, cultural grocery stores (e.g., small Somalian grocery stores in the neighborhood on 82nd; Fubonn and smaller Asian stores on 82nd Street in Portland; Maung Mingala International Mart on 122nd and SE Division) were highly utilized due to the fact they carried affordable or quality produce, meats (e.g., goat, beef), and cultural ingredients and spices. For example, an Ethiopian, middle-aged mother shared, “I am going for the store of Somali that buys beef, goat, so my family is not eating beef [right now, because it’s Ramadan], just goat meat and buy whole goat. Buys one goat.” Many families indicate that they learned about these cultural grocery stores from community members in their ethnic groups who have lived in Portland longer than they have. Findings indicate that they also utilized mainstream grocery outlets (e.g., Fred Meyer, Safeway, Winco, Walmart, and Costco) as they were geographically accessible, or affordable. For example, a Somalian, female youth indicated,

We go to Winco. And if sometimes, we run out of stuff and we don't need to fully shop, we just go to Safeway and just buy things. Just for like small things. [We go to Safeway on Powell]. And if we run out of food, then we just go grocery shopping at Winco food and Somali stores to buy stuff too.



Participants also shared how they seek out a farm where they can purchase whole animals like goats. As a middle aged, Congolese male caregiver (an uncle) indicated,

So here too if you want to eat the fresh goat meat, you have to drive far from here, like to Southern Oregon, or Woodburn, so over there you will find the farms. The farmers there will cut the meat. I remember one time I drove her (xx mother) over to Southern Oregon. We went there to buy goat, live [goat], and then they cut it for us. So the other thing about culture is that, you have people who end up in small families, like father, mother, two kids, three kids. And then some of us where you

have more than 10 people in the family. So you have a vision, you don't go to the market every day and buy things, you have to buy things in bulk, so that is why sometimes you can see that we go to big stores and sometimes we go to small stores. And like here, what she was saying you can just buy goat meat, the goat meat from Australia, you can go to the stores here and get it, but if you need the fresh one, you go to Salem, Woodburn to the farms.

This, as indicated by participants, seem to be an affordable option and prepared based on their religious background (e.g., Muslim; halal meats). Additionally, participants are able to coordinate among themselves in using this option.

The Nepali family in the study has a family garden in Milwaukie, which was provided by another non-profit organization, Mercy Corps. The family plants vegetables, and sells them at the Farmer's Market, including one at PSU. The same family also shares some of the vegetables with their neighbors, including some families in this study. The entire family works on the garden. An Ethiopian family in the study obtains some produce from her aunt, who plants peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, and radishes.

Strain and Stress

Findings indicate three sub-themes as participants face stress and strain: 1) financial strain; 2) loss of cultural foodways and lack of access to cultural food; 3) the burden of meeting multi-generational food needs; and 4) concerns about health due to the Western diet.

Financial strain. Findings indicate that most families who were part of the study experience financial strain. Due to the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) referred to as food stamps, some participants deal with constant negotiation, as a middle-aged, Congolese male caregiver indicated,

You find some stores that they don't take food stamps. And when you do buy these green bananas, they are costly and you are reducing all of your food stamps for this item. So when you go once or twice, you end up with nothing.

The green bananas mentioned above are produce prepared for cultural and religious (Muslim; it was Ramadan at the time of the study) purposes. Some cultural food and spices, according to study participants, may be more expensive even when sold at cultural grocery stores. Many families also noted that the meats purchased at smaller cultural stores were not the most affordable.

Loss of cultural foodways and lack of access to cultural food. Some caregivers in the study indicated a struggle to find places that have one's cultural food, and how the

experience of searching for such places can be stigmatizing. For example, a middle-aged, Congolese male caregiver shared,

...when you leave and come here, you find people here that are from your country and sometimes from your own tribe. But because they have been here for a long time, they lose their habit. And now that they are American, so when you ask them and you come here and you have your African habits, and when you ask them, they just look down on you, and they don't show you where to find things. So you struggle in the beginning, until you find someone who understands you, who is on the level to bring you to the store or who will go with you to give you the information and that is the problem we have.

Burden to meet multi-generational food needs. Some parents in the study shared how stressful it can be to meet the needs of their children based on the child's preference for Western/American food. A middle aged, Congolese male caregiver said,

Yes, yes that [losing one's knowledge to cultural food] is a big problem. And when kids arrive here, they are going to school they change culturalistically. They don't take time to change because when they go to school, They have, I don't know which kind of foods they [the schools] are giving them, and when they come home, They don't like to eat the foods you have here at home. And they [are] asking parents to cook the way that they eat at school. And these packages [packaged and canned foods]are not prepared to cook some food [ones that they have at school]. [Pointing to xx mother], She doesn't even know the food.

He went on to say,

Sometimes kids they put pressure on us, like my niece here, if you find her, like she has not eaten. And you arrive in the evening, and she is telling you, "Uncle I am hungry." We have this problem. She is family and you cannot resist you kid or your niece or nephew who is hungry, it is just money, and you have \$5, and she would like to go to Subway. And if you don't have something, and she will cry like and take something that you have prepared and then she goes to bed. And she is angry, but she doesn't understand that. She.. I am not able to make the food you want.

Other families in the study expressed similar sentiments in which their children prefer, at times, Western food like pizza, hamburgers, and sandwiches from fast food restaurants like McDonald's and Wendy's. A Nepali family, who has access to a plot for family gardening, shared how both Nepali and Western/American food are in the home, with their adolescent daughters wanting McDonald's. The father expressed that he does not always have the financial means to pay for it, and has encouraged them to seek employment so they can purchase their own food. Findings indicated that most, if not all of the female youth, daughters, have been taught to cook both cultural (from their parents, mostly mothers) and western foods (from other community members).

Concerns about health due to the Western diet. Almost all families in the study indicated tremendous concerns about the health of their families in result of the Western diet. For example, a middle aged, Congolese mother shared her thoughts on what she hopes to pass on to her children,

My advice is that if they can eat healthy, eating veggies, fruits, anything that can help them eat healthy, I just want the best for them. My advice is that if they can continue eating healthy foods then this will help them. And here you have fast food, and when I hear the word fast food, it means to me that it doesn't take longer to cook, is that really healthy? Like Hamburger and pizza. Like this one (pointing to xxxx little brother) he likes hamburger and pizza, but whenever he tries it, he gets skin allergies, so that is the experience I had to follow. When I stop him from eating that food, then his skin will be good. But when he eats it, after two days he has skin allergies. And sometimes he could be vomiting until he has to go to the hospital.

She also described her observations when transitioning to living in the U.S. and how there is a growing concern about health due to the Western diet,

In my life, I can say that I have not seen obese people in my country when I was there. I saw people who could be fat or overweight but not obese. But when I come here, I was asking people, that this kind of food that you are eating here-- hamburger, pizza--that is the kind of food that are making people obese. That is why I am afraid for them [the youth], like xx [my niece and others]. She can become obese easily, if she continues eating that American food. And I don't know in the future how she will be. It is easier to gain weight then to lose. If she eats good then she can reduce her weight with this [cultural] food. All the kids I have, all the kids, I

can see, I can tell them or not [who can become overweight, obese].

Opportunities for School and Community-based Partnerships

Findings suggest three areas as opportunities for promoting cultural responsiveness and inclusiveness: 1) programs aimed at youth and multi-generational family empowerment; 2) culturally responsive health education and promotion; and 3) social entrepreneurship.

Programs aimed at youth and multi-generational family empowerment. Adult participants (caregivers) in the study spoke frequently of teaching the next generation about preserving the knowledge of the preparation and the serving of cultural foods. Although gender may play a role, findings indicate that families have a sense of pride when youth know how to “cook traditional food from family and culture.” For example, a female, Somalian youth said, “She [mom] wants me to know all the traditional foods and how to cook them.” A female Ethiopian youth added, “She [mom] said that she had taught me all that I need to know. So I pretty much make everything!” [Mom is showing gestures and body language that indicate a sense of pride]. As this discussion was taking place, a middle-aged, Congolese male caregiver (uncle), interjected about the role of culture and its expectations based on gender,

Once again that is something about culture. African male, if my mom sees me in the kitchen, she would beat me. It is just because of school. Then some of us, they know how to cook. And now if the mother asks you to help, do the dishes. But telling you that you have to cook this food or that food, it does not happen in African culture. Maybe other countries, but not in my country. So I can help my mother to go and buy food. The boys can go to the store to help buy food. Then they come with the food and then stop there. Now for the mothers and their daughters to cook. So I am amazed when these two kids (pointing to xx and xx) that they are cooking for their mothers everyday, that is the pride of an African women. Because they are doing that for love, not for like being a slave no. Nothing like a slave but for love. You love your family. You cook for them. So boys are not involved in food and cooking. They can be involved in providing food, but the mothers or fathers are preparing them [boys] to be good men, good husbands, good father, to be a provider.

Culturally responsive health education and promotion. Juxtaposing the focus on the family, caregivers in the study emphasized the need to consider culture when learning about health. As a Congolese, middle-aged male caregiver indicated,

But one thing I want to add to this youth. When they arrived here as a tribe and they start to reject our traditional food. But even though they are going to school, they don't know how to prepare. What is the advantage to eat traditional African food? What is the advantage to eat American food? What can be the danger, the risk? But even though they are seeing the risk, seeing people struggling with weight, they keep eating the same foods that is making adults being sick, diabetes, dehydration, obesity, cancer. All these are complications and risks to eating American foods. People are going to die. They will die with the food. So when we eat our African food, I think we keep our weight. That is one advantage! When we go out of our habits and don't know about food, so we have to learn that, that when we eat, we have to learn that, we have to eat more vegetables. I have even in my family, those who do not like to eat vegetables. Meat or fish only, that's an issue.

Additionally, some youth shared how their favorite foods stemmed from their religion (e.g., Muslim).

Social entrepreneurship. Based on a running theme of the higher cost of certain cultural foods, participants in the study expressed that they would like food prices to be reduced and make things affordable and easily accessible. All the participants in the study indicated that food stamps can only go so far. Some families in the study would like access to or gain ownership of community gardens that provide them the opportunity to plant, harvest, and sell their own produce. Yet, one Somalian, female caregiver expressed a concern that because she is disabled, how will she farm or tend to a garden?

Service Providers' Focus Group

Although a range of practices exist when working with refugees and immigrants, findings based on the service providers' focus group indicate a proposed Leadership for Change model in which organizations and practitioners promote diversity, inclusivity, social change, and equity. Utilizing the micro-meso-macro levels of practice in social work (e.g., ecosystemic perspective), sub-themes emerged in each domain (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Leadership for Change



Micro Level of Leadership for Change

Two sub-themes emerged in the micro level: 1) mindfulness and openness to diversity and inclusion; and 2) solicit individual volunteers to better engage with service users.

Mindfulness and openness to diversity and inclusion. Findings suggest that service providers who have an openness to address issues related to diversity and inclusion tend to think of more creative and innovative ways for better engagement with service users, volunteers, and donors. For example, seeing the service users as humans and people kept a Caucasian/White, male service provider mindful and humble as he engaged with them,

I think one of the things that is really helpful is, I don't want to toot my own horn but, I have been around for a while. I've been standing around doing this thing for a while, and my predecessor was great. She was super nice and charming to all the clients especially the Chinese, because she spoke a bit of Chinese. There are other volunteers, sort of older American men and women who speak a little more gruffly with the immigrant population, sort of not really caring too much where they have come from or what struggles they have faced in their lives. And in fact maybe having some prejudices, which is something I work on with them. And so

whenever I am interacting with them, I am super from the heart, and I am super just really interested in them, knowing where their countries are in the world, where they come from and asking them about things that come up in the conversation and just really caring and interested. And I think that that has created a whole new dynamic in the pantry where people just sort of light up when they come in where as, “Oh gosh, this old guy is going to be yelling at me again.” So that is an important thing, to have that, that human connection and see people.

As seen, the service providers create a place that is perceived as open, caring, and welcoming. During the focus group, a rich discussion on keeping the service users’ dignity intact, and understanding the “refugee mentality” and how it manifests in behaviors and interactions are best practices. Here is an excerpt of the discussion, starting with an African American/Black, female service provider’s point,

Keeping their dignity intact. You know because it is so hard to ask. And a lot of the times, because it is so hard to ask, act a little ugly because they have to force themselves... and once I tell them that they are safe here, and that I know that this is difficult, but you are going to get taken care of and you can come regularly, once a month. Once we get passed that, they come with a happier disposition when they come in.

Another female service provider of Asian/Lao background added,

I would like to piggyback on what you were saying XX [service provider’s name] about how you said, “You’re safe, you’re okay,” because we always use this example for refugees. In the camps, if the clinics say they are going to open tomorrow at 9, what time do you think refugee will be lined up? 7-9 the night before, 5 in the morning? Yes the night before, because they don’t know if they are going to get help. So as they stand in line of the Food Bank and you watch other people grab food, you get anxiety standing there. because you don’t think there will be enough food. And they don’t understand the system like XX, and you, XX, and you, XX that already got the system down. You already know how much bread you got and you know how to divide it up, but that is the piece that the refugee and immigrants don’t grasp.

This discussion led to issues related to trauma experienced by refugees and immigrants, their resiliency, and ability to maneuver the system.

Solicit individual volunteers to better engage with service users. Findings indicate that although service providers struggle with a small team of paid staff and a large volunteer pool, a best practice that creates opportunities to address diversity and inclusion includes soliciting individual volunteers with similar backgrounds (e.g., language) to better engage with diverse service users. For example, an African American/Black female service provider shared,

I was having some problems with my Asian clients, like I said with them pushing because they are trying to get food, not because they want to hurt anybody. So I have a friend that is Vietnamese, that speaks Chinese and Vietnamese, so I had him come in. Okay hold on let me back up, so what I would have to do is get the younger person with the people to tell them to stop them from doing that because that is disrespectful... and they would ask like they could not understand, like they could not understand English after that when they were talking just fine with me, so it is a respect thing they can't do that. So I have a friend, he is probably 40 something, and he understands. He has been to school. So he came and got on my microphone and said, "XX [service provider's name] said," instead of, "You need to.." "XX[service provider's name] said this and that," and then, I told him to ask them to raise their hands if they understood. All of them raise their hands and after that it was so great. And so he did that for weeks, because not everyone comes on the same day. So everyone that comes through got to hear that. [Participant goes on to explain what he was saying to the clients about rules and everyone is going to get food, to not disrespect the place and so on]. And after that, it calmed down, it calmed way, way down. And after that they were bowing to me to let me know that they got it. That was really amazing because I didn't know that the younger kids could not say that (to their elders). So that worked really, really good.

Additionally, the same service provider shared another story of teaching her volunteers the usage of respective language,

But to piggyback on what XX [another service provider's name] was saying, when I started at [organization's name], I would have some of the volunteers refer to them [service users] as the

“Orientals,” and I had to teach them that they are “Asians” and that they don’t have to even refer to them as a race. And those were the older people, and they learned, because they honestly wanted to help, even though they had those rough edges. They really do want to help and volunteer. But sometimes where they came from, who they are is not necessary what we are looking for. But if we can help send them down a bit to help. And it took me more than a year for some of them to change the way they referred to people.

Working with volunteers is a crucial task for all service providers who participated in the study, and requires high level of ongoing engagement and training. For example, a white female service provider indicates,

See I think that [professional development and volunteer training] is one of the products of the system, as much as transferring pounds of food to people who need that. It is opening eyes and removing stereotypes for the people who volunteer. There is a lot of different impacts there.

She continues,

What I tell our volunteers is that we are not here for some theological goal or philosophical discussions. We are here to see how many adults, how many children. We have got flashcards and all of them are translated into about six different languages, and it is very basic, numbers, addresses, I mean you don’t have to know if they are voting Republican or Democratic, and really with gender and stuff, I am never applied for money that involved gender issues, so it really doesn’t matter to us because they are eating right. So that is the whole thing we are doing. The rest is none of our concern.

To compare the two situations above, you have one service provider who intentionally trains volunteers to be more respectful and seeks out volunteers who have some familiarity of the target group’s background. The other is a situation in which the service provider orients its volunteers on how to be cordial and objective.

Messo Level of Leadership for Change

Two sub-themes emerged in the meso level: 1) work with donors by educating them on the type of foods needed or preferred by service used based on culture (e.g., fresh

produce and other cultural foods); and 2) actively seeking out donors who are more open and culturally responsive. Findings suggest a strong emphasis on collaborating with donors.

Work with donors by educating them about the type of foods needed or preferred by service users based on culture (e.g., fresh produce and other cultural foods). Findings suggest that service providers who worked with their donors on what is needed for their clientele is a best practice for diversity and inclusion. One Caucasian/White, male service provider indicated,

Well, it [culturally responsive food] would be much better, instead of translating [materials]. The resources available from the Oregon Food Bank ...to get more broccoli and beef. I think all of our Chinese and Russian immigrants would be much happier. They could live without the brochure if they had more broccoli and beef.

Findings point out that diversifying the foods, including ingredients, is a major need for the community. Service providers stressed the importance of this. For example, a Caucasian/White, female service provider said,

..the problem with food banks is in general is that it is not a very good fit with the diet of the refugee and immigrant communities. They need much more whole foods than packaged foods. They need big gallons of oil, bigger bags of flour and rice, right. And they are lucky enough to get meat in it; great. And they don't eat everything, so they throw that stuff away, so they need much more ingredients than the American prepared foods.

Findings suggest that the current food bank system relies on donation by dominant cultures, as another Caucasian/White, female service provider indicated,

I thought about that [diverse foods] because there are different kinds of foods, and because our system. I mean the Food Banks system relies on donations. It is donated by the dominant culture, people who say, "Yum this is what I eat" so they will give whatever they eat. And so it is very hard to make a case to the food pantry that they should go out and spend cash to buy particular food, but I did think, but a great deal of what I do is in response to incentives from the Oregon Food Bank. We would probably have a totally different kind of feeding program if it wasn't for TEFAP. That structures the way we do [things] a lot. [Others agree]. If there was an incentive for instance. If I

documented for every dollar of halal food that we have purchased and segregated, we would get some more food from the food bank, Then I could see doing that. But it is very hard for me to stand in front of our donor community, because this is not government money. These are private people and churches, service bugs, and places like that; and say we are not going to buy any more hamburgers; we do not need any more, but we are going to spend it on halal food, because there are not many people in that group that eat like that. So it would be a big communication thing.

Participants further discussed how the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) administered out of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) poses some limitations and barriers in servicing diverse communities, as a Caucasian/White, female service provider shared,

It [TEFAP] mandates that we provide nutritional, fully balanced, 3 to 5 day food boxes, for people in our service area without any, with their self declaration service ability. All of that is in their service regulations. So if we want to do a backpack program for children after school that is, that is not a 3-5 day food box. So the Food Bank, they will give us small allocation, but it is not sufficient. We would not get any TEFAP food for that. So it shapes the way we do our programs.

Findings point out some tension in interpreting the TEFAP regulations. The above statement was followed by another discussion from a Caucasian/White, male service provider,

Yes, we work with the same [TEFAP] requirements and restrictions. I have a thought on what you guys were just talking about, reserving other foods, or special foods for certain people. Because I don't think that can work, because on one part, is it legal to save this one food for this person, like do you have to be a Muslim to get this food? Like if we had goat for instance, I could think of plenty of people who are not Muslim who would be interested in trying goat. Like when I think of the food services that are available, we are always getting spaghetti and rotini, and it would be great if we could get some Asian noodles, rice noodles, different types of noodles, and thinking because maybe then our clients from parts of Asia would say, "Oh great. I like those ones,"

get those, but so would our American clients. So would the Hispanic clients. everyone could like those. So it would have to be a huge amount. We would have to be getting just as much as rice noodles as we get of spaghetti to supplement and make that a constant thing, because with the USDA and the TEFAP regulations, a lot of that is about not discriminating and putting some things aside and saying this is for some people. That would be problematic and I know you [pointing to the other participant] are not suggesting that.

The issue of expense and the need of a “special compensation factor from the Food Bank” for providing diverse foods such as halal meats and foods were discussed by a White/Caucasian, female service provider to encourage organizations to diversify its foods. Additionally, discussion on gluten free products took part, and one participant, a Caucasian/White, male service provider, pointed out,

Most volunteers will help people find those items they need, or make an extra effort to look at the cans and find the ones with the least amount of sodium, or find the package of pasta that is gluten free.

With the help of a university-community partnership, a Caucasian/White, female service provider explained the process for accommodating gluten-free users,

We try, especially this time of the year [summer] to have as much of whole fruits and vegetables as possible, so I think in the shopping model, people who need to avoid gluten need to know what they need rather than us telling them what they should get. And we have been very fortunate with OHSU nursing students setting up all kinds of good ways to handle canned fruit and help get salt out of other things, have posters explaining things, help educate people, and help make healthier choices.

Such partnership added value to organizational capacity and enhance the ability to respond to such needs.

Actively seeking out donors who are more open and culturally responsive. Findings suggest that diverse donors play a role in providing more food options for service users, but service providers need support in seeking them out. For example, an African American/Black, female service provider shared how they provide a variety of “clean meats”

like “beef, and chicken, and fish with scales, goats, and sheep..those kinds of meats.” When asked how they get them, she responded,

Well, we get it through the Food Bank and Thriftway, Safeway, Fred Meyers, Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods. And we pick up everyday somewhere, every single day. And like he said [pointing to another participant], we have bread that we put out that people take also, but we also have limits on bread, like today it was 6 loaves. And sometimes it will be 10 loaves, but it just depends on what we have. The lowest I think we have gone is three loaves.

Findings suggest that other participants strive to seek out diverse donors who can meet the needs of diverse food sources, but may need assistance in developing these relationships. Another participant who self identified as mixed Asian, male and was not able to attend the focus group, but was individually interviewed, suggest the possibility of expanding on donors or partners like the mutual aid associations (MAA), which are primarily grassroot, culturally specific organizations, sometimes without the federal, non-profit, 501c3 status,

So I get by, because I have a network, consolation of planets. We are all revolving around each other. We all spin a certain energy and context. That is the spiritual capital; the social capital; the cultural capital we spin in relationship with each other. On the ground we are to sustain because we just get the thing done. You know, we now have what you call eight equity practice models running the city of Portland and it is simply equity and practice, we have terrific line staff. They are all white folks. They work for the city. They are good people. They are really good at what they do. They are cops. They are good environmental people. They are good neighborhood activist. They are good housing people. They are good.... but they don’t know the first thing about us. That is not their fault. We are just so segregated. The education is so segregated and so what I get these folks to do is partner up with our MAA elders activists, and together they design. They develop and they deliver a super duper product.

The stipulations that “education is so segregated” and how “the city of Portland,” specifically “white folks” in running programs provide an opportunity for more cohesive and collaborative initiatives. Findings strongly suggest potential innovation through such work. This study participant, as discussed in the next section, provided more insights on macro level practices.

Macro Level of Leadership for Change

Three sub-themes emerged on the macro level: 1) utilizing the “shopping model” to provide variety of food choices and options; 2) beyond “food stamps” approaches such as community gardens; and 3) advocate to work with businesses, mutual assistance associations, and other community resources. These sub-themes suggest an array of useful approaches for creating diversity, inclusivity, and equity.

Utilizing the “shopping model” to provide variety of food choices and options.

Findings suggest that many practitioners use the “shopping model” when engaging with diverse users. This model provides the ability for service users to pick and choose their food within the limitations. A Caucasian/White, male participant described how the “shopping model” may help in demystifying stereotypes among racial/ethnic groups,

...I just did a thing with the Food Bank, a lady was getting her Master's in Social Work and we performed a skit. And it was about pointing, like if the client was Mexican, we would point them to like beans and rice and that was not good to them. That was stereotyping and hurting some people's feelings. But we don't do that because we have a grocery list, and it is a pantry. So you are welcome to pick what you enjoy within the limits we give you. So we don't have to point anyone to anything, because they get to choose and go around the whole pantry anyway. They will first get to the starches, and they get to choose like spaghetti or rice, brown rice, or white rice, or quinoa, all that stuff is there. Couscous is available or mac and cheese in the box, or elbow macaroni, they are free to choose what they want. We are not going to give them what we think their culture will enjoy. So that is how it works.

Providing options and choices is key. Another service provider, a Caucasian/White, female participant indicated,

Well if they [service users] don't read or write in any language, we point. And out of the shopping system is, depending on the size of the family, you get a pink, or blue, or green food slip. Small, medium, or large family. Then when you go into the pantry, there is a pink, blue, or green sign, and it had Arabic numerals that seem to be common, and that is how many choices of the shelf that they can make. So it makes it simpler, but it makes it for

miscommunication also. But we have ended up shoving food at somebody who was saying “no,” and then we were very frustrated because we were trying to figure out what was it that that person wanted, and it is a major effort to find someone who can explain what they want.

As this participant shared, miscommunication still occurred, but this approach was more helpful. More room for improvements is needed.

Beyond “food stamps” approaches such as community gardens. Findings suggest that service provider participants emphasized helpful approaches that may have promise in promoting change. Such approaches go beyond the use of food stamps and include community gardens and social entrepreneurship that includes youth and multi-generational work. Although participants agreed that more community gardens are needed, some expressed concerns. For example, a Caucasian/White, female service provider indicated,

We have a community garden and a garden committee that does the garden. And there is a waiting list. There is a lot of people who can’t get in.

The statement above suggest an access issue as well a organizational process that may need more refining. Another participant, a Caucasian/White, male service provider added,

One of the big problems with that is the time to garden with the climate like this is in the summer, when the people who could runs those types of programs are students, and there is not school so... Like we had an intern from PSU who was going to be working on the gardens, but it was like February, so there wasn’t a lot going on in the garden, so that has been the problem with that.

The discussion above suggest two issues: seasonal timing, and community partners’ availability to assist. Findings also suggest another consideration when organizing and developing community gardening. For example, an Asian mixed male study participant who works for city government pointed out his work with MAAs holds promise of integrating community gardening into the life of a city,

Regarding food, well, New Portlanders Program is successful to the degree I can engage our mutual assistance association, elders and activists. So the things that have to do with what we call family, health, and happiness, is through that system, through that ethnic stream system. And when it comes to more specifics about food,

the only work we have done is through community gardening, and getting community garden space, and community gardening grants to our MAAs, not to mainstream organizations who will let our folks garden. Or distribute the food to our folks, because that is not the same as immigrant or refugee engagement, or newcomer integration, my job is integration. So we intend to take our place in the vigorous life of the city. So that is my work to get people directly, engaged, using government, especially city services.

Findings suggest that “integration” is a key process to consider. As noted, providing access for MAAs to obtain grants or funds that can be utilized to provide “community garden space” for community members. The same participant later went on to discuss how gardening may be a possible solution,

So I will learn from these folks to take care of that, to take care of the problem of our ridiculousness entrepreneurial women, not getting jobs and needing to make money, gets to gardening. The problem of our elders sitting at home lonely, is that everyone needs to work and study, and being isolated and needing to be together with their hands in the soil, so if they are healthy and happy, then we are all happy and healthy. That is how that gets to me, the solution for all of that is gardening.

Community gardening may have an entrepreneurial aspect, especially for women who do not have access to steady employment.

Advocate to work with culturally responsive small businesses, mutual assistance associations, and other community resources. Findings suggest that working with culturally responsive businesses, MAAs, and other community based organizations may provide opportunities for collaborative work on diversity, inclusion, and equity. Participants agreed unanimously that work that is targeted to a specific geographic place can be helpful. A Caucasian/White, male service provider indicated strong connections with other community organizations in the Cully neighborhood are working to address the needs of communities of color,

Well [my organization] which runs the NE food program also has XX, which has refugee resettlement programs, refugee and immigrants service programs, we have XX, which is a certain Russian language, Oregon social services and Russian social services. We also have a number of partners in our community [working with the Latino community]. We have some

connections with NAYA, as well as other connections in the Cully neighborhood. That is sort of like one of the big things we are working on up there, Living Cully, like a big part of what we are doing is connecting. Part of the service learning initiative is focusing on placing jobs in that neighborhood. Along 42nd Ave and Columbia and those types of places.

As initiatives coordinate community-based resources in specific geographic places, MAAs may add value to the work, as suggested by an Asian mixed, male participant,

...generally our newcomer communities fall into indigenous systems of organizations, and we call, the Federal Government calls it, Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs). We have in Oregon 70 to 80 of them. ... And to a higher formality, they would get their non profit tax status, and so on. And then hooking them up with grant givers, but that not like, with standing many groups, Oregon Bhutanese Community of Oregon, Association of Burmese Refugee of Oregon, Many halko among the community of Oregon. They are informal. They are elders, uncles and big aunties, strong personalities in there, strong families. So that is who I work with are those elders and the civic activists.

As discussed in the micro level section, participants in the service providers' focus group agreed that the opportunity to utilize volunteers from the communities with similar languages and backgrounds as the service users has promise. A potential motivation, as a Caucasian/White, male participant indicated, is to help build one's English speaking ability among volunteers,

I have a Russian client who has come in and she has been really enjoying it and has been coming back every week. And the reason she has been coming it is helping her with her English. For all the other clients that she is getting who don't speak Russian, I mean she is certainly happy to help those who do speak Russian, but she also gets that African American gentleman who then she is going to communicate with in English to the best of her ability and it is helpful for her. So people can come from all the different kinds of communities, and for one thing I don't have a lot of time, like hours and paid periods to go and get in touch with other churches and communities of color to try and get some people to come in, but that is definitely something I would like to see, that is an area that we can improve in.

Another participant, a Caucasian/White, female participant assured that providing an opportunity for volunteers from immigrant and refugee communities to practice their English language skills would be valuable to the work,

I think I have a lead for you [speaking to the Caucasian/White, male participant], we are often approached by a language school, who wants to place their students, and they are usually short term, like one or two months commitments, but they can come like everyday or like every other day, and they want to be placed in an environment where they can speak English. And their native languages are Chinese, Korean, Arabic, a lot of Asian languages, Japanese. They are quite young usually, over 18.

An Asian/Lao, female participant added that local universities should build in service learning projects to help build capacity with assistance of the Oregon Food Bank,

The food bank could do that, they could fund a position to have that person be the one to really connect with PSU, UP and do the service learning projects that really bring in some diversity. Like they would have to fund a position to rely on you all. There are all these hands-on community, so let that person be the one do it.

As suggested, a point person in the OFB could also assist in coordinating communities on bridging local, small businesses. A Caucasian/White, female participant shared a situation in Rockwood,

Well I am a part of the Jenny Cole's work at EMO on food access, the identified in the Rockwood community is lacking, it is not a food desert, but still they maintain short of fresh vegetables and fruits, fresh produce.The effort from these people is to subsidize competing grocery stores, but I am just wondering why are we doing this? Why can't we get a tour bus and ride around to these Hispanic stores and learn about them so we don't have to go around convincing people that don't want to have fruits and vegetables. Why argue with them if they don't want to. They don't have to.

Findings suggest that work with culturally responsive small businesses may create new opportunities for diverse food systems. The same participant indicated how limited grant

funds support such an idea and the need to network with other service providers, businesses, and MAAs,

Well that is not where the grant money is coming from, and so it [idea of learning more about culturally specific grocery stores] was shut down. There is not money in that kind of thinking. But I think there is no community in that other kind of thing [subsidizing competing grocery stores]. We need to bond each other more closely as a community. You are talking about community development, I am all for network of people who care for each other, meet each others needs, economically, charitably, all those different ways, but I don't think, we will turn out to be Europe if we have all these cultural enclaves.

Another participant, an Asian/Lao service provider presented a lack of coordination,

That is if we had a position that is fully funded we don't know if anyone at the OFB is doing an assessment on what is happening with all the sites to see what is a commonality, what is not, where are the gaps, I am noticing that now as I sit at this table, the three of you are learning about what each other is doing.

The same participant previous, a Caucasian/White, female participant affirmed this lack of coordination or collaboration among small businesses, MAAs, and community-based organizations,

But they are going have their core supporters then they are going to be meeting people's need too... Chamber of Commerce saying to the nonprofit, get together, but not saying that to the car dealers. And each of these businesses are appealing to a separate kind of market. Different visions of things and I think it is the same way in the nonprofit world.

As noted, the idea of collaboration is welcomed, but infrastructural support needs to be in place among systems.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings suggest an array of approaches in creating opportunities for diversity, inclusion, equity, and change in Oregon's foodways and food systems. Trinidad (2012)

describes three major food discourses that theoretically exist in response to food insecurity: 1) the rights discourse, 2) the anti-poverty discourse, and 3) the community food security discourse (see Table 1: Three Food Justice Discourses).

Table 1: Three Food Justice Discourses

rights discourse	anti-poverty discourse	community food security discourse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● human rights lens ● every human being should have the right to feed thy self as an essential attribute of the social rights within a democracy ● calls for accountability on governments to protect its citizen against hunger ● lacks mechanism to enforce govt agreements & focus on individual entitlement rather than structural or political economic conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● beyond access to food ● attributes hunger to an issue of poverty ● ignores the connection of food to environment ● ignores the role that the global system has in production, distribution, & consumption of food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● encompasses both human rights & anti-poverty discourses ● aims to engage in broader perspective of food, such as addressing issues of sustainability & community building ● aims to be supportive of needs of community & to assure equitable food access through democratic decision making processes ● lacks discussion on epistemology ('knowledge production')

Through the rights and anti-poverty discourses, many U.S. food banks have historically focused on economic issues and provided emergency food services. Findings from this study suggest moving towards a community food security discourse to address issues related to diversity, inclusion, and equity in Oregon. The community food security discourse integrates both the rights and anti-poverty discourses and can assist in developing approaches to better serve refugee and immigrant populations. To assist practitioners and others in the field what a community food security discourse may entail, training workshops on the rights and anti-poverty discourses need to be part of orienting leaders and community volunteers on how such discourses and its approaches can be framed in their existing work

The Rights Discourse

The rights discourse uses a human rights lens. Proponents of this discourse contend that every human citizen has the right to be fed and is seen as an essential attribute of the social rights within a democracy. This discourse calls for accountability on governments to protect its citizens against hunger (Levkoe, 2006; Riches, 1999). Despite arguing for a moral stance, the lack of a mechanism to enforce governmental agreements, both on the international and national levels, leaves policies dependent on local governments to support

this stance. On a programmatic level, this could be framed as legislative work at the state level, where OFB may facilitate food initiatives that focus on an array of members of our community with legal documentation (e.g., migrant, asylum seeking, refugee, or immigrant status). The major critique with this discourse is its tendency to focus on individual entitlement rather on structural or political economic conditions (Levkoe, 2006). Hence, strategies and approaches aimed for refugees and immigrants must consider the legal statuses of family members. A family may have members with mix documentation (e.g., legal refugee, asylum seeking, and un-documentation).

The Anti-Poverty Discourse

The anti-poverty discourse has considered issues ignored by the human rights approach. This discourse frames food security as beyond access to food, and attributes hunger to an issue of poverty (McIntyre, 2003). Critics of this discourse indicate that using an anti-poverty agenda ignores the connection of food to the environment or geographic place, and the role that the global system has in the production, distribution, and consumption of food (Levkoe, 2006).

The Community Food Security Discourse: Integrating Human Rights & Anti-Poverty

The community food security discourse encompasses both the human rights and anti-poverty discourses, and aims to engage in a broader perspective of food, including issues of sustainability and community building. This discourse aims to be supportive of the needs of the community and to assure equitable food access created through democratic decision-making processes (Anderson & Cook, 1999). Proponents of this discourse work to build community and invest in projects that aim to create long-term self-sufficiency. Its focus is primarily on neighborhoods and households, and sees them as having the potential to initiate social change. Based on the findings, it is this discourse that should be adopted in Portland.

Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place: Approach and Method for Social Change

Findings from this study suggest a community-based food security discourse using a *Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place* (CIPP) (Trinidad, 2012) as an approach and method in creating opportunities for diversity, inclusion, equity, and change in Oregon's foodways and food systems. Although, the community-based food security discourse draws upon both environmental sustainability and local economic development (Levkoe, 2006), it lacks the discussion around community knowledge production or epistemology relevant to refugees and immigrants. CIPP can be a natural fit in moving the community food discourse towards a food justice framework relevant to refugee, immigrant, and indigenous communities. Community-based organizations, leaders, practitioners are encouraged to create and develop

an indigenized, place-based, and anti-oppressive community food security discourse.

A vision of food democracy can be utilized to challenge forces of control, exploitation, and oppression. Food democracy refers to the idea of public-making and increased access and collective benefit from the food system. Acknowledging that each community or group has different relationships, including reinterpreting its meaning to these relationships to food, food democracy focuses on a discussion on local, indigenous and place-based community epistemology. Infusing CIPP, food democracy requires that community members develop the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in building food systems, and to have an impact on community initiatives. Thus, the role of a practitioner can be framed as a leader for change.

Findings suggest a framework of Leadership for Change (see Figure 3: Leadership for Change below). This framework provides a template for leaders and practitioners to engage with community organizations, small businesses, MAAs, and other community assets. Practitioners generally need to focus on: 1) understanding the needs of the target community; 2) building critically conscious volunteer teams; 3) building upon communities strengths and assets, and 4) creating innovative ways to deal with systemic barriers.

Figure 3: Leadership for Change



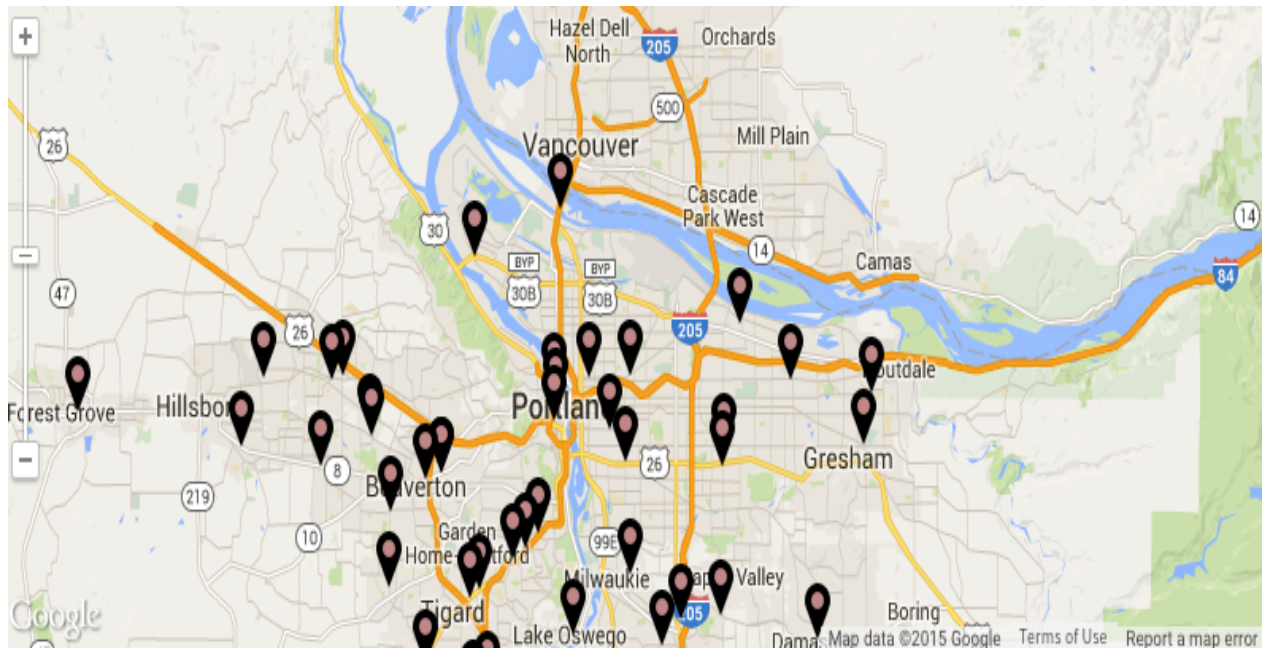
OFB can facilitate such leadership development among community partners. Findings of the study imply that practitioners and leaders need to be aware of how historically exclusive communities continue to be denied access to creating their food systems. Findings demonstrated illustrated gaps and identified areas of improvement to work on. Specifically, culturally responsive entities need to be central (see Figure 4: Entities to Work With). As OFB works with federal, state, and local governments in community-wide initiatives, it is recommended that culturally responsive entities are included, and such partnership be intentional and purposeful in its processes. For example, MAAs in Portland

are informal, culturally responsive community or grassroots groups, some ethnic-based such as the Lao American Foundation and faith-based, run by volunteers in the communities. They provide mutual aid and are “natural helpers” in their specific ethnic or religious communities. Some are linked to the New Portlander Program housed in city government (see <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/62226>). Refugee resettlement programs in Portland closely work with MAAs (see <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/?c=62226&a=448753>). Future community-based efforts should identify pathways to foster strong collaboration and partnerships in Oregon with such entities, and be supportive and facilitated by OFB. Such initiatives can include better coordination of resources that provide halal meats (see Map 2 and link for market places and other resources: <http://www.zabihah.com/sub/QSMkd5q0Og?t=m>) and/or access to community gardens provided by City of Portland’s Park and Recreation (see Map 3 of existing community gardens and link <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/finder/index.cfm?ShowResults=yes&AmenityTypeID=8>). As seen in the maps below, limited resources exist in geographic areas that refugees and immigrants reside. For example, only five known resources in East Portland provide halal meats, and eight community gardens are accessible.

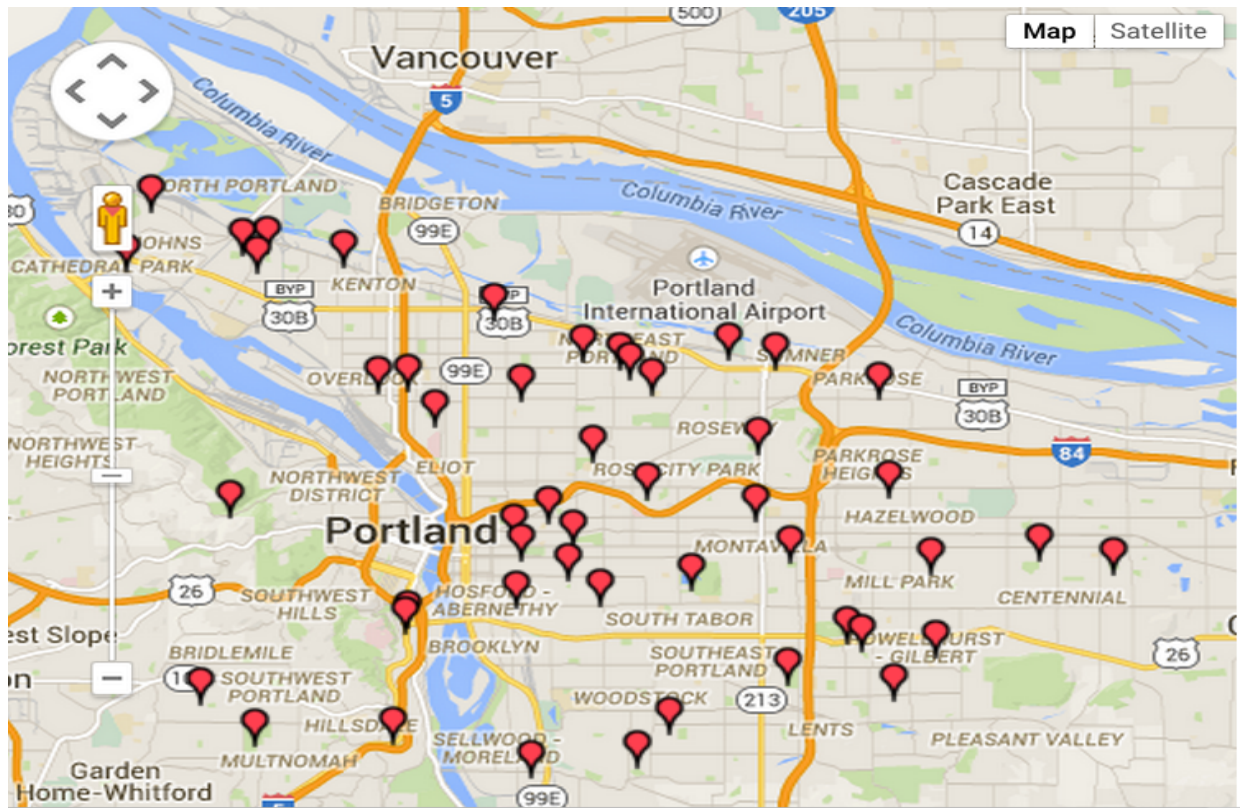
Figure 4: Entities to Work With



Map 2: Resources that Provide Halal Meats



Map 3: Community Garden Sites Provided by Portland Parks & Recreation



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Findings suggest a community-based food security discourse using Critical Indigenous Pedagogy of Place (Trinidad, 2012) as an approach and method in creating opportunities for diversity, inclusion, equity, and change in Oregon's foodways and food systems. Future general recommendations include outreach, training, and community education on anti-oppressive practice among existing leaders and community builders, creating pathways for former refugees and immigrants to be in positions of leadership and change, and integration of multi-generational and historical trauma informed work. Specific recommendations include:

1. Partner and collaborate with culturally responsive entities to train and mentor existing and emerging leaders and community builders, including white allies and volunteers, on issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity as they integrate community-based food security discourse into their work. For example, many refugee resettlement programs have existing leadership and a pool of volunteers that work in their food pantries, but need affordable (or free of charge) opportunities for ongoing training on diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-oppressive practice.
2. Partner and collaborate with culturally responsive entities to train and mentor former refugees and immigrants into pathways of leadership and change in community-based food security approaches and strategies. For example, the Coalition of Communities of Color have leadership institutes for their respective racial and ethnic groups. Likewise, the New Portlander Program can be a venue for partnership and collaboration in empowering refugees and immigrants to be involved. Intentional recruitment and retention initiatives into positions in the community may be beneficial.
3. Facilitate and support building community leadership, community-based, community-driven, and sustainable initiatives in specific geographic locales in which immigrants and refugees have high residential density. Specifically, places like Cully, Powell-Lent area, the Jade District (SE Portland), and East Portland/Gresham are especially important to foster partnerships with.
4. Partner and collaborate with culturally responsive entities, schools, and other systems that provide services and programs to refugees and immigrants to integrate multi-generational (e.g., with youth and elders) and historical trauma informed work. Since food access involves whole families as well extended family members, community-based initiatives that involve them would be beneficial. Learning and critical awareness can happen across generations. Historical trauma informed work includes the ongoing awareness of institutionalized oppression and its manifestation of exclusion in everyday situations. Such work must include an intentional commitment to lifelong learning of such, and integrating culturally responsive

approaches that validates one's interpretation of culture, collective history, community values, and ways of life. It also includes work to build a sense of belonging and community, as well as building support to create culturally responsive strategies to access food. Most importantly, it involves ongoing examination of health outcomes and disparities between racial/ethnic groups rooted in geographic place.

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