CBSD to Intervene on Racial Disparities in Food Insecurity in Hayti, MO
Project Team Leaders

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Per USDA reports, 45% of Black residents experience low access to healthy foods compared to 13% of white residents.
Food Security Equity Impact Fund

Community-led solutions to end hunger

The Food Security Equity Impact Fund supports community-led solutions to address systemic inequities by awarding multi-year grants to community organizations and network food banks engaged in food justice and equitable access initiatives.

Established in 2021, the Fund addresses the root causes of hunger, invests in communities of color and deepens food banks’ partnerships in their communities.
From a community perspective, what is driving racial inequities in food insecurity in Hayti, MO?
Method

“Community-based system dynamics (CBSD) is a participatory method for involving communities in the process of understanding and changing systems from the endogenous or feedback perspective of system dynamics (Hovmand, 2014)”

Group Model Building: “model-building process in which a client group is deeply involved in the process of model construction (Vennix, 1999)”
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Day 1 - Identifying Relationship between Key Factors

- Community Building: Fellowship over Breakfast
- Dialogue in Small Group
- Identifying Key Factors (Small Groups)
- Connection Circles
- Community Building: Fellowship over Lunch

Day 2 - Exploring System Structure and Identifying Places to Intervene

- Community Building: Fellowship over Breakfast
- Model Review
- Action Ideas
- Community Building: Fellowship over Lunch

25 community participants
24 out of 25 participants were Black.
All participants were adults (25+).
Most of our participants were 60+ years in age
Phase 2: Key Activities in Design + Planning for GMB

Day 1

- Identifying Relationship between Key Factors

Community Building: Fellowship over Breakfast
- Dialogue in Small Group
- Identifying Key Factors (Small Groups)
- Connection Circles

Community Building: Fellowship over Lunch
Phase 3: Implementation of GMB

Policy Level

- Economic opportunities
- Community Policies
- Getting better jobs
- Farmers/business owners working together
- Being engaged
- Sense of accountability to improve community
- Community voice in elected officials
- Commissioners supporting healthy grocery stores
- Motivation to improve community
- People leaving town

- Quality of available food
- Health
- Competition

- People leaving town
- Frustration/feeling powerless
- Community representation in voting and council meetings
- Local community efforts to improve community

Assessments/inspections of stores/food community - accountable

Concern for your community

Local community efforts to improve community

Committed to food justice

Get local government involved
Experiencing negative impacts made by people in power motivates community members’ desire to improve their community.

However, experiencing those negative impacts and/or not having the political representation in how decisions are made can lead to frustration and sense of powerlessness.
Environment of a grocery communicates racialized messages to community members about how they’re valued or seen by the store owners and takes a mental and emotional toll on community members.

Mental and emotional toll is exacerbated when traveling to white neighborhoods and experiencing cleaner stores with better produce/meat within same chain.

Because these stores are the most convenient options, community members are routinely subjected to these grocery store environments.

Lack of competition in local grocery store markets further facilitates poor standards for community members.
Many adults have caregiving responsibilities for parents/elderly family members with chronic disease. The caretaking toll requires adults to rely on convenient options, which are most often food that does not make them feel good about eating.

While the desire is to avoid experiencing the same chronic disease of older generations, caregiving toll is a vicious cycle of putting off own health needs to support others in family with needs.
Prioritized Action Idea:
Community Committee
Local Committee to Promote and Collaborate on Change
Key Events:

- Developed group text thread to promote civic engagement
- Organized and participated in February Town Council Meeting
- **Community Voices Read Back**
  - Since February Town Council Meeting, Improvements at grocery stores (cleanliness, management and quality of food)
- Invited key service providers and other relevant leaders in the local food system and included representatives from mayor’s office and SEMO Food Bank
- Project Team met with participants from GMB to develop outline and goal for a presentation and develop meeting materials to support community members in the meeting.
- Goal of this meeting was to introduce community committee to other key stakeholders and foster conversation about how other stakeholders can support the community committee (i.e. How are their efforts aligned? How can their work strengthen the efforts of this committee?)
Community Design of Intervention

Community Voices in Action

“A small town that is alive”

- Built Environment
- Food Security + Access
- Education, Arts and Cultural Engagement
- Economic Development
Importance of identifying limits to growth – How can we better anticipate these limits to attract and sustain businesses?

Metaphor: System as a bicycle – “we won’t stop moving [forward] because we keep pedaling. We need to consider how we can put a stick in the wheel to stop it from moving forward.”

Paradigm shift for Participation in the System & civic capacity

Need for Shared Leadership for Community Empowerment
Shift in Perspective on Value-add of Shelf-Stable Food – How can fresh food also be convenient and accessible?

New Question: Is Black spending unintentionally viciously amplifying racial disparity in access to food? How does this impact empowerment?

Importance of considering the psychological toll of racism
### Key Takeaways

| Having someone on our team who is well connected and well trusted by community was an asset for design and implementation of GMB. |
| Identifying quality – not just mere existence - of relationship community partner has within the community |
| Identifying different dimensions of power differentials and establishing new patterns of interactions to address |
| Identify power dynamics on team and with participants; plan how to support normalizing a new relationship dynamic of equitable power |
| Space to sit with and unpack the impact of psychological toll of racism |
| Reflecting on racialized experiences can bring up reflections on feelings of sadness, hurt or anger. Important to consider how to support people if those feelings are resurfaced. Important to consider how to design an experience that will not create these same experiences |
| Causal Loop Diagramming + Time to listen to one another strengthened sense of connectedness |
| Consider how the parties involved have been able to listen to each other as they are asked to actively co-create shared understanding |
| Community isn’t looking for handouts or someone to come in and save them |
| Trust that community members have the agency and answers – and ensure you’re asking the right questions and designing a process well enough to elicit and listen to those answers before opting for saviorism |
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