



Food System Planning and Designing for Health:

A Citizen Science and Photovoice Approach to Food Asset Mapping in Vancouver



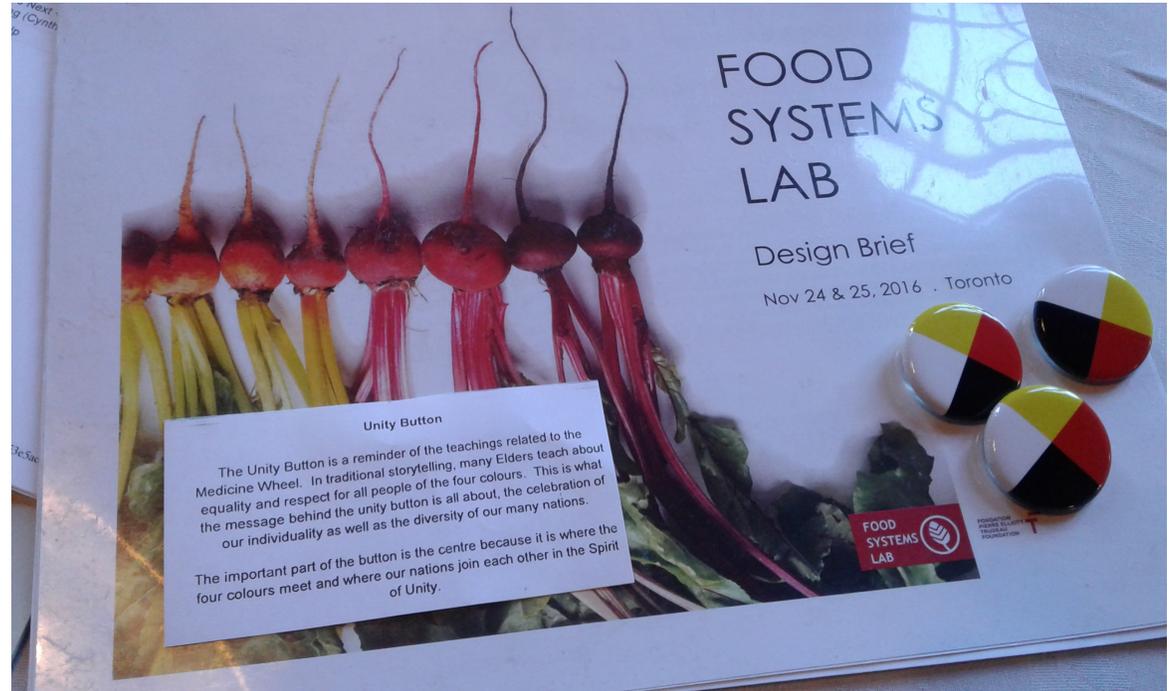
A woman wearing a brown hijab and a black raincoat is working in a garden. She is using a knife to cut a piece of green leafy vegetable from a raised garden bed. The garden bed contains several plants, including a large head of green leafy vegetable. In the background, other people are visible, some wearing raincoats, suggesting a rainy day. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a community garden or market area.

Agenda

- Food System Planning and Health
- Food Asset Mapping
- Photovoice Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusion



Healthy Food Systems & Healthy People



A collaborative interdisciplinary research and social innovation hub based at Simon Fraser University. The Lab was established in 2016 with a vision for a just and sustainable food system for all...

Food: A Stranger to the Planning Field (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000)

“Planning lays claim to being comprehensive, future-oriented, and public-interest driven, and of wanting to enhance the livability of communities. It is concerned with community systems—such as land use, housing, transportation, the environment, and the economy—and their interconnections....”

The food system, however, is notable by its absence from the writing of planning scholars, from the plans prepared by planning practitioners, and from the classrooms in which planning students are taught.”

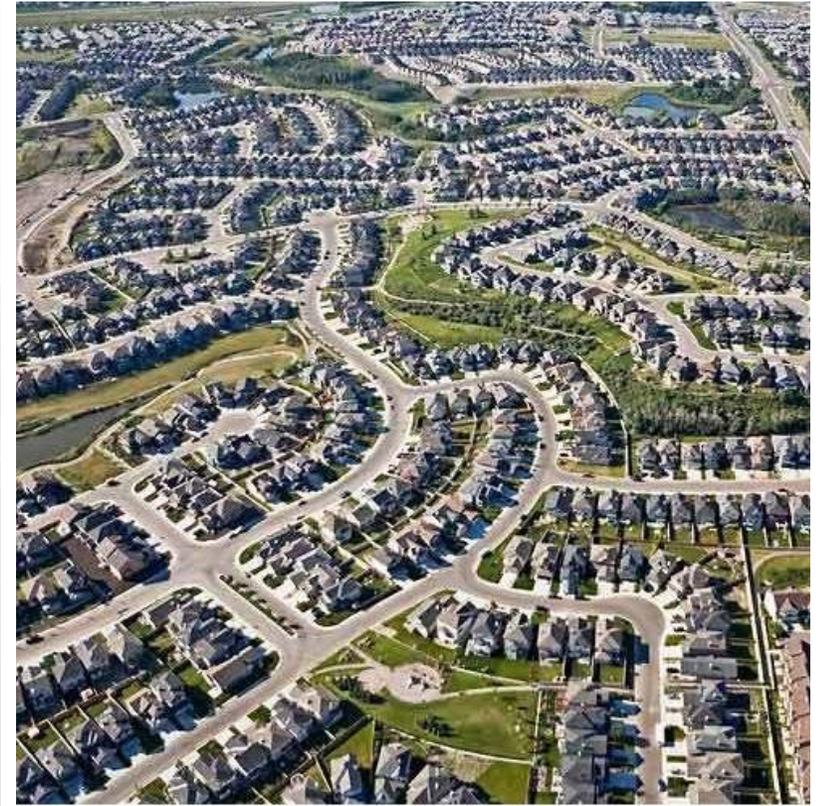


Food is ignored in planning

“Food is a sustaining and enduring necessity. Yet among the basic essential for life- air, water, shelter, and food- only food has been absent over the years as a focus of serious professional planning interest. This is a puzzling omission...”

(American Planning Association, 2007)





What happens when food is ignored in urban planning?
Answer: health, environment, food security and resiliency suffers

Food System Planning and Food System Planners



Food-systems planners are playing a growing role in municipal policy

Municipal governments are recognizing they need to bridge the gap between city-dwellers and food sources

Nikki Wiart

December 4, 2016



Green city: Food-systems planning covers everything from production to grocery-store locations

The rise of food system planners
(Soma and Wakefield, 2011)

Planners/professionals who are working in, or engaged with the food system with the aim of rendering it more sustainable with respect to its social, economic and ecological effects
(Morgan, 2009)



THE LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN
OF THE VANCOUVER PARK BOARD



City of Vancouver (COV)- The Good

- Vancouver has thousands of food assets, particularly a growing number of urban agriculture sites (City of Vancouver, 2014; Mendes et al., 2008).
- Vancouver Food Strategy (2007), Local Food Action Plan (2013) etc..
- COV is a signatory of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact
- Designated as City of Reconciliation in 2014

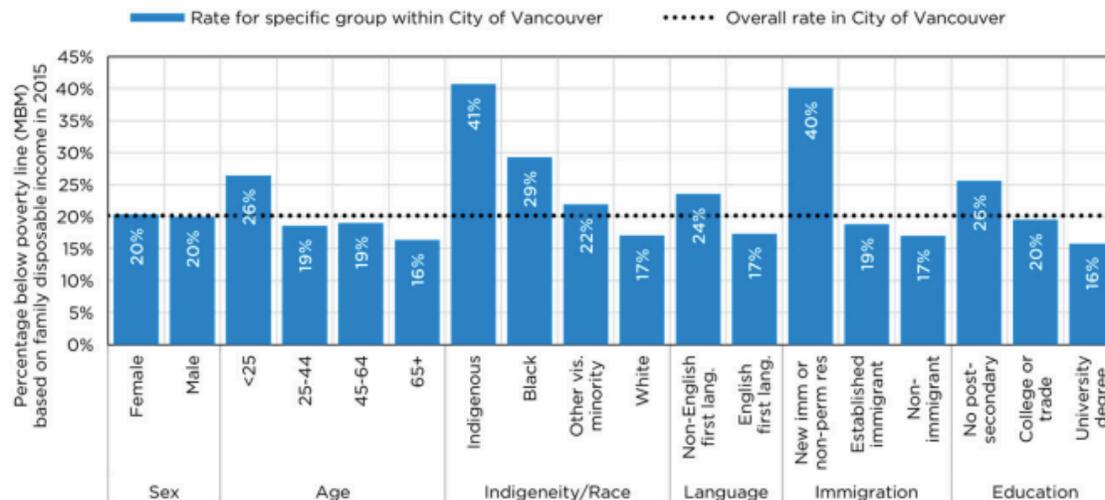
Problems Health and Hunger

A study of food bank users in the Greater Vancouver area found that 62% of the participants noted that food banks were not enough to meet their daily household food needs (Holmes et al., 2019).

Equity and Poverty

Poverty does not strike randomly: inadequate income to meet basic needs correlates with other systems of oppression and inequity. In Vancouver, Indigenous and Black residents are much more likely to experience poverty than other residents. Newcomers have higher poverty rates than established immigrants or Canadian-born residents.

City of Vancouver: Poverty Rate by Selected Demographics, 2016

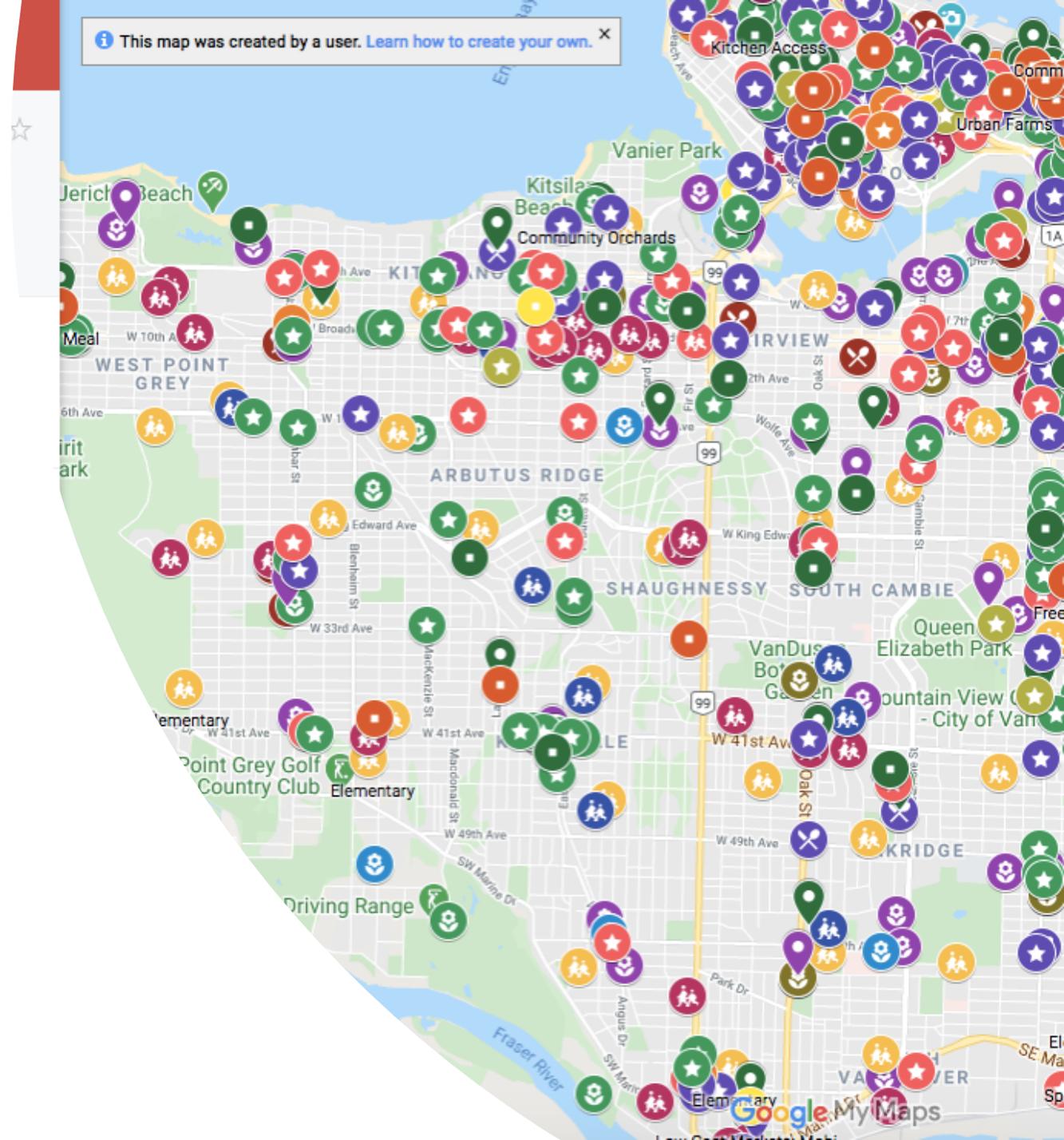


Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population
Target group profile accessed through Community Data Program

- In Vancouver, 1 in 3 Indigenous children live in poverty
- In British Columbia, Indigenous households had the highest rate of food insecurity
- 1 in 5 recent immigrant households face food insecurity

Food Asset Mapping

Food asset mapping is an emerging tool to promote food security and food resiliency in cities. It provides a baseline of a city's food assets and identifies local food infrastructures that can support community food security (Baker, 2018)



Food Assets

Food assets include the local food infrastructure that maintains food secure communities and regions – farms, processing and distribution capacity, food enterprises, markets, retailers, community gardens, urban farms, community kitchens, student nutrition programs, emergency food distribution and community food organizations and centers.

(Baker, 2018, p. 266)

Examples of Food Asset Maps

☰ **Burnaby + NW Food As...** 🔍 ⋮

▼ Everyone is welcome to contribute or give feedback to this mapping project; please contact via email brian_tai@sfu.ca. 620 views
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Free or Low Cost Meals

▼ Free Meal
 Meal Delivery Programs
 Low Cost Meal

Free or Low Cost Grocery Items

▼ Free Grocery Items
 Low Cost Grocery Stores

Kitchens or Food Programs

▼ Community Kitchen Program
 Food Programs
 Food Skills Workshop
 Kitchen Access

Research Questions

- 1) How can a citizen science-led food asset mapping process better identify “hidden” food assets and aspirations, which has thus far been relatively overlooked in mainstream food security framework or dominant food asset maps;
- 2) How can the integration of photovoice in a citizen-led food asset mapping project support the development of a more just and equitable urban food policy?

Methods:

Food Asset Mapping Charette and
Photovoice



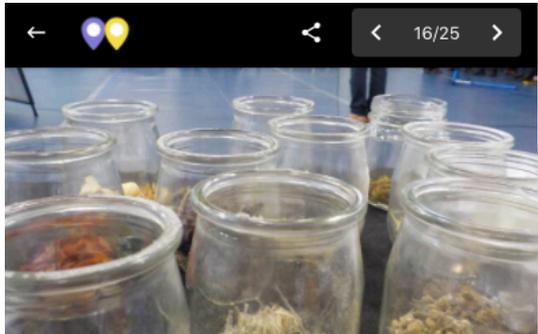
Food Assets and Health: Natural Environment



In my culture, when the tide went out, dinner was served because that's where the food is. And now, with all the resource raping of our Earth, when the tide goes out, now we got to worry about red tides, we have to worry about whether or not our food sources can get through the rivers, whether or not we can actually go down to the beaches and actually forage the food that we're so used to being able to do.....and we're getting sicker from eating the food because of all the chemical dumps. The fish can't go up the Fraser River right now to spawn, and salmon is one of the most important things in native culture because the salmon spawning is our main food source.

-Aya (pseudonym) – Indigenous woman

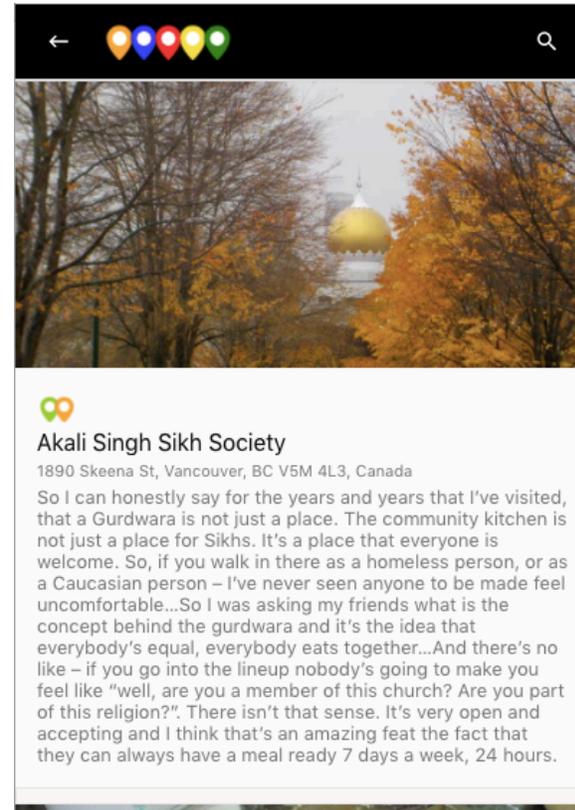
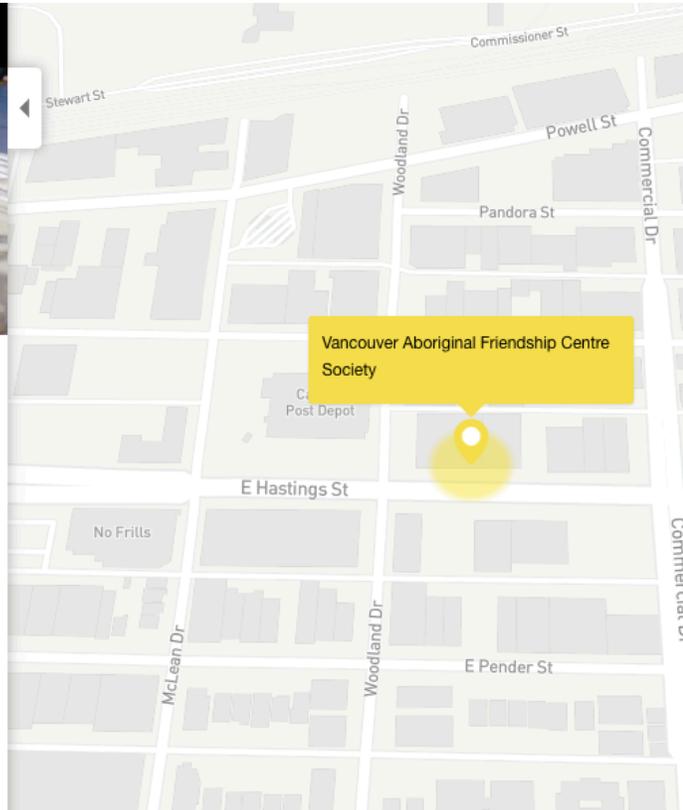
Citizen Scientist Photovoice Food Asset Mapping



Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society

1607 E Hastings St, Vancouver, BC V5L 1S7, Canada

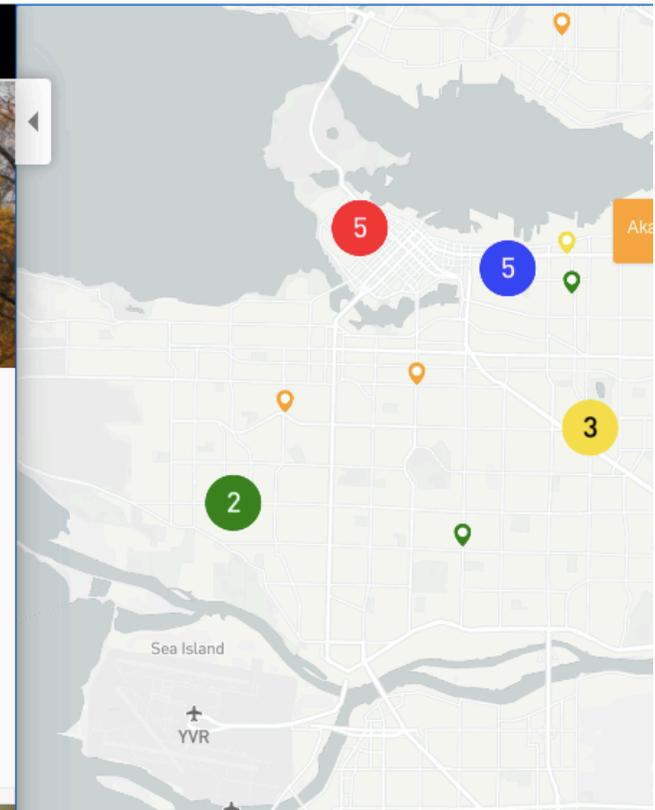
This space actually made me happy, it was a table event where I'm showcasing the plants that I've harvested, that our group had harvested, and were showing it off and were also knowledge sharing with anybody who comes to the table who want to know more about it. This event was a community event at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre. It was about, the idea was around homelessness, but they had many tables around the medicine, they had tax tables, they had a



Akali Singh Sikh Society

1890 Skeena St, Vancouver, BC V5M 4L3, Canada

So I can honestly say for the years and years that I've visited, that a Gurdwara is not just a place. The community kitchen is not just a place for Sikhs. It's a place that everyone is welcome. So, if you walk in there as a homeless person, or as a Caucasian person - I've never seen anyone to be made feel uncomfortable...So I was asking my friends what is the concept behind the gurdwara and it's the idea that everybody's equal, everybody eats together...And there's no like - if you go into the lineup nobody's going to make you feel like "well, are you a member of this church? Are you part of this religion?". There isn't that sense. It's very open and accepting and I think that's an amazing feat the fact that they can always have a meal ready 7 days a week, 24 hours.



Food assets: Barriers to healthy affordable foods



John (pseudonym), binner, single-room-occupant

About 12:30pm it's on the Monday, Thanksgiving Monday, and this is the line up to get into Union Gospel Thanksgiving Dinner and yes, it starts at 10 o'clock in the morning and goes 'til 4 in the afternoon. And this is about 12:30/1 o'clock. And you can see it goes all the way. And that building way there, that's the Union Gospel and it goes around, so there's about 900 people. And it takes about an hour...

That's the only place that holds a Thanksgiving Dinner... Sometimes you have to wait a while to get a good meal, especially like certain times, like Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years... it shows all the people that don't have any place to go for Thanksgiving dinner. What this means is... they're there so they can spend Thanksgiving dinner with other people.

Food assets- Barriers to healthy foods (continued)



“Like I’ve been to the food bank a few times on my own, there’s just not enough, you know, to last a whole week. So, if there were more fruits and vegetables then maybe people would eat a little more healthier instead of boxes of Kraft dinner and stuff like that. Yeah. You kind of need healthier food, something that’s going to sustain you.” (Ruth- Indigenous)

Food Assets and Affordable Healthy Foods



Chia-ling (senior resident and forager)

So, this is my favourite Sunrise Market...the boss goes to the produce markets, gets the last sellable, the things that can turn into cash quick, they are there. So, Sunrise Market's food is always very cheap. I mean, if you stay for few days, they all need to go to compost. That kind of situation. But I love it. My spirit just loves that kind of affordable, plenty...

Food assets that reminds people of “home”



Parvati (pseudonym): Punjabi, Senior resident

...So, I mostly get my fruits and vegetables from here, and then the Persian store...To me, it reminds me, because Persian culture I feel very close to...I am Punjabi, from India from the Punjab province underneath Kashmir in the northern part of India, and my background from home is I am a farmer back home so all of these memories....it reminds me of that home so it takes me back to my childhood... (Parvati)

Food assets, decolonization and reconciliation



Brioni (Indigenous), knowledge keeper

“This is cultural identity, indigenous knowledge handed down and this is how we would grow, we use this space beside Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House to grow Calendula. Calendula is a medicine that is used for many things, you can eat it, you can drink it as a tea, you can put it in a salve. So, what we grew it for, is to make a salve to help people with eczema and psoriasis so we made a huge patch there, so we go there about every couple of weeks and pick the blossoms. So, these are my kids coming with me harvesting the plant and they know what it’s for and they know how to pick it”

Food assets without stigma: Food as a commons



Ravi (pseudonym) former refugee, South American

So I can honestly say for the years and years that I've visited, that a Gurdwara is not just a place. The community kitchen is not just a place for Sikhs. It's a place that everyone is welcome. So, if you walk in there as a homeless person, or as a Caucasian person – I've never seen anyone to be made feel uncomfortable...So I was asking my friends what is the concept behind the gurdwara and it's the idea that everybody's equal, everybody eats together...And there's no like – if you go into the lineup nobody's going to make you feel like “well, are you a member of this church? Are you part of this religion?”

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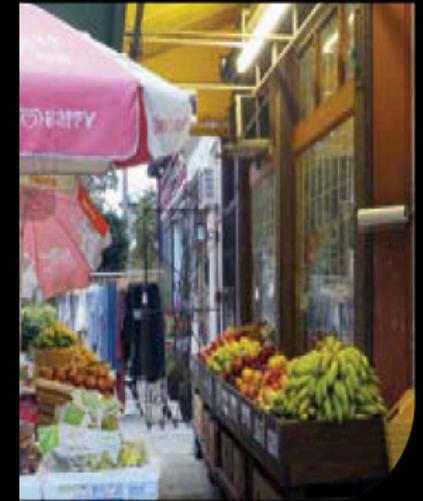
Conclusion

- Without a clear process around engaging diverse, equity deserving communities, the food asset mapping process may miss important sites and contexts that contribute to community well-being.
- It is important to understand the potential barriers that may be faced by residents when accessing so-called food assets.
- Through photovoice, we found a novel approach to food asset mapping that enabled citizen scientists to provide context, identify barriers, and share their stories and aspirations about the future of food security in Vancouver.
- From a planning and policy perspective, a photovoice food asset process may enable the development of a more just food system for all and better infrastructural investments.

Our Home, Our Food, Our Resilience



Vancouver



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More info about our studies:

<https://foodsystemslab.ca>

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