

Youth Building Roots Photovoice Project:

A youth perspective on where food comes from

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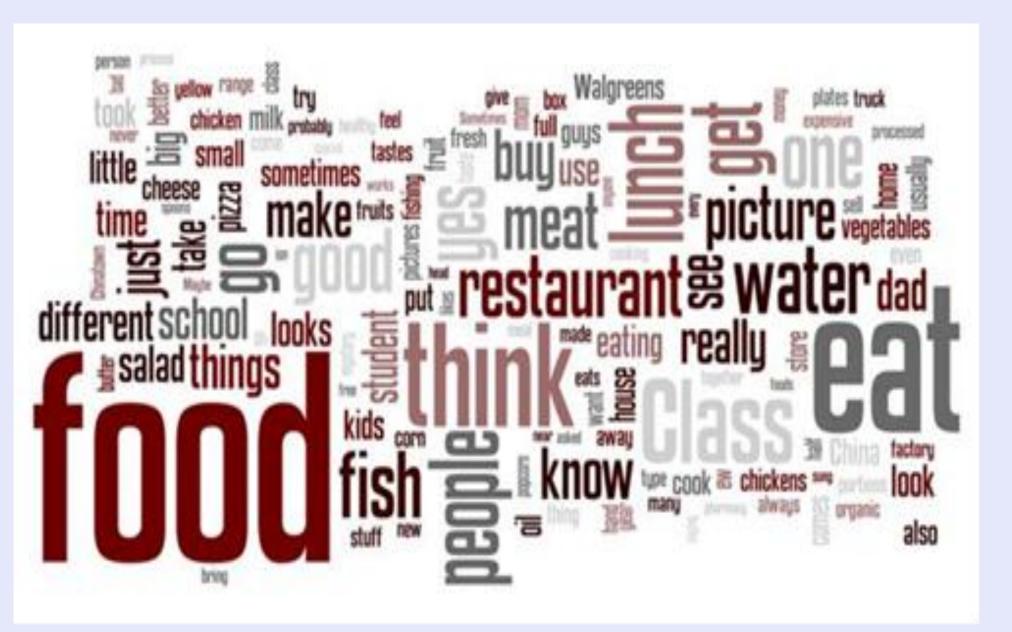
INTRODUCTION

•Given population growth and rising incomes, it is estimated that the demand for food will rise by 70 to 100 percent by 2050 (USDA, Vilsack, 2011).

•For the first time in history we have as many overweight people as undernourished people and the consequences of our dietary habits are on a disastrous trajectory for human health and for ecosystem health (Giovannucci et al., 2012).
•A systematic review of youth nutrition interventions concluded when planning, implementing and evaluating garden based youth education programs: Involve a variety of stakeholders (including youth) in the intervention planning process and consider principles in Community-Based Participatory Research (Robinson-O,Brien, Story, & Heim, 2009).

•Offer school-based programs that integrate nutrition and gardening in order to raise awareness about the connection between healthy food choices and locally-grown fresh produce (Community Food Security Coalition, 2003).

Picture 1: Word collage of transcribed notes from Photovoice with most frequent words appearing largest



Primary Aims of the Capstone Photovoice Project:

- •Gain a better understating of youth perspectives of food and food systems, on the individual, interpersonal and environmental levels
- •Explore how culture and food access influence food choices of youth in Philadelphia
- •Create a dialogue and stimulate social change for sustainable food systems while increasing awareness for food related issues both locally and globally
- The project was also a supplement to a youth program through The United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia (UNA-GP), titled Youth Building Roots (YBR).
 YBR is carried out annually in schools throughout Philadelphia with the goal of educating middle-school students on nutrition, hunger, local food production and global food
- •To add a global component to YBR, UNA-GP collaborates with Novi, a non-profit organization that seeks to improve the quality of life of villagers in West Africa.

sustainability practices.

•This project was to focus on a smaller subset of the students participating in YBR and directly engage them in carrying out a research project. The findings can be used to spur change in the local community, identify needed policy changes in the Philadelphia school system, potentially expand and enhance YBR, as well as provide the participating school with resources to advocate and link with outside organizations.

METHOD

Participants:

- McCall School, located at 7th and Pine Street Philadelphia, Pennsylvania USA
- •The 7th and 8th grade students who opted to participate & received parental consent (n=14; 8 females, 6 males)

Design:

- Photovoice methodology to explore project aims
 Photovoice joins together photography, storytelling and social action. Pictures are taken of things that are important to the photographer. The meanings of the pictures that develop can be used to promote changes in
- •The ecological model was the guiding framework for this project. Understanding the multiple levels that influence what young people eat is crucial in creating effective change, at the individual, community and policy level.

the communities & organizations involved (Wang, 1997).

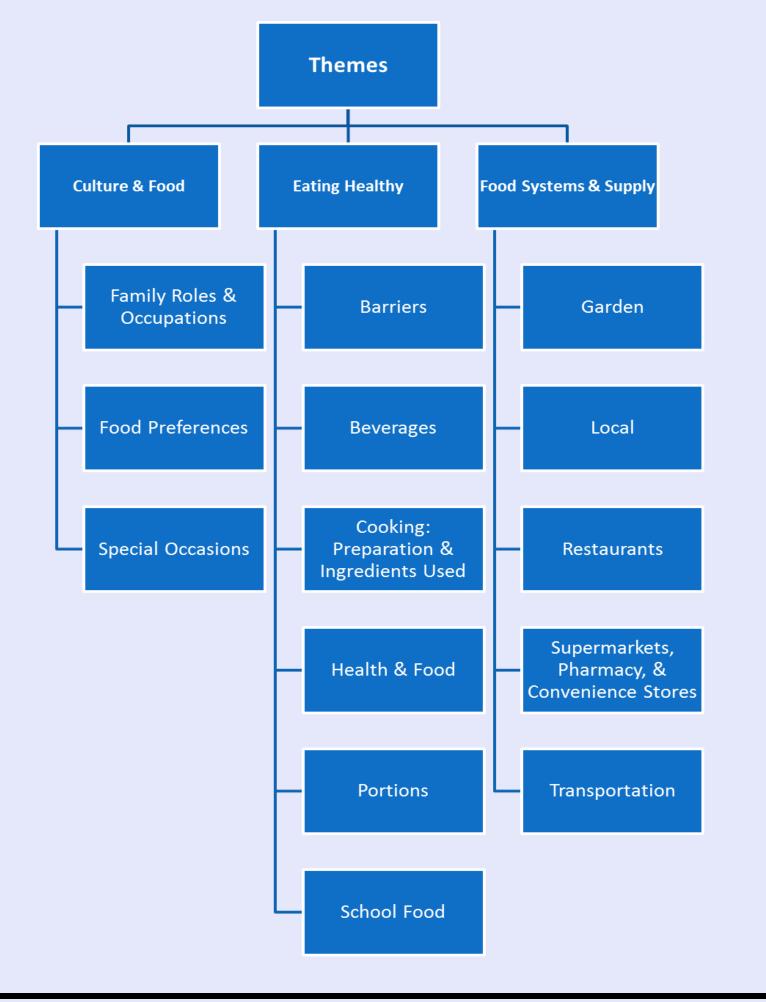
Procedure:

Thomas Jefferson University IRB approval received
Cameras were recruited for the project and later donated for subsequent research projects at Jefferson.
Two YBR sessions, three Photovoice sessions and one culminating event occurred over a 2 month period.
Students individually took photographs using the guiding questions:

•What do you eat?•Where does your food come from?

- •Photo selection, contextualization and discussion followed using SHOWeD: What do you **S**ee here? What is really **H**appening? How does this relate to **O**ur lives? **W**hy does this problem or strength exist? What can we **D**o about it? (Wang, 1997)
- •Students created captions, themes, and a presentation for the YBR culminating event (Picture 4).
- Each session was tape-recorded and transcribed.
- •Items were coded and theme analysis was carried out.
- To ensure accuracy, triangulation was used.

Chart 1: Hierarchy of Themes developed from pictures and transcribed notes



RESULTS

Table 1: Frequency Table

Themes:	Culture & Food	#	Eating Healthy	#	Food Supply & Systems	#
	>Food Preferences	7	>Beverages	2	>Local	4
	>Special Occasions	3	>Cooking: Preparation & ingredients used	5	>Restaurants	4
			>Food and Health	5	>Supermarkets, conv. & pharmacy	3
			>Portions	6	Transportation	2
			>School Food	8		
Theme Total:		14		30		16

•Using coding, in-depth analysis and triangulation, three (3) major themes: Culture & Food, Eating Healthy, and Food Supply & Systems, emerged with sub-themes under each (Chart 1).

•Most frequent of the major themes was Eating Healthy, and the most commonly discussed sub-theme, across all themes, was School Food (Table 1).

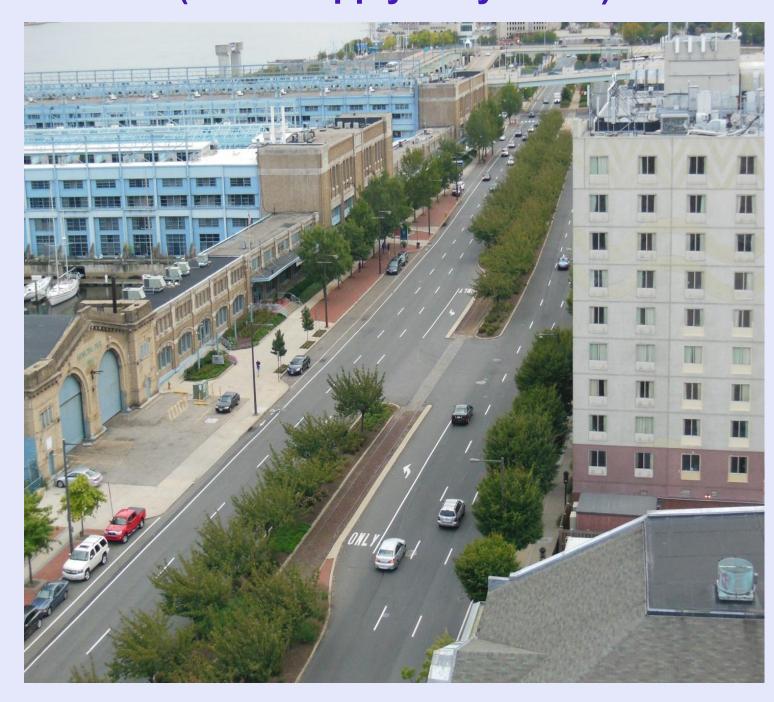
PHOTOVOICE EXAMPLES

Picture 2: School Food (Eating Healthy)



"Vegetables, if school had these, we'd eat them."

Picture 3: Transportation (Food Supply & Systems)



"Ben Franklin Bridge, a view of traffic.
The cars shown represent transportation, which is how we get our food."

DISCUSSION

•This project expands on existing knowledge of food and health related topics. It provides a varied vantage point, by directly engaging youth and encouraging them to play an active role in carrying out the project.

•The most frequent theme was the dissatisfaction with school food. The participants had a unique cultural background and were oriented with eating local, growing their own food, appreciation for cultural differences and an understanding of the negatives of processed foods.

•Restaurant employment (parents/family members) was common, as was eating out at restaurants.

•Limited awareness of food supply and shortages as well as a lack of understanding of global food systems; this could be addressed through school-based education, after school clubs and other activities, such as YBR.

Picture 4: Culminating Event Tree Planting Ceremony & Photovoice display



•More needs to be done to provide youth with the tools to create change. Students speak positively toward healthy eating, demand a better school lunch and show interest in growing food and eating local. School gardens, farm to school, education on local issues and global food supply is needed to foster and support growth and civically engaged young people.

To ensure sustainability of the YBR project, and to effectively bring about the changes highlighted in this project, collaboration and outside resources are essential.
Limitations: Convenience sample & small cohort; Findings may only be applicable to the McCall School and the surrounding area.

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Thomas Jefferson University: All professors and staff

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