



# Building a great farmers market

Food Dignity Practice Brief 2

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[www.fooddignity.org](http://www.fooddignity.org)

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*This document tells the story of how the East New York Farmers Market, in Brooklyn, NY, developed into one of the country's largest community-based markets and what we've learned about the essential combination of people, products, and place.*

[www.eastnewyorkfarms.org](http://www.eastnewyorkfarms.org)

[www.ucceny.org](http://www.ucceny.org)



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## **Introduction**

*Every Saturday something unusual happens at New Lots Avenue and Schenck Avenue in East New York. If you were there you'd see a dozen or so teenagers bustling around setting up tents, tables, and barricades. You'd wonder what they were doing, until you saw the vendors start to arrive. Twenty-odd vendors heaping their tables with fresh greens, herbs, peppers, fruits, and all kinds of produce grown by more than 70 youth and adult gardeners through out East New York and by regional farmers. You'd also see others selling baked goods, home-cooked food, and even fresh fish.*

*When the customers arrive, you'd see the real action start. People representing the amazing cultural diversity of our community, lining up for their favorite vegetables from back home, seniors and young adults alike, arguing over the freshest greens.*

*If you stayed around a little, you'd see youth involved in all aspects of this endeavor – selling produce, surveying customers, running activities for younger kids, even giving tours of their own ½ acre urban farm adjacent to the market.*

*The fact that this scene is so unusual is a crisis. The fact that it is happening in East New York, means that we are working collectively to address the root causes of food insecurity by building our own resources and working to change the food system, starting with our community.*

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## **Why markets are a good strategy for food access**

In our largely immigrant and migrant community, **markets remind people of home.** So many people come to US cities from places where open-air markets were the norm – in our case, from the US South, from the Caribbean, from Central and South America, from West Africa, and from Bangladesh. Given that, it's surprising that there seems to be a perception that farmers markets are the domain of (predominantly white) yuppies. If markets are not drawing customers who are from places where agriculture is a big part of daily life,

we should be asking what's wrong with these markets, not assuming that people of color or working class people just don't like or don't appreciate fresh food.

Markets are a relatively **low-capital and highly visible way of getting fresh food** into a community. This advantage also hints at the challenges faced by some other strategies, such as initiatives to expand produce availability in corner stores and bodegas.<sup>i</sup> This is likely one of the reasons that neighborhood groups working to increase access to fresh food have increasingly turned to markets as a strategy.

**Furthermore, markets can be built upon to provide a wealth of community benefits** beyond access to fresh food. Our market is one of the oldest and largest of a growing group of community-based markets that add youth development, job training, urban agriculture, and education, arts, or social events to the basic direct marketing model of a farmers market.

Still, many farmers markets – especially those in low- and middle-income communities - struggle to remain viable. **This document tells the story of how the East New York Farmers Market developed and what we've learned.**

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## **Market profile**

East New York is a culturally rich, ethnically diverse and economically disadvantaged community located in eastern Brooklyn. Our 174,000 residents are predominantly Black (50%) and Hispanic (40%), with approximately 35% immigrant households and 45% of residents under the age of 24. Our community faces many problems that are symptoms of historical disinvestment and discrimination, including high levels of violence, poverty rates of 31%, high unemployment (16%), and one of the highest rates of incarceration in the city. Many residents struggle to find and afford fresh healthy food, and this is reflected in high rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.<sup>ii</sup> **People do not expect to find**

**a vibrant farmers market here, and it is our pleasure to surprise them.**

The East New York Farmers Market was founded in 1998 as part of the East New York Farms! Project. In 1995, the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development worked with local organizations to initiate a series of community opinion forums. They asked residents to identify both needs and existing resources in East New York. Needs mentioned included more safe public spaces and green spaces, more retail convenience – especially fresh food – and better opportunities for youth. On the resources side, people mentioned our abundance of community gardens – over 65 in fact, more than any other neighborhood in New York City. They also mentioned the gardeners themselves, residents who had the vision and commitment to turn these vacant lots into vibrant gardens. And they mentioned the youth, over one-third of the population in our community, and the potential they held.

Through a coalition of organizations and local residents called the East New York Planning Group (ENYPG), The East New York Farms! Project came together as a way to further develop these resources to meet community needs. A case study (<http://goo.gl/VVJzLL>) offers further detail on the growth of the East New York Farms! Project (ENYF).

Working with youth interns and adult gardeners to increase organic food production in community gardens, we were able to start a small farmers market that provided residents with access to fresh food, generated income for gardeners, and would eventually become a community gathering space and a key educational component of our youth program. We had reached out to some citywide farmers market operators, and they declined the invitation to open a market in East New York, which turned out to be a blessing because **we had to do it on our own, and were able to build a program structure that works for the unique needs of our community.**

When the market opened in 1998, there were only two vendors – one local community gardener, Johanna Willins, and John Ameroso of Cornell Cooperative Extension selling produce from Gericke Farm in Staten Island. Though a core group remained committed (Johanna, a few local gardeners who were members of the East New York Gardeners Association, and the ENYPG partners including Cornell University Cooperative Extension, the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, Local Development Corporation of East NY, and United Community Centers), the market struggled at first – to secure a good location, to attract vendors and to attract customers.



*East New York Farmers Market in 2001*

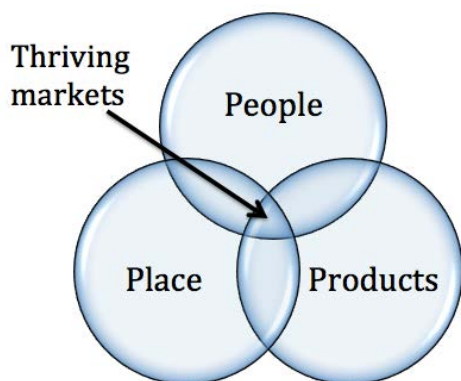
**In 2001, a confluence of factors helped the market achieve growth that boosted us to the next level.**

- **First**, we were able to recruit two regional farmers, whose products vastly expanded volume and variety at the market. Mike Rogowski joined in 2000 after ENYF staff tracked him down at a conference organized by Just Food, and we recruited Alex Kravets in 2001 through the NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets.
- **Second**, after a year of lobbying from ENYF partners, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets began distributing Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons through Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Centers in East New York in late 2000. They did not previously distribute coupons here because there was no farmers market. By

2001, both WIC and Senior FMNP coupons were distributed at the start of the season.

- **Third**, LDCENY succeeded in lobbying the city to clear and re-pave the market site and fix the surrounding sidewalks.

This combination of an increased ability to attract **people** through FMNP vouchers, an expanded selection of **products** for them to buy, and an improved physical **place** taught us an early lesson about these crucial balance of these essential elements of creating a thriving market.



Our market grew steadily over the years. In 2013, an average of 15 vendors sold at our Saturday market. This included 45 gardeners and 15 other local vendors (selling products ranging from prepared food to health products to crafts), as well as two regional farmers. Our markets (large Saturday market and Wednesday farm stand) generated over \$124,000 in sales, with over \$49,000 earned by local residents. Approximately 18,000 customers accessed an estimated 45,000 pounds of fresh, locally grown produce, and redeemed nearly \$60,000 worth of food assistance dollars (WIC and Senior FMNP, EBT/SNAP, NYC Healthbucks, and NY State FreshConnect).

Since our inception, our market has provided over 740,000 pounds of fresh produce to local residents and generated over \$1,300,000 in sales for local vendors and regional farmers. In our networking with other markets, we have yet to find a larger market that serves a low or middle income community as its primary customer base and engages youth and local gardeners to the extent that we do.

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## Getting people

### Grassroots outreach

Though we've experimented with different options, it seems that local, **grassroots outreach is more effective** than higher-end broader advertising. East NY is a place where personal relationships are still important, and a two-minute conversation with a person can make much more difference than 10 radio ads.

Two of the main large-budget advertising strategies we employed did not yield great results. In 2005, we produced advertisements for local bus shelters. Surveys that year indicated little impact from the ads, and some regular customers (who were coming to the market before they saw the ads) told us that the posters, which used professional stock photos and were created by a graphic designer, looked a "like a McDonald's ad for healthy food." We learned that this more "polished," advertising didn't really reflect the character of our market.

In 2013, we received a \$10,000 NY State Department of Agriculture grant to produce radio ads. We ran 55 60-minute spots on stations suggested by our members and customers. The radio ads had a reach beyond just East New York, which differed from our usual outreach strategies. But ours is the largest market for a couple of miles in each direction, and our surveys have shown that 35% of customers drive to the market. But only 1 of 137 customers surveyed last year heard about our market on the radio. We were surprised by these results, given the fact that doing more advertising, specifically on the radio, was a suggestion raised both by customers in last year's market survey and by vendors at our season review meetings. Interestingly, our surveys revealed that **the most common ways that people heard about the market were still Word of mouth (36%) and Walking by (51%)**. The fact that word of mouth continues to be such an important part of how we reach customers

points to the **important social element of markets**. While there is no substitute for having a good variety of fresh produce and advertising that asset, people will also come and stay because they know and like – or get to know and like – the people who they expect to see at the market.

### Creating a permanent presence

Though farmers markets can set up in highly visible locations and generate excitement when they're operating, **they mostly are not permanent structures**. When they aren't in operation, there may be no obvious sign that a market exists in that spot. **This makes permanent signage very important**. Though we do not know if 51% of customers who found out about the market by "Walking by" saw the market when it was open or saw the multiple signs we have on our adjacent urban farm or community center, it is clear that this percentage is higher than in some years in which we had less permanent signage. For example, in 2010 27% of customers found out about the market by walking by. It's worth noting that the signs we installed in 2011 are simple, hand-painted signs. However they convey the key info about the existence of a market, and dates and times.



*Sign on UCC Youth Farm fence*

### Affordability

In a low- or middle-income community, it's obviously important to keep prices reasonable. At the same time, vendors also need to earn income. What vendors need to charge can still be too high

for what some customers can afford to pay.

**Government food assistance programs have had a huge impact on our market sales** including FMNP, EBT, NYC Healthbucks, and NY State Fresh Connect, in that order. In the first full year that FMNP coupons were distributed in East New York, market sales increased 400%.

FMNP in particular, which provides vouchers specifically for fruits and vegetables at farmers markets to low-income women with children and to seniors, has constituted between 45% and 80% of market sales since vouchers were first distributed in 2001. In years when state or federal funding for FMNP were reduced, market sales were impacted.



*Intern Shuaibu Kenchi accepts a Senior FMNP coupon.*

Though large-scale policy changes could address systemic problems to make fresh food more affordable in the future, programs like FMNP currently **provide an important way for customers with limited income to be able to choose fresh produce while also expanding potential income for vendors**. 35% of our customers say they are saving money on groceries by shopping at our market.

Our surveys and experience suggest that many **customers who use FMNP coupons also use cash** at the market. Each eligible person receives only \$20-\$24 of FMNP coupons per season, which could easily be spent in one visit to the market. Yet 56% of our customers say that they shop at the market every week or a few times a month. It's



interesting to note here that while income from food assistance programs stayed mostly steady over time, cash sales increased significantly.

### Reaching those who are harder to reach

From a series of six focus groups conducted with residents in 2004, we learned an important lesson. The participants – primarily people who did not regularly shop at the East NY Farmers Market – in each case spoke at length about their concerns about the poor quality of the food they were eating. But at the end of the 90 minute session, they would conclude that “That’s all there is, so what are you gonna do?” It was clear that people were aware of problems with our food, and did care, but did not know there were other options. It served as a reminder to us that **our primary battle was to inform people that there are other options available**, and available in their community, but that we did not necessarily need to re-educate people or convince them that food they’re eating is bad for them. East New York has many people who do want to buy and know how to cook fresh food, and we’ve built our success by reaching them. Along the way we proved that many **low- and middle-income people of color do like and will buy fresh produce**.

And, just as in any community, there are people who may actually need some more convincing, or may be harder to draw. Two groups that we are looking to reach more effectively in the future are:

#### **a) Women receiving WIC**

Since 2011, five new markets have opened in East New York and Brownsville – primarily smaller markets with a single vendor or with youth reselling produce through GrowNYC’s Youth Markets program. Though supply of fresh produce is still not sufficient to meet the potential demand of the nearly 300,000 residents in East New York and Brownsville, this is a great time to tackle the challenge of reaching out a broader range of potential customers. This could include **working**

**to increase redemption of WIC FMNP and WIC Vegetable and Fruit checks** at our market.

Despite the **tens of thousands of dollars of WIC FMNP coupons** redeemed at our market each year, an almost equal number **go unredeemed in our area each year**.<sup>iii</sup> Our surveys also show that only 2% of our customers are under 25 years old, while 90.2% of WIC recipients are under 25.<sup>iv</sup> We have found anecdotally that people who have lived more of their lives in NYC or US cities are less likely to have learned how to cook fresh produce from scratch, likely because of the difficulty of accessing fresh food here. We also recognize that in a community where 25% of households are headed by single mothers, people often need to get their shopping done in the most convenient possible way, which may make it harder for them to plan ahead to do their shopping at our markets.

#### **b) Customers who speak limited English**

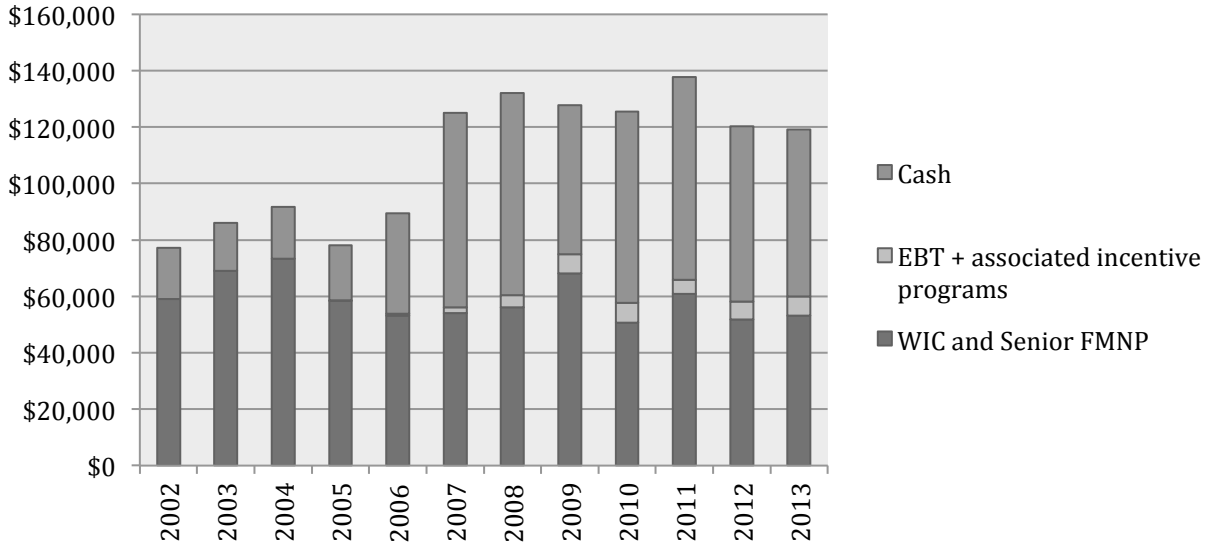
While our market does attract a diverse range of customers who speak English, Spanish, Bangla, Russian, Creole, French, Yoruba, and other languages, the majority of our customers speak English as their primary language. In order to draw an even broader range of customers, we have tried a few strategies, though we’ve not yet succeeded in attracting numbers of speakers of other languages that seem proportionate to their presence in East New York.



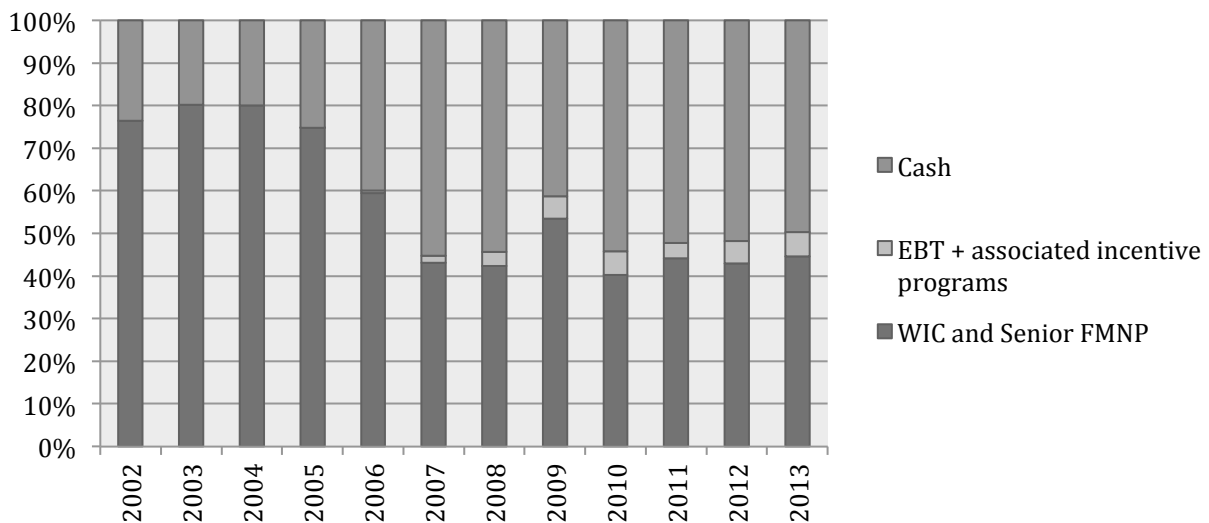
Market flyer translated into Bangla

Since 2003 we have translated our market flyers into Spanish, and since 2007 we have produced

### East NY Farmers Market sales by category, in dollars



### East NY Farmers Market sales by category, percentages



**A note on market sales:**

While sales are not the only way we measure success of our markets, self-reported income from vendors, broken down into currency categories, provides an important gage of our impact for vendors, customers, and the broader community. In addition to our outreach, vendor recruitment, and place-making efforts, a variety of factors beyond our immediate control have caused fluctuations in market sales over time.

Anecdotally, we've found that customer attendance and spending have been impacted by weather (very hot days and rainy days result in lower attendance), economic conditions (2009 economic downturn), and funding levels and distribution dates for FMNP. In a market where a handful of vendors account for the majority of sales, external factors that substantially affect the production or participation of any one vendor can also be important. Our vendors have faced weather-related challenges (unusually warm spring weather followed by a freeze, fall hail storms, Hurricane Irene, Hurricane Sandy), family emergencies, and failure to secure visas for seasonal farm staff. Fruit supplies at our market and dozens of other outer-borough markets were affected in 2012 when Red Jacket Orchards (a vendor at our market) shifted their focus to wholesale marketing.



market flyers in English, Spanish, Bangla, and Russian. We've tried to work with vendors to make sure that their prices are always displayed in order better accommodate speakers of any language, though it's been difficult to get vendors to be consistent about this.

Realizing that it's **not just our flyers and advertising that draws customers but also our local vendors** (their relationships in the community, and the products they sell), we also had our Market Rules and Regulations and Vendor Applications translated, and worked with the New Farmer Development Project (now FARMRoots) to recruit Latino farmers, and with other local organizations to reach potential vendors.

This experience taught us how difficult it is to create a truly multi-lingual project that can really attract and meet the needs of customers and vendors who speak limited English. Even though we do have some staff members, vendors and youth interns who speak Spanish, Bangla, and Russian, any customer or vendor is still more likely to interact with someone who speaks only English. Because **relationships and community are so important to our market**, it seems that this **barrier in creating strong relationships** with residents who speak limited English has been an obstacle to retaining multi-lingual vendors, and therefore, drawing multi-lingual customers. It's a challenge we're still working to address.

#### Learning from our customers

While responding to customer feedback on-site is an ongoing responsibility for our all of our staff and youth interns, we also conduct an **annual survey of 100 customers each fall**, over the course of 4-5 market days. We also occasionally conduct shorter surveys mid-season, using one or two questions from our full survey. The survey results give us a valuable picture of how customers heard about our market, how they are getting to the market, and how they feel about the market, as well as who is shopping at the market.

Survey questions have been developed and tweaked over the years based on input from vendors and youth, and examples from other markets. Though we generally add or remove a few questions each year, we keep them fairly consistent to compare responses year-to-year.

Youth interns are trained to conduct surveys on site. They later enter the data into Google Forms, and help to analyze results. Survey results are presented to vendors and other members at our Season Review meetings each winter.

**The survey tool we used in 2013 is included as an Appendix at the end of this report.**

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### *Getting products*

A good farmers market needs a good variety of quality products, and it's clear that no amount of 'extra' features can substitute for this. Our surveys show that 70% of our customers visit the market because of the quality of the products, and 65% are eating more fruits and vegetables because of the market.

#### Involving local vendors

In all of the customer surveys we've conducted since 2005, the most common suggestion to improve the market is always "more vendors." **While regional farmers are a key part of our market (as described below), local residents make up the great majority of vendors...usually 12 of 15 vendors on an average market day.** When we first started our market in 1998, we weren't able to convince any farmers to sell in East New York, and had to rely on the food we could grow ourselves in community gardens.

We have deliberately structured our market to make it easy to for local vendors to join – both because helping local residents generate income is important to us, and because their involvement draws their friends and neighbors as customers in a way almost no other kind of outreach could.



*Gardener Pauline Reid setting up her table at the market.*

To do this, we've had to do things that many other markets don't do. **We own, store, and rent equipment** at very low rates for local vendors. Youth interns set up and take down tents, tables, and chairs for vendors who rent them. Almost all vendors who are local residents take this option, and many of them would be unable to participate otherwise, because they either lack the money, means of transportation, or physical ability to bring their own equipment.

We also **keep our space fees very low** for local vendors, and offer discounts for vendors who participate actively in the project in other ways (like attending meetings, doing outreach, interviewing youth interns, or attending site visits with funders).

Many gardeners still do not have enough time or volume of produce to have their own stand at the farmers market. **Our "Share Table" offers an option for gardeners to drop off produce to be sold by our youth interns.** Proceeds are then shared between the gardeners and the youth program. The percentage that gardeners earn is based on their level of participation in East New York Farms, and if they harvested the produce themselves (versus requesting that our youth interns harvest for them, which we accommodate when we can). **This option makes it possible for gardeners with any amount of surplus produce to earn income and make a contribution to the volume and variety the market.**

Our **Market Rules and Regulations**, available on the ENYF website (<http://goo.gl/tl5b4f>) provide details on the fee structure for our market (p.3) and income sharing arrangements for the Share table (p. 4).

Our structures are meant to accommodate as many local vendors as possible, and most of our vendors have other jobs, which means they often have limited capacity to invest in or expand their businesses. This means that our staff take a more active role in market management than might happen in other markets where vendors are involved in structured management (for example, markets where all vendors participate on active committees). That said, our vendors conduct invaluable informal outreach by constantly talking to their friends and neighbors about the market, and are invested in the market as a resource for their community as well as an outlet for their products.

#### Partnership between regional and urban growers

Regional farmers are essential partners in our market. These farmers have provided on average **5 times more volume of produce** to our community than we could have with urban farming alone. Their participation enables our market to move beyond creating symbolic access to making a **sizable impact on availability and consumption of fresh food** in East New York. With their larger stands, the regional farmers could potentially draw customers away from local gardeners, but this partnership works in part because **regional farmers and local growers generally sell different products.** Local vendors sell the culturally specific crops that people can't find easily, while farmers provide larger variety and volume.

Despite the successes we've had, **recruiting and retaining farmers is, admittedly, just hard.** East Brooklyn markets in particular suffer from being both perceived as less desirable because of lower income levels, and from being far from farmers in upstate New York. Farmers generally struggle to make a decent livelihood, and look for markets



*Mike Rogowski with staff hired from the community*

where they can charge higher prices. With more than 141 markets in NYC (up from 79 in 2006),<sup>v</sup> there are many other markets in higher income communities at which farmers could sell. And upstate farmers who are willing to consider selling in a low- or middle-income community could find markets closer to them in the Bronx. Though East New York is closer to Long Island, Long Island has enough population density that most Long Island farmers do not have to travel into the city to sell their products.

We deliberately make it very easy to join our market, and this also makes it easy for farmers to

leave, because they generally have not paid any fees upfront, or invested a lot of time in registering. This makes it even more **necessary for vendors to see sufficient sales fairly quickly.**

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## *Creating a place*

**Many low-income communities lack existing public spaces that are well used or maintained.**

In East New York, for example, active pedestrian streets are lacking. The streets that are busy are usually designed more for cars and for moving quickly than for lingering (ie Pennsylvania Avenue train station). Public spaces like parks or plazas are more rare than in other neighborhoods, and the ones that exist are often not well maintained and therefore not well utilized. In 1998, East NY didn't have a place like Union Square or the entrance to Prospect Park where we could locate our market. We had to create a place. Once we moved our market in 2007 this was much easier, because our space was more fluidly connected with the UCC Youth Farm, a small park and the local branch of our public library, while still being close to public transportation (trains and buses).



*The market in 1999, operating outside of a vacant lot on New Lots Avenue and Barbey Street.*



### Your “best” may not be good enough

**A clean, attractive space is important.** It took us some time to learn this - that trying our “best” might not be good enough. When the market was operating in a vacant lot on New Lots Avenue and Barbey Street (from 2000 to 2006), it was very hard to keep that entire 32,000 square foot space clean when we only used it once per week, and had only three staff members. But East New Yorkers are sick of having lower quality services, and to tell people we were doing our best wasn't enough, we had to make the space attractive.

This is especially important because even great local markets can face an **issue of perception - an idea that anything in historically neglected community list East NY must be of lower quality.** In fact some East New Yorkers travel all the way to the farmers market at Prospect Park. This market is bigger, but it's also more of a destination, and there is often a perception we've fought hard to overcome and need to always be conscious of.

### Building a gathering place

**Cooked food, places to sit, events and activities** create reasons for people to stick around. If you're going to have vendors selling cooked food, providing seating gives people a place to relax and enjoy their food.

**We also host a range of events to make our market fun.** We found that customers enjoyed the events, but they rarely planned their visit to the market specifically because of a special event. This seems to be changing a bit now that internet use among our customers is growing, which has made it easier to send email blasts about specific events. Without the staff and resources to widely promote with flyers, posters or direct mailings, **getting the word out about individual events** was sometimes difficult.



*Something Positive performing as part of Summer Saturdaze*

We've incorporated **arts programming** into our market for many years with support from the Brooklyn Arts Council, and in 2009 we teamed up with a new organization, Arts East NY to offer a variety of arts programming for all ages **every Saturday in July and August** (called Summer Saturdaze). Being able to **market these events as a series** simplified things for customers- they could come any Saturday during the summer and know there would be performances. We saw more people stay for the entire duration of the performances, whereas before, customers might find out about a performance only when they were already at the market, and not able to stay if they hadn't already planned to. We've also found that ongoing activities over the course of the day worked well for similar reasons.

Years ago, our market surveys drew many suggestions about **activities for kids**, when we already offered activities for kids! We realized that since the activities were often running for just one hour during the market day, many people could visit the market at other times and easily miss them. We decided to shift to a **kids' activities table with games and craft supplies available throughout the day.**

**Events centered on specific crops** like callaloo, bittermelon, tomatoes, corn, and hot peppers have been popular, and can allow for vendors to take a more active role (by providing samples, displays, information), than in other events like music and dance performances.



*Kids activities station with chess and mobile library*

In 2013, we piloted a **series of gardening workshops** at the request of customers and vendors. These workshops were a hugely popular and we plan to expand the series in 2014.

#### The market as a program

To be clear, all of these activities certainly increase the cost and effort of running our market, but **we think of our market as a program - not just a market**. It provides education and meaningful employment training for our youth. It's a community gathering space for people of all ages and backgrounds. It's a place to celebrate what's great about East New York. And this environment has an impact on health beyond just the produce people consume. Creating a place that helps people enjoy living in their community

reduces stress, and stress has a range of well-documented negative impacts on physical health.<sup>vi</sup> Our market is a program that generates income through market fees. The fees generated aren't sufficient to cover our costs of running the market<sup>vii</sup>, but that's okay. Just like our other programs, we plan to make a long-term investment in fundraising to continue it. And the income we do earn through market fees provides a crucial source of flexible funds to supplement the grants we receive.

Results of our market surveys reinforce this idea that the market is much more than just a place to shop. 25% of people said they visit the market to socialize, and 27% were driven by supporting their local economy and community. 33% of customers said they were meeting new people as a result of shopping at the market, and 36% were getting information on community events. 61% of customers said they spend more than an hour at the market.

We work hard to create this kind of atmosphere, and it has paid off. One customer told us, **"I come here every Saturday, and I buy my veggies and I sit down and eat my breakfast, and it's the best part of my week."**



*Community Educator Jeanette Carter leading a canning demonstration*

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**Other resources:**

Diversifying Farmers Markets, by the Project for Public Spaces. 2008.

<http://www.pps.org/reference/report-diversifying-farmers-markets/>

Markets for All, A Catalyst for Underserved Neighborhoods, by the Project for Public Spaces. 2010.

<http://www.pps.org/reference/markets-for-all-a-healthy-catalyst-for-underserved-neighborhoods/>

Mapping Competition Zones for Vendors and Customers in US Farmers Markets, by the United States Department of Agriculture. 2011.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5094336>

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**Notes:**

<sup>i</sup> On the one hand, efforts to work with corner stores and bodegas are founded in a wise recognition that there *are* existing food retailers in all communities. In East New York, the term “food desert” is not really accurate, as there is plenty of food, just not much fresh, healthy food. On the other hand many residents have learned from years of experience that their local corner stores *do not* carry fresh or healthy products. Many East New Yorkers have already adjusted their routine to do their grocery shopping in Manhattan on their way home from work, or in Queens when they visit their sister, for example. In the time it may take to get people to see local corner stores as a reliable source of fresh food, the store owner, who is probably making minimal profits anyways, may decide that selling produce was not a good venture.

<sup>ii</sup> East New York (Brooklyn Community Board 5) suffers diabetes rates of 16%, and obesity rates of 30%. Rates of heart disease hospitalizations are higher in East New York than in Brooklyn and New York City overall. From Community Health Profiles: East New York and New Lots. 2006.  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2006chp-204.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Based on data provided by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, WIC redemption rates in East New York are around 45-55%. This data is tracked by WIC contractor, and because

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contractors often run sites in multiple neighborhoods, its not possible to obtain an exact redemption rate for WIC FMNP coupons in East New York.

<sup>iv</sup>WIC Participant and Program Characteristics 2012 Final Report, by United States Department of Agriculture. 2013.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/WICPC2012.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> New York City 2013 Food Metrics Report.  
[http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/planyc2030/pdf/2013\\_food\\_metric\\_report\\_112513.pdf](http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/planyc2030/pdf/2013_food_metric_report_112513.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> Stress Effects on the Body, American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-body.aspx>

<sup>vii</sup> Our market generated \$10,510 in fees in 2013. Though our market is so integrated with our youth program and Community Educator program that it's hard to isolate the costs, we estimate that we spend \$44,000 per year on our two markets, with the majority of funds spent on our Saturday markets.



## **Market operator “checklist” – questions to consider**

<b>Getting people</b>	
<b>Grassroots outreach</b>	How can you utilize grassroots outreach - like word of mouth advertising, and street outreach?
	Are large-budget advertising methods effective for your market? Do they reflect the character of your market?
<b>Creating a permanent presence</b>	Will people who pass by your market site when it’s <i>not</i> open know that a market operates there? How can you increase signage?
<b>Affordability</b>	Are market organizers and vendors promoting use of food assistance programs (Farmers Market Nutrition Program, SNAP, WIC Vegetable and Fruit Checks, and other local incentive programs) as much as possible?
	How can your market attract people who use food assistance programs to also spend cash at the market?
<b>Reaching those who are harder to reach</b>	What are redemption rates for FMNP and WIC Vegetable and Fruit checks in your area? What opportunities are there to improve these rates, possibly by reaching out to younger mothers?
	How can you create an equally great experience for customers who speak limited English? Are there vendors and market staff who speak other languages? Are prices clearly posted?
<b>Learning from our customers</b>	How can you use surveys, or other methods, to better understand your customers – who shops at your market, why, and how often?
	How do you analyze and use survey responses and customer feedback?
<b>Getting products</b>	
<b>Involving local vendors</b>	How can you recruit vendors from the neighborhood as well as regional farmers? What might the barriers be for local vendors to participate? Can these be alleviated by options like renting out tents and tables, or organizing a cooperative “drop-off” table?
<b>Partnership between regional &amp; urban growers</b>	How can regional and urban growers compliment each others’ products?
<b>Creating a place</b>	
<b>Your “best” may not be good enough</b>	Is the market a physically attractive place? How does it compare to other markets in other neighborhoods?
<b>Building a gathering place</b>	How can you encourage people to stay a while? Does the market have places to sit, prepared food, activities?
	Are events and activities planned and advertised ways that are easy for people to remember? Can customers enjoy events and activities without too much planning ahead?
<b>The market as a program</b>	How can you generate some income from your market <i>and</i> raise funds from other sources to support the full range of community benefits that a thriving community market offers?

Name of intern doing survey: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Fall 2013 Farmers Market Shopper Survey

*East NY Farms!* is conducting a survey to see how we are doing and to learn how we can improve the market. Individual responses will be kept private. We sincerely appreciate your time!

### 1. How often do you visit the market? (check one)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First time at market  | <input type="checkbox"/> A couple times per month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A couple times a year | <input type="checkbox"/> Every week               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About once a month    |   |

### 2. How do you get to the market? (check all that apply)

Walk    Taxi    Drive    Bike    Train    Bus (what line?) \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. How did you hear about the market? (check all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth                | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior center (which one?) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking by                   | <input type="checkbox"/> WIC center (which one?) _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signs on gardens             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking demo (where?) _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flyer in the mail            | <input type="checkbox"/> Poster (where?) _____            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio (which station?) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Linden Blvd multiplex            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                  |   |

### 4. Why are you visiting the market? (check all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good quality of products                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Socializing with friends and/or vendors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good prices  | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting local economy and community  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can find products here that can't be found elsewhere | <input type="checkbox"/> Using Senior coupons                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buying organic products                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Using WIC coupons                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buying healthy foods                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Using foodstamps/EBT                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe)                              |  |

### 5. As a result of shopping at the market are you? (check all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating more fruits & vegetables | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning new recipes                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trying new foods                | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting new people                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saving money on groceries       | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting info on community events and services |

### 6. On average how long is your visit at the market? (check one)

- 30 Minutes or less    1 – 2 hours    2 – 4 hours    over 4 hours

**7. How satisfied are you with the market overall on scale of 1-5 (1 least - 5 greatest)**

- 1 (not satisfied)     2     3     4     5 (very satisfied)

**8. Please list 3 NEW products you would like to see sold at the market.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Please list one specific idea to improve the market next year.**

**10a. Have you shopped at our other market (Weds?)      [Y] [N]**

**10b. IF NO to above, why not? (check all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I didn't know about it             | <input type="checkbox"/> It's too far                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know where it is           | <input type="checkbox"/> There is less variety than Saturdays |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The times aren't convenient for me | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                          |

***We would like to learn a little more about our customers:***

**11. What is your home Zip Code?**

**12. Gender:**     Male     Female

**13. What is your ethnicity? (Check all that apply)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African-American | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean        | <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Latino           |  |

**14. What is your age?(circle one)**

Under 25      26-35    36-45    46-55    56-65    66+

**15. What country were you born in?**

**16. Would you like to join our mailing list? (about 1 email/week and 2 mailings/year)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_ Apartment # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your time!*