



Foundations for Success: Building a Strong, Community Food Project

A Community Food Project (CFP)

- provides access to locally grown food
- is of, by, and for the community
- cultivates self-reliance
- empowers/includes economically vulnerable people as participants and/or leaders
- is social justice minded
- is collaborative, and
- can be sustainable over the long-term.



ENYF Retrospective Case Study

<https://prezi.com/kixjpppdqbqz/enyf-retrospective-case-study/>

Neighborhood Forums:	Central ENY		Youth	CypHills	ALL	TOTAL
	11/6	11/16/95	4/30/96	8/8/96	FORUMS	No.
What works in ENY?						
Community/People Resources	22%	46%	21%		33%	35
Local politics/politicians	4%				1%	1
Violence/ Safety & Police	7%	6%	7%		7%	7
Social Service Programs/Providers	15%	2%			5%	5
Jobs/Economic Development/Programs	11%	14%	3%		10%	11
Business/Commercial facilities/services	4%	2%	3%		3%	3
Recreational Programs/Facilities	4%	2%	17%		7%	7
Education/Schools	4%	4%	3%		4%	4
Cultural/Educational Programs/Facilities	7%	12%	24%		14%	15
Media Image/ Local Media						0
Community Physical Resources(Land.etc)	7%	12%	3%		8%	9
Natural Environment/Open Space			3%		1%	1
Transportation/Infrastructure	7%		14%		6%	6
Other	7%				2%	2
	100%	100%	100%		100%	106

Is of, by, and for the community



Provides access to locally grown food



Provides access to locally grown food



Cultivates self-reliance



Empowers economically vulnerable people
as leaders



Empowers economically vulnerable people
as leaders



Is collaborative



And can be sustainable over the long term

Be a learning organization

This began with taking the time to learn what costs already exist in the community, and eventually really got into introducing a project.

This created a culture where feedback and participation are constantly invited and welcomed, both in structural and informal ways.

This has resulted in more growth in our total organizational equipment in our programs. This continues to ensure that growth is generally driven by community members, and is sustainable. Expanding this approach in **Academy** to be able to give the community a seat in total substantial investments, but can lead to deeper impact.

Use crises and transitions to build strength

This gives us our history, crisis points turned into opportunity. For example, we started our project at a time gardens were under attack by the Mayor, and government funding for urban gardening was declining. Our market also flourished during a year in which we had to replace all of our supplies, and we were later able to obtain a smart dining permit that we were not likely to be impossible.

Some key staff functions focused on to make beneficial changes to our partnership and staffing structures.

Individuals matter

While a program that values individuals as a whole of individuals may not be sustainable, the care of each of its individuals, especially in the early stages of a new idea or program, can maximize the participation of others.

This early participation, when the potential "benefits" of participating are minimal (due to better access to food production) or nonexistent in a positive community of persons, are not yet realized, can attract others who are waiting to participate and the benefits are more done.

Partnerships are complicated

While it does not mean they are not worth pursuing, but that they should be carefully considered.

We've found that there must be a willingness from each partner to go beyond their role as a partner or client. This commitment must be supported by the leadership of each organization. Partners should bring a diversity of skills and resources, such that every partner has a clear sense of what they offer and what they gain from participating.

Partnerships may need to change or dissolve as a project evolves.

Lessons learned

Download more details PDF version here: <https://www.ghf.org/>

Having staff matters

... especially full-time, long-term staff. Being able to recruit and retain specialized staff makes it possible to be a learning organization.

We engage community members, and we recognize that there are limits to the time they can commit. We consider it a victory to have to staff to help community members turn their ideas into reality.

Partnerships, staff of a small organization like ours often need to demonstrate great commitment and flexibility, and have a very diverse set of skills, or willingness to constantly learn and do new things.

"Both/and" is powerful

By combining program elements that we more often pursued separately, we have been able to strengthen our programs and achieve greater impact in our community.

This has included, for example, working intensively with youth AND adults, managing our own farm AND providing assistance to other growers, building food access for low-income residents AND generating income for our local vendors, striving to create concrete improvements in the lives of East New Yorkers AND seeking the less tangible relationships and networks built.

Know who you are

Knowing who we are - including who we are accountable to, what our strengths are, and what our capacity is - helped us ensure that we run quality programs driven by our mission.

This has included choosing not to pursue certain partnerships or opportunities, even in ruling opportunities, that did not seem likely to advance our mission.

Food Dignity Project

www.fooddignity.org

**for more stories about how CFPs across the country start,
grow, succeed, struggle, and more**

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