Exploring Empowerment in Food Security and Food Sovereignty Programs

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OVERVIEW / INTRODUCTION

- My project reviews the connection between empowerment and non-profit food security programs and non-profit food Sovereignty programs to see if food security programs or food sovereignty programs are better at empowering their participants. The connection between food security, food sovereignty, and empowerment is important to me because I am interested in learning about what an empowering food system looks like. As the manager of the Healthy Corner Store Coalition, this research applies directly to my work.
OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

1. To understand if food security programs or food sovereignty programs are better at empowering their participants.

2. Provide recommendations for a food system that prioritizes empowering participants.
METHODS AND APPROACHES

Five expert interviews of a range of experts involved in food security and food sovereignty in the Bay Area were conducted. The experts ranged from San Francisco and city of Marin staff, community organizers, policy experts, and food media publishers.
METHODS AND APPROACHES

A content analysis is conducted examining empowerment in the mission statements of eight non-profits food security organizations and 12 non-profit food sovereignty organizations.
Literature review

A literature review is conducted that serves as the foundation for understanding food security and food sovereignty. In total 15 peer reviewed journal articles were reviewed.
Food Security definition:

“all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”

- US Food and Agriculture Organization
Food Sovereignty definition:

Food sovereignty is the: “right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”

- US Food Sovereignty Alliance
Empowerment

- **Capacity building:**
  - Willingness
  - Access to resources
  - Mobilization

- **Transformative action**
  - Improvement
  - Change
  - Enhancement

- **Power**
  - Autonomy
  - Agency
  - Influence
In total 12 food security organizations and eight food sovereignty organizations were analyzed. Organizations were chosen from a search on Guidestar for “food security” and “food sovereignty.” 10 were chosen for each category. After the content analysis was conducted, it was revealed that there were four more organizations that met the criteria for “food security” than there were for “food sovereignty.”
DATA ANALYSIS- Transformative action:

- Of the 12 food security organizations only two met the criteria for transformative action.
- Six of the eight food sovereignty organizations met the criteria for transformative action.
- The P-value for the relationship between transformative action and the type of organization (food security or food sovereignty) is .009 and the chi-square value is 6.81 with 1 degree of freedom.
- This means there is a close relationship between transformative action and the type of organization, we accept the null hypothesis.
DATA ANALYSIS- Capacity building

- Of the 12 food security organizations, only four met the criteria for capacity building.
- Seven of the eight food sovereignty organizations met the criteria for capacity building.
- The P-value for the relationship between capacity building and the type of organization is .017 and the chi-square value is 5.69 with 1 degree of freedom.
- This is a statistically significant relationship, but it is slightly less significant than the relationship between transformative action and organization type. We accept the null hypothesis.
DATA ANALYSIS - Power

- Of the 12 food security organizations, only one met the criteria for power.
- Seven of the eight food sovereignty organizations met the criteria for power.
- The P-value for the relationship between power and the type of organization is .001 and the chi-square value is 12.5 with 1 degree of freedom.
- A p-value of .001 tells us that there is extremely high (about as high as possible) statistical significance between power and the type of organization, we accept the null hypothesis. This is also the highest p-value and chi-square data in the entire data set.
DATA ANALYSIS - All three levels of empowerment

- Of the 12 total food security organizations, there aren’t any whose mission statement addresses all three levels of empowerment.
- Of the eight food sovereignty organizations, there are five whose mission statement addresses all three levels of empowerment.
- The p-value for the relationship between all three levels of empowerment and the organization type is .002 and the chi-square value is 10.0 with one degree of freedom.
- What this data tells us is that there is a very high statistical significance between levels of empowerment and organizational type. We accept the null hypothesis.

Figure 1: Organizational mission statements that Include Transformative Action, Capacity Building, and Power
IMPLICATIONS

- A major implication in these findings is that of the 12 food security organizations there isn’t one that meets the criteria for all three levels of empowerment. Based on this sample, this means that 0% of the time food security organizations are working to empower their participants.

- The antithesis of the previous implication, which is presented in this research, is that 62% of the time food sovereignty organizations are working to empower their participants.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the city of San Francisco to implement a policy requiring an empowerment component to all organizations with a food security program.

2. Funding priorities in San Francisco to be shifted to organizations that are empowering their participants.

3. Creation of a regional Bay Area food sovereignty group.
REFERENCES


Jamie, Cidro. "Beyond Food Security: Understanding Access to Cultural Food for Urban Indigenous People in Winnipeg as Indigenous Food"
In every measured level of empowerment, food sovereignty has higher scores than food security. There isn’t a single food security organization that measures all three levels of empowerment. According to this study food sovereignty organizations are empowering their participants and food security organizations are not.

The purpose of my research is to understand if non-profits with food security or food sovereignty programs are better at empowering their participants. Provide recommendations about how to incorporate empowerment at the level it is lacking.

Do non-profit food security or food sovereignty programs do a better job of empowering their participants?

- Expert interviews
- Content analysis
- Literature review

- Of the 12 food security organizations two met criteria for transformative action, four met criteria for capacity building and one met criteria for power.
- Six of the eight food sovereignty organizations met criteria for transformative action, and seven of the eight met criteria for capacity building and power.
- Of the 12 total food security organizations, there are zero whose mission statement addressed all three levels of empowerment. Of the eight food sovereignty organizations, there were five whose mission statements addressed all three levels of empowerment.

**REFERENCES**


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