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**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

people, food, flint, farmers market, community, talked, system, connection, question, folks, nutritious foods, kids, farmers, stores, places, traffic, area, add, grant, convenience stores

**SPEAKERS**

Interviewer, Participant 143, Interviewer 2

[INTRO]

**Interviewer** 12:29

Awesome and again, this is sort of one of my roles in this process, is just sort of translate the the knowledge and the understanding the boxes and lines. So the first thing we could potentially do is talk about some of these connection strengths of all the relationships that have question marks. Um, but I do want to say that like, if I ever ask a question or something like that where you're like "I'm not really sure" or "I don't think I can really speak to that," definitely just let me know and we can skip that like. If you're like, I don't really know that much about the supplemental sector. Like great let's just skip talking about that, I really you know- Let's not- I want to like focus in on on your piece of the puzzle sort of your knowledge on the food system. And I don't want to waste your time talking about something that you're like "I'm not really sure what -what it-what that dynamic is." So my first question might be you know, if you have any thoughts on you know, where and how people are purchasing food in Flint. So just finding some of the connection strengts of the relationships going out from use of retail. Is this something that you would want to or feel comfortable talking about?

**Participant 143** 13:48

Yeah, I can talk about that.

**Interviewer** 13:50

Awesome. Um, so I guess if we want to focus in on like local versus chain restaurants. How would you sort of describe describe the connection strengths here? So it's really sort of evaluating like, you know: how much are people, you know, purchasing food at local versus chain restaurants? Do you think one is stronger than another? Do you think both of them are the same? Do you know, are they are they weak? Doesno one really go to restaurants. What is sort of your your understanding of perception?

**Participant 143** 14:25

So you want me to speak of my my geographical area?

**Interviewer** 14:30

Yeah

**Participant 143** 14:30

So so there- the chain restaurants- Well, I'm in the Third Ward, and we have very few services here. The- so we have a we have a couple McDonald's, but they're situated- And oh, and there's a chicken place as well. There were two chicken places. One of them closed. McDonald's for a lot of people in my neighborhood, who are on foot, doesn't get frequented by them. So it's mostly just traffic is going you know, down Saginaw street or on 475 there. That's what attracts- where they get those businesses. We have two local- we have to local restaurants. And they stay steadily busy. Though there's a one Pearson road, Pearson and Saginaw Street. And like I say, they they stay steady, with local folks buying there. And then the the other one is at- what is that? Is that Hamilton? Is that Leese- Leese and Saginaw. Um, and it stays steady as well. You're just looking for traffic, right?

**Interviewer** 16:13

Yeah, yeah.

**Participant 143** 16:14

It stays steady as well.

**Interviewer** 16:19

Um, then, what is- do you have any thoughts about: sort of the same, similar question with grocery stores versus convenience stores versus more sort of like direct from farmer. How much food do you think people are- are, you know, purchasing from grocery stores in Flint, from convenience stores or places that are a little bit more direct from the farmer

**Participant 143** 16:47

So for my immed- for my immediate neighborhood this this is a big concern for folks. People buy where they can. So they- if they taking the bus they go up to Kroger's up in Mount Morris or- So I- so I use public transportation as well. I go to Sam's Club on the bus. Sam's or Aldi's, which are both-both out of our areas. There are- there are a couple little grocery stores in our area that are within walking distance, but the selection is very limited in the one. And on the other is- it I feel like I'm in prison buying stuff. Imean it's-it's really- it's really it's really uncomfortable for me there. Yeah that's correct. So basically I go- for myself I go out of the area. And I think most of my neighbors do except for those who are- except for the poorest of them. And then they go to the liquor stores and-and they mostly go to the liquor stores it's my perception. And we're just talking about what frequent which stores are frequented, not not what they're purchasing right

**Interviewer** 18:28

Yeah, so not -it's more so I guess um you know, like where where people are like getting their food. And you're saying that like people get most of their food from grocery stores but sometimes we get like a little bit from convenience stores. Then that would be like a stronger relationship on one, and less on other. People are saying- getting most of their food from convencience stores, and that one would be stronger. So it would be-

**Participant 143** 18:54

So they're getting most of their food from out of the area. They're depending on public transportation or ride from family members.

**Interviewer** 19:05

Um, and then how much do you think that- are people getting food farmers markets or other sort of more direct from producers?

**Participant 143** 19:19

So what most of people in the area are- most people that I associate with and it's mostly the people in our area, they go to the they go to the Flint farmers market right after they got their bridge card filled. And they usually just do it one time. Because it's too expensive down there. So and they prefer it. The food is- the food- the quality of food is better. The atmosphere is better. It's nice down there. But it's- it's just too expensive for them to be able to use it as a main source of groceries

**Interviewer** 20:13

Awesome. Um, and then do you have any thoughts or perception of-of where people sort of use supplemental programs like, SNAP? Like double up food bucks? You mentioned that people use it a lot in the farmers market? How would you maybe describe the strength of connections to grocery stores, or convenience stores? Or we can also sort of skip this question if you'd like to.

**Participant 143** 20:43

I didn't- I didn't understand that [Interviewer]. I'm sorry.

**Interviewer** 20:46

Oh, gotcha. Um, you know, so you said that people use the bridge cards a lot in the farmers markets. Do you know if like, people use, like, other or similar supplemental nutrition programs in grocery stores mostly, or convenience stores?

**Participant 143** 21:09

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, sure. They- Yeah, they- I mean, that's-that's their chief source of buying food is-is those, you know, WIC and SNAP and double up food bucks and-and their bridge cards. Most of people in this area are-are well below the- well within the poverty level. And-and so they also, they also depend- They also depend greatly on food giveaways.

**Interviewer** 21:50

I'm just mapping things. I'm sort of um- connected some of the things. I just want to double check that I'm mapping stuff accurately. You know, something that you mentioned- that the farmers market provides, you know, higher quality foods, we labeled as nutritious foods. And the problem is that it's not very affordable. And something that you talked about right now, sort of linked income. That, you know, when you have sort of a lower level of income, and you, you know, depend on sort of the supplemental nutrition programs, and sort of emergency sector needs these giveaways? Is that sort of a fair map of what we've talked about, is there anything you'd like to add or change at this stage?

**Participant 143** 22:57

No, that's that's pretty good. That's pretty good. Um, you mentioned Flint fresh earlier. They don't even service our area. We're the poorest area, and we just do not get serviced here.

**Interviewer** 23:10

Yeah

**Participant 143** 23:11

At one point, it was on the map, and then then they-they took it off. It's-it's an area that that I'm quite concerned with. Because they received a lot of money to be able to-to eliminate the food desert, but they basically end up being- supporting people that have money with better foods in the area. Was that- was that in line with your question, or did I go?

**Interviewer** 23:48

Yeah, definitely. Yeah, we um, you know, we wanted to start out with something fairly structured. But like, as we know, have this sort of conversations become more-more open ended and more evolved to sort of see know, based on, on your understanding, you know, things that you think are important or significant to the food system. So, so something like that is awesome, it's perfect. Great. Well, I'm going to switch screens briefly, back to the presentation. And we're going to go through just a couple more definitions.

**Interviewer** 24:23

So we have a list of what we're calling food system values. So these are things that were developed through through conversations and focus groups with Flint residents. So basically ask people, you know, "what do you want from from a food system? What does the food system that serves you well look like?" And these are sort of some of the concepts and definitions that came out of those-those conversations. So um, some of them might look familiar, because I've sort of sparked something that seemed very similar, or the same answer, I sort of added them to the map. But I'm going to go through these definitions. And as I do, so, if you wouldn't mind thinking about which-which two or three, you might want to add to your map. So we're going to talk about as many as you'd like, but starting with two, three is usually a bit easier. So things that you think are particularly important stuff like food system, or that you in particular have experience with. So I'll go through those right now.

**Interviewer** 25:20

Education is that people want opportunities to learn food skills, like cooking, gardening, nutrition, health, and potentially apply those to career development. We also have community empowerment. So folks want the food system to empower communities in a couple of different ways, like supporting local economic development, fostering a sense of community, and prioritizing residents cultural values. We also have quality of life is respected. So this is sort of a combination of a lot of things we're hearing. But basically, that people want to be able to move through the food system with their dignity, choices, comfort and safety respected, in a way that promotes the common good and quality of life for all.

**Interviewer** 25:59

We also have partnerships, so this would be a sort of a step above, just the consumer level. So the different groups and organizations involved in the food system should promote creativity and encourage problem solving to produce trust and strong partnerships that provide leadership, and support collaboration and communication. And our last three are nutritious foods. So this is that people want more food options that are high nutritional content with less additives and preservatives and come in appropriate portion to support health. Affordability: food should be priced so that folks can access the type, quality, and quantity they require. This is considering, you know, not just the price of food, but also sort of in relation to resident income and really measuring their ability to afford the food that they want. And then availability. So the type of quality and amount of food required for community members to be able to feed their families, and themselves should be physically present. Um, do you have any questions about these definitions?

**Participant 143** 26:57

No, and I-I-I am comfortable commenting on all of them.

**Interviewer** 27:05

Yeah, um, do you have a sense of which- so we've- I've already added, I believe nutritious foods, affordability and availability to the map. Are there any other ones, maybe two or three that you would like to add right now? Or would you like to work with the three that we already have?

**Participant 143** 27:24

We can work with these we have. And in- I might very likely, during the process, come up with anothers.

**Interviewer** 27:34

Okay, awesome. I'll switch back to mental modeler. So, so far, we- Sorry, I added a bird feeder outside of my window. And it's been a blessing and a curse. Now I get to stare at cute little finches, but they also dive past my sight line constantly. So just what was okay, so we- Yeah, so currently, we've connected sort of farmers markets as being unaffordable. And then also sort of connected that supplemental sector, that there's a lot of good work to make food more affordable for folks. Availability, sort of these local, like smaller grocery stores, and convenience stores don't have a lot of availability. Grocery stores have more. And nutritious foods currently have weight that farmers markets provide a lot of nutritious foods. Are there any other connections are immediately jumping to mind, or one of these values that you would like to start with and focus on?

**Participant 143** 28:45

So so I'm confused where we went from the last page to this page?

**Interviewer** 28:51

Yeah, so um, we sort of like, had the definitions of the values. And then the goal is just to make sure that we're-we're sort of on the same page of like, what that means. So like, what is affordability? And what doe, you know, availability mean? And now what- the goal is just sort of place these concepts into the map of the food system? So you know, where are different areas in the Flint food system that that affect affordability, or availability or nutritious foods? And then what are the outcomes of those? So you know, when food is less affordable, like what happens? When people have access to nutritious foods, or don't have access to nutritious foods, what are sort of the outcomes of that to the community? So the goal at this point is to sort of build connections to and from these-these values to sort of integrate it into the food system if that makes sense.

**Participant 143** 29:49

I think I'm getting confused with the-the, the so-so the- When you went to the definitions, you talked about education. And so I am absolutely positive that if we had a- what would you call that? If we had a learning kitchen here, a learning commercial kitchen, that you would have a number- You would have- you would probably have to have a schedule to accommodate all the people that would-would partake in that. We have some- we have some great resources here. We got the Broome Empowerment village, but they don't have a good kitchen. I mean, it's- you know, as a cafateria to distribute food.

**Participant 143** 30:41

We got the Berston Fieldhouse. They got just a little thing to make coffee that's about, you know- that's about all they have there. We don't really have a place for-for people to be able to hands on learn to cook foods, learn it. So if I'm going the wrong way- wrong way, you just you just let me know.

**Participant 143** 31:16

Um, of the- I get emotional so bear with me. One of my- one of my biggest concerns is what the kids are eating. So I mentioned the Broome Empowerment Village, they provide lunch to those kids. I have chickens, I would- I-I would hesitate feeding those to the food to the chickens. And yet that's what those children are being indoctrinated to eat. And it makes me- and I know the folks that are there are, you know, they're doing what they can with what they have. But it makes me angry that-that- I call them my children because they're in my neighborhood, are- I mean and- I see them eating better in videos about third world countries than I see them eating here.

**Participant 143** 32:17

And so- and there's a lot of kids. Those kids run up there and they get that food you know. And-and they're thankful for it. So they're hungry. So I'm guessing that they don't get all the meals or-or what they have isn't as nice as what they're getting here in this free food. And I think it's really important that we start supplying places for- so that they give away all this- They give away all these foods to give away all the you know, the-the greens and you know in this season, you know. There's the- churches are throwing food away, because there's more that can- than can be handled. And people are going by and they're picking this stuff up and-and-and [name] is going out there and she's picking up food for three families. And she's going from-from one- from one food giveaway to another food giveaway, coming back with all this food. And most of it just rots. It just rots. It doesn't even- I mean if they brought it to me I could use it for compost.

**Participant 143** 33:27

And-and the thing is if we had- if we had community kitchens, so these people- This is part-partly speculation, but-but I see- but I see how people interact with one another and there is a certainly a sense of community among among my neighbors. And if they had a community kitchen to go to I'm- and they brought their-their free food there. Man I bet you they- And somebody was there to give them some ideas on how to- how to cook you know. Maybe their Granny's other great grannies, and so forth who-who-who had a better life than the kids do now. I bet you these these folks could thrive. Am I on topic? Am I-

**Interviewer** 34:19

No this is- this is great. I'm just making a lot of connections. [Interviewer 2] might have a [voices overlapping]

**Interviewer 2** 34:29

Yeah, no, absolutely. Um, [Participant 143] this is- this is really about your perspective. Your perspectives, connections. You know your community. And so everything you're sharing is is gonna be on point, you know, because it's-it's about what's happening in Flint.

**Participant 143** 34:47

So so let me make- let me- So [name] was his name. I worked with [name]. I can't remeber if he was with Michigan State or Michigan- University of Michigan.

**Interviewer 2** 35:00

Oh okay, [full name] right?

**Participant 143** 35:02

Yeah, yes, yes, yeah

**Interviewer 2** 35:03

He's at MSU

**Participant 143** 35:05

Okay, so- and, you know, he had a program where he was getting- he was getting coolers into the liquor stores. And-and the liquor stores were supposed to be able to put- to put produce in there. And so- and some of them did. Some of them were really good at putting produce in there. And they would get back to [name] and said, "hey, look, this is going bad, you know. I'm throwing money away here." And then other stores, you'd go back to, and-and the vegetable coolers are filled with beer. And so it- you know, so and-and- So I'm picking on-on-on-on [name]. [Name] is a very conscience- this guy has a good conscience. I'm not trying to say anything negative about him. But-but what this tells me is: we need to give the power to the people, you know. Put, you know- take- get these resources in the hands of the people who need it. You know, maybe they need a little direction and management, you know. But-but for the most part, you know, they have- they can do it themselves. So I went into a rant there didn't I

**Interviewer** 36:32

No, that's great. We are going to cover- one of the goals of this conversation is not just to build out sort of your, your understanding of the map, but we're also interested in talking about about leverage points: things that you think should change in the system that would have a positive outcome. So I am, you know, writing down all of these things, as you know- maybe this isn't something that's happening well, right now, or happening at all in the system. But it would be-be really, you know, potentially very powerful. That would have a good outcome. So this is all all very relevant.

**Participant 143** 37:07

So let me let me bring something else that I feel could be a resource. So we-we have- we have- I'm going to exaggerate. We have a million churches in the area, right. We have more churches than we have people I think. And most of the people in the congregation, they come there, because that's where their great granny came. And they don't even live in the area anymore. But-but they're-they're sustained- I mean, they get, they get a lot of grants and things in order to do community work. I-I really think that they should be held a little bit more responsible. A little bit more shouldn't be expected to them, if they're going to- they're going to be accepting community resources.

**Participant 143** 37:54

Yeah, in order to, you know- I mean, they- the free food that they're giving away, they received it from resources that are basically funded by other people. So um, so you think about all those churches. A lot of those churches have kitchens. And so- and-and this could increase their, the people attending church on Sunday too. Or every, you know, three or four days a week if-if we started funding those kitchens. With the-the responsibility that they make those kitchens available to the public for-for-for cooking their meals. For learning how to do better. We could have a huge impact.

**Participant 143** 38:50

And then those food dis- and then they also- Shoot there's one- there's one right down the street here. And it's a huge, beautiful building and it's empty. They don't even use it, they got two churches on the same lot. And man, think about the possibilities there. So if- so, if we were working more like a community- And this is really my- this is this is really my point. We all separate into these different little niches, and we're not working as community. We're-we're-we're saying, "Oh, I got to get this grant for me instead of working with our neighbor." We're in competition with their neighbor for that same grant. And you know what I mean by neighbor there, right?

**Participant 143** 39:37

So okay, okay. I'm talking about the entities. And it is commercial and religious. You know, we don't, we don't work like community anymore we're — it's- if I'm off base, just let me know. I just-

**Interviewer 2** 39:37

Mm hm

**Interviewer** 40:00

No you're not.

**Interviewer 2** 40:02

Not at all.

**Interviewer** 40:11

[inaudible]

**Participant 143** 40:14

And if that were to happen- if we were to build a- If we were to build a network among those churches. And we've forgotten denomination, you know, everybody's available everywhere, and we didn't discriminate because of some doctrine. And-and I'm not pointing my finger at anybody, I'm putting my finger at everybody. If we were just a little bit more loving toward one another, and a little bit more accepting. And then we could- we could create a food Co Op, that would kick butt. Because they're doing it in Midland. They got a program up there. And it's- they don't make it available for the poor, they make it for the people. But if we-we-

**Participant 143** 40:55

So I talked to the pastor there, he invited me up there. We could start a Co Op tomorrow that would give superior food to folks. Superior food for less money than they're paying for-for the cheaper foods now. And if we had all these places working together- We wouldn't have to build new places. We don't have to go ahead and renovate stuff, but we could- it'd be- it'd be kind of like- So I, when I was a kid, back back in the 50s we had a lot of mom and pop stores. I mean, you know, if somebody was out of chocolate ice cream, I'd walk two blocks the other way and and I'd find the chocolate ice cream. So-so that would be that kind of the same thing with these churches. We have- they're already established there.

**Participant 143** 41:49

And I'm beating the- beating it up now- I'm repeating-repeating myself, but-but yeah. And I-I'm confident, you know. We've got that other religious group that's trying to start that store. He's been working on that since before I moved here. It was going to be over here on- over off of 475. And then he moved it over and he was going to do it where that- And it keeps moving. And every every week I get a- or every month I get an email from "Oh, we're getting so close, we're getting so close." And I'm so- I don't want to swear. I'm so tired of this. Because years, at least eight years since I've been going by. I keep hearing the same contradicting stuff.

**Participant 143** 42:45

And-and so and I thought about go ahead and starting this Co Op myself. The problem I have was that: is here's a white guy coming into a neighborhood that's 90% black. And here is going to be the white Savior. I'm fearful that people would think that of me. But-but I've started co ops before, and I've seen how- We belonged to a co op in California. And it has saved us a tremendous amount of money. And we had better food. And there's no reason why we can't do that right now. Right-right now, right here. Right-right here in the Third Ward. With the Third Ward, we have resources available to us right here. Where if we work together, we could be a demonstration to the rest of the world.

**Interviewer** 43:59

Some of the things I'm hearing of like these connections between, um, you know, the-the power that there is in-in community empowerment, in partnerships and working together, just for stuff like local food, retail or local food economies or something like that. That there's potential there that would have benefits, like affordability, like access, like nutritious foods. That sort of connects those those concepts.

**Participant 143** 44:54

Was I out of line there at all, [Interviewer 2]?

**Interviewer 2** 44:57

Absolutely not.

**Participant 143** 44:58

Okay.

**Interviewer 2** 45:00

No, those things are all very important [Participant 143]. It's the beauty of the privilege we have. And I consider it a privilege: is to hold space. So that the voices of folks in Flint, who can provide insight perspective, so we can really hold up a fully integrated picture, which nobody can do individually. Because everybody's, like you said, niche a bit, you know. And that's normal. That's-that's the way it is. But when you step back, you need everybody's voice. And you need these diverse perspectives. So people hear the voices of their neighbors. And then we can engage. So no, you're absolutely on point with sharing your experience for sure.

**Interviewer** 45:51

I'm wondering if we could- if you'd be interested in talking about this sort of the production side of it. What I've labeled here as sort of gardening and urban agriculture. Are there ways that you sort of- one thing you experienced is that you mentioned that vandalism, has been a problem. Are there other ways that you see sort of like gardening and urban agriculture, connecting to some of the things that we've already talked about. Either sort of the, the outcomes, the benefits of it, and in communities or sort of the drivers of it. What enables gardening and urban agriculture to happen? Or what are some-some barriers to it?

**Participant 143** 46:38

So I think that it's always picking the churches. So I'll pick on them. We have a lot of hoop houses in Flint. And-and if we were to collaborate a little bit better- And so I mean- so a lot of these folks are selling their food to Flint Fresh. So they they take- they take a wholesale price, and they discount the wholesale price and-and then Flint Fresh goes and distributes like they do. And then- but the issue here is, they're not even- they're not- they're not making any money. They're not- they're not building something that's sustainable. They don't- they have to depend on grants, in order to keep going on the next year. They go to the Community Foundation, or they go to these other places, in order to stay in business.

**Participant 143** 47:31

Pastor [name] over there in the east side, I mean, he has his religious organization that's contributing a lot of money for that. And then he gets other grants over there. If we start- if we start doing things like we did, when my grandfather and great grandfather did- had farms. Well, I don't know if my grandfather had a farm, my great grandfather did. And my dad spent a lot of time there. And they-they worked with one- they worked with the other farmers, you know. And so they did things like, you know- At first, you know, they're using mules, and, you know, I'm sure sometimes kids were pulling- they were pulling the plow, you know.

**Participant 143** 48:22

Where, and if it was tough times, and then somebody was able to get a tractor. And so, so he would, he would make that tractor available to everybody. And then one of the other farmers will say, "Oh, so I'll- you get the tractor, I'll get the plow." And then somebody else would, you know, "and I'll get the harvester." And you know, and it go on. And so they built this- this whole- And Michigan was built on this. They built the whole region. We were the number one producer of vegetables, bec- and it's all bec- It's all because we had these co ops. If we go back- And the dairies were the same way. The dairy business is a tough business. But all those dairy people got together, and they- and they-they-they supported one place to to process all-all their- all their milk and cream and so forth.

**Participant 143** 48:28

So cut- it cut up the cost of production. That cut the cost, to produce a gallon of fresh milk way down, because they didn't have to have 20 or 30 different processing places. They had one. And so if we start doing the same thing with the urban-urban agriculture, we could do the same thing. But it's- so I was picking on churches before, but I worked with edible Flint, and-and I see and a lot of the different farmers there. I'm working with a beautiful young woman now. She's got a garden. And-and I'm having trouble understanding talking to her about us getting together and cr- and going for a grant, because she doesn't want to lose out on the grant that she can get by herself.

**Participant 143** 50:11

So- and so- and, you know, I'm-I'm fine, I don't- if I- if I want to be a hermit, I could be a hermit. You know, and I don't have to- and I'm going to be able to survive. So I don't need that grant, but I know we could. Instead of her getting $5,000, the two of us could probably get $50,000. And if we got somebody else who, you know- It wouldn't be long, we could get a group where we get a million dollars to build a- to build a system that is sustainable. That- where we don't need that outside funds anymore to get going. We don't, you know, our grounds are cleaned up, our hoop houses and greenhouses are all all paid for. And, and [name] is growing- he's going three crops, and [name] is growing three different crops. And then- and so- and so you- and then- and then you have a true farmers market. The market is run by farmers, not by businesspeople who take- who-who are making more money than the farmers themselves.

**Participant 143** 51:26

And so- and so, to get started, those farmers could get a grant for the farmers market, just like the people down at- that have the farmers market did. Got monies to-to-to get going. And got tax-tax credits. And-and-and you- [Interviewer 2] is definitely familiar with all the things they do. And so- and it's maddening because they all- they went at this as "Oh yeah, we got to take care of the food desert." But you go to the farmers market, and it's a middle class and upper middle class that are- that are benefiting from that. It's not- it's not- it's not my- it's not my neighbor, next door who's combined to a wheelchair. She can't drive, she can't get out. And she- and she has to exist on free food.

**Participant 143** 52:24

And-and, and- I'm kind of going off base now. But um- but-but it, the lady across the street wanted her grandkids to come over. You know, and so it's-it's- it-it, we need systems that will support them. We need to get past this- we got- need to get past this, "I'm going to make a million dollars as a farmer." And I don't know if you watch the videos, the how-to. You know, all these how-to videos. I watch- I've watched 1000s of them. And one of the things I found out- These guys are telling you how easy it is to do that, are making money through s-subsidies are getting from the people who are- whose shovel they're using. Whose-whose seed, they're buying, and so forth. They're not making it on growing. So-so-so if we were to bring it back- So I'm not faulting them, they found a system that works for them. But-but you-you it was the authority you have, you can- you could help unite people bring them together, develop a system like this.

**Participant 143** 53:48

So you were involved when the Flint Fresh thing was-was-was-was being put together. I went t- before the Community Foundation before. So I knew about Flint fresh. And I talked to them about a different- a different program to distribute food. And they told me no, we already has a system going in place. Well their system, man, I couldn't have been supporting 10 times a food with the money they paid just for that truck. And the difference is I'm not working- I don't need- I don't need income. I don't need to make money off of that. But um- so there's some questions that-that need to be answered. Some solutions need to come up with that I'm not presenting for you. Because people-people have to be able to take care of the family and pay the mortgage and so forth. So-so I'm looking at it from a perspective, a guy who is-is willing to volunteer to get this stuff done. So it's not- it's not fully objective.

**Interviewer** 55:00

No this is um, this is great. And I appreciate and thank you for being open and honest with us. I know that's really our goal was to, to see your perspective. So I really appreciate you sharing that. So I guess I'm just checking back in sort of added, you know, this is what I also wrote down as sort of a leverage point this idea of cooperative production. Again, I can change the names of anything, if you want. Some of the benefits is that it lowers the cost of farming, that it enables the sort of community support networks slash social connections, and a sense of community that can-can lead into this sort of community empowerment. That there are some relationships between Farmers Market and Flint Fresh to gardening and urban agriculture, but they're not particularly strong right now. And that one of the issues is sort of that folks who are selling at the farmers market, it's not really supporting, again, from a different way. But like, not like Flint, local farmers who are selling the farmers market and stuff like that.

**Participant 143** 56:16

It's more like going to a boutique, rather than to a grocery supply- I mean, it's neat, because I'm buying it from the farmers market, you know. And there is a there is a human connection that you don't get there at Kroger's or Sam's or Walmart. But-but it doesn't fill the needs of the people who need it most.

**Participant 143** 56:49

So I want to say something else about that, too. So-so I have a- I have a friend of mine. She's-she's a grandmother. And her kids were almost completely raised. And she found out about these two girls who, whose dad was murdered. They were twin girls. And so she adopted those girls. So at the age- grandma became mom again, right? And she was, and she, she has lupus. She has she has she, she has a lot of responsibilities. Her daughter has four kids, and basically she's the chief caretaker for those children, which you know, we see a lot of that kind of stuff happening in, in Flint. She- when- so, when she gets when she gets her, her funds, she goes right down to the farmers market, and she buys down there, because she wants to, she wants to support that ideal. And so, so let's give her- let's give her the real thing. You know what I'm saying? So she's really supporting the, the local economy.

**Interviewer 2** 58:08

Hmm. That was a good way to put that. Thank you for that.

**Interviewer** 58:25

I'm gonna switch back real quick. We've talked about sort of education, community empowerment, partnerships, nutritious foods, affordability and availability. I guess the only one left is clearly life is respected. And you're interested in talking about that, or we can

**Participant 143** 58:43

Say that again? I didn't-

**Interviewer** 58:45

The only one we haven't talked about is quality of life is respected, which we could add that if you'd like to discuss it, or we can- you can skip-

**Participant 143** 58:52

This- this is- this is a- I'm surprised it didn't come across about that. Because we are- we are- Why are there so many murders, executions in our area? It's because people, you know that, you know- Black Lives Matter, right? Well, black lives don't matter to people who are so desperate that they feel like they have no power. And they'll just- and they just- they- they're reacting out of- out of- directly because they don't- there's no hope. There's no hope for them. So- and the quality- I mean, so a lot of- I mean, the guy that just killed the grandma and the baby, he just got out of prison. You know, we didn't provide for him. We didn't provide him for him to transfer the the transitional tools that that he needed in order to- to leave a life of crime.

**Participant 143** 1:00:03

The only thing- and so, um, and-and what are we teaching our children, you know, with these food giveaways and things. And so, and then, you know, we see the kids being taken care of. Now once they turn 18, guess what: all of a sudden they're on their own without the tools, t-tools to move forward. And so- and so where do they get their education. They get the education the same place that that 27 year old did, that killed that grandmother and that and that baby.

**Participant 143** 1:00:05

So we need- we need to- we need to start thinking more about the quality of life for the people that live in this food desert. Because of food desert's just one symptom, you know. We got the bad water too. And we got, you know, a lot of people are living out here without heat in their homes. And-and-and all kinds of things that I don't even want to talk about right now. Because I get too emotional on it. But um, yes, we- this- if we- if we- if we solved the food problem, that-that would- that would take care of- that would- that-that would take maybe 10% of the pressure off the people in this area. But there's so many other things have to be dealt with, in order to resolve this.

**Participant 143** 1:01:37

So this- so-so take this- So since I'm on a rant, I'm going to take advantage of it. So um, right- so right now I'm on I'm on a campaign to get walkable sidewalks in the north community here.

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:52

Mm hmm.

**Participant 143** 1:01:53

And so, I- right right now- So it's illegal to walk in the streets, right. And-and young men and women- I mean, so the prosecuting attorney just-just a few months ago said "No, don't do that anymore." But young men and women get picked up and taken downtown frequently because they had other-other issues. And so- but-but was that right to stop them because they were walking in the street? because there wasn't no sidewalk to walk on?

**Interviewer 2** 1:02:25

Mm hmm

**Participant 143** 1:02:26

You know, but then- but then the city- the city penalizes me. It would it'll cost me $300 to replace 40 feet of sidewalk in my- in my front yard. But the city wants a $1400 fee. a permit to do that. And then they want me to hire a contractor on top of that. That-that's $1700. All of a sudden it's-it's 17 to 14. What's that- 31- $3100. That's 10 times what it cost me to do that job. And-and-and guess what? They only let me do my house. They won't let me do a lot next door. That's a land bank house. And there's nobody there to do that. You know so-so and this-this is- this is just sidewalks. There are so many things that-that my-my children, that the children in my neighborhood have to deal with that we don't even think about. This quality of life. And daycare-daycare. Look at all these little girls, little boys too, who are who are being sexually assaulted by-by folks because they're taking they're taking advantage of this- the fact that we don't have adequate daycare in our neighborhoods. You may you may wish you never talked to me after this-

**Interviewer 2** 1:04:16

No I was just about to say [Participant 143], you're connecting a lot of dots. Oftentimes people don't see the connections between basic life experiences and how the food system is connected one way or the other. You know, or that there are places that it may be an indirect connection. So, no, this is a this is actually a beautiful map. And we thank you for your-your-your candor and and when we can tell as you're talking. Because like you said it's- it is emotion because it's hard stuff, right? It's real stuff. So you're-you're on track. And we appreciate it.

**Participant 143** 1:05:01

So let me share something else about the- about the stores that people go to. So people get beat up and robbed when they go to those stores. So people are scared half to death to go to the stores. They don't- when- if it's getting close to dark, and they don't have any milk or cereal for the kids in the morning, guess what: kids are going to go hungry in the morning. Because-because it's better for them to go hungry than the mom, or the kid that they would send down there, to get killed. And so that's, you know, lifestyles.

**Participant 143** 1:05:45

And then think about- so after dark- so last night, we- it eased up for a while. Chief [name], I think is doing- I think he's doing- he's making a big impact in a short time. I'm really appreciative of Chief [name]. But things are starting to relax a little bit. And so just last night, a guy went- a guy was going around. And he was going around the block, shooting his gun: one shot here, one shot down there.

**Participant 143** 1:06:13

And so not-not long ago, it would be automatic weapons. Twenty, thirty times you'd hear that that "Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom." And then they sound- it seems like they put a new cartridge and they do it again. Then they just go around the neighborhood to do this, intimidating people. Well, think about- think about those children that live in this neighborhood. That they're getting acclimated to this. Think about how they're being indoctrinated by these, these urban terrorists. You know, so life-lifestyle. And-and think about how that messes up their digestive system. Think about how that's going to change their requirements for nutrition.

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:57

Mm hmm.

**Participant 143** 1:07:14

And you know what, when I first- w-when I first came here, we had- we had this little boy that lives next door. He was 11 years old. Mango was what he wanted to be called. He didn't even know what a mango was, but he'd like that- he liked the sound of that. And mango- so when I first got here, people would give me a bunch of books. You know, picture books, elementary school, for like third grade and-and down to kindergartens, books. And so, mango had a bunch of cousins over. And so I brought the books out, and I was giving them- giving them books, right? And the kids were picking the books out. You know, man, they were so excited. I never s- that many- That was better than any Christmas I ever I ever watched kids participate in.

**Participant 143** 1:08:09

And so mango wasn't picking a book out. And so I I picked one out that-that-that I thought he would like. And he was a brilliant kid. You'd sit there and have conversations with him. And he-he-he was a brilliant kid. He- I don't know what happened to him now. I don't even want to think about it. But um, so I pulled the book out. And then he started getting really uncomfortable. And he finally said, "I can't read." And so we found a- we found a picture book for him with words. So he could do association.

**Participant 143** 1:08:55

But-but this-this kid was a leader. The younger kids, the other kids, there was- they would- you know, there would be up to 10 of them that come around. And they would all come over to my house and they'd like to dig and they-they like to dig holes and stuff. They didn't really help with the garden. Actually they did- they did too. I take that back. They-they created a whole garden bed in one day that they didn't think they could do. And they were so proud of themselves. But they would come over- and they would come over and we would play together. And-and-and mango would-would teach them. He would line them- He was- he was- what do you call that in the Olympics when they-they do the flips and walk on the bars and?

**Interviewer 2** 1:09:43

Oh yeah, the gymnastics

**Participant 143** 1:09:45

Gymnastics, gymnastics. He could do that. He'd walk, you know the little wrought iron rails right there along. He would walk along that wrought iron rail like a tightrope walker would do, turn around backwards, and do a double somersault and land on his feet. And I said, "Mango, Where'd you learn that?" "I saw it on TV." Do you know that those gymnasts, they-they've proven this. Gymnasts are the most brilliant people there are. The most- what's what's the right word? I'm not that brilliant, but that- they have- Because in their mind, they make- they're making all these automatic calculations, you know. When they do those twists, and they do all that stuff that they do. That takes a superior intellect in order to pull that off. Well, here's this little boy: 11 years old, couldn't read. And yet he- and he was teaching the neighbor kids to do it. They were in my front yard doing backflips.

**Interviewer 2** 1:10:59

Yeah.

**Participant 143** 1:11:00

You know, six year olds. And so and-and-and his parents had a hard time. His grandmother had a hard time. He got bounced around a lot. They finally got kicked out of that house. And I don't know what happened to him. But-but-but lifestyle and environment, you know, it deprived- he could be- that kid could have been the President of the United States.

**Interviewer 2** 1:11:33

Yeah, yeah.

**Participant 143** 1:11:34

Yeah

**Interviewer 2** 1:11:35

When I-I hear you talking about a couple of things. The just the different kinds of knowledge, and the peer teaching, that happens, um, were a couple of things I heard come out of that. You know, different kinds of- different kinds of knowledge and different ways of acquiring knowledge. I heard

**Participant 143** 1:11:58

And see, we don't- we don't teach children- Our school system was designed to prepare children for the military. It's-it's- it gets- it-it-it's not there to teach them. It's there to get them to obey, and to find out their skills. And so they can be used by-by the government. And by-by commerce. If we- if we taught kids based on-on what they= what they were- what they loved, what they were- what they were inclined to do anyway: Just think how- just- I am positive that they would excel beyond. Well beyond

**Interviewer 2** 1:12:48

Yeah

**Participant 143** 1:12:49

Yeah

**Interviewer 2** 1:12:49

You got some great ideas. [Interviewer], you want to check in on any of these connections and things? Because I know you've got a couple of other things you're gonna want to ask [Participant 143]. No, you're good, no, you're good. She's doing a lot of work while you're talking. And we want to make sure, too, that she checks in on some of the connections to make sure that- When we go back to this map, [Participant 143], we want to make sure that the- because as you see her showing directions of connections and intensity. She's-she's listening to what you're saying. And-and-and in from her experience, you know, kind of creating what that looks like on the map. So we always pause to check in just to make sure that we really are reflecting your voice. Oh- and I know, there's a couple of things we want to ask you about too. And you've talked about a number of things that we are going to ask you about. So you'll see we're doing a lot of work on questions that we haven't even asked yet, but [Interviewer] you want to check in on anything here?

**Interviewer** 1:13:57

The big one that I want to talk about is sort of this section that I added. And one of the [inaudible] says I've added this sort of a- this piece of sort of youthood being- talked about that- is affected through nutrition and food access. And can be improved even by like, you know, as you said- like getting involved in gardening and urban agriculture. That, you know, one of the big negative things is the, you know, experience of crime. Or you know, not having food that is available, or nutritious foods. That um has sort of created this-this loop here between youthhood being- and you know, you don't have food accessible to you, when you grow up, experiencing a lot of crime. That, you know, it makes you- it contributes to this sort of feeling of powerlessness, of desperation. And so that creates a loop here that will get, you know, trapped-trapped in systems of this that you don't have-

**Participant 143** 1:14:56

So it's more than- it's more than feeling a desperation, of feeling of desperation and powerless. It's-it's, it's getting a sense of: this is what's normal. This is how things are

**Interviewer 2** 1:15:08

Hmm. Normalized.

**Participant 143** 1:15:15

So when they- when they go out into the world on their own, they're-they're-they're ref- they're-they're reflecting back in on these things that were part of their life. And so-so when when they take a gun to the beach and they shoot it, do they- do they feel remorse or anything? No, this is just the way things are.

**Interviewer** 1:15:43

The other thing I- another question I had is: you were talking about leverage points already. So the sort of learning and community kitchens, getting you know more resources to people to make changes. Give them the power to make changes in their own lives, rather than going necessarily through, you know, sort of like emergency food organizations and stuff like that. I also talked about partnerships, that collaborating to sort of do these things would be good. Another one was a potential cooperative. Getting superior food to people, that would be more affordable. Also sort of related to partnerships. And then another was grants or tax credits and sort of like financial assistance to, you know, get farmers started in gardening and urban agriculture. Are there any other things that come to mind o-of potential leverage point. So things that you see that would be powerful or influential are useful in the Flint food system? Or is that is that a good list?

**Participant 143** 1:16:56

Sure, sure. Um, so I just talked about how children's future is developed through what they experience. So if we were to take- if we were to take these children on trips to-to, and I'm trying to think of an agricultural area. Take them up to the thumb, where they're growing hops. I mean- I mean, so I mean- you're growing beer here. These kids, they know what beer does and stuff. But you take them up there, and they see how crops are growing. They-they-they see the difference in lifestyle of the folks there. They perhaps they can go to the- I sort of say ocean. But perhaps they could go up on the- up on the water and-and go to the State Park and-and so forth, to experience life- To experience life from a different perspective.

**Participant 143** 1:18:04

Perhaps they could even camp overnight. And so they can go through the night and maybe not being able to sleep because-because it sounds different. It's birds and frogs and-and other things that are foreign to them here in this area. And so you could also take them to a- to an area- So I'm conne- I'm trying to connect it with food here. So take them where the uh- up on the Black River there. Up by Alpena, you know. The fish will migrate up in there. These huge fish come up these little streams and stuff. And you can introduce the children how-how, in nature, these fish are reproducing. And they can see that. And they can see other lifestyles. And they can see- they could get experience beyond-beyond what what they're getting now.

**Interviewer** 1:19:20

The last thing I want to ask about is- I do want to be conscious with your time. We have about six minutes left is add one last concept to the map, and that is COVID-19. Um what have you either sort of experienced or know about how COVID-19 has impacted the Flint food system?

[COVID SECTION]

**Interviewer** 1:25:13

I'm going ahead and save this file. And my last question is- it's very open ended, you know. It'ss basically like- we talked a lot about many different aspects of the food system and the outcome and the-the community in Flint. Is there anything that we haven't talked about today that you would like to add to make sure that we carry itforward in this research? And the answer can definitely be no.

**Participant 143** 1:25:48

That's a loaded- I'm kind of tired right now-

**Interviewer** 1:25:51

No, and it is- we know that this is a lot of like, mental energy.

**Participant 143** 1:25:55

So as soon as we hang up, I gotta think, "Oh, I should have said this and I should've said that."

**Interviewer** 1:26:01

Yeah

**Participant 143** 1:26:02

I'm never for- I'm never for a lack of voicing my opinion-

**Interviewer** 1:26:07

Um [inaudible]. Um because I was about to say that if you do have any questions or comments, you can definitely feel free to follow up with me over email. I did also want to just say that everything that we talked about is just confidential.

**Interviewer** 1:26:23

[OUTRO]