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Tue, 4/12 10:10AM • 1:16:17

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

people, food, connection, flint, compost, talked, local food system, local, sectors, grow, affected, access, crops, transportation, waste, system, laws, community, money, buy

**SPEAKERS**

Participant 203, Interviewer, Interviewer 2

**Interviewer 2** 00:00

So thank you for your permission to record the interview. So the recording is now on. Again, your participation is totally voluntary. And you can choose not to answer any of the questions. Or you can withdraw from the research at any point along the way. We will keep the recordings confidential, as I said, with our research team, and we won't share, use or share your name or any kind of identifying information in any of our research results. However, we would encourage you to be mindful of anyone who might be in the room or in the space where you are and nearby and able to hear you. We don't mind but you might be someone there that you might want to share some things and not necessarily have them. Hear your your comments. And you can always follow up with us as well. If you have any questions after the interview by emailing Karissa. Her email was in the invite that she received. So your consent to this interview, as demonstrated by your continued participation. Do you have any questions before we move forward? All right, great, wonderful. So again, welcome. And thank you. So the first question we would have is, if you wouldn't mind introducing yourself, and then we'll go ahead and get right into the interview.

**Participant 203** 01:28

Yeah, so my name's [Participant 203]. I work for [Organization] right now. When it comes to this topic, I went to Central Michigan for environmental studies and anthropology. So I'm a little bit into this field. I used to work for community garden, throughout the pandemic. So that kind of gave me a little bit more in depth look at the food system in Flint. I'm not saying that I'm an expert, but I definitely have experience a little bit more than I was like.

**Participant 203** 01:28

Okay, great. Well, that's great. So that helps us see your experience. How would you describe your role if you would in the local food system?

**Participant 203** 02:24

I say that I. I kind of put myself in a weird situation, I guess. So. I'm being a part of like, kind of committees. I guess I'm in it, but not really like a public figure.

**Interviewer 2** 02:46

Yeah. Yeah. You want to say a little bit about that? The committee's?

**Participant 203** 02:50

Yeah, so. So right now, I just been inducted into the [Organization Name] for the [Position]. And then I'm also part of a food garden committee that just started thinking less last few weeks, on top of, at the Boys and Girls Club right now, we, I also help with our wind tunnel that we have in the summer as well, that goes directly to our club members, but also to the community around us.

**Interviewer 2** 03:25

Awesome, great, thank you. And thank you for the great work that you're currently doing. So what we'd like to do is get started, [Interviewer] is going to share her screen, and we're going to share a document that has some of the definitions that we're using for the system for the boot system. And just kind of walk through those. Can you see that? Okay? Yes. Okay, wonderful. So we're working with five different sectors of this local food system, the first being production, where we're focusing here on growing crops and livestock and this can range from small gardens to the large farms. So your producers in that category, then we're looking at processing which will include packaging as well. So here we're talking about folks who receive that food and who are watching it, packing it, possibly even turning it into value added products, like we started with tomatoes. Next thing you know, we diced it, add some spices, we got some lovely salsa or ketchup or whatever we might want to make from that. The third sector we look at as a wholesale folks and resale where folks are taking the food, you know, that's been grown and goods and then they're selling them, you know, to someone, someone else. So we've got our wholesalers and resellers in that category that are retail All section where we all you know go get our food where the food is sold, whether it's in the grocery stores or the convenience stores or farm stands or the Farmers Market downtown, boxes, restaurants a variety different ways whether it's being catered basically the food is being sold to customers through this retail sector. And then last but not least, we know that we don't eat everything. So the food that doesn't get eaten, you know collected and and then manage a waste in that case, we might be dealing with haulers and composters and folks of that nature. Any questions about the sector? And the descriptions of those? Yep. Okay, all right. And we can always come back to this if needed along the way. So based on these particular sectors, how do you think about your expertise within or across these different sectors? Where do you see yourself having the most experience or expertise rather?

**Participant 203** 06:07

I would say probably the production and retailers maybe waste

**Interviewer 2** 06:15

production retail or, and waste?

**Participant 203** 06:18

Yeah. I wouldn't say packaging, because most of the stuff we do is like giving away so it's not like we're packaging and distributing it to other people, we kind of just giving it to people.

**Interviewer 2** 06:32

Okay. All right, great. Great. All right. So before we what we want to do now is we're going to take a few minutes and walk you through this modeling process, we talked about fuzzy cognitive modeling or mental modeling, Carissa is gonna walk you through and introduce you to this.

**Interviewer** 06:53

Yeah, so we'll do a quick refresher. I know that we talked almost a year ago at this point. So you may have some familiarity, but it's been a minute. So I'll just go through a quick example. Do we basically have two basic components, right? It's the concepts and then connections between them sort of building out your understanding of the system. So if I'm looking at, you know, what impacts traffic and a city, I might say, you know, the number of cars really impacts how much traffic is, once I've decided that there's a connection, I basically need to decide, is it a positive connection or a negative, which doesn't mean like good or bad? It's basically like, one moves one direction does the other one, also? Or does it decrease. So for number of cars, if there's more cars, there's also more traffic, less cars, less traffic at a positive connection. So it's a blue arrow, public transportation might be more of a negative connection, because if you have better public transportation, maybe there's going to be less traffic, because people are riding on buses, or subways or something, and they're off the main road. So that's sort of positive and negative. My last choice is how strong is the connection. And this is really sort of evaluation of how impactful is one thing on the other. So cars and traffic, you know, maybe that's a strong connection, like it is, is the biggest decider of how much traffic there is public transportation, maybe more. Because it has an influence, but it's not like the end all be all, you know, like, some people are gonna want to drive their cars or buses still on the road. So impactful, but more of a medium rather than strong connection. Something like the number of cyclists might be a question. So like, because, you know, it has some impact on how much traffic there are, but you can't bike to in the snow, you can bike 20 miles every day, you know, you can't do it while carrying a couch, like it's not going to, you know, like solve the traffic issue. So that's sort of the three decisions is what direction is the connection? Is it positive? Or is it negative? And is it weak, medium or strong? And I just want to you know, like greenery, like, we're really building a map of your understanding and your experience and knowledge. So even though I'm going to be you know, creating the connections while we talk is really your map. So feel free to jump in and correct me. You know, I don't think that's connected like that. You know, I wouldn't word it that way. Feel free because I really want to get accurate to your understanding. There's no like, like, we don't know what the right answer is. I'm just trying to map your knowledge. So you know, it's very much your map. Feel free to feel free to correct me in any way.

**Participant 203** 09:56

Gotcha. Thank you.

**Interviewer** 10:02

Rene, I muted you for a second. So I was getting some feedback

**Interviewer** 10:10

when I needed you for a second, because I was getting a lot of

**Interviewer 2** 10:13

okay, yeah, I was just sort of sitting in the middle. Alright, great. So now we have the concepts here represented. So you'll see the, in addition to the sectors that we talked about earlier, an additional concept you'll see is around racial inequity. So we're looking at not the sectors as well as the impact of racial inequity on the folk system. So as we look here, and you think about your expertise, and your experience, and you talked about the production, retail and waste sectors, how would you draw your involvement in these different sectors? You know, in the local food system, how would you see them connected to one another.

**Participant 203** 11:02

Um, I think they're all like intertwined to each other. So it's, you know, the product has to go somewhere. And unfortunately, right now, in this global market, it's the product comes from someplace, we not necessarily means it's local, but it comes from someplace so it has to be distributed to stores. And so that means that also that wherever it is being shipped from, has to have a middleman of okay, I'm buying your products, and we're gonna pay you for that. I think that when it comes to waste before that food given gets to those grocery stores, orange plates, there's always and, and a feminine man a waste of food. I think there's like

**Participant 203** 12:03

I think there's like a statistic that I get like to two or 3% of all world, bananas actually go into grocery stores because they don't look right. So if that gives you any kind of indication of other food waste that we're having, that should indicate that. I think when it comes to retailers itself, there is a

**Participant 203** 12:36

there's, there's laws I say would stop them from recycling or composting, their own trash, especially when it comes to thinking about like, actual restaurants. So you can buy it from a specific organic place or buy local, but then there's laws in place that says after a certain date, you can't give this food away. Then you also have places that will only sell certain things at local places. So I would say in Flint, it's still considered a food desert because you don't have actual grocery store in the area. Where like, yeah, burned may be really close is still not inflict. We have I think we have more dollar trees and dollar generals on the Restore block than we do like, local grocer.

**Participant 203** 13:44

I guess that that all ties into racial inequality. I mean, it's not just influenced that it's been seen. That's kind of just any urban place that has a majority population that is not Caucasian. I think that it's been, fundamentally, it's always been like if we give education to the sets of people that maybe they'll make better food choices, and there's like, a combination of other things that is competing people for making those correct food choices. You have access, you have transportation to the certain areas you don't have. I would say not access to those certain places, but just access to those foods alone.

**Participant 203** 14:45

I would say that, yeah, you can get some education but you can't give them transportation to like get this stuff or if they want to get to transportation to go get some food from burden or he's going to grant like They can't keep it fresh because they have to use public transportation isn't reliable can be, but most times not, you're waiting 3040 minutes you have frozen food in the summer, that's not gonna last

**Participant 203** 15:22

we just talking about distribution in general. There's definitely a lack of diversity when it comes to our food system. So we have a lot of farmers right now we're dealing with cash crops, so they can only, you know, kind of grow one certain thing, which is kind of destroying our ecosystem when it comes to farming.

**Participant 203** 15:51

Let me know, if you need me to stop.

**Interviewer** 15:54

I'm definitely gonna move back to talk through some of these connection strings. But I like you know, all the threads that are coming out of this. Let me figure out the best way to word this

**Interviewer 2** 16:13

is actually great, because it's just following your stream of conscious flow is good, because what ERISA does is she'll pause in between and just make sure we got everything and I'm taking notes as well. And we'll kind of repeat back some things along the way just to make sure we're we gotcha.

**Participant 203** 16:31

All right. Yeah, just let me know if I'm just confused. Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 16:38

This is good. Um,

**Interviewer** 16:41

so yeah, so I'm gonna basically like walk on fair when I'd love to get some sense of, you know, I've just kind of arbitrarily not arbitrarily based on what you said assigns like if it's positive or negative, but I'd love like a more direction for like the connection strength. So I guess the first thing we can talk about is like sources of waste. So sort of connected non local producers versus local grocers, wholesalers and resellers, retailers, and then sort of this, you know, how food waste could be managed. So you talked about food rescue, but there's legislation around way that basically makes compost or to and makes that more challenging? How would you sort of assigned connection strength to food waste? And how it's sort of happening currently in Flint? Like, is a more coming from local producers, non local producers, wholesalers retailers, and then like how effectively or not effectively to being addressed by food rescue or insolent currently?

**Participant 203** 17:55

That's a good question. So it's so positive means there's a there's more value in tours that were negative is more looking towards like, there's not that much headway to get to one way or another.

**Interviewer** 18:09

Yeah, so in this specific case, it'd be positive connections, or contributing to food waste, and negative connections are managing food waste. And so the connection string would really do telling, like, you know, if they're saying like, Oh, you know, 30% of food waste comes from retailers, where only like, 10% of it comes from the whole sales stage, I might put this as like a strong connection, this one more is like a weak or like, medium. And similarly, like, yeah, compost could feel this big waste that like, there's very little composting and Flint. Again, I don't know if this is true, I'm just making it up. So, you know, I might make that like a weak connection. Whereas like, oh, Food Rescue, you know, there's actually a lot of that. So maybe that's more of a medium connection. So sort of, like your sense of how much are these?

**Participant 203** 18:57

Gotcha. So like non local producers, I say that that's most where food is coming from, is like getting a bigger push for local grown foods. But I think that there's still a lack of collaboration in plant to have that like, be a foundation, you know, like, yeah, get local food from like the food bank or even your local food. Or you can go to the farmers market if you have a way to get there. But like, there's still like, not a local grocery store for people to go to buy all these local foods add in if there is one is just one, you know, just not touching the north side of Flint where, you know, Beecher is you know, it's not touching the east side. It's somewhere where not everyone can get to When it comes to laws and legislations, I think that's heavily impacted because you can make laws saying like, we will intensifies, getting fresh foods and local food sources, but then at the same time restrict people from having their own hands and chickens in the yard. That is a source of fresh foods from themselves. But you're restricting it for some reason.

**Interviewer** 20:32

Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 20:33

Yeah. Just so there, you're talking, you know, the incentive for local foods, but then restricting livestock. The food? Yeah. So the livestock aspect of it

**Participant 203** 20:45

is almost like, we want you to depend on us for your food. So,

**Interviewer** 20:58

yeah, so other aspects I added was sort of listing the omics around, I titled it like geographic differences, or disparities sort of trying to get into this, like spatial issue around food access. So you know, that leads to like less stores in certain areas, or like lower quality stores, you know, differences in food, access to transportation barriers, and how that feeds into food safety, as you mentioned, and like healthy food choices, and ultimately health. Are there any changes or additions you want to make to sort of that side of the map right now?

**Participant 203** 21:38

So what are what is value added processors? What is that?

**Interviewer** 21:43

Yeah, so that only people who are turning, you know, produce or, like animal products, and like, manufacturing or processing and like one stage beyond that. So Renee is example of like turning tomatoes until the salsa or like peppers and a hot sauce or, you know, packaging making in the ears or something? Yeah, so we're looking at sort of like the local level.

**Participant 203** 22:09

So yeah, I would say that there's definitely organizations in Flint that are contributing to those things. Like there's the crinan Foundation, there's the best room, there's like a bunch of different organizations that do that. But again, when it comes to collaborating as a holistic situation, so like, you don't see the crown, doing programming for foods, bringing local food organizations that come here to proactively give kids foods anything like a regular thing. So when they can get accustomed to that. You don't have local grocers reaching out to after school, clubs, or MC with organizations to promote fresh foods. It's like you have to reach out to us.

**Interviewer 2** 22:58

So you're saying that there's corrections connections between those value added and local sourcing of foods is what you're saying?

**Participant 203** 23:05

Yeah, like the educational pieces are there. So like the criminal go out to do like educational pieces, or like samplings at the farmers market? They will talk about nutrition if you requested. But that's only hitting, you know, a finite amount of people that want to participate? Or who can who can participate in those if they are in that area?

**Interviewer 2** 23:35

Got it. So that collaboration between the actual producers of the food and folks who do educational kinds of programming is kind of what you're describing there. Yes, you've got the folks who are doing education, but they're not necessarily connected to the people who are actually producing the food themselves. And that's the collaboration you're describing. Yeah. Okay. Thank you. You talked a little bit about, I'm just going to kind of piggyback on where Carissa was to is that you made reference to that farmers can only grow certain kinds of cash crops. And they can only grow certain kinds of foods. So that was leading to the lack of diversity of food. And then you also talked about it impacting the actual ecosystem of food, you know, in Flint. So let's see if we can capture if we can capture those items as well.

**Participant 203** 24:51

Would you want me to go into a little bit more descriptive about that?

**Interviewer 2** 24:53

Yeah. Because I think you were making the connection between that blue diversity and the production of local foods as well as, like ERISA has drawn connections now between that and the access to food, the access to healthy food choices, but also that was the connection to producers only being able to grow certain kinds of foods. And that was true for the local producers as well as the non local producers, would you say? Or was it more?

**Participant 203** 25:26

Now local producers? I would say that local. So I would say local itself would have more diversity range, but they still adhering to like, what do my community is used to? So usually, it's like for Flint. It's like, what is something that helps with lead poisoning, so we do like grains, do a, you know, like spinach, lettuce, all these things that help with lead, or, you know, soak up lead from the ground, which is great. But I will say when people are not able to go to these local areas, or go to the farmers market, go to a local food source, or don't even know that there's local food sources, access and plant when they go to a grocery store. It's not local. And it's usually the same stuff. Gotcha. So when it comes to growing, bigger, producing arms, they can only grow a certain kind of crap, because that's the most money they getting out of, or this the only kind of supplement from the government that they can get to grow those crops.

**Interviewer 2** 26:49

Okay, the incentives to grow those crops. Okay, got that. Okay. And I heard you make another connection. You talked about that producers are growing crops that affect the soil. Did you talk about the some of the crops they grow? Were to address land in the soil? Yeah.

**Participant 203** 27:11

So I'm saying local, are the organizations that work with the grow? I guess the first first few crops of the year are usually like mix greens or vegetables that don't need to be patronized. So you're looking at spinach pactual, a mix greens, and lettuces. All these are I would say very good for reducing lead in, in the bloodstream, but also it also sucks in the ground as well.

**Interviewer 2** 27:53

Gotcha. Okay, so there are two connections there to the soil to the foods itself, and then also to impact the quality of the soil. Yeah. Okay. So we got the hill part. Okay, so we just need the soil connection. Okay. All right.

**Participant 203** 28:09

Going forward, when it comes to soil and larger farms, it's that if you continually using or to continue growing the same crop, like if you do tomatoes, you're sucking up those nutrients from that soil, because it's using the same nutrients. So you're not replenishing that soil. Which, if you're only getting paid to grow a certain crop, and that's all you can make money from them, your swing is gonna kind of get tarnish because you're, you're describing the same thing over and over again.

**Interviewer 2** 28:42

Okay, so you're talking there about the crop rotation, growing other crops, so you're speaking to the diversity of the crops, not only for lead mitigation, but the diversity of the crops that impacts the quality of the soil? Yeah, that's what I've heard you just say, okay, yes. Okay. So crop rotation to also help with the soil. Got it? Okay. Got that. Okay. All right, great. Let's see, you. Karissa, I'm gonna, I'm checking to see if we see the connection between the fact that people have low access to transportation, and that also means that they don't necessarily, they can't keep their food as fresh. Javon you talked about the food being, you know, kept fresh. Yeah, is that that is okay. Safety. Sure. Okay.

**Interviewer** 29:39

Um, but again, anything that you're like, I wouldn't word it that way. Totally. Let me down we can change that.

**Participant 203** 29:47

So I would say thinking of like Michigan's like, how to stay in the summer. If you're waiting for your, you know, a bus or you're waiting for your ride to get there. You can take 2030 Maybe even 40 minutes depending on time. After scheduling, if you have frozen meat in your bag and you have to travel that long, it's not going to stay frozen for that long.

**Interviewer 2** 30:10

Okay, okay. All right. So it's about the food in transport that it stays fresh while you're traveling. That's what you were thinking over here. Okay. All right. Want to make sure we got that? Let's see, we're looking at this beautiful map here. Are there other connections that you are thinking of in terms of because right now I'm just trying to see is everything kind of connected there that you've talked about? I'm standing my notes.

**Participant 203** 30:42

I think you should put in line between a race inequality select laws and legislation because that's absolutely. Okay, as effective.

**Interviewer 2** 30:53

Okay. Let's see, I see markets stores,

**Interviewer** 31:03

where posters are connected to food waste and laws and legislation. Anything else? And the answer can be no.

**Participant 203** 31:12

Yeah. To to producers and transport barriers as well. Okay. I will say that people would love to compost, but there isn't that one. All areas can kind of post to, there's not locations for people to compost at. Okay. Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 31:42

So probably the barrier. So when you say locations, are you speaking of? When you say locations? Are you thinking of?

**Participant 203** 31:51

I think of like. So I would say composting in itself smells bad. So like, if you do want to compost, you know, in a very affordable way in your apartment and then have the smell in your apartment? Or do you want to compost it? Somewhere where someone's gonna mistake it as trash and you know, get rid of it. So an apartment complex don't have the necessarily equipment or tools for you to compost for yourself. So you would have to take it somewhere else. But there's no real facilities for you to take compost to unless, you know, community farm, or someone that

**Interviewer 2** 32:29

Gotcha. Okay, that's what I was wondering you were talking about? In terms of we're okay, great. Awesome. Um, one of the you talked a little bit about, we've talked about retailers as it relates to waste. Any, so other connections that you might see as it relates to retailers there in terms of, you know, the Market stores or restaurants or things?

**Participant 203** 32:59

I would say that there are

**Participant 203** 33:10

Yeah, I mean, there's like a lot of things you can go into when it comes to like retailers. I mean, right now, I guess the inflation is costing a lot of things more money than it should be. So right now, doors, I would say restaurants may have to hike their prices just because of what the market is climbing right now. Which is going to affect how people can spend their money and when it comes to fresh foods and especially if they have to go somewhere to get fresh food

**Interviewer 2** 33:42

Okay, so is affecting the food prices.

**Participant 203** 33:48

I think right now also we have a transportation issue when it comes to imports and exports, because of where we're at when it comes to our trading. A lot of things are backed backed up which is, you know, affecting how people are getting food. You know, I've heard people say they can't get certain meet people, certain people that can't get certain, you know, fresh items. So for me, I was I was kind of like, I knew this was kind of happening just because of how everything else is going on, but like other people will think I'm shocked. I can't get chicken. Well. There's a shortage on everything.

**Interviewer 2** 34:37

Mm hmm. Yeah, the supply chain disruptions are real. People are feeling it, they're describing it but they don't know that its supply chain per se language. Yeah, gotcha. Okay. So we see the connections there to the retailers in general. So, when you think of About the retailers and the supply chain, is it? Do you see connections to specific retailers that are being affected by the supply chain? Or would you say retailers in general, which is where we have a connection right now?

**Participant 203** 35:13

I would say in that specific niche supply chain, I mean, you know, retailer that's getting hit, I think everyone across that board is getting hit

**Interviewer 2** 35:23

the markets, the stores and the restaurants are all getting. Okay.

**Participant 203** 35:27

And then you have, you know, geez, I mean, if we weren't really get into it, like we have, like protesting that's happening right now that's affecting its supply chain, because you have truckers who's protesting different, you know, equality situations, or that it's about marriage, or just like work environments. And you also have, you know, union and non union union labor workers right now who's protesting? I think in 2020, we had wonderful fourth of all farming production was down because we had legislation that said that, like no immigrant workers can come on the farmlands. And that hasn't changed since then. So I can only imagine how those are affecting our supply chain right now. Yeah, I think over a million workers right now, obviously, right when it comes to wages. And then when you're talking about people working on these bigger farms are historically underpaid.

**Interviewer 2** 36:29

Okay, so yeah, that's a whole nother? Yes. So high net to wages as well. So you're seeing so wages, this, you're making that I heard you make that connection to a couple of things, wages in terms of disruption, and then also wages as relates to production? You were talking about the growers wages. Okay. All right. So we want to make that connection. Mm. Hmm. Okay. All right. So that wages connection, is that more to is that to the non local producers or for local producers as well, that connection on wages, would you?

**Participant 203** 37:14

I think that's for everyone. I don't think that it's not affected right now. That's not feeling that kind of like, we need to.

**Interviewer 2** 37:23

All right, so it's impacting all sectors wages. Yeah. Okay. Okay. So we want to make that connection. All right, great. All right. So you can see that other connections that you're seeing this point with, because we've got a couple of other things we'll go into with you, and maybe they'll come out as we go. For you, though, okay. All right. Well, let's take a look at at racial equity and racial inequity in terms of the connections and you draw on some of those already. How would you connect racial inequity to the local food systems? When we talk about those key sectors, we've been discussing production and value and wholesale, retail and composting and waste? How do you see racial inequities as it relates to these sectors

**Participant 203** 38:25

I think there's still a there's still this mindset of people who are outside of Flint, who's like, Oh, poor Flint. They need X, Y, and Z, they're, you know, down and out. They need drink water. And then the amount of times I've heard people make jokes about like, Oh, you're getting out of it, because you need fresh water is ridiculous. So like the, this lack of so the there there's this whole thing of like, we need to help Flint, but we're just going to give them like the tools that they may need. So like, here's this educational piece, and here's a little laminated card that tells you how to make the recipe, but we're gonna fix your transportation issues. We're gonna make it easier for you to buy your food because inflation is insanely high right now. You probably can't afford it anyways. And then you have not exposure. So there is this very I would say this upward tick of healthy living, mindfulness, and like eating different grains and you know, being healthy, but there's not like the educational portion of like, or access to these things to be exposed. So like, yeah, you can say to someone, you should eat it too. Killing a pumpkin, you should do squash, you should do this. But if they don't see it regularly, and it's not like provided to them regularly, they won't go out of their way to buy it. And if they don't know how to cook it regularly, then it's not something that they willingly spend their money, especially when the cost of things are so high. So when you think of when you're going to a store, or like convenience store, or a Rite Aid, or like, even like gas station and plant, they have certain foods, they're bananas, apples, you know, they have, you know, maybe some fresh things that are packaged singlets and plastics that may be a little bit cheaper, but it's not as good quality as you went to Whole Foods somewhere down the street, you know, in Burton Grand Blanc. So when it comes to quality, I still think Valley. There's this. There's underlying. We're trying to help. But we don't understand how they're not helping themselves situations where it's like you're not helping the actual problems. You're putting a BandAid on a gash.

**Interviewer 2** 41:14

Got it? Mm hm. So you're not dealing with the Yeah, yeah. Like you said the gash is the is the it's not the root cause is what you say in there. So yeah, just kind of give a couple of these back to you talked about. You mentioned the water issue, if you know, you're are people actually leaving. And that the tools if I'm looking here, what Karissa has put on is the ineffective, you know, Band Aid solutions are tools, but they're not necessarily fixing the actual problem, the real problem that's happening, you made the connection between the tools and transportation, or heard you talk about made the connection between those ineffective tools and inflation, that is not necessarily addressing the fact that the prices are high? And could you even afford the to afford the food. And you made another connection around exposure. So that was the transportation that was that last one was to transportation recipe that I was just, Oh, you got that one already. Okay. So it was in also you made the reference to not only are the tools ineffective, but also that people's capacity to even know how to cook it. So education around it was another another connection that I heard you make was to education. And then you also talked about the foods in certain places. That then being packaged in a way you talked about the quality and not being as good in certain places. So that was a quality of food question as relates to these geo Darica. Geographic, okay.

**Participant 203** 43:22

So I'll even put like food access that you give to people so you when you do food drives, or the food bank gives food, they're only required to do the bare minimum. So you're here. Food Bank gives food to after school, school after school organizations and they're supposed to give me something sweet, salty, vegetable or fruit? That doesn't mean it's good. It just that if they hit those quotas, then it's good enough

**Interviewer 2** 43:57

so that ties to the quality. Okay,

**Participant 203** 43:59

yeah. I think the same thing when it comes to you know, K through 12 schools up to like, yeah, it's full, but it's still trash food.

**Interviewer 2** 44:08

Gotcha. So emergency food as well as food system folks school system as a food system food school system. Okay.

**Interviewer** 44:18

Would it be fair to connect so that I guess some of the dynamics that we've heard and I just want to double check with you is that you know, these sources are important for like food access, where it's like yes, you have something to eat but the quality and the nutrition of it is bad. So it's like that.

**Interviewer 2** 44:41

So you are quality there. So your connection on nutritious is up here on the right. Yeah, okay, data. Okay. Good point. Okay. When you think about racial equity So what are some of the racialized barriers if you were to participation in the local food system? So when you think about the system system itself?

**Participant 203** 45:13

Education is a big thing. Oh, sorry. Sorry, I jumped. There you go. I think education is one of the big things. It's like this whole, like idea that, like, if you don't have a degree, you don't know what you're talking about. Like, okay, I may not have a horticulture degree, but I've been farming for 20 years, and I know what works. Like. I may not, you know, have a degree in forestry. But I know that if we cut down certain vegetation, it still will be able to grow, you know, pulling the fleet or thing to work. I think, intelligence not saying that intelligence. No. I say knowledge can open a form of partisanship is the barrier. There's like a class of someone else. Like, yeah, you may be part of the community may be proud of these local food groups. But like, because I have a master's degree or I have a PhD, like I know more than you. Okay. Which, in some cases, maybe that's true. But I feel as though like, if you're coming to the community to help the community, you should try to take what the community is saying, and work with them and not try to work against them. And I think a lot of organizations do that, where they're like, Oh, we know what you need. So we're gonna give it to you. And then it doesn't work. Why didn't it work?

**Interviewer 2** 46:47

Right. So I heard you tease that out, as you said, I've been doing this for the longest. So that's really local knowledge. So there's that the, in that concept there permisos perception of local knowledge and experience?

**Interviewer** 47:00

Yes. Okay. Yeah, so I'm trying to capture this, like, really awesome, not awesome, like, great, but like intriguing was was intriguing dynamic, of like this sort of, like social valuation of degrees, or like formal education. Sort of playing into this, like, especially like this extra intervention of like, you know, you if you don't have this thing that I perceive as a marker of expertise, then I don't consider you an expert, which, you know, feeds back into not taking you seriously not believing there.

**Participant 203** 47:41

Oh, yeah, absolutely. It's like, you know, I mean, I'm there's, I'm sure you're both your work. How many times have you heard like people complaining about an environmental problem, and not being taken seriously, until it was like, Oh, these people are dying because of this thing? And like, we've been saying this for 10 years.

**Interviewer 2** 48:01

Right. Got it. Yeah. So there's a quiz that helped me is there. Do you have a connection right now between perception of local knowledge and the social valuation of degree? I can't. I know you do your thing.

**Interviewer** 48:18

Yeah, I know. It's messy. I'm trying to

**Interviewer 2** 48:20

know. Yeah, yeah. I just checking for if there's one between those two. Yes, I see it now. Thank you. Yeah, got it. Okay. Great. Got an interesting, another interesting, intriguing question for you. Are there ways that the food system contributes to racial inequity? Yes.

**Participant 203** 48:59

When it comes to

**Participant 203** 49:15

Yeah, that's an interesting question. Yeah. So it doesn't play it doesn't play a role when it comes to what are people culturally used to versus what is the social norm value for health? So for instance, I would say that there's not a heavy push on the black community to eat avocados. Avocados are supposedly supposed to good for you. And it's socially norm to understand that like, I always thought it was a good fit. That's not inherent in, say the black community to eat avocados. I'm not saying that. No black people eat avocados, but it's not like I grew up in San Jose. You know, avocado, I would say that a lot of there's like a lot of incident, you know, intersectional of like cultures that live or intertwine with each other, that have different food. But it's not a dress, it's always the same kind of bland food, like, you have your chicken, you have your rice, which is like a commonality in all cultures, but there's different sectors of it like and the lack of diversity when it comes to those foods is not in certain areas. So if you drive through plant, there's not like every store that you can buy Baba canoes, you have to go to the farmers market, where there's a certain customer people that goes to the farmers market. You can't you know, find. Now you can find Cuban food now, but like, how is that marketable to people that don't know what Cuban food is?

**Interviewer 2** 51:04

Okay, so I'm

**Participant 203** 51:07

sorry. Yeah, no,

**Interviewer 2** 51:09

I'm hearing you say that. The cultural foods, just having first of all access to them, you know, the cultural foods you have access to them. And that the actual locations where you'd have to go to even get to those kinds of kinds of foods. So and then the third element was the social norms around foods around healthy foods. So I'm sure for instance, she does a marvelous job connect, draw arrows when I'm playing it back to me make sure we got them. So people you talked about people having cultural foods, but then those cultural foods are not always aligned with the social norms of the types of foods.

**Participant 203** 52:03

So I will say that like back in, like maybe, like, maybe 1520 years, I wouldn't say that holistically. Relying on like herbs and different kinds of like oils and remedies was like the social norm, it was kind of like, oh, you're kind of hippie, you're kind of like out there. Now, 20 years later, a lot of people are using different kinds of Tumeric different kinds of, you know, native indigenous cultures, remedies for sicknesses or different kinds of like things upon their food, which was like, looking like outcasts or doing that when you were back in the 90s, early 2000s.

**Interviewer 2** 52:45

Saudi indigenous and cultural foods

**Participant 203** 52:52

I would say even in that situation of like growing indigenous foods and saying that like, they're weeds when they people use

**Interviewer 2** 53:06

so happy to identify this.

**Participant 203** 53:11

Like, I didn't know until like a few years ago, there's over 500 different kind of corns that used to grow just in America, we only eat yellow corn. Yeah, that's diversity. Yeah, lack of diversity of knowledge

**Interviewer 2** 53:26

of like biodiversity of food. So I'm here.

**Participant 203** 53:29

Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 53:30

Okay. Got it. Not a great connections here.

**Interviewer 2** 53:45

Okay, well, let's, let's chat a little bit about other influences, you know, so are there are there currently or have there been major influences that you feel or impacts on the food system? The local food system?

**Participant 203** 54:07

Ingress to what situation?

**Interviewer 2** 54:12

I'm just connections, for example, you're from Flint. You mentioned water earlier. So water crisis for example.

**Participant 203** 54:22

Oh, yeah.

**Participant 203** 54:28

Yeah, I would say irrigation would have probably a big one. Environmental factors also is a is a huge and more relevant situation now that people are having to come accustomed to I think Michigan last year had a drought that I will think majority of people are just didn't know why it was a drought. And that effects when it comes to you know what municipalities are? Um, when we had that drought, when we had over access of water was, you know, most of my cherry tomatoes were you know, destroyed because they got oversaturated

**Interviewer 2** 55:12

the droughts then the floods

**Participant 203** 55:22

like, the sad these outside factors that are happening, but are not like really fully discussed and community, it's kind of like this is just happening to deal with that kind of thing.

**Interviewer 2** 55:41

Okay, so communication, I'm saying, so they're happening, but there's a lack of communication.

**Participant 203** 55:49

Yeah. Okay.

**Interviewer 2** 55:53

Okay. So that's environmental and the water crisis? And of course, then there was the big one for everybody all over the world, right. COVID. Yeah. How did you, I would you, if you've seen any impacts to the Flint system as it relates to COVID.

**Participant 203** 56:18

I think it worsened some of these already highlighted problems. So that affects transportation, access to any kind of governing body to help you and supplement or need access to, you know, going to the store and feeling safe, you know, with your health or with what's being produced to you. But I think that it gave people time to develop the certain like, gardening skills, I think they're very much uptaking growing your own foods, providing your own kind of health to yourself. Being out, being more outdoors, and being more involved in those type of spaces.

**Interviewer 2** 57:16

Awesome, okay. All right, let's let's test shows that everything. So the connection to worsen worsened conditions on access to supplemental transportation, and also impact on health and safety, perception and health and safety. COVID. Got it. And then it also positively gave more time or gardening skills and for attending to your own health. So being able to learn to grow food, and being outside more access to outdoors more. Okay. All right. Cool. All right. Well, let's, um, are there as we look at this, and honestly, that sounds like a really crazy question. Any additional things you want to add to that before we kind of get to our last couple of questions with you.

**Participant 203** 58:21

I say that COVID has a lot has distributed a lot of these different kinds of sectors. So it you know, affected laws and affected how we view how we view people, how we view the these different, you know, sectors when it comes to quality of food quality of health. I think people had to really slow down and to kind of look around what's actually happening. And so that's why you have you know, people fighting for higher wages or, you know, fighting for different kinds of social betterment when it comes to legislation, because people don't have time to look at it look and say, this is probably not the best way we can live.

**Interviewer 2** 59:16

So I'm looking at the connections that made so planet back COVID affected, you know, looking at the laws, looking at the quality of food coming out of the sectors also affected people's awareness. So that that contributed to this you had on their protests and fighting for higher wages. So we've got

**Participant 203** 59:41

people how they can afford afford their food or just afford housing. I think that talking what we're talking about homelessness, you can't not Talking about food access, because who are these laws directly targeting when it says you can't give your food to x people? You have laws that says X amount of people can't dumpster buys for food that's been thrown away. It's not targeting me. You know, it's not targeting us on the Zoom call directly of targeting those people who have less

**Interviewer 2** 1:00:27

homeless. So I heard a connection between you mentioned the the advocacy and that tied to the wages, political advocacy and wages. I heard that. And then you talked about it affecting the affordability of food. And also, the affordability of housing. So COVID affected? housing affordability, as well as food, the affordable food?

**Participant 203** 1:01:09

Yes. Okay.

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:13

And the laws going back to the laws that talked about food rescue, that you have your food rescue over here, and the impact that that had on homeless people. So you made the connection there. On the left side there the the loss in food access, housing, which are home homelessness, yeah, was another connection I heard. Okay, so let's see how to get that in there.

**Interviewer** 1:01:58

Yeah, well, advocacy,

**Interviewer 2** 1:02:03

okay. Wages as a whole. I see homelessness.

**Interviewer 2** 1:02:15

Okay. I had a great connection. And that's one of the reasons why we also did recording is because we may when we go back, and we listen, if we missed anything, or we'll make some adjustments. So thank you for that. Um, so it's, that's really great. So the next thing we really want to talk about, and this will be our last major, you know, question to you. Is, as we talk about considering leverage points or changes that might improve the system, like, if we look back when Chris was showing you the traffic example, she talked to you about, well, hey, what if we want people biking? Or, you know, things like that? How would that change the system? So if you could change? Consider this map, this beautiful map here of the current food system? What, how would you make changes to improve it?

**Participant 203** 1:03:17

There's two major things that if you effect them, would, I think, fundamentally affect everything else, and that's tapping the... definitely low income and homeless populations and their needs first. So I would say that right now, if you give up social programs, or social acting laws that help ease the burden of people, then that would affect everyone else. So right now you have high inflation, high rent /buying market, higher food, and then you have no social programs to help people. And then when they are on food stamps, or on some kind of social programs, if they are getting a job, any kind of supplemental help that they had is taken away, which is making more of a burden on them than when they didn't have a job. So giving unhomed people some type of supplemental help on top of their job, to combat these inflation problems would not only help but would give people more access to food, transportation, buying things for themselves that will help them not just financially but health wise. Which will in turn, if people are buying more would help the economy. I'm not sure why anyone else in these power positions haven't made the connection, but it's beyond me. But, tackling those problems-you would have more people to not only be in a healthier environment-have an environment for themselves, but overall, locally, they'll be more of a community stronghold to help those who are in need.

**Participant 203** 1:05:14

[inaudible] situation. So you may have a drug problem, instead of sending them to, you know, prison or a facility, have them, a case worker to help them work through their problems. I think, you know, kind of taking some of these laws to restrict people who have made mistakes that are not... I guess, non-violent crimes, you still have a former offense, so you can't get a job, which then in turn, you can't properly help yourself. Which leads you down one or two paths.

**Participant 203** 1:06:04

I think we've had multiple examples over the pandemic where you had given people money: $1,500. And you saw growth and not only healthy choices of buying food as people were able to afford their bills and other access to things that they want. And not necessarily just materialistic things. So if you're looking at people who want to make those choices of buying healthy foods, then they need the extra money to do that. If you are choosing between getting Little Caesar pizza for $5.50 or a bag of avocados for the same price, which one are you going to buy to feed your children? Probably not the avocados. If all you're making is $13 an hour, and that's the choice you just have to make. You need higher wages to afford those foods that are high-cost more, but also, to afford healthy foods, you need to make more money. And if you're choosing between a pizza, for $5, or your rent, you're going to choose my rent, and buying this pizza for $5, and not spending money on expensive groceries. So I will say, helping people financially would help them make better choices. But also you can't just let the educational piece kind of be thrown away either. So there has to be a component of having growing-having school gardens be a norm, in certain places, or teaching about outdoor spaces not just for monetary gain, or protection land. I think there's two sides of this whole environmental thing when it comes to K-through-12. It's either we're protecting it, or you're gonna make money from it. There's not an in-between ground. There's not a holistic talk about how we are intertwining us as humans into the environment. I think later in life, you find that for yourselves, but it's not a cultural norm to talk about that. Which ties back to, you know, racial inequalities. There's not a lot of Black people in the outdoor spectrum. And there's historical reasons for that, and there is, you know, present reasons for that.

**Interviewer 2** 1:08:38

Okay, so those are things that would change-facilitate change. Laws, looking at how laws work, you talked about supplemental, you know, the kinds of things that supplement income that don't cause you to lose social benefits that are important to you. And education. Okay, anything else you want to add to that, when you think about leverage points? Do you think-are there any things in particular that might happen at different levels, you know, in the system itself, to help get to that point of a more equitable system?

**Participant 203** 1:09:19

Yeah, I think diversifying some of the power positions that we have in this country would definitely do that. There's not a lot of representation to what's happening in the United States right now. And I think a lot of our legislations-our governing bodies right now are still stuck in the 80s economic spectrum. They're seeing inflation, it's like, oh, this is 1.2 inflation that we had in the 80s. It's like no, like, our minimum wage should be at $20 and is still at $9 in some places. Renting is, you know, catastrophicly high for people. And then you know, last September you cut people's benefits for mortgages. So you have even more homeless people on the street. It's visibly there and by metrics, it's there. But you don't want to address these problems. So I think a more refined legislative body will be better.

**Participant 203** 1:10:23

I think more access to these educational pieces, but like a follow through on that. So like, yeah, you can say, like, give these classes or have these free like, programs for people to come to, it's great. It gives them like the starting point, but it's not a follow through of, okay, we're going to supplement you with these certain types of foods, so then you can get used to it. And even if there's a program out there that only lasts for a year or two. So people can-you can't make changes in that, that spectrum. Yes, you maybe changed a few people's living situation, but not the entire community that you're trying to work for. You can't give a grant and expect people to change an entire community or entire local system in that short amount of time.

**Interviewer 2** 1:11:28

Awesome. Is there we've talked a lot about the system and rthe [inaudible] and the racial equity. And now, you know, leverage points. Anything else that's important that we are either either we forgot to ask you in our questions, or just maybe coming up for you now that you want to add to the conversation today?

**Participant 203** 1:12:06

I would say acknowledgement. I think there's a large amount of lack of acknowledgement when it comes to... how do we get to this point? I think in our society, we're very much like, we're better because we're not how we used to be. And it's like, how much have we actually changed? Since whatever we "used to be." Because we can have this interface, we can Zoom each other, and this technology is better? Or our social norms are better, because there's two black people and one white person in a Zoom call, but there's still racism happening in America? Have things actually changed? I think acknowledgement of where people had to come from to get to where they are now, not just when it comes to food groups, but different community partners. There are loads of different kinds of ethnic groups and community members that are intertwining with each other, but we're blanketing them on this thing -- like you need this because you're in this city. You need this because you're in this local municipality or this district. Not actually going to these people and asking them what they need. Acknowledging that they may know something more than these people who have degrees.

**Interviewer 2** 1:13:31

Awesome. Thank you so very much. Yeah. deeply appreciate this conversation today. As we, you know, move forward, just kind of want to remind you that we recorded it will be sharing within our team, you know, making sure first of all, we've got it for US ally, because you shared a lot of information, we want to make sure we accurately reflect your your thoughts on your map. And we'll also be sharing it amongst the research team. But again, that's just confidential within us, nothing that's going to identify you. If you need to follow up with other thoughts come things you want to share. You have questions later about this process. Reach out to [Interviewer], you have her email was in the invite that you got, we're going to do two things. In closing, we'll give you a link to the evaluation because we really do want to hear your there's some information there about this process. And we'll also email it to you. So whichever way is easier for you to access that. That's fine. As you know, from before, it takes a couple minutes to do that. But it really is very valuable input to us. And so with that, again, we just both want to say thank you tremendously for not only this interview, but I'll extend it and say just beyond just in listening to you talk Your work, you know, in this community, your thoughts? And we certainly hope, you know, we'll keep you connected around what's going on. If you're interested in it. Just the next year is going to be very, there's gonna be a lot of information and opportunity to engage for this. Well, thank you so much. Oh, not at all. Are you kidding? We weren't limited to 90 minutes and being, you know, really considerate of your time, we would just keep talking to you.

**Interviewer 2** 1:15:37

This has been amazing. And again, absolutely. And I think this survey has a question on it about staying engaged in the process. If you're interested, by all means, let us know. And we'll certainly make sure that we continue to extend these invites when, you know, we're looking for inputs and also when we're sharing back you know, the things that that you've shared, you know, today and and how that might look in the future for the plant food system. So, yeah, absolutely. All right. Great. Very nice to meet you. Yeah, you have a great day to day.

**Participant 203** 1:16:10

You too, as well. Bye.

**Interviewer 2** 1:16:12

Bye bye.