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**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

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**SPEAKERS**

Interviewer, Participant 123, Interviewer 2

**Interviewer 2** 00:00

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**Participant 123** 01:13

no, I'm awesome.

**Interviewer 2** 01:15

All right. Cool. Thank you. All right, great. So here's the here's the hardest question I'm going to ask you today is how would you describe your role or your experience in the local food system? Scott?

**Participant 123** 01:28

Um, are you Are you guys familiar at all with, you know, the edible Flint?

**Interviewer 2** 01:36

We are, but we have to ask you that question. Sure.

**Participant 123** 01:42

Well, I just, I wasn't sure how much I had to yet. But I am a I'm a volunteer at the edible Flint educational farm. Okay. On a couple of committees there. And so yeah, we've been doing that. I've been doing it since 2015. Okay. We started out in a garden space across from Hurley hospital and have moved to a different locale in the city limits. Because of the donation of some property that was given to us, much bigger space, we're able to do a lot more farming and gardening and we share our harvest with the local community to try. Yeah,

**Interviewer 2** 02:35

awesome. Actually, I was there not too long ago, Scott.

**Participant 123** 02:40

I'm so happy to hear that. Oh, that's great. Yeah, I

**Participant 123** 02:43

was there with, with Kelly and with Amy. Amy Freeman and I are buddies.

**Participant 123** 02:48

Oh, but I love I love him. Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 02:51

Good. Great. Great, thank you for that. Well, what we'd like to do to kind of get started we're, we're focusing on on five sectors of the food system. So we want to walk through those definitions with you. So when we look at the five sectors, we're looking at production, so the folks who are growing crops are raising animals, whether they are in the backyard, small, small scale, or large scale, you know, producers. And we're also looking at the processing and packaging. So the folks who take those things that were grown or raised, and wash and pack them or even turn them into value added products. So today, it was a tomato tomorrow, it's lovely salsa with some other lovely ingredients with the tomatoes. So those folks that are doing the processing, then we're also looking at the wholesale. So the folks who gather those items that are produced and so but created by others, and they make those available as resellers. And then the folks in the retail sector, who operate the stores, the markets, that we go to the convenience stores, the farm stands, the restaurants, the caterers, all those folks that are in that retail sector, as well. And then last but not least, not everything related to food is edible, you know, and some of it doesn't get eaten. So we're looking at those that manage waste, whether they're composting it or potentially, it might still be edible, and they're moving it on as rescued food. Um, any questions about that or anything to add to those?

**Participant 123** 04:38

No, I understand those definitions. All right,

**Interviewer 2** 04:41

perfect, perfect. And with that in mind and your your either your work or your experience in general, where would you say that you have? You see yourself having the most expertise in these sectors?

**Participant 123** 04:56

Definitely a production

**Interviewer 2** 04:58

Okay. All right, great. Awesome. Awesome. So it's been a while since the first interview you did with Carissa. So she's gonna take a few minutes to reconnect you with the mental modeling approach.

**Participant 123** 05:13

Okay.

**Interviewer** 05:15

So, um, this is the program that we'll be using, it'll be the same process, as last time, but I'll run through it, the general process using an example with the issue of traffic. And this is really just to make sure that you have the knowledge about what I'm doing, as you sort of answer the questions to jump in and say, you know, I don't think I would connect it like that, or I wouldn't word it like that, because we're really trying to build, you know, your understanding your knowledge of the system, to do that accurately. So some of it's a little technical. But that's what I'm here for. And we just want to make sure you know, you know, what the different color means and stuff like that. So as we're sort of building out the system, we might be, you know, looking at an issue like traffic. And my first thought might be that the number of cars on the road impacts how much traffic there is, my next choice is if it's a positive or a negative connection, which doesn't mean that it's like a good or a bad connection, it just means if one increases, does the other one, also increase or does it decrease. So for number of cars and traffic, more cars, more traffic, less cars, less traffic moving in the same direction, so it's a positive connection, and it has a blue arrow, public transportation might be more of a negative connection and an orange arrow. Because if you had more public transportation, or a better public transportation system, you might have less traffic as people are taking the bus or riding on a subway if it's a big city or something. So that's positive and negatives. My last choice is the strength of the connection. So really, a measure of how influential or impactful is one thing on another, so cars to traffic might be a pretty strong relationship, you know, if tomorrow everyone decided to sell their car, there wouldn't be a lot of traffic issues. Whereas public transportation might be more of a medium connection. Because it can be, you know, fairly influential, but you know, there's always people who really love their driving their cars, or they live somewhere or work somewhere that's just not very common and is inaccessible by public transportation systems. And something like the number of cyclists might be more of a weak connection. You know, it has, so if we increase the number from Oh, biking to places, you know, it has some impact on traffic, but it's really not a solution to the problem. You know, some people don't like biking, you know, they might have to move a couch. You can't do that with a, by the way, I have to bring your groceries home. Like, it's just not a solution to the traffic problem, some impact, but not really a solution. So that's sort of the process, you know, how are things connected? The positive or negative? And is it a weak medium or strong connection? Any questions about this process?

**Participant 123** 08:14

No, it's thank you for helping me ring that bell. I kind of remember doing this last time too.

**Interviewer** 08:21

Yeah. I mean, it's been almost a year.

**Interviewer 2** 08:25

Right. All right, well, great then. So the image that you're seeing now has those sectors that we talked about a few moments ago and like you said, you situate yourself with the your expertise is strong or strongest in the production area. So we'd like to just hear from you how you see the work that you do and your expertise in in production connected to you know, other sectors in the food system, and other factors that you know, connect between these as well so we can start there.

**Participant 123** 09:05

Okay, do you want me just to to

**Interviewer 2** 09:08

Just talk to us about the work that you do and production and well [Interviewer] does the beautiful thing that she does and getting all those concepts out and we'll be checking in with you to make sure we're getting capturing it right as you talk about it.

**Participant 123** 09:22

Okay, so we right now at [Organization] don't have much connection with retailers it's just, you know, the the choice we've made to- everything is given away, it's donated to volunteers, or people that come on to the farm property to pick up the harvest. And we do though, actually with the COVID the last couple of years, we mostly have been giving our harvests to the Hurley Food Pharmacy. Oh, okay. Are you familiar with that program?

**Interviewer 2** 10:23

Yes. Mm hmm.

**Participant 123** 10:24

So they in turn are the point people who actually get the food to the people that need it.

**Interviewer 2** 10:34

Okay.

**Participant 123** 10:36

I think-I hope this year we can get back to-I think we'll always keep that as a piece. But I think that this year, hopefully with the COVID lightening up a little bit, we'll be able to get back to having people come onto the property and us being able to share with them.

**Interviewer 2** 10:57

Okay. Okay. And you said volunteers and others who just come to the farm?

**Participant 123** 11:04

Yeah, right, exactly. The majority has given away, you know, people that volunteer, they'll take some for themselves occasionally. But last year, we grew and harvested 4500 pounds of fresh vegetables.

**Interviewer 2** 11:26

Okay.

**Participant 123** 11:28

And the majority of that, I'd say the majority went to the food pharmacy, and of course, all that is given up to the community.

**Interviewer 2** 11:38

Okay. Okay

**Participant 123** 11:40

You know, we're going to get back to doing that ourselves, mostly. But with COVID, it was just so tricky.

**Interviewer 2** 11:51

Mhmm.

**Participant 123** 11:51

You know, having the public on the property, and there was some, we did some of that, but. And we're at a new location now, you know, our first full year at this new location was 2020, well, it was 2019, but we split our time between the old demonstration garden across from Hurley and so our first full year dedicated to the new spot was the first COVID year.

**Interviewer 2** 12:32

COVID year, wow.

**Participant 123** 12:34

So we've been trying to make connections with neighbors and surrounding community to let them know what we're about, and what we're doing and who we are, and we're making some inroads. But, we'll continue to work on that. When we had been over at that other garden space for such a long time and so many people in the community knew us and they knew the days we harvested and they-we just had a really comfortable relationship in that regard. But, so this one-you know, and of course, it was a little more high profile across from Hurley-this one's more in a neighborhood setting, so, but we continue to get better at that and I'm really looking forward to being able to do all that better.

**Interviewer 2** 13:37

Okay. All right. Great. Great. And um, the, with the food mainly going to the pharmacy and then directly to people, so not much you said with retail. With the food that you're producing, are any value added folks taking what you grow and turning your tomatoes into something? Anything with the value added processors at all? Or is it mainly they're getting your raw foods?

**Participant 123** 14:11

Yeah, it's the fresh vegetables. Yeah, I mean, other than getting soups cooked in the kitchen. I don't think-I don't think people that take our stuff are doing stuff with it and selling it or whatever.

**Interviewer 2** 14:33

Okay.

**Participant 123** 14:34

We are trying to get a little more into-trying to pay a little closer attention to our composting and our waste. [Name] has helped us with that too. So last year, we had built a couple of larger sized compost bins. I've heard this year that we're going to get a big dedicated bin for that, that maybe [Name] and her crew would come and pick up on some schedule for us. So there is a piece of that on the farm property.

**Interviewer 2** 15:18

Okay. All right, great. Great. And you're composting the...?

**Participant 123** 15:26

Mostly, I would say food that we might not catchand it would spoil on the vine, food that gets a bite from a woodchuck. And then you clean up a row of green beans and you've got a really great green product, but not edible.

**Interviewer 2** 15:52

Okay, gotcha. Okay, all right. Great. Got that. Yeah. Spoiled, or the little animals are having their meals.

**Participant 123** 16:03

We share with everybody.

**Interviewer 2** 16:05

Absolutely, as they got to eat too right. That's right. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. I'm just wondering, when you add anything with the resellers at all, are you bringing it because you're giving food away? Are you adding anything to the food you're giving away? From the wholesalers, or nyone like that, or you just mainly we grew it here and here's what we're doing. Okay. Cool beans. Yeah. Just wanted to double check on that.

**Participant 123** 16:36

Yep. Yeah. We've got, again, we're trying to get a lot of things in place. We had a fruits-a produce stand built for us last year. And so, we're going to get this thing squared away, where people hopefully know the days were there, they know the days we harvest, when to come and pick it up, and...

**Participant 123** 17:05

Okay, so that's right. You do, you have your farm stand there. Yeah, I remember seeing that. Nice. Okay. All right. Great. Go ahead.

**Interviewer** 17:16

I'd love to talk potentially about some of the other things [Organization] does. If I recall correctly, there's like a branch supporting folks getting into gardening themselves, either at home or community gardens. Do you want to talk a little bit more about about that?

**Participant 123** 17:35

Sure. For as much as I I know, I know a little bit less about that part of what goes on. But yeah, that educational piece is a big part of what [Organization]'s trying to do, to educate, support, and inspire the community in this whole process. When we got this farm space donated to us that we're at now, one of the one of the real earmarks-I mean, we named it the educational farm and it was about getting better at those pieces. And [Name], she has just really ramped that up. She's really well connected with all the right players, and on the schedule, even now, there are classes planned at the farm, groups to come out, kids groups, even educator groups who would teach kids about gardening, farming and outside gardening stuff. A number of things like that are in place. And I think right now there's even classes going on probably through zoom; I know they wanted to have some of the classes in person, but like "how to garden" classes and all the assorted pieces of of that. So yeah, [Organization], I mean, that's really-that would really be the mission. It's one thing to-I mean, we all love growing and sharing, but to help someone figure out their own plan if they're interested, I mean, that'd be ideal.

**Interviewer 2** 19:45

Mhmm. So the solid folks that are taking the classes, [Participant 123], are these home gardeners, are they people that are farming, where they're growing food and maybe possibly even selling it? Do you have a sense of what type of producers were talking about?

**Participant 123** 20:02

My sense is that it's mostly designed for the home gardener.

**Interviewer 2** 20:08

Okay.

**Participant 123** 20:15

I'm not sure what the makeup of the classes are exactly. But that's my sense of what's being taught.

**Interviewer 2** 20:25

Okay. All right, great. Excellent. So we got home gardeners. Okay. Let's take a look at at a couple of things. One of the things that we're interested in-is there anything else, [Interviewer], that you want to ask about on here? I'm just wondering, are there any connections when you think about-we've got a couple things there, you talk about the food as nutritious food. Is there any other connections that you would make to the fact that what you're offering is nutritious food, that's coming from the farm itself as well as...?

**Participant 123** 21:08

Yeah, certainly the nutritious pieces is so important for everyone, right. But in these places, I think especially of food insecurity, and food deserts, as you know, places in Flint can be. I think it becomes even more important and the thing for me, too, is exposing, especially young people that may not otherwise have an opportunity to be exposed to fresh grown produce, to have that experience. Even if it's not-if they never get into gardening or anything, but just to know what that tastes like, and know how it makes their body feel, versus, you know, not that. So, I really like exposing, especially young people to fresh, organic, nutritious produce.

**Interviewer 2** 22:24

Excellent. Great. Thank you. All right. [Interviewer], anything else you want to ask? Before I go on to the next part? Any other connections we want to explore? All right, great. Thanks. So one of the things we were looking at, as we look at the localized system, we're wondering, in your experience, if you could speak about ways in which there's a connection between racial equity or inequity to the food system, and particularly, not only just the areas that you have direct influence over, but even in some of the other areas, if there's knowledge that you have about that?

**Participant 123** 23:16

Well, the, the community that we're in at the farm, we see and hear about the food insecurity. I mean, there's a mix of races and ethnicities, but certainly, the common thing seems to be the economic inequity, but we we definitely see minorities and things as the people that are using our services. Okay, not sure I answered that.

**Interviewer 2** 24:19

Yeah, of course, [Interviewer] is making those connections as we go through it. Mm hmm. So the economic aspect, the food insecurity part of it, which you mentioned, okay. And that is the other arrows she's drawing is for access to food and to the nutritious food, which you just talked about, is tied to food security. Okay, does that accurately capture what you were thinking there, in terms of...

**Participant 123** 24:46

[Interviewer] is good. [Laughter]

**Interviewer 2** 24:47

She's very good.

**Interviewer** 24:49

This happens to be how my brain works. Everyone's got their talents and this one's mine.

**Interviewer 2** 24:55

Yeah, she's been picking up on what you're talking about there. Okay. When you look at the the food system, in general, not only just the parts that you're working on, are there any-what you would consider racialized barriers to participation in the local food system in Flint?

**Participant 123** 25:17

Well, it can help for one thing. I mean, there's not even a lot of places to get food for everybody in Flint. I mean, is there even a major grocery store in the city limits? No, so, how would people get to a store? That's got to be a barrier. There's a number of people that walk because they don't have transportation to our farm, and they might pull a wagon, so they can carry vegetables back. The fact that there's what seems to me very limited access to food in general, and then, that barrier of transportation, even for the places where food is available in the city. The economic piece, that's always going to be a barrier, and that's no secret that there's a lot of people struggling in Flint, economically. You know, even a barrier may be that even some of the programs and stuff that we do, and and maybe programs and services like ours, if somebody doesn't have a computer, or they might not be out and about to even be informed about what's available to them. I'd imagine that's a barrier of sorts.

**Interviewer 2** 27:15

Right, access to the information about services. Yeah. Got that. Okay. Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Here's another way to look at this, maybe this might-are there ways that you and your experience or that you think that the food system contributes to racial inequity?

**Participant 123** 28:00

Well, maybe, I guess just thinking about how I'm involved. I do think about being able to communicate that piece better: how do we get the word out that we have free food for people? Do we put up posters in churches? Do we-I don't know. Do we put flyers on doors? We've tried some of this stuff with mixed results, and we need to be better about measuring that and feedback and things. Some of this is new to us. I think in the beginning, we're just going to grow some food and hang the the harvest, put it in bags, and hang it on the fence up there, and it'll take care of itself, but we are trying to pay closer attention to this stuff. Oh, so in ways the food system is a barrier in itself.

**Participant 123** 29:15

Yeah, yeah.

**Participant 123** 29:21

Well, maybe the kinds of foods that are available. I pick up that Meijer's ad and I see what's cheap: the bad stuff; it's the junk, and the good food is still real pricey. So maybe the food system could could figure that piece out a little bit better,

**Interviewer 2** 29:53

Mhmm. Okay. Okay.

**Participant 123** 30:00

Guess I'd have to give that one some more thought.

**Interviewer 2** 30:03

Yeah, you're doing great with it. Yeah, those are things that come up for you. You mentioned COVID a little earlier, so as we think about major things that influence or impact the food system, are the things that in your experience, or thoughts that have had major influence or do have influence or impacts on the food system? And you can build on the COVID example, if you'd like, or if there's some others.

**Participant 123** 30:39

Things that, yeah, things that have-was that the question what things had an impact?

**Participant 123** 30:44

Yes, yes. What is or has had major influence or impacts on the food system?

**Participant 123** 30:55

Certainly the COVID. I mean, not only were we not in the best position to be really close and interactive with the public, but I think the public, especially with us being in that new spot, they were trying to keep themselves safe. They didn't know exactly who we were and what we were doing, either. So I think the COVID probably kept people a little closer to home and indoors. And, again, maybe not aware of things that were available or helping, I know, it's a few years old now, but that water piece, that-people became understandably suspicious of what was going on with a lot of stuff. And that was a big question that came up for [Organization]. Well, is this food safe to eat? You're watering it with the bad water. And I think they even questioned what we were doing now. We tested our soil, we had our water tested, we would try to stay on top that, but people were certainly suspicious. They didn't think they could even do their own home garden, because they weren't sure if their own water was safe to grow vegetables and that kind of thing. So, the water piece, I don't know exactly how much that's still impacting the community in that regard. But, I think a lot of people lost a lot of faith so hopefully over time that'll be repaired. Let's see, what else...

**Participant 123** 33:19

Yeah, COVID, water, other things that have either in the past or are currently influencing the food system in Flint, you think?

**Participant 123** 33:33

Oh, let's see. I don't know. I mean, these are probably pretty general answers, but funding and, financial resources available for people trying to do the kind of things we're doing and people that would support the food system in Flint. I guess to take a 10,000 foot view, weather always matters when you're farming and gardening but, let's see.

**Interviewer 2** 34:16

Yeah, funding is a big one. Right.

**Participant 123** 34:18

Well, and so I'm not really tuned into this real hard, but the school system was a place where these kinds of things were communicated. You know, there's efforts made to have a little school garden and efforts made to have a person there to teach the kids that kind of thing. And as the funding and tax basis lost, the school struggled to maintain those programs. I know that even for some of the stuff that has been in place that there's been cutbacks happening as we speak In that regard so that I think that could be impactful.

**Interviewer 2** 35:07

Mm hm. Okay, yeah. Finally. Great. Thank you. Okay. Right. Anything crystal you want to touch on before I go to the next? You want to build on any of the trying to see have any loose ends there?

**Interviewer** 35:36

Yeah, I just want to check in and make sure these are okay. These my trusty little trick. Flint water crisis really impacting the trust in food, impacts from gardeners, producers, [Organization], weather being impactful. Yeah, I think it's a big scale thing, right? People in Flint can't change the weather, but it doesn't mean it's not really influential. Funding and financial resources, loss of the tax base, you mentioned, in the context of the local food system education programs, and so COVID-19, and all the things in purple or pink, but sort of these like high level influences.

**Interviewer 2** 36:17

Yeah. Okay. Great. Thanks, [Interviewer]. Alrighty, well, as you're looking here at your view, and from your perspective on the food system itself, what we want to do is consider change. So what kinds of things might change the food system? So, as you're looking at this and the current system, how would you make changes to improve it?

**Participant 123** 36:46

Well, I guess on my very ground level of position, I will continue to be a part of this educational piece, and the sharing piece. And the exposing piece, showing people and showing kids, what's possible, and that kind of thing. So then, to just multiply that a little bit to get and have support for places and people that do the kind of things that we're doing at [Organization]. You know, some of the other stuff that we talked about, so much of this seems to have to be addressed by money, you know, the loss of that tax base. Although it's hard to get mad at one thing about the Flint water crisis, but definitely money is a piece of remedying all of the problems that that created. Mm hmm. So yeah, getting funding however, that works: fundraisers or grant writing or political awareness, and messaging to places that matter. Mm hmm. Getting and setting up transportation too for people that need it. How do we get the food to them, or them to the food? How do we make people aware of that. They've talked about free Wi Fi for a community, so people could have access to the internet, and they could maybe hear about these things, or at least have a chance to.

**Participant 123** 39:25

Okay. Ah, great. Now, we've asked you a lot of questions. And you've thought about a lot of things, was there anything that we either didn't ask you or something else that you think is important? That might not have been framed and part of the conversation that we've had?

**Participant 123** 40:01

No, I can't think of anything that I necessarily wanted to talk about. I know that you prefaced this thing and how it all relates back to the racial inequality. And that just seems like such an overwhelming subject. You know, it always seems like that piece, you know, where do we start with that. But I suppose it's starting in all of these places that we're talking about, especially for people that are struggling with, and all the different ways people can struggle. I mean, good healthy food, it's got to be a foundation. I think no matter who we are, we know how important that is. And so that just seemed like such a simple and important piece, a beginning piece, like a foundational piece.

**Participant 123** 41:13

Mm hmm. Yeah. Yeah. I hear you, I feel that too. Wonderful. What Thank you, we, first of all, thanks for the great work that you all are doing it out of a flood. And thanks for making the time we appreciate it, the first interview and just look them back with us to take a you know, just another dive and to take a closer look. And we look forward to that. And, again, just a reminder, this interview, while we recorded, everything is still confidential, we'll use it to do our work with it, but it will remain confidential. If you have any questions, thoughts, concerns, or otherwise, after the interview, feel free to reach out you have [Inter you know, email as a contact as a contact person. And then last but not least, it wouldn't be an interview without asking you for an evaluation. Tell us how you experienced this. So you've got Krista just dropped it in the chat. But also she sends an email. So you know, like to get the email, then you can do that. And, and we're in one of the things of questions, that's there's where, you know, wrapping up a set of interviews. So if there's folks that you feel that would benefit from this process in terms of their voice, by all means, let us know. And we'll reach out. And, again, really appreciate you making the time to be with us today.

**Participant 123** 42:44

Well, my pleasure, and thanks for, for what you are doing to, you know, the, that you're paying attention to this looking into it, and I'm sure that will be helpful and impactful for what we're all trying to get done.

**Interviewer 2** 43:03

Wonderful. Well, thank you for saying that we really hope so as we were reflecting, we're holding space for the voices of it and be able to bring it back in a way that that we really hope the information, you know, gives folks what you need, you know, to be able to, you know, make changes in this system. So awesome. It's our pleasure. It's our privilege to do it. So thank you. Yeah. All right. Well, take good care, Scott. And well. We look forward to seeing you soon.

**Participant 123** 43:33

Thank you. Nice to meet you, Renee. And see you again, Carissa and please come back to farm anytime. We will have lots of veggies this summer. All right.

**Interviewer 2** 43:44

Wonderful. We're going to take you up on that. Alright, Scott, take good care now.

**Participant 123** 43:51

Thank you. Bye bye bye.