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Provisional Food Security: The Role of Emergency Food Systems in An Evolving Landscape

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Provisional Food Security:
The Role of Emergency Food Systems in An Evolving Landscape

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
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To my late mother, Tracy Walker Howell.

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Abstract

A lasting consequence of Reagan administration rollbacks in government food assistance programs is the safety net of private food provision organizations. Over the decades that these private assistance agencies grew in scope, food justice movements began sprouting up around the country that sought to address rising food insecurity and other inequities of dominant food systems. Today, private food provision organizations and food justice movements make up a large portion of emergency food systems response, forcing food insecure individuals to rely on overburdened pantries and volunteers who depend on coherent community strategy to succeed. Oftentimes, vulnerable populations are excluded from these systems. This study looks at a variety of private provision and food justice organizations in Kingston, New York, and the surrounding Ulster County, to understand how they operate in urban and rural settings alike during shock circumstances. It explores a variety of components that make up an organization, such how they are managed and what they do for the community, and how those factors promote or discourage food security, food access, inclusivity, and change.

Introduction

Literature, Terminology, and Project Overview

Food systems can be defined as a complex web of activities involving the production, processing, transport, and consumption of food.¹ Food systems span variably, from nationwide to local scales, and closely concern public health. The complexity of food systems can leave themselves particularly susceptible to biological or socio-economic shocks, which can result in widespread increases in accessibility barriers related to cost, transit, and food selection.² Low-income populations across the United States are most vulnerable to these accessibility barriers, as they already experience less access to healthy and affordable food.³

Various organizations seek to change this relationship with the food system. Charitable organizations, such as food banks and food pantries, work towards lessening the aforementioned accessibility barriers. These resources are relatively new; the first food bank was founded in the late 1960s by a food relief volunteer who sought to improve the use of food that would otherwise go to waste.⁴ This innovation shows the duality of food pantries as sites of relief and food waste

¹ “WHAT IS THE FOOD SYSTEM?” Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.futureoffood.ox.ac.uk/what-food-system>.

² “THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE 2021,” Accessed May 2, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.4060/CB4476EN>.

³ D'Anieri, Sophie Ferris, "Bridging Inequity Through Farmer's Market Mobility: Food Access Barriers and Alternative Food Systems in Kingston, New York" (2017), *Senior Projects Spring 2017*, 353, https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2017/353.

⁴ “1st Quarter 2022 | Choices Magazine Online.” Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.choicesmagazine.org/choices-magazine/submitted-articles/impacts-of-covid-19-on-food-banks>.

prevention. To date, there exist over 200 food banks that serve every state in the country.⁵ In addition to charitable organizations, other food justice and food sovereignty movements exist to empower individuals to create change locally. Each of these organizations, both charitable and of the food justice movement, can be identified as parts of a food provision landscape and mapped by coinciding geographic locations.

The broader notions and impacts of such organizations have been debated. Relief programs and organizations have been found to decrease food insecurity.⁶ Pantry programs can also be used to create equitable food access and security if implemented correctly.⁷ Further, many food banks and pantries offer a series of other beneficial resources and services that benefit their communities beyond just food. Oftentimes pantries can serve as local hubs that bring people together and unify a community under humanitarian causes.⁸ Another benefit recognized in literature is the food bank as a solution to food waste.⁹ Food banks receive their food in various

⁵ “1st Quarter 2022 | Choices Magazine Online,” 2.

⁶ “1st Quarter 2022 | Choices Magazine Online,” 1.

⁷ Stauffer, Jon M., Manoj Vanajakumari, Subodha Kumar, and Theresa Mangapora, “Achieving Equitable Food Security: How Can Food Bank Mobile Pantries Fill This Humanitarian Need,” *Production and Operations Management* 31, no. 4 (April 2022): 1802–21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/poms.13663>.

⁸ Evans, Savannah, “The Impact of Food Banks,” *SLO Food Bank* (blog), September 19, 2022, <https://www.slofoodbank.org/the-impact-of-food-banks/>.

⁹ Cooks, Leda, “Food Savers or Food Saviors?: Food Waste, Food Recovery Networks, and Food Justice,” *Gastronomica* 19, no. 3 (2019): 8–19, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26854615>.

ways, namely from farmers, manufacturers, retailers, and wholesalers who seek to repurpose their food due to overproduction, production flaws, and other related errors.¹⁰

However, emergency food providers have been attributed to deepening existing social inequalities through the mobilization of low-income, hungry volunteers.¹¹ Another critique of such charitable organizations is the complexity of its consumption; recipients may not have the time or resources to prepare their food, nor may it be culturally appropriate to consume.¹²

Scholars have placed emphasis in the past decade on the need for deeper investigation into broader forces that bring about food insecurity and food waste.¹³

Similarly, the dynamics of food justice movements have been analyzed diversely. Food justice and sovereignty movements have been attributed to the incorporation of marginalized groups that have been unseen in the past, something that various emergency food programs fail to register.¹⁴ However, such projects have also been attributed to re-enforcing white supremacy

¹⁰ Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York, “How the Food Bank Works,” Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://regionalfoodbank.net/how-the-food-bank-works/>.

¹¹ Dickinson, Maggie, “Free to Serve? Emergency Food and Volunteer Labor in the Urban U.S.,” *Gastronomica* 17, no. 2 (2017): 16–25, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26362436>.

¹² Jones, John C, Joanne Christaldi, and Diana Cuy Castellanos, “The Acorn Squash Problem: A Digestible Conceptualisation of Barriers to Emergency Food Assistance,” *Public Health Nutrition* 25, no. 4 (April 2022): 1045–49, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980021003748>.

¹³ Cooks, “Food Savers or Food Saviors?,” 1.

¹⁴ *Histories of Othering, Practices of Solidarity, and Prospects for Emancipatory Convergence among California’s Food and Farming Movements in Times of Resurgent Rightwing Power*, Rotterdam: Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2021.

through its leadership organization;¹⁵ many food justice movements that seek liberation along intersectional lines are made up of predominantly white, middle-class activists and organizers with inaccurate, and at times damaging, aims.¹⁶ Furthermore, while scholars agree with the way food justice activists critical appraisal of food system failures, they question the feasibility of proposed local, sustainable alternatives in light of widespread institutional change.¹⁷

This study will look at the City of Kingston and the surrounding Ulster County as an example of a food provision landscape. By examining various charitable and food justice organizations, including People's Place, the Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, the Blue Fridge Project, Eat Well of the Live Well Kingston Commission, the Kingston Food Coop, Catholic Charities of Ulster County, the YMCA Farm Project, and the Underground Center of Saugerties, insights can be made regarding community strategy surrounding food insecurity and food system shock prevention, as well as community response to shocks. This study looks at the makeup of these organizations, identifying and analyzing specific aspects therein and how they dictate each organization's internal and external workings. Each organization addresses one or more of the following themes: food security, food

¹⁵ Roman-Alcalá, Antonio, "Concerning the Unbearable Whiteness of Urban Farming," *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 5, no. 4 (September 18, 2015): 179–81, <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2015.054.031>.

¹⁶ Holt-Giménez, Eric, and Yi Wang, "Reform or Transformation? The Pivotal Role of Food Justice in the U.S. Food Movement," *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 5, no. 1 (October 2011): 83–102, <https://doi.org/10.2979/racethmulglocon.5.1.83>.

¹⁷ Alkon, Alison Hope, "Food Justice and the Challenge to Neoliberalism," *Gastronomica* 14, no. 2 (2014): 27–40, <https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2014.14.2.27>.

sovereignty, and emergency response/emergency food provision; COVID-19 will be used as the primary example of crisis with respect to each organization's emergency relief efforts.

Food Security

Food security is the condition where all people in a community have constant access to sufficient, safe, affordable, and nutritious food for a healthy diet.¹⁸ Food insecurity is the lack of those conditions, a complex issue facing many Americans today which is brought about by a number of political, economic, social, and geographic factors. Many Americans are reportedly food insecure, with rates before 2020 hovering between 9% and 15%,¹⁹ more than 3 million people, though some estimates are as high as 37 million people; rates are especially prevalent amongst children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.²⁰ Poor communities of color experience disproportionately higher rates of food insecurity, where dietary options are limited to ultimately damaging foods. Widespread food insecurity in the United States can be traced back decades, as far back as the Great Depression.²¹

¹⁸ Benton, T. G., "Food Security," In *Encyclopedia of Applied Plant Sciences (Second Edition)*, edited by Brian Thomas, Brian G Murray, and Denis J Murphy, 19–22, Oxford: Academic Press, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-394807-6.00039-3>.

¹⁹ "1st Quarter 2022 | Choices Magazine Online," 1.

²⁰ Murthy, Vivek H, "Food Insecurity: A Public Health Issue," *Public Health Reports (1974-)* 131, no. 5 (2016): 655–57, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26373997>.

²¹ O'Brien, Doug, Halley Torres Aldeen, Stephanie Uchima, and Erinn Staley, "HUNGER IN AMERICA: The Definitions, Scope, Causes, History and Status of the Problem of Hunger in the United States," America's Second Harvest Public Policy & Research Department, 2004.

The notion of food security is crucial to public health, as it is a major indicator of an individual's ability to live a healthy life.²² In fact, food insecurity is linked to a myriad of negative consequences including malnutrition, obesity, and starvation,²³ which result in a minimum of \$160 billion in healthcare costs annually.²⁴ Understanding and addressing the root causes of food insecurity is crucial to any transformation of local, national, and global food systems. This study focuses on how different organizations face food security challenges, whether through direct aid or emancipatory movements.

Community Strategy

Community strategy is the way in which a community plans its affairs with the aim of improving the social, economic, and environmental well-being of their areas.²⁵ Such planning varies in different contexts, as communities of different socio-economic makeup have different priorities with regard to challenges and opportunities that they face. Local policy and physical environments influence daily life which can affect said planning; community activity varies greatly in urban, suburban, and rural areas.²⁶ These activities are dictated by local government

²² De Pee, Saskia, and Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, "Food Security," In *Encyclopedia of Human Nutrition*, 306–15, Elsevier, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-821848-8.00067-6>.

²³ De Pee and Pérez-Escamilla, "Food Security."

²⁴ Hunger Report, "The Cost of Hunger in the United States," Bread for the World Institute, Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.hungerreport.org/costofhunger/>.

²⁵ Law Insider, "Community Strategy Definition," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/community-strategy>.

²⁶ Keener, Dana, Kenneth Goodman, Amy Lowry, Susan Zaro, and Kettel Laura, "Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United

and organizations, and therefore their decision-making can heavily influence the well-being of a community.²⁷ Furthermore, the temporality of such circumstances may have adverse or salutary effects on public health.²⁸ The way a community organizes its food system can be an indicator of its long-term vitality and sustainability.²⁹ A particular example of a community strategy organization is Eat Well of Live Well Kingston Commission, an organization that provides support and space for policy initiatives that bring about community strategies supporting the betterment of local food systems. This study focuses on how community strategy is composed and executed facing food security challenges and emergency circumstances.

Emergency Food Provision Organizations

Due to reductions in government assistance from the Reagan administration, charitable agencies such as food banks and pantries have presumed much of the responsibility to feed food insecure individuals and families as emergency food provision organizations.³⁰ The first food

States: Implementation and Measurement Guide.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 2009, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED507769>.

²⁷ Keener et al., “Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States: Implementation and Measurement Guide,” 2.

²⁸ Seligman, Hilary K., and Seth A. Berkowitz. “Aligning Programs and Policies to Support Food Security and Public Health Goals in the United States,” *Annual Review of Public Health* 40, no. 1 (April 1, 2019): 319–37, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040218-044132>.

²⁹ Feenstra, Gail W., “Local Food Systems and Sustainable Communities,” *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* 12, no. 1 (March 1997): 28–36, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0889189300007165>.

³⁰ Dickinson, “Free to Serve?,” 1.

bank was opened in Arizona in 1969, marking the start of Feeding America, the largest domestic hunger-relief organization in the United States.³¹ The growth of private food assistance programs ensued in the following decades, creating a de facto safety net for vulnerable populations around the country and thus relieving pressure from government action. This safety net of private providers has succeeded in feeding hungry individuals and families over the decades but is vulnerable to failure in the face of many questions relating to food selection, food quality, distribution dynamics, and the paradox of efficiency vs equity.³²

The main goal of emergency food provision organizations is to feed food-insecure individuals. Such circumstances of food insecurity vary widely, from place-based needs like food deserts to individual needs, or community crises.

A distinction can be made between food banks and food pantries, as food banks are larger facilities where surplus food is stored and then distributed to food pantries, identifiable as the sites of unitary packaging and distribution to individuals and families in need. Further, regarding the scope of these operations, food banks tend to supply general regions, while pantries are more locally based, however, this varies.³³ Roughly 60% of food that pantries receive come from banks, while the rest is received through private donations.³⁴

³¹ “Feeding America’s History | Feeding America,” Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/our-history>.

³² Jones, Christaldi, and Cuy Castellanos, “The Acorn Squash Problem,” 1.

³³ Bhattarai, Gandhi Raj, Patricia A. Duffy, and Jennie Raymond, “Use of Food Pantries and Food Stamps in Low-Income Households in the United States,” *The Journal of Consumer Affairs* 39, no. 2 (2005): 276–98, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23860606>.

³⁴ “1st Quarter 2022 | Choices Magazine Online,” 2.

Pantry operations vary widely in scope; some organizations deliver groceries and meals to clients while others operate brick-and-mortar style pantries. The efficacy of these has not been studied, however, it can be assumed that mobile pantries work better to create accessibility with geographic and transit barriers in mind.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, food banks and pantries saw a massive rise in demand, due to the increased stress on the food system and subsequent increase in food insecurity.³⁵ Governmental assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) have helped alleviate food insecurity in crisis times,³⁶ but the majority of pressure is put on the emergency food system, comprising mostly of private charitable organizations. Throughout the pandemic, food banks distributed up to 60% more food and saw significant increases in users.³⁷ Identifying how pantries are managed, as well as the services they provide, can give insights into how they can be better managed to increase resistance to emergency circumstances.

The emergency food provision organizations in Kingston and Ulster County are diverse in scope, offering a number of services in different ways. There are traditional brick-and-mortar style pantries such as People's Place and Catholic Charities that aim to simply feed hungry individuals and families, while organizations such as the Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative and the Blue Fridge Project take an alternative approach to emergency food provision as a result of crisis situations.

³⁵ "1st Quarter 2022 | Choices Magazine Online," 3.

³⁶ "1st Quarter 2022 | Choices Magazine Online," 1.

³⁷ "1st Quarter 2022 | Choices Magazine Online," 3.

Food Justice and Food Sovereignty

Food justice is a term that describes an effort to challenge and restructure major food systems while focusing on equity for vulnerable populations and establishing connections with other forms of social justice.³⁸ This concept was created in response to a decades-long increase in food insecurity and diet-related diseases and has gained mass popularity through mainstream media and consumer movements. Similarly, the idea of food sovereignty has gained global prominence in tandem. The term refers to a community's right to access healthy and culturally appropriate foods produced using sustainable methods, and their right to define their systems of food production.³⁹ The motives of food justice movements are well intended but are usually disconnected from any reality of change that its activists and followers subscribe to. In fact, scholars have criticized such notions, as the expectation of any transformation through wide-spread individual acts of consumption, rather than through fundamental institutional change, is far-fetched and more so aligned with neoliberal economics.⁴⁰ These trends are contradictory to the nature of both movements as they are fundamentally socialist, striving to change society for the better with historically marginalized groups in mind.

Nonetheless, certain organizations are aware of these backward trends and seek to overcome them. In the case of Kingston, New York, the YMCA Farm Project is one of them. The

³⁸ D'Anieri, Sophie Ferris, "Bridging Inequity Through Farmer's Market Mobility," 1.

³⁹ "Food Sovereignty | USFSA," Accessed May 2, 2023, <http://usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/what-is-food-sovereignty/>.

⁴⁰ Holt-Giménez and Wang, "Reform or Transformation?," 86.

Farm Project is an urban farm located in Midtown that is committed to antiracist action through direct involvement in the local food system, youth empowerment, and social justice initiatives. Another similar organization in Ulster County is the Underground Center of Saugerties. Also involved in youth empowerment, the Underground Center of Saugerties teaches youth alternative ways of living with respect to communal food sourcing and labor. The Underground Center hosts a variety of programs that strive towards this end, accounting for the aforementioned discrepancies and ensuring equitable community access to their organization. Similar to both the YMCA Farm Project and Underground Center is the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, an agribusiness training center and agricultural operation located near Kingston. The Farm Hub is particularly notable due to its scale and reach; the organization seeks to change agricultural dynamics in the Hudson Valley to support a more ecologically resilient and sustainable food system. The Kingston Food Cooperative is another food justice organization seeking to open a communally owned grocery store. The Food Coop wants to build relationships with participating community members around their local food system with racial, gender, and socio-economic justice in mind.

In Summary

This study focuses on several different facets of the aforementioned emergency food provision and food justice organizations. Through analyzing how the aforementioned organizations conduct operations, and their respective reaches within the community, a more thorough understanding of community strategy around emergency food provision and food justice movements can be developed. The analysis of organizations will be broken down into five sections: administrative structure; missions, visions, and goals; services; social impact; and target

groups. Each of these five sections will look at the respective qualities of the mentioned organizations and develop an understanding of how they exist within the “Kingston food provisions landscape,” a term that will be used to describe the mapping of organizations in the area.

Methods

To research the food provision and justice landscape in Kingston and Ulster County, a variety of internet resources were collected and analyzed. The study relied on the internet for information as it is the most consistent and accessible resource available, though could potentially be misleading. Therefore, the direct research of organizations was limited to organizational websites and verified news and blog outlets to maintain certainty and accuracy of information. Primary sources of information were collected from the studied organizations' websites, where a variety of useful data and details were available. Documents related to the operations of organizations were discovered and used, such as presentational material, informative newsletters, service reports, audit reports, and governing documents like organizational bylaws and rules of procedure. An interview was conducted with one of the council members of the Kingston Food Coop which assisted in the search for useful information and other connections. News publications and blog posts by the Daily Freeman, Hudson Valley One, Nectar News, and Civil Eats also offered lots of useful information about the organizations, especially with regards to their respective services and community impacts, as well as administrative pieces of information. Using these materials, information was obtained about specific aspects of each organization and analyzed to understand their inner workings, and their respective relationships with the community, and each other, in the context of emergency and local food systems. Comparisons were drawn between organizations to understand how each model of emergency food provision or food justice organization works, how they conduct primary services and operations, how they strive towards building inclusive and equitable spaces, and how they dealt with shocks specific to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Analysis

The food provisions landscape in Kingston, New York is diverse, with different organizations serving different purposes. Outside of common food actors like grocery stores and restaurants, many organizations take part in serving the community in ways that go beyond the conventional commercial actors. Amongst these organizations are food pantries, cooperatives, collaborative networks, and related civil service enterprises. Each of these services vary in their missions, structures, services, and impacts but nonetheless aim to bring relief to the community of Kingston and Ulster County in the face of food insecurity amongst other issues. Each organization may be categorized based on several factors: administrative structure, mission, goals and vision, services, social impact, and target group. A group's administrative structure could be hierarchical or council based, or instead decentralized. The missions and goals of each organization may vary widely depending on their values and how they wish to impact the community, and the diversity of core principles can yield categorization amongst them. Servicing is an especially diverse aspect amongst the various enterprises, as certain organizations run pantries that provide food for many, while others seek to do so but lack the means to realize their operations; some organizations may not even have ambitions to delve into the service aspect but rather provide networking tools and other support to the existing organizations in the community. The way each organization impacts the community on a social level can be analyzed; some projects work to radically change the food system in line with food justice movements, while others simply feed hungry people without such ambitious goals in mind. A final consideration is the target group or target market, for whom the organization seeks to impact. Most organizations

seek to assist food-insecure members of the community, however, some projects aim to impact a wider demographic, or rather specific geographic areas within the city and Ulster County. Each organization is different, and identifying these differences and analyzing them can help create a fuller understanding of the food provisions landscape in the Kingston area.

Administrative Structure

An administrative structure is the arrangement of roles and responsibilities amongst members of an organization. Though usually organized along hierarchical lines, these structures can take different forms. Understanding administrative structure can help reveal deeper insights about an organization, especially regarding decision-making and overall design at different levels of management. The first categorical group is defined by the hierarchical structure, usually following a pyramid-shaped top-down chain of command. A typical administrative hierarchical structure is topped by a CEO, to whom managers and/or supervisors report, with employees forming the base of the pyramid. A second group is defined by a non-hierarchical structure, where there is no rigid chain of command, but rather a group of directors or council members that make decisions together regarding the organization and its directions. A third group includes organizations that have divisional administrative structures, where each member of a managing team specializes in a certain activity, with individual or partnered directors dictating the organization's operations.

Among organizations with a hierarchical organization is the Catholic Charities USA foundation. Its CEO and president head the organization supported by a series of officers who manage the different facets of the operation. This religious organization has hundreds of regional

operations around the country, one of which serves Ulster, Sullivan, and Orange Counties in New York State; in fact, Catholic Charities has an entire sub-administration in New York State that mimics the organizational structure at the national level. The NY state team is extensive and comprises 22 different operating directors and officers. Further, the regional office in the Hudson Valley continues the trend of hierarchical administration. Their Ulster regional administration has a number of officers and directors, including typical positions like CEO and CFO, as well as a volunteer board of directors.⁴¹ The organization's extensive administration in New York State alone reveals the capital Catholic Charities have backing their operations, and perhaps the capacity of charitable religious organizations due to both patron donations and volunteers. The Kingston pantry is managed by a Catholic Charities director using volunteer labor to help maintain its biweekly operations. Of the organizations present in the Kingston area Catholic Charities likely has the largest administration, containing offices on the city, county, state, and national levels. Catholic Charities has probably one of the largest budgets amongst organizations reviewed in this study; Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster have assets worth just over \$4.2 million.⁴² The majority of their funding is sourced from federal grants, private donations, and surplus revenue from services, with some labor and funding coming from in-kind donations.⁴³

⁴¹ Catholic Charities, "Leadership / Board List," Accessed April 28, 2023, <http://www.cccsos.org/about/leadership-board-list/>.

⁴² Roberts, Andrea Suozzo, Ken Schwencke, Mike Tigas, Sisi Wei, Alec Glassford, Brandon. "Nonprofit Explorer." ProPublica, December 31, 2020. https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display_audit/22783220201.

⁴³ Forbes, "Catholic Charities USA | Company Overview & News," Accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/companies/catholic-charities-usa/>.

The Live Well Kingston organization is a City of Kingston Commission that contains eleven voting members appointed by the city mayor. This administrative structure mimics a corporate board of directors, where each voting member represents a facet of the community and its diversity. According to the organization's most recent rules of procedure document from April 2018, members meet and elect chair positions who will act as a facilitator between voting members and coordinators for each focus group.⁴⁴ The organization's structure is a democratic board of directors, where the mayor holds the most power in shaping its administrative makeup. It is not clear how the administrative structure continues past the coordinators for each focus group, but the higher-up structure is clear, although it hasn't been updated in over 4 years. The commission's focus groups, like Eat Well and Grow Well, are managed by their elected chairs to reflect the goals of the organization;⁴⁵ this gives each chairperson some flexibility to act independently and guide their focus teams as they see best. This structure works well with the goals of the organization as pressure is taken off of voting members to gauge community interest, giving them more time and space to make decisions and develop fitting policies. The Live Well Commission gets general funding from the City of Kingston, philanthropic organizations like American Public Health Association and Novo Foundation, fundraisers, and private donations; they also work on collaborative projects with funding from specific government agencies like the CGC.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Live Well Kingston Commission, "Live Well Kingston Commission Rules of Procedure," April 18, 2018.

⁴⁵ Live Well Kingston, "Rules of Procedure."

⁴⁶ Daily Freeman, "Kingston Lawmakers Approve Paid Coordinator of LiveWell Commission," September 7, 2017,

Similar to Live Well Kingston, People's Place's administration is led by a board of directors, but also has a community board and two executive staff members.⁴⁷ Being a private foundation, People's Place's administration is slightly more decentralized as compared to Live Well which is ultimately shaped by the mayor and his or her chosen members. The two primary executive directors supervise daily operations, while their board of directors is made up entirely of volunteers who oversee the organization and ensure that it has the resources necessary to sustain its operations and long-term goals. Its community board members serve as ambassadors for the People's Place, managing fundraisers and interacting with community members serviced by the organization. A few things define the People's Place administration structure: firstly, its small size yields simpler internal management and helps keep its goals and objectives agreeable in scope; secondly, the organization is an established part of the Kingston and Ulster County communities, having been founded in 1972 and being a consistent part of community relief since then;⁴⁸ lastly, like other organizations, the community board is active within the community and provides opportunities – such as fundraisers – for people to interact with, exposing them to People's Place and their services. The board of directors contains eight members, each playing specific roles in the administrative upkeep of the organization.⁴⁹ The seemingly small board

https://www.dailyfreeman.com/news/kingston-lawmakers-approve-paid-coordinator-of-livewell-commission/article_33ec67d4-161f-55df-a140-b311a3ec577c.html.

⁴⁷ People's Place of Ulster County, "Board & Staff," Accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.peoplesplace.org/board-staff/>.

⁴⁸ People's Place of Ulster County, "History" Accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.peoplesplace.org/>.

⁴⁹ People's Place of Ulster County, "Board & Staff."

works well with regard to the scope of their operations; though not alone in providing relief to Kingston and Ulster County, People's Place is one of the leaders in their area. The density of their administration works hand in hand with their half-a-century legacy as each director works within well-defined roles having clear goals for the organization. People's Place is funded primarily through revenues from its thrift store, however, they also rely greatly on private donations and grants and host four major fundraisers annually to ensure they have enough revenue to sustain their thrift and pantry operations. The largest contributor of their food stock is the Regional Food Bank of North East New York.⁵⁰

The Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative (KEFC) is a grassroots coalition that specifically focuses on an administrative structure that is non-hierarchical. The organization is made up of 15 community organizations that came together to help ameliorate the food insecurity brought about by COVID-19.⁵¹ Their on-the-ground managing team consists of two simple roles: an administrative and operations coordinator, and a direct service and outreach coordinator.⁵² Since KEFC is an emergency response organization, its administration is slim; this is likely because, unlike other organizations, KEFC did not have time to develop governing rules and procedures that would shape its management structure. Rather the immediate focus of the organization was to serve the food-insecure people of Kingston. Additionally, due to the fact that KEFC is primarily a networking and servicing organization, the bulk of the administrative work

⁵⁰ People's Place of Ulster County. "Home," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.peoplesplace.org/>.

⁵¹ Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, "ABOUT KEFC / SOBRE KEFC," Accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.kingstonemergencyfood.com/about>.

⁵² Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, "ABOUT KEFC / SOBRE KEFC."

is carried out through the coordination of partners and service outreach. It is a community-based organization that interacts with partners of that same nature; this minimal yet effective structure adheres to its non-hierarchical framework while successfully providing relief for the food insecure. The majority of KEFC's funding comes from the Novo Foundation, similar to other social reform efforts in the Kingston area.⁵³ Individual donations are also encouraged, though a significant portion of their labor force is volunteer work. Throughout the pandemic, their food was sourced from procurement agencies and organizations like the Hudson Valley Farm Hub and the YMCA Farm Project.

Similarly to KEFC, the Kingston Food Coop has a non-hierarchical administrative structure. It follows the model of a cooperative business, defined by the USDA as “a user-owned and controlled business from which benefits are derived and distributed equitably on the basis of use or as a business owned and controlled by the people who use its services”.⁵⁴ Classified as a corporation, the Coop has a team of seven people, consisting of a 5-member council, an outreach coordinator, and a capital manager. Each member is elected for a term by the patrons of the organization - consisting of Kingston community members - and serves to challenge one another and the organization itself to improve its bylaws and operation. The coop's bylaws are extensive and list the various duties and responsibilities of each part of the organization.⁵⁵ Compared to KEFC, the other non-hierarchical organization, the coop's administrative structure is a bit more

⁵³ Daily Freeman, “Lawmakers Approve Paid Coordinator.”

⁵⁴ USDA Rural Development, “Cooperative Business Principles,” USDA, April 2011, 1.

⁵⁵ Kingston Food Co-op, “Meet Our Leadership,” Accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.kingstonfoodcoop.com/leadership>.

thorough, as they have existed for longer. As mentioned earlier, KEFC was founded rapidly to appease the effects of COVID-19 on food security in the Kingston area, while the Coop was initiated in 2018 by its founding members with other goals in mind. It seems that due to the lack of emergency, the Coop was able to take time – about 6 months – to create a thorough base for their administration, including more complete bureaucratic measures to ensure its sustainability as an organization and eventually as a worker cooperative marketplace. At the inception of their organization, they created bylaws that dictate the direction and makeup of their operations and administration. Another key difference between the two organizations is that KEFC’s lifespan is shorter by nature as an emergency response organization; though they are adapting to the new normal, their emergency food provision service does not hold the same grounds as a communal grocery does in the Coop’s case.

The Blue Fridge Project provides a unique perspective on administrative structure, as it is essentially run by community members. As an emergency response to COVID-19, the makeshift pantry followed a model of give and take – community members both used the resource and sponsored its upkeep by taking and leaving food items that they did or did not need. The Clinton Avenue Church and Beyond 4 Walls office hosts the refrigerators, but everything else is primarily community driven. Hence the Blue Fridge is a low-cost, low-maintenance pantry model where an administrative body is almost entirely removed, giving full control to the supply and demand as dictated by users. The ideas were formed by a small coalition of Kingston community organizations such as the Kingston Food Coop, Beyond 4 Walls, and Rise Up Kingston.⁵⁶ However, after its creation there has been no team that dictates how the resource will

⁵⁶ Taylor, Mathew, “Kingston Community Fridge Project,” Kingston Weekender, December 23, 2020, <https://www.kingstonweekender.com/blog/kingston-community-fridge>.

work other than being a site of exchange for community members, effectively bringing people together to help curb food insecurity. While it can be assumed that the OneHope Community and its partners provide basic staples to support a supply floor for their fridges, the pressure is put on patrons to uphold its functionality. Another interesting facet of the project's management is privacy; the team does not record exact usage data. The Blue Fridge Project is a truly unique site of food provision due to its simplicity and effectiveness while sidestepping the need for an administrative team. As mentioned prior, Blue Fridge is sustained by donations, and no funding is otherwise necessary.

The Kingston YMCA Farm Project is another unique organization whose administration is few and tight-knit. The Farm Project team is made up of a Project Director, Educational Director, and Community Liaison, each playing different and key roles in the organization. The project is financially sustained by its parent organization the YMCA.⁵⁷ Their administrative structure is similar to that of KEFC though the organizations have different services and missions. The Farm Project benefits from its experienced professionals with respect to both food and educational systems, as it enables them to manage multiple youth teams and steward the organization towards its objectives and goals. The organization earns most of its revenue and subsequent funding from its seasonal farm stand,⁵⁸ and receives significant funding through donations and fundraising, with some additional funding through state grants.

⁵⁷ kingston ymca farm project, "About," Accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.kingstonymcafarmproject.org/about>.

⁵⁸ kingston ymca farm project, "Farm Stands," Accessed May 2, 2023, https://www.kingstonymcafarmproject.org/farm_stands.

The Hudson Valley Farm Hub is an agricultural center that promotes equitable farming and ecological resilience. The organization's administrative structure is not entirely clear through accessible resources, however, it is understood as a subsidiary of the NoVo Foundation.⁵⁹ There seems to be a director, as well as a circle of advisors that oversee the Farm Hub's activities and coordinate partnerships with local food service organizations. The bulk of HV Farm Hub's funding comes from the NoVo Foundation.

The Underground Center of Saugerties (UGC) is a grassroots organization with a small managing team. Founded by two educators in Saugerties, they make up the administrative body of the organization.⁶⁰ Similarly to the YMCA Farm Project, UGC benefits greatly from its compact team through experience and alignment of vision. The organization is primarily educational but does engage with the community as a food provision center in its Free Food Program. The majority of UGC's funding comes from fundraising and private donations, however, their operating costs are fairly low – their 2021 fundraising goal was \$7,500 to fund their internship programs.

Of the various structures amongst food provisions in the area, the Catholic Charities organization is the only one with a concretely **hierarchical** structure. Each member within the organization's administration is a member of the Catholic Church and is chosen specifically to manage different parts of the organization, demonstrating a particularity to their administrative

⁵⁹ Hudson Valley Farm Hub, "Home," March 22, 2023, <https://hvfarmhub.org/>.

⁶⁰ Johnson, Nicole, "The Underground Center: Building the Next Generation Of... – NectarNews," June 30, 2017, <https://nectarnews.org/2017/06/the-underground-center-building-the-next-generation-of-environmental-activists/>.

makeup. People's Place and Live Well Kingston contain some similarities mimicking a top-down administration, however, both organizations seem to privilege more collective decision-making with regard to the upkeep of operations. People's Place has an executive director, which mimics the role of a CEO, while the mayor of Kingston selects the voting members of Live Well.

Notable features of Catholic Charities' administrative structure include its capacity to operate nationwide, the size of the organization, and the funding it receives. However, its Kingston food pantry is only open twice a week for five hours at a time, despite the organization's reputation as one of the most capable charities in the country; however, this could speak to its prioritization of other social services in the area.

The second group of administrative structures amongst food provision organizations in Kingston is the **non-hierarchical** category. Most commonly, these organizations have board members that reflect the community they serve, having been elected by their organization's members or chosen by community liaisons. In this sub-category, there is People's Place, having two serving boards and a pair of executive directors; Live Well Kingston, with a chosen board of voting directors and focus-team chairs; and the Kingston Food Coop, having a council elected by the corporation's members. A common feature of these organizations is that they hold scheduled board meetings that are open invite. The Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative is also non-hierarchical, but rather in their labor organization, as they only have two on-project directors. There are many similarities and differences between the non-hierarchical organizations. Each organization varies in scale; People's Place has the largest administrative team amongst these organizations, with 22 members in total, followed by Live Well Kingston with roughly 15 members; the Kingston Food Coop's council has 7 members.

The third group of administrative structures is the most typical among organizations in this study, the **divisional and small team** administrations. This group includes The Underground Center of Saugerties, having one instructional director and one logistics and communications director; the YMCA Farm Project, with one farming director, one educational director, and one youth liaison; the Hudson Valley Farm Project, with a series of divisional directors in its different agricultural faculties; and the Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative with two primary administrative and outreach coordinators. These kinds of organizations are usually smaller scale, though that is not always the case. For instance, the YMCA Farm Project and the UGC work in similar fields of educational agriculture for youth, while KEFC and Hudson Valley Farm Project provide high volumes of meals and produce to the Kingston area. These differences also shed light on diverse budgets and funding, where the former two organizations rely on donations from community members, while the latter receives funding from the NoVo Foundation, especially the Hudson Valley Farm Hub likely due to the scale of its operations.

Missions, Visions, and Goals

The missions, visions, and goals of an organization establish its purpose, defining its proposed impact and affecting how it will interact with its surrounding community. Usually, an organization uses a mission statement to define who they are and what they value, and a vision to detail what they wish to become. Goals are then created as markers for success. Though each organization mentioned in this study is involved with food provision, their ideals vary theoretically and seek different outcomes. Exploring the differences between the missions, visions, and goals of each organization helps map out the food provision landscape in Kingston

and surrounding areas while profiling each organization to gauge their socio-political aims.

Though each set of values will vary for every organization, their general aim can be categorized into the following groups: **Immediate Relief**, **Addressing the Bigger Picture**, and **Hybrid**.

Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative is a grassroots organization operating in the Kingston and Ulster County area. Founded in March of 2020, KEFC started with the concrete goal of feeding hungry mouths in the community during a time of crisis.⁶¹ The direct pursuit of a goal, rather than the development of a mission and vision, was due to two factors: 1) KEFC was created as a limited emergency response and 2) it sought to network with existing food provision organizations to mitigate food insecurity brought about by COVID-19. The urgency of the crisis led KEFC to act quickly in aid, and the collaborative nature of their efforts meant their work was definite. However, the longevity of the pandemic and its effects led the organization to rethink its role as a limited response. Through exposure to issues with local food systems, KEFC redefined its purpose and established a mission and a vision. The organization's mission is to focus on satisfying the immediate needs of community members – maintaining its relief legacy from the early pandemic – while working towards eliminating all elements of food insecurity and developing ideas and policies to achieve food sovereignty for all. They envision a Kingston community where everyone has open access to food and individual agency in the food system.⁶² These newer values were a direct result of exposure to the ails of existing food systems throughout the pandemic. Keywords such as food sovereignty and individual agency show the

⁶¹ Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, "ABOUT KEFC / SOBRE KEFC."

⁶² Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, "Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.kingstonemergencyfood.com>.

importance KEFC places on increasing the role of the individual in local food systems and beyond. Amongst others, KEFC values equity, accountability, transparency, personal and collective understanding, and racial justice. These ideas may be deemed radical as they imagine a significant shift from the current status quo. Ultimately, the multidimensional nature of KEFC's objectives shows their reach as an organization; they value the immediate relief of community members while simultaneously creating space for a new narrative of food systems reform.

The Kingston Food Coop is a cooperative organization that seeks to open an affordable, accessible grocery store for all community members of Kingston. Their values are progressive and reformative; founded in 2018, they seek to reshape local food dynamics to better serve the people of Kingston.⁶³ Their mission is to create a community-owned grocery store that builds relationships around food toward the goal of a thriving and equitable local food system, and they envision a transformed Kingston that is sustained by a culture of collectivity and intergenerational community wealth. Their core values include openness and equity, accountability, racial justice, and transformation of the local food system.⁶⁴ The Food Coop's core values were created during a six-month period before and during the early COVID-19 pandemic;⁶⁵ due to not being an emergency response organization, their goal to create a collective grocery store was seemingly hindered. Nonetheless, KFC has been extremely thorough

⁶³ Kingston Food Co-op, "Timeline + Member Count," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.kingstonfoodcoop.com/timeline>.

⁶⁴ Kingston Food Co-op, "Our Core Values," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.kingstonfoodcoop.com/core-values>.

⁶⁵ Kingston Food Co-op, "Our Core Values."

in building an open and honest community around its project with proactive measures that challenge itself and its members in the process.

People's Place is a not-for-profit organization that hosts a food pantry and thrift store for the Kingston and Ulster County communities. Its mission is to feed, clothe, and respond to the essential needs of the people in Ulster County.⁶⁶ They do not have an apparent vision. As mentioned in other sections, the history of People's Place benefits them greatly, as their values have remained fairly consistent since their foundation. This enables them to set well-understood goals and focus on ways to improve their operations. Interestingly, People's Place is one of the biggest relief organizations in Kingston and Ulster County but doesn't seem to mention anything about the theoretical mechanisms of the issue they face. The organization seeks to provide relief in concrete terms for people in need, without any conceptual basis in the transformation of local food systems. People's Place does briefly detail Ulster County poverty statistics on its website but fails to elaborate to what extent its organization will fundamentally change the causal issues.

Eat Well is a focus group of the Live Well Kingston Commission. Their mission is to bring together residents and people working on the food system in Kingston and facilitate communication to create better access and utilization of healthier food. Eat Well envisions "an environment where community members have access to healthy food, preferably grown locally and sustainably".⁶⁷ Its primary goal is to "develop, implement and/or support policy, systems and environmental change by supporting and promoting local efforts to improve access to

⁶⁶ People's Place of Ulster County, "Home," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.peoplesplace.org/>.

⁶⁷ Live Well Kingston, "Eat Well," March 6, 2023, <http://livewellkingston.org/focus-teams/eat-well/>.

healthy foods throughout the community.”⁶⁸ Eat Well is another interesting organization as it does not deal directly with food provision, but seeks to change local food systems through community building and engagement. Something notable about their values is that they seem rather neutral; they do not seek to overhaul the food system or make significant changes, but rather coordinate efforts to create healthier and more accessible food choices for members of the community. The language used in the organization’s vision is also rather tame, stating that the necessity of sustainability and locality in food systems are merely “preferable” and not mandatory.⁶⁹

The Hudson Valley Farm Hub is a non-profit organization that promotes agricultural resistance in the region. Its mission is to foster an equitable and ecologically resilient food system that meets the economic and social needs of Hudson Valley communities, while embracing inclusivity and promoting the diversity of farmers in the region.⁷⁰ Something to note is that the Farm Hub is one of the few organizations in this study that works directly with the agricultural production of food, making efforts towards the widespread dissemination of sustainable practices throughout the Hudson Valley.

Catholic Charities is a not-for-profit human services organization that has an operating office in Ulster County. Their mission is to assist people in need regardless of their faith, and the organization envisions a change in the course of poverty in the United States.⁷¹ Catholic Charities

⁶⁸ Live Well Kingston, “Eat Well.”

⁶⁹ Live Well Kingston, “Eat Well.”

⁷⁰ Hudson Valley Farm Hub, “About,” Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://hvfarmhub.org/about/>.

⁷¹ Catholic Charities, “Home,” Accessed May 2, 2023, <http://www.ccsos.org/>.

is not solely a food provisions organization, therefore they deal with more than just food insecurity; however, their mission does not mention addressing the root causes of poverty, rather they seek to put a band-aid on a bullet wound. This is more common in large-scale relief operations since organizations such as Catholic Charities have already invested tremendous time and resources into the simple act of relief rather than investigating the development of poverty itself. Because Catholic Charities is not equipped to participate in political decision-making, such investigations of poverty and its causes would not be worthwhile; the organization seeks to help feed, clothe, and assist people through hard times.

The Blue Fridge Project of OneHope Community is a food provision project in midtown Kingston. The OneHope community seeks to bring people together, though the primary goal of their communal fridges is to provide hunger relief to those in need during the pandemic. As mentioned before, the operation is a low-budget, low-maintenance pantry, so the need for a distinct mission, vision, and goal is not as relevant as in other cases. Nonetheless, it is clear that the Blue Fridge Project seeks to provide a form of food security as an alternative relief site.

The Underground Center of Saugerties is a grassroots non-profit organization that works to realize social change in its community through education. While the UGC's primary mission is to redefine communal ways of living and the labor required to realize those changes,⁷² their example provides an interesting look into an alternative way of creating guiding values for an organization. They have defined a set of ten principles that direct their work and efforts, which highlight their values and effectively communicate their vision. Each principle is articulated

⁷² The Underground Center, "About The Underground Center," Accessed May 2, 2023, <http://www.theundergroundcenter.org/about-the-underground-center/>.

thoroughly and leaves little room for interpretation, a unique feature of the UGC alone. Notable features of these principles are many. Each of them are intense, strict, and create a pointed dialogue with the reader. They flesh out every principle with lots of writing, giving readers examples of each in action and identifying how to implement them. They also qualify each principle with concrete reasoning, citing setbacks that could arise on the path to change if not seriously addressed. Every principle is radical but invokes a sense of humility, illustrating their vision on a personal level to the reader. The UGC is a special organization as it takes its mission to work towards a profoundly different society to a new level, meticulously crafting a guiding framework, subject to reflection and redefinition, that inspires such change for its members and subscribers.

The YMCA Farm Project is an urban farming organization in Kingston. Its primary mission is to educate, nourish and connect the Kingston community with their urban farm. Their vision is to use the farm as a way to educate and engage young people in food production. The project is committed to racial and economic justice, working towards creating a more equitable food system for everyone. The YMCA Farm Project's primary goal is to connect the youth of Kingston to the food system, educating participants about the production of food and its importance regarding social justice.⁷³ Ultimately, they are a Youth Education and Empowerment program that creates space for young people to engage with the food system, while also addressing aspects of food accessibility in their community.

⁷³ Wimbish, KayCee, "Kingston YMCA Farm Project – The YMCA of Kingston & Ulster County," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://ymcaulster.org/our-farm/>.

The organizations reviewed have varying missions, visions, and goals, but each can be categorized based on factors such as language and intent, as well as the theoretical scope upon which they operate. In one group, there are organizations that seek to provide immediate relief to people in need, identifiable as the **Immediate Relief** group. This group includes People's Place, Blue Fridge Project, and Catholic Charities USA. Each of these organizations seek to provide for people in need through services that address said need in the short term. Their missions, visions, and goals, are geared towards helping aid impoverished people get the help they need. In Kingston, both Catholic Charities and People's Place host pantry operations that provide high volumes of food to their users, irrespective of circumstance. Blue Fridge Project was created during the COVID-19 emergency as a source of mutual aid and depends on the goodwill contributions of its users to subsist, and therefore differs from the former two pantries; nonetheless, all three sites of relief seek to address the issue with little investigation of the source of the need.

Organizations oriented towards addressing the root causes of food insecurity belong in the second category, identifiable as the **Addressing the Bigger Picture** group. This group includes the Kingston Food Coop, Eat Well of Live Well Kingston, the Underground Center of Saugerties, and Hudson Valley Farm Hub. A few aspects differentiate these organizations from the prior group; the main differentiator in this group is the attempt to address fundamental issues with local and broader food systems. Another key marker is the specific aim to address greater societal issues as they relate to food security and accessibility, such as racial justice and other socio-economic issues. There is some diversity amongst each organization within this group as well. The Kingston Food Coop seeks to open a community-owned grocery store, emphasizing

the importance of building communal relationships around food commerce, while Eat Well, for the most part, seeks to develop policy and work on a legislative level within the city. Hudson Valley Farm Hub, on the other hand, works on the agriculture and production side of things, aiming to rework sustainability dynamics between the farm and the environment. The Underground Center engages with ideas of radical change around labor, land, and communal food systems while empowering underprivileged youth to enact this change despite their circumstances. It is important to note that each organization within this group does engage with direct provisional assistance, though their missions, visions, and goals align more closely with broader societal change.

The remainder of organizations can be categorized as a combination of the prior two groups, seeking to both provide hunger relief and address societal ails, identifiable as the **Hybrid** group. This group includes the Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative and the YMCA Farm Project. KEFC was originally an emergency food provision organization and began as an Immediate Relief project, but in time began to encompass principles of food justice and broader social change while maintaining its relief operations. The YMCA Farm Project can be seen as a niche combination of Hudson Valley Farm Hub and Underground Center of Saugerties, as they promote the engagement of youth in addressing societal issues through hands-on and educational experiences in sustainable food production while hosting a farm stand, creating high-quality food access for Kingston's citizens.

Services

Services create the site of exchange between an organization and its clientele. The services of an organization can vary widely, from emergency food provision to educational experiences surrounding the food system and its challenges. Each organization offers a unique service that defines its place in the community as a site of relief or change. The diversity of services creates a range of work that can be analyzed and categorized to reveal trends present in the food system. Organizations can be grouped according to their services as followed: **Direct Food Provision, Food Justice Initiatives, and Food Production Education.**

People's Place in Kingston offers a variety of programs and services. The main services include a community cafe, a food pantry, and summer and holiday meal programs. The community cafe offers a continental breakfast and other items for breakfast and lunch and is open every day from 8:30 am-1:00 pm. Their food pantry, open daily except weekends, provides ingredients to users for up to two visits per month, also offering a "Fresh Bounty" section that offers food items daily free of charge on a first come first serve basis. Their Bag Summer/Holiday/Spring Hunger program offers children and youth free meals during school recess periods. They also host a weekly farm stand in their parking lot.⁷⁴ Amongst the many other programs that People's Place offers, these core services make up a strong portion of the food provision landscape in Kingston. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they continued operating, though limits were placed on the physical spaces of their pantry; volunteers had bagged groceries and meals in place of their walk-in pantry and community cafe. Their services

⁷⁴ People's Place of Ulster County, "Programs," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.peoplesplace.org/programs/>.

are sustained by a strong and dedicated volunteer workforce and frequent donations from the community. A large part of their food is sourced from the Regional Food Bank of North East New York.⁷⁵

The Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative offers a limited meal and grocery delivery service. The organization was initially created at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, hence the majority of its services reflect the need to curb food insecurity during that time. In collaboration with the Catholic Charities food pantry in Kingston, KEFC delivers groceries weekly. KEFC provides a meal delivery service through Family of Woodstock and The Hodge Center that operates daily except weekends.⁷⁶ The organization offers ample volunteer opportunities to help facilitate these operations, including grocery and meal delivery positions, logistical work like volunteer scheduling, operating food request hotlines, and working groups that discuss each of the prior services. The entirety of their organization operates in both English and Spanish languages. On their website, they offer alternative materials to access affordable food, including an affordable food map of the Kingston area, and a number of locations where free groceries can be acquired.⁷⁷ They also have various resources regarding SNAP and other government assistance programs. KEFC is one of the few food provision organizations in Kingston that functions to network the various pantries and services to feed hungry mouths.

⁷⁵ People's Place, "Programs."

⁷⁶ Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, "FOOD HOTLINE / LÍNEA DIRECTA DE ALIMENTOS," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.kingstonemergencyfood.com/food-hotline>.

⁷⁷ Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, "OTHER RESOURCES FOR FOOD / OTROS RECURSOS PARA ALIMENTOS," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.kingstonemergencyfood.com/resources>.

Their work in developing and distributing resources beyond their immediate limited delivery service reveals their dedication to serving the community.

The Hudson Valley Farm Hub hosts a 1,500-acre farm as well as a number of different programs for farmers and agricultural enterprises.⁷⁸ The farm hub grows a variety of crops in a rotational cycle throughout the year with an emphasis on the maintenance of soil health. The Farm Hub's notable programs include Agricultural Education and Training, Applied Farmscape Ecology, Food Access, Language Justice, Agronomic Research, and Seed Growing.⁷⁹ Each of these programs have specific aims that help them achieve their mission of increased ecological resilience in the Hudson Valley farming community by sharing their knowledge and resources. A notable feature of these programs is their multiplicity and diversity; the organization offers on-farm training, research programs, language training and inclusivity, and partnerships for food distribution networks. Its on-farm practices include cover-cropping, crop rotation, and reduce and/or no-till cultivation, aligning with its sustainability mission. In addition to these programs, the Farm Hub works with Ulster Corps to help store bulk products that they grow during peak produce season.⁸⁰ The organization also publishes an ecology blog and a newsletter that keeps its patrons and followers informed about its seasonal harvests, research efforts, and community involvement on a regular basis.

⁷⁸ Hudson Valley Farm Hub, "Home."

⁷⁹ Hudson Valley Farm Hub, "Programs," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://hvfarmhub.org/programs/>.

⁸⁰ Hudson Valley Farm Hub, "Distribution," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://hvfarmhub.org/distribution/>.

The Blue Fridge Project is a simple model of a mutual aid resource. Present in many municipal areas around the world, the idea of a community fridge has gained popularity in recent decades but especially during the COVID-19 pandemic as a form of hunger relief. The Blue Fridge Project in Kingston was an example of these efforts, offering a mutual site of relief that is maintained by its users. There are two fridges in Kingston that are regularly stocked, located at the Clinton Avenue Church and the Beyond 4 Walls offices.⁸¹

Eat Well of the Live Well Kingston Commission serves the Kingston community in an interesting way, as they create space for conversation and state-oriented initiatives. The sub-team supports and promotes (presumably financially or with human capital) various efforts in the community to see those conversations realized; however, Eat Well does not deal with the immediate provision of food. That being said, the sub-team publishes regular news and blog posts that give readers ideas and methods to realize healthier relationships with their food and local environments and hosts a community hotline through their website.⁸² Eat Well also hosts a monthly meeting open to community members who wish to get involved with their work. It should be noted that this type of service does not relieve food insecurity immediately or in the long term, as it is suggestive and could be helpful but makes no immediate impact unless acted upon.

The Kingston Food Coop seeks to open a community-owned grocery store that fulfills and reflects community wants. They aim to open and operate this enterprise in midtown

⁸¹ Taylor, “Kingston Community Fridge Project.”

⁸² Live Well Kingston, “Eat Well.”

Kingston, where the community will be able to access affordable, locally sourced, and culturally relevant food products. The organization also offers Coop memberships where patrons can take part in council elections, have a voice in decision-making regarding food offerings and logistical arrangements, and contribute to their community-building process. KFC also offers a wide range of membership shares, depending on various factors such as racial and gender privilege, earning power, and other relevant socio-economic factors. Similarly, the grocery store will accept SNAP benefits.⁸³ The Coop also engages with the community through fundraisers and community events. A standing critique of KFC is that their grocery store has not opened yet, despite having founded their corporation in 2018 roughly 5 years ago, though they do have a coherent timeline that projects open doors sometime in 2024. It seems that the pandemic slowed down the process of opening, however, their efforts weren't halted altogether; throughout the pandemic, the Coop participated in the emergency food relief program alongside various other organizations included in this study.

Catholic Charities offers a wide variety of services to its clients. These include substance use disorder treatment, prevention, and education services, social services and anti-poverty programs, employee assistance programs, and immigration services amongst others. On the organization's web page, they have both immediate and short-term relief options to utilize at any time. Due to their aim to provide general relief to people in hardship, the span of their efforts in Ulster, Orange, and Sullivan counties are not focused solely on food provision.⁸⁴ However, their

⁸³ Kingston Food Co-op, "F.A.Q.," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.kingstonfoodcoop.com/questions>.

⁸⁴ Catholic Charities, "Programs/Services," Accessed May 2, 2023, <http://www.ccsos.org/programs-services/>.

Kingston location is a food pantry open on Tuesday and Friday every week from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, where they provide prepared groceries and meals to their visitors free of charge. The limited hours of operation indicate that there may exist accessibility disparities, as food-insecure households may not be able to go to their pantry while it's open.

The YMCA Farm Project offers a number of valuable services to the Kingston and Ulster communities. The organization seeks to educate and empower community youth through its food production and commerce operations. They host a seasonal farm stand that sells farm fresh produce at low prices and offers employment opportunities for community youth. The farm stand operates seasonally, open during three different periods; early June to late October, mid-July to late August, and mid-November to late February. Its winter farm stand teams up with the Hudson Valley Farm Hub to offer a selection of winter greens. The stand is operated by their youth crew and its supervisors.⁸⁵ The Farm Project also organizes educational opportunities for youth of all ages; they offer on-site field trips for primary school groups and a camp experience for young children to learn about gardening. Youth engagement is one of the YMCA Farm Project's strongest efforts giving year-round employment to local high-school-aged teenagers, offering hourly wages and meaningful work to better their community.⁸⁶ The Farm Project also hosts a community garden and compost hub for use by community members. The farm project further hosts a number of community engagement opportunities surrounding its farm activities and

⁸⁵ kingston ymca farm project, "Farm Stands."

⁸⁶ kingston ymca farm project, "Educational Programs," Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.kingstonymcafarmproject.org/programs>.

themes.⁸⁷ The myriad of services that the YMCA Farm Project provides offer many benefits for their community, the most important being youth participation in sustainable agriculture, the communal development of an inclusive food system, and the creation of accessible and healthy food options for the people of Kingston.

The Underground Center of Saugerties offers a multitude of comprehensive activities and services for its participants. In line with the organization's guiding principles, its primary focus is education, offering programs that teach gardening, building, and construction of infrastructure, forestry, as well as community service projects.⁸⁸ These services are realized through the organization's internship and apprenticeship programs, where local youth are taught invaluable labor skills that reflect the UGC's mission of exploring alternative ways of living. A primary food provision service offered by the UGC is its Free Food Program, a multifaceted initiative that aims to do a few things: educate the community about food justice and food security; train the community to produce local subsistence diets; grow and share crops that reflect a local subsistence diet; and procure seeds to ensure the resilience and sustainability of their local system.⁸⁹ They have a Boys & Girls Club that hosts younger children on fun and educative field trips around their garden facilities. They also lead several initiatives that explore similar themes, such as their Local Compost Initiative. Similarly to the YMCA Farm Project in Kingston, the

⁸⁷ kingston ymca farm project, "About."

⁸⁸ The Underground Center, "UGC Summer Internship Program," Accessed May 2, 2023, <http://www.theundergroundcenter.org/56-2/>.

⁸⁹ The Underground Center, "Saugerties Free Food Program," Accessed May 2, 2023, <http://www.theundergroundcenter.org/saugerties-free-food-program/>.

UGC's programs tackle large problems at a local level while creating the wherewithal for community youth to continue the navigation of these problems.

Food provision organizations in Kingston offer a variety of services that touch upon different themes. The **Direct Food Provision** organizations deal with just that: direct servicing of food, whether groceries or meals, to food-insecure individuals in the community. Organizations in this category include People's Place, Catholic Charities, KEFC, and the Blue Fridge Project, each of which deal with either procuring or providing supplementary food for those in need. It is worth noting that these organizations made up the primary emergency food response during the COVID-19 pandemic, though other organizations in this study played notable roles as well. The Direct Food Provision organizations, however, were equipped to respond to the crisis, having had the existing infrastructure to utilize when needed. KEFC is a particularly impressive response organization as it was created as a result of the pandemic. The **Food Justice Initiatives** organizations serve the Kingston food landscape in different ways, as they address the deeper root causes of food insecurity through their work. Organizations in this group include Eat Well, the Kingston Food Coop, and the Hudson Valley Farm Hub. These organizations approach issues in alternative ways to just food provision, as demonstrated through larger efforts to create lasting change for the community. Due to the apparent size of these organizations, however, they should be able to contribute to the emergency food system in the case of shocks like that of the COVID-19 pandemic. The **Food Production Education** organizations offer initiatives that seek to address issues in the production of food. The YMCA Farm Project, the Underground Center of Saugerties, and the Hudson Valley Farm Hub all offer educational programs surrounding the production of food and sustainable agriculture. It is worth noting that these organizations could

also be named as food justice initiatives, however, the scope of their services focuses on agricultural production education. The Hudson Valley Farm Hub is a special example as it provides mass amounts of produce to provisional organizations, as well as conducts agricultural experiments and education initiatives, therefore belonging to both groups.

Social Impact

The impact of an organization can be a measure of its success with regard to its goal. Analyzing the impact of an organization on its community can yield insights into its effectiveness; by looking at available service data, trends, and reports, the effectiveness of an organization can be interpreted with respect to its goals and circumstances. While other sections of analysis were demarcated by descriptive categories, the social impact section will be concluded with a reflection on the different scales and trends of the impact that each organization made based on available data.

People's Place has had a significant impact on the Kingston community for some time. It is one of the largest food provision organizations in the area, servicing thousands annually. Its reach within the community has grown over the past decade; in 2012, the pantry recorded 111,229 meals served, while in 2022 it recorded 1,374,192 meals served. Of the organizations in this study, this is the highest number of meals served. A notable feature of the traction People's Place has received in recent years is that from 2018 to 2020, their recorded number of meals served nearly doubled from 695,031 to 1,156,502 respectively. Similarly, the number of meals served in 2014 was 186,954 which jumped to 508,943 in 2016.⁹⁰ One would expect the pandemic

⁹⁰ People's Place, "Home."

influenced the large influx of clients to the pantry from 2018 to 2020, however, a relatively greater increase occurred from 2014 to 2016. Indubitably, People's Place played a large role in helping the food-insecure population throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, 1,000 new families became clients of the pantry likely due to the pandemic. Aside from the numbers, People's Place brings together the community through their work.

The impact made by KEFC on the community of Kingston and Ulster County has been significant, especially with regard to the COVID-19 crisis. To date the organization has serviced over 305,226 meals to over 4,306 people; between March and June of 2020, they had serviced more than 1,000 households. During peak pandemic times, they procured nearly 3,000 meals weekly for 500 families. Their first delivery occurred on March 18th, 2020, when 175 prepared meals were procured and distributed; just over a month later, they delivered over 2,900 parcels. Similarly, their grocery delivery serviced 25 households per day in late March of 2020, and 90 households daily the week of April 27th, 2020.⁹¹ They also filled the role of public school meal programs, where before closures roughly 3,000 children were fed breakfast and lunch daily.⁹² KEFC's role in the relief effort was the task of coordinating amongst local governmental agencies, existing food provision organizations, and the hungry people of Kingston. Their efforts demonstrated how cooperation amongst different existing agencies can significantly relieve some of the stress of emergency circumstances.

⁹¹ Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, "Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative Presentation," Community Food Funders, April 29, 2020, <https://communityfoodfunders.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/KEFC-presentation-4.29.20.pdf>.

⁹² Admin, L. E. P., "Spotlighting the Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative / Poniendo El Foco Sobre Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative," *Hudson Valley Farm Hub* (blog), June 25, 2020, <https://hvfarmhub.org/spotlighting-the-kingston-emergency-food-collaborative/>.

The Hudson Valley Farm Hub has a profound impact on the emergency food system in the Kingston and Ulster communities. Throughout 2020, the Farm Hub donated more than 300,000 pounds of food to local organizations that saw its distribution to food-insecure individuals and families.⁹³ The organization partnered with KEFC to partake in the COVID-19 emergency response network, where it greatly assisted in easing food insecurity through its bulk donations. In 2021, the Farm Hub harvested and donated roughly 350,000 pounds of food.⁹⁴ In the same year, their 1,500 plot of land became certified organic, which raises questions about accessibility; organic food is more expensive on average than non-organic food and therefore creates accessibility barriers for certain socioeconomic groups. However, lots of their food is donated and therefore bypasses this pricing barrier, but the ratio between donated produce and sold produce is unclear.

The impact of the Blue Fridge Program has been a popular site for hunger relief. It is estimated that the Kingston fridges see a minimum of 30 visitors daily, with a higher estimation at up to 60-80 visitors daily, whether taking or leaving food.⁹⁵ The Blue Fridge is an especially interesting model of emergency relief during the COVID-19 Pandemic, where the no-contact exchange of provisions created accessibility in a unique way. This project shows that normal people have the ability to quickly come together to help one another, instead of waiting on institutional assistance.

⁹³ Hudson Valley Farm Hub, “Distribution.”

⁹⁴ Hudson Valley Farm Hub, “Distribution.”

⁹⁵ Taylor, “Kingston Community Fridge Project.”

The impact of Eat Well on Kingston is hard to empirically measure since they have not produced data regarding their efforts. However, they have produced countless community events that bring the people of Kingston together in light of wellness and public health.

Similarly to certain other organizations, the Kingston Food Coop's social impact is hard to measure due to not having opened its grocery store. However, the KFC model has a high potential for positive social and economic impact, as it could bolster employment and job quality in the area, support and develop local food systems, and promote healthy and sustainable foods.⁹⁶ As mentioned before, the organization was active in the community's emergency food system response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Food Coop helped organize relief efforts with KEFC, People's Place, Family of Woodstock, and the Blue Fridge Project. Volunteers from the Coop helped bag and deliver groceries and meals with KEFC and People's Place, and one of the Coop's founders helped initiate the communal fridge idea as its project manager, having then successfully opened two fridges that remain active in the community.⁹⁷ A considerable critique of the Coop is its potential to further gentrify the community. The pandemic saw a migration of affluent residents from New York City to Kingston, and with them came a number of issues to Kingston; namely, gentrification and a housing crisis. Lifetime residents of Kingston have cited rising prices of food, transportation, and housing as a threat to its community through

⁹⁶ "Healthy Foods Healthy Communities: Measuring the Social and Economic Impact of Food Co-Ops," National Co+op Grocers, 2012, <https://icagroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Healthy-Foods-Healthy-Communities.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Taylor, "Kingston Community Fridge Project."

displacement.⁹⁸ Some fear that the Novo Foundation-funded Food Coop could bring the same effects to their community despite their efforts to create more accessibility.

Catholic Charities remains a notable relief organization in Ulster County. Its service to the area for over a decade has brought relief to many individuals and families in need. Over the past 9 years their *Feeding Our Neighbors* campaign – a project that seeks to ameliorate food insecurity in New York State – raised nearly \$700,000, the equivalent of nearly 3 million meals. As of August 2021, the campaign has assisted 520 SNAP application processes and served over 10 million meals to more than 33,000 households, a major contributor to the emergency food system response during the pandemic.⁹⁹ Another notable effort In the Ulster County area, working in partnership with KEFC and other food relief organizations, Catholic Charities distributed over 150,000 meals to 6,800 households in the area since the beginning of the pandemic.¹⁰⁰ In addition to food provision impacts, the Catholic Charities webpage offers a number of resources, similar to those of Eat Well, that provide ways to cope with food insecurity.

The YMCA Farm Project’s social impact is broad throughout Kingston. Their youth-run garden produces 5,000 pounds of food annually on one-third of an acre, and sells it directly to

⁹⁸ Solomon, Will, “Will a Buffett-Funded Co-Op in the Hudson Valley Boost Food Access or Lead to Gentrification?,” *Civil Eats*, October 20, 2022, <https://civileats.com/2022/10/20/will-a-buffet-funded-co-op-in-the-hudson-valley-boost-food-access-or-gentrification/>.

⁹⁹ Catholic Charities of New York, “Feeding Our Neighbors,” Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://catholiccharitiesny.org/feeding-our-neighbors/>.

¹⁰⁰ Keane, Isabel, “Drive-Thru, Pop-up Food Pantry to Take Place in Monticello on Wednesday,” *Times Herald-Record*, Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.recordonline.com/story/news/local/2021/02/09/covid-safe-food-pantry-pop-up-monticello-wednesday/4403684001/>.

the community; some of that produce is donated to the Blue Fridge Project. From 2020 to 2022, the organization made and put in place 75 garden beds for residents and organizations around the city in an effort to promote food sovereignty. The Farm Project also joined forces with KEFC to procure and deliver food to those in need during the initial shutdown period in March and April 2020. Through their community garden, the organization coordinates and manages 28 garden plots for community members, a number that has steadily grown since the resource's inception.

¹⁰¹ Their youth engagement is also remarkable; they host nine different youth programs, each of which engages youth in educational experiences surrounding community empowerment, sustainable food production, social justice, sustainable design, urban resilience, and cooking.¹⁰² What's especially noteworthy about the Farm Project's efforts is its direct involvement with the community. Through enacting a wide range of youth activities, the organization aims to build a generation of capable activists while also improving several facets of Kingston including urban green space, food security, and social justice and awareness.

The social impact of the Underground Center of Saugerties is similar to that of the YMCA Farm Project, as it interacts with the community of Saugerties to challenge traditional conceptions of the food system, local self-sufficiency, and collective labor dynamics. What's particular about the UGC is its focus on critical inquiry into the faults of the current food system, which is reflected in its programming and services. Their Free Food Program has seen success

¹⁰¹ Wimbish, KayCee, Susan Hereth, and Pat Pellicano, "2020-2022 Gratitude Report," YMCA Farm Project, December 2022, https://assets.nationbuilder.com/kingstonymcafarmproject/pages/76/attachments/original/1678391249/2020-2022_Gratitude_Report_Small.pdf?1678391249.

¹⁰² Wimbish, Hereth, and Pellicano, "Gratitude Report."

through 6 growing seasons, however, the organization does not present data with regards to pounds of food harvested or expansion of their raised beds initiative. Due to this lack of data, it is hard to contextualize the impact of their Free Food Program on a quantitative level, though their reports do detail which crops performed best and how seasonal conditions impacted performance.

Each organization has made an effort to see change in their community – whether it be through food provision services or broader food justice initiatives, the Kingston and Ulster County communities have seen a variety of different impacts from these efforts. It is worth noting that most organizations made contributions to the emergency food system response during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even organizations like the YMCA Farm Project, which are not classified as emergency food providers, donated portions of their farm produce to response efforts. This shows that local organizations and initiatives are more capable of facilitating community response when broader institutions and agencies are unreliable. Furthermore, the coordination of organizations to relieve food insecurity during the pandemic was remarkable, and KEFC stands out as it was created for that purpose.

Target Group

The target group or target individual of an organization goes in hand with their missions and operations; it defines their serviceable markets. A target group or individual is variable depending on the service being provided. In the case of both food provision organizations, the recipient of services is usually the food-insecure, but individuals within this category can be variable on the basis of race, gender, socio-economic status, and abledness. Food justice

movements usually target underrepresented and marginalized groups with their efforts, though they don't always find success in their appeals.

People's Place invites everyone into their facilities, though they do specify a target clientele. As per their website, they provide assistance to anyone living in Ulster County, especially the unemployed, the physically and mentally challenged, the working poor, youth, and the elderly.¹⁰³ As a food pantry, they aim to assist anyone who identifies as food-insecure. As mentioned in other sections, there is no emphasis placed on specific identification, however, they make efforts to bridge the community across socio-economic lines with their Community Cafe, an inclusivity goal that is not very precise but nonetheless mentioned as part of their mission.

The target group of KEFC is simply people in the Kingston area who were food insecure or found difficulty accessing food during the pandemic. Like most of its operations, the organization networked its clientele through existing organizations such as People's Place and Catholic Charities. The organization makes a pointed effort towards inclusivity in the area, offering the entirety of its services in Spanish and English.¹⁰⁴

The Blue Fridge Project targets all community members who seek to participate in their effort to create mutual aid. They seek visitors who can afford to leave food they do not need, as well as visitors that are in need of food. The project also seeks volunteers and donations from the community between food item restocking and monetary donations to help contribute to operations. An interesting aspect of the community fridge model is that it can either reinforce or challenge inequitable patterns of food distribution and accessibility based on its location in the

¹⁰³ People's Place, "Programs."

¹⁰⁴ Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative, "ABOUT KEFC / SOBRE KEFC."

community. If fridges are located in food deserts, its target group would benefit from its implementation; however, if not, it could result in superficial assistance.

The target group of Eat Well Kingston is simply the residents of the city. Their aim is to increase the wellness and public health resources available to the Kingston community. Eat Well information does not mention anything about inclusivity in its blog or webpage, rather emphasizing the need to transform the food system to be more environmentally friendly and equitable.

The Kingston Food Coop targets the city's community. They wish to serve their community and better represent its abundance and diversity, and thus desire members from all backgrounds, regardless of socioeconomic status, racial and gender identity, and ableness. An interesting facet of their community recruitment is the diversity of their membership plans. On their website, they have a chart that graphs household income and the number of people in a household and determines the appropriate membership share price, or tier, for a prospective member. They also include a list of considerations regarding tier selection, degree of earning power, racial and gender privilege, class background, immigration-related expenses, age, and a number of other factors. They offer solidarity shares that are low price, creating accessibility for community members who face economic or other hardship but wish to participate in the process.

¹⁰⁵

The target group of Catholic Charities is people in their area who are in need of outside assistance; this includes “the homeless, the hungry, the emotionally and physically challenged, as

¹⁰⁵ Kingston Food Co-op, “F.A.Q.”

well as immigrants, and the marginalized and vulnerable”.¹⁰⁶ They also target elderly populations for their food provision services. However, it seems that the organization focuses on helping those with addiction issues, as the majority of its web page consists of addiction recovery resources. Similarly, there doesn’t seem to be a community coordinator, and available resources regarding their pantry operation are slim.

The target group of the YMCA Farm Project is twofold; they target young people in Kingston to build their youth and farm crews and seek to attract anyone in the Kingston community that wishes to engage with their various food production efforts. Their educational programs look to include and empower the Kingston youth – specifically elementary school students, and high school and college-aged youth – and build a generation of capable food systems and social justice advocates. Through their youth engagement work, they are able to interact with the greater community through their urban space and gardening resources.¹⁰⁷

The Underground Center of Saugerties targets community youth looking to get involved in the restructuring of the local food system. They ensure their programs are accessible; their apprenticeship and summer internship programs are offered completely free of charge as they believe traditional educational experiences that teach similar skills favor the economically privileged. Their attention to accessibility demonstrates their awareness and dedication to challenging societal barriers that create obstacles in these types of efforts.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster, “Programs/Services.”

¹⁰⁷ kingston ymca farm project, “Youth Empowerment,” Accessed May 2, 2023, <https://www.kingstonymcafarmproject.org/youthempowerment>.

¹⁰⁸ The Underground Center of Saugerties, “About The Underground Center.”

Conclusion

Through the analysis of various aspects of emergency food provision and food justice organizations, this study explored different agencies of community response to food insecurity. The study pursued a better understanding of how Kingston and Ulster County residents find food security and related protection from alternative sources than direct state aid; the various functional aspects of those alternative sources and how they do or do not benefit the community; the political and social implications of those alternatives; and how each served the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Published literature shows that during times of socio-economic shock food access barriers increase, causing higher rates of food insecurity, felt disproportionately more by low-income groups and communities. This study sought to examine the ways in which food pantries are affected by said trends, namely how they respond and in what ways, if at all, they address already existing disparities through their work and management. This study showed that emergency food systems do feel increased pressure during shock circumstances, specifically in the demand for their services. Certain organizations in the emergency food system show a tendency to become radicalized as a result of shock circumstances, due to an increased awareness of, or exposure to, flaws and failures in dominant food systems. Similarly, food justice movements exhibit similar trends, though they usually demonstrate radical values before instances of shock. Literature also suggests that food justice movements present alternative food systems that critically assess dominant food systems acutely, but propose alternatives that are not viable on large scales. This study somewhat reaffirms that notion, as the organizations discussed all operate on local scales and seek to make a change in

their communities, aware of the fact that institutional change is less likely. However, contrary to existing literature, most of the organizations reviewed made critical efforts towards inclusivity.

Through the analysis of the administrative structures of each reviewed organization, several insights were developed. By looking at management structure and related administrative details, an understanding of the capacity of an organization can be established. Things like the size of the administration, how it is structured, its development, and its budget give an idea as to how much the organization is able to manage and its operation potential. Key insights from this section include how less radical organizations, meaning those who have less ambitious goals for change, are equipped with more staff and resources; these examples also tend to follow more traditional organizational structures. Another is that the non-hierarchical organizations have more detailed goals of inclusion and diversity. By addressing and analyzing the administrative aspects of emergency food provision and food justice organizations, communities can better understand how to build and maintain systems of relief.

The analysis of the missions, visions, and goals of each organization gave insight into the theoretical and political framework of each organization. A critical assessment of the ambitions of an organization can help improve its future efforts. While looking at the various missions, visions, and goals it was clear that not every organization had a vision for concrete change, especially those organizations that sought to just ameliorate food insecurity alone. Though this wasn't always the case, organizations that had less political ambition were seemingly more established. This shows that the food justice movement and related emancipatory food politics are a more recent revelation in Kingston and that they seem to attract specific support rather than mass momentum.

Through reviewing and analyzing the services of each organization, this study develops a clearer idea of what needs are being met and what opportunities are available with regard to the emergency food system and food justice in Kingston and Ulster County. With regards to the pre-pandemic food landscape, pantry services such as Catholic Charities and People's Place had demonstrated consistent service and activity in the community for time. Food justice organizations like the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, the YMCA Food Project, and the Underground Center of Saugerties all similarly hosted agricultural and labor education programs before and throughout the pandemic, mostly unchanged by the latter's shock conditions.

Social impact is a strong marker of how organizations have brought to affect their ambitions. Most organizations included in this study have made an impact on the community, though some only as a result of the pandemic. An interesting insight from this section was the pandemic response of certain organizations and their efficiency in doing so; KEFC and the Blue Fridge Project were born from necessity in the early pandemic and successfully provided for the vulnerable members of the community. This demonstrated the ability of the Kingston and Ulster community members to come together in mutual aid efforts when state agencies are unavailable or compromised. It is important to keep a critical eye on organizations such as the Kingston Food Coop, as they promote inclusivity and viability in an alternative food system, but have the potential to further patterns of gentrification that have already dominated the community in recent years.

In conclusion, this study mapped the emergency food provision and food justice landscape and formed an understanding of key aspects that ensure its functionality and accessibility for the community. As shown throughout, both emergency food provision and food

justice organizations have diverse political, social, economic, and operational makeups, but all seek to provide some level of food security for their communities. By way of different strategies, each organization creates an option for community members to seek varying levels of food security. The primary takeaway is identifying how an organization seeks to make change; organizations that look towards mending deeper issues of inequality and oppression within both local and broader food systems are more likely to create tangible change. Immediate relief efforts are also crucial to assisting the food-insecure, but preventing and fixing mechanisms that bring about food insecurity altogether is where future efforts must be guided. Considering the impacts of the pandemic, people became more aware of emergency food systems due to heightened rates of food insecurity. Recognizing that people have a better understanding of these alternative food providers, more concerted efforts can be made to address the underlying issues that cause food insecurity in the first place. The ‘new normal’ can be approached with insights to create a better, more inclusive, and stable food system.

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