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Growing the Mission: Nonprofit Organizations Conducting Food-Growing Activities in the Twin Cities of Minnesota

Marcos Stoltzfus
Hamline University, mstoltzfus@gmail.com

Growing the Mission:

Nonprofit Organizations Conducting Food-Growing Activities in the Twin Cities of Minnesota

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Marcos Stoltzfus

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Thesis Advisor:

Kim McKeage, PhD, Hamline University

Committee Members:

Ann DeLaVergne, Our Community Food Projects

Robert L. Routhieaux, PhD

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Abstract

Growing food has become an increasingly common activity for nonprofit organizations, and doing so offers many opportunities to confer benefits to individuals and communities. Through a qualitative methodology, this research project uses a grounded theory approach to explore the challenges, opportunities, and issues faced by nonprofits in the Twin Cities that conduct food-growing activities as part of their mission. The study found three main categories of themes relevant to this sub-sector: Food Philosophy and mission prioritization, business model and economic concerns, and integrated program design characteristics. These factors are discussed from a nonprofit management lens, and implications for leaders are explored. Finally, an analytical/descriptive model is proposed to describe relationships between these factors and as a potential framing tool for organizational leaders.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study examines the unique intersection of the local food movement and the nonprofit sector within the Twin Cities region. In particular, it focuses on examining nonprofits in the area that are engaged in growing food as part of their activities. Through a qualitative methodology the study asks: What are the opportunities, issues, and challenges facing nonprofit organizations in the Twin Cities region that are producing food as a component of their mission?

Background of the Problem

In recent decades, the 'food movement' has experienced a massive surge of national interest (Pollan, 2010). One aspect of this movement involves an interest in food produced locally, manifested in massive growth of farmers markets and community supported agriculture in recent decades (McFadden, 2004; Galt, 2011; United States Department of Agriculture [USDA], 2013; USDA 2014a).

In the media, local food has gathered attention through several nationally-acclaimed books and films examining the issue (Joanes, 2009; Kenner & Pearlstein, 2008; Kingsolver, 2007; Kimball, 2011; Pollan, 2006). This national interest amounts to a significant impact, as the "sale of local foods in the U.S. grossed nearly $5 billion in 2008" (Pirog & Bregendahl, 2012, p. 3). This movement not only impacts the general public, but also the business, governments and organizations which operate within the economy of local food.

In recent years, local food-growing activities (of all sorts) have been increasingly described using the term *urban agriculture* (Hendrickson & Porth, 2012). This term has been applied to individual, community, commercial, and charitable food-growing activities, and includes such forms as gardening, urban farming, aquaponics and others.

Research on the value created by urban agriculture tends to look either at the benefits of fresh produce *itself* (from a nutritional or hunger-relief perspective), or the benefits of gardening as an *activity*. Benefits can be combined into three primary areas: health impacts, social impacts, and economic impacts (Golden, 2013; Surls et al., 2014).

Health impacts are those tied to an individual's physical well-being, and can be realized through participation in food-growing activities, or through consumption of locally produced food. These benefits may include a change in dietary practices (Bellows, Brown & Smit, 2004), increased food access, food literacy (Golden, 2013), or exercise-related benefits (Bellows et al., 2004).

Social impacts influence dynamics, relationships, and interactions among residents and between residents and the built environment around them (Golden, 2013). They extend beyond individuals to affect the community to which residents belong. These benefits may increase pride of local residents in their community, change the capacity of community activism or affect self-reliance (Surls et al., 2014).

Economic impacts speak to the financial, employment, and economic capacity-building benefits which accrue to communities where urban agriculture occurs. Five major categories include: "(1) job creation, training and business incubation, (2) market expansion for farmers, (3) decreased food expenditures, (4) savings for municipal agencies, and (5) increased home values" (Surls et al., 2014, p. 36).

The literature showing the benefits of urban agriculture begins to lay the framework for the modern nonprofit sector's involvement in these activities. Indeed, they provide the premise for nonprofit participation in local food and urban agriculture. These benefits represent the

method by which an organization can articulate added value to society, therefore justifying food-producing activities within a nonprofit context.

This justification is not merely theoretical. A literature review of the topic reveals profiles of nonprofit organizations growing food as part of their missions (Berman, 2011, Lawson, 2005; Yepsen, 2008), each of which demonstrates the reality of nonprofit food-growing. Beyond this, other articles make only small mentions of the role the nonprofit sector plays in urban agriculture; within partnerships (Henderson & Hartsfield, 2009; Jones & Bhatia, 2011; SPUR, 2012) and as potential avenues for successful urban gardening programs (Balmer et al. 2005; Brown, 2002). Unfortunately, beyond these examples, literature documenting nonprofits as food-producers was extremely limited.

Statement of the Problem

The literature review conducted for this study (see Chapter 2) revealed a gap in the knowledge about nonprofits that are producing food as a component of their mission. Although there is a significant body of research on local food, gardening, and urban agriculture, these studies do not extend to examine their relationships with the nonprofit sector. The extent of urban agriculture as a whole is not well understood (Golden, 2013), and this is also true of nonprofit-urban agriculture integration.

Although studies have examined the best practices and possibilities of urban agriculture (Hendrickson & Porth, 2012), little is known about nonprofit application of these dynamics. While anecdotal evidence indicates that production methods may be similar between for-profit and nonprofit entities, studies have not yet compared the two or profiled any distinctiveness, if existing, of nonprofit participation.

No studies were found to indicate breadth of adoption across the sector, best organizational practices, most effective production or distribution methods, or assessments of the perceived benefits which nonprofits generate by producing food. Lacking this research, there is little to guide nonprofit practitioners currently directing (or considering) food-growing programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a preliminary understanding of Twin Cities nonprofits with a food-producing component of their mission. This study investigates the research question: What are the opportunities, issues, and challenges facing nonprofit organizations in the Twin Cities region that are producing food as a component of their mission? Additionally, it asked the following sub-questions. How, and to what degree, do these factors impact:

- The nonprofit's organizational structure?
- Their food production & distribution models?
- The stated purpose of the activities and communication around created value?

Methodology

The study examined nonprofit organizations growing food within the urban and peri-urban (Mougeot, 2000) region centered on the Twin Cities of Minnesota, Minneapolis and St. Paul. The research question was investigated through a qualitative research design using a grounded theory approach, in order to provide meaningful insights into the field. Qualitative design is effective for building meaning and understanding for phenomenon (Merriam, 2009), and grounded theory is an apt tool for studying phenomena which have limited theory surrounding them (Charmaz, 2006).

Participating organizations were selected from a candidate pool which responded to a demographic assessment of regional nonprofit organizations with food-growing programs; for clarity, food-growing nonprofits (FGNPs). Data was primarily gathered through semi-structured interviews with Executive Directors at participating organizations, supplemented by examination of organizationally-produced documents and online material

Data analysis was accomplished using the constant comparative method, a constructivist approach designed to build a practical theory of the issue examined (Merriam, 2009). Collected data was continually monitored, coded, and analyzed during collection in an effort to identify emergent patterns within the data (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Chapter 3 provides full methodology for the study.

Significance of the Study

A lack of research means the lack of a meaningful base of knowledge for nonprofit leaders who seek to better understand the dynamics surrounding organizations that choose to grow food. Nothing is available to describe the practices used by FGNPs, neither across a given geographic area, nor within specific mission-classification areas.

An increased understanding of nonprofit participation within this area will provide several benefits to nonprofits and the sector. Among others, these benefits include a deeper understanding of nonprofits' implementation of these activities, the thinking behind their adoption, practical models of implementing the activity, and communication around these activities.

Beyond the practical questions of *how* nonprofits produce food lies another: How do nonprofit organizations participating in these activities articulate the *value* they provide to

society by doing so? Why is it important that *nonprofits* run the food-producing activities they do? Is there a tangible difference between nonprofit operations and their for-profit counterparts?

This study proposed to help ameliorate the gap in the knowledge by exploring the dynamics and trends surrounding nonprofit food production. A primary use of the study will be to aid existing organizations in better understanding the subsector they operate within. It provides a measure of comparability, as well as examples (through organizational profiles) of production models, methods of communicating value, and uncovers patterns of challenges and opportunities.

Interest and activity around local food has grown in recent decades, and it is likely that this trend will continue. As the first of its kind, this study has the potential to provide insight to future nonprofit organizational leaders considering participating in these activities. In particular, the study examined three areas within each organizational profile: (a) organizational structure, (b) production and distribution models, and (c) the stated charitable purpose of the activity and communication of this purpose. Translated, these areas will help to provide insight into each topic by asking:

(a) What patterns do the structures of food-producing programs follow? How do urban agriculture programs integrate with other organizational activities? How do these activities support the stated mission of the organization? How does an organization balance earned income potential with mission-driven work?

(b) How have organizations found success or faced challenges in the logistical problem of growing and distributing food? How have production or distribution mechanisms been adapted to reflect organization's unique needs? How is distribution accomplished, and how does

the organization involve participants in this activity? How does an organization's mission inform its distribution methods?

(c) What are the stated goals of engaging in the food-growing activity? How does an organization prioritize the benefits created by growing food? What advantage does prioritizing provide to organizations? Finally, how does the organization communicate created benefit to external audiences?

This study attempted to investigate these questions in order to shed light on the factors affecting FGNPs. The pages below provide a comprehensive literature review (Chapter 2) and overview of the implemented methodology (Chapter 3) before proceeding to report results (Chapter 4) and discussion (Chapter 5) of the findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

As with any research question, a thorough review of existing literature is essential to understanding the background and context of the issue. The following literature review has been completed in order to accomplish this. First, the review will examine the 'local food' movement (a major driver behind urban agriculture efforts) and seek to understand motivations behind the recent surge of interest in local goods. The review will then move on to examine the historical roots of gardening in America as a backdrop for modern-day efforts of local food production. This historical review will particularly examine those gardening efforts driven by charitable intent. The chapter will then move on to explore what research exists around the benefits of urban agriculture; and its effects on communities and individuals. Finally, the review will close by examining the immediately-relevant topic at hand: nonprofit involvement in food-growing activities.

What is 'Local Food'?

In recent decades the 'food movement' has experienced a massive surge of national interest (Pollan, 2010); a movement which includes a heightened awareness of locally produced food. As an example of this trend, farmers market proliferation has more than quadrupled since 1994 (USDA, 2013). Community supported agriculture (CSA), a structure whereby consumers pay membership fees to a local farmer in exchange for weekly deliveries of fresh produce, has grown from a new idea (and the first established CSA in the US) in 1986 (McFadden, 2004), to many thousands today. Estimates on the number of CSAs in the year 2000 and beyond range from 6,500-12,000 (Galt, 2011; McFadden, 2012; USDA, 2014a).

In the media, local food has gathered attention through several nationally-acclaimed books, including The Omnivore's Dilemma (Pollan, 2006), Animal, Vegetable, Miracle (Kingsolver, 2007) and The Dirty Life (Kimball, 2011). Films such as Food, Inc. (Kenner & Pearlstein, 2008) and FRESH (Joanes, 2009) also examine local food and have brought wide-spread attention to bear on the issue. Nationally, this interest amounts to a significant impact, as the "sale of local foods in the U.S. grossed nearly $5 billion in 2008" (Pirog & Bregendahl, 2012, p. 3). This movement not only impacts the general public, but also the business, governments and organizations which operate within the economy of local food.

To truly understand the scope of such a rapidly-growing phenomenon, it is important to construct an understanding of what this movement encompasses. Unfortunately the word 'local' is an inherently subjective term, which defies neat categorization. Unlike a well-defined government certification like Organic (USDA, 2014b), there is no broad agreement for how to quantify the more abstract term 'local'. The closest legal definition is provided in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, which says that a product can only be considered "locally or regionally produced… [if] the total distance the product is transported is less than 400 miles from the origin of the product" (p. 245). Despite this baseline definition, little agreement exists about how to narrow the term to more meaningful levels (Martinez et al. 2010; Feagan, 2007; Starr, 2010).

In spite of the ambiguity, several attempts have been made to clarify the term. One of the simplest is the concept of 'food miles' as a measurement of the distance food has traveled from producer to consumer (Pauzet & Riley, 2005). While this term does not define what 'local' is, it does attempt to create a method by which to quantify and compare food origins. This system is

sometimes adopted by those using the label 'locavore' (Belli, 2007), many of whom place a restriction of 100 miles for 'local' foods (Martinez et al., 2010).

This is not a universal opinion on locality however, complicated by widely varied consumer perception on the meaning of the term (Durham, King & Roheim, 2009a). Other understandings rely on social or political borders, where local can comprise neighboring counties, states, or more-vaguely defined 'regions.' The details of each are generally dependent on the organization, municipality, or company providing the definition (Martinez et al., 2010).

Distance-dominated thinking about local food is a distinctively geographic understanding. An alternative framework is built on marketing arrangements, focusing on the interaction between consumer and producer directly or the relational distance between the two parties (Bower, Doetch, & Stevenson, 2010; Dowler, Kneafsey, Cox, & Holloway, 2009; Martinez et al., 2010). Examples of closely-arranged relationships are direct-to-consumer relationships like farmers markets and CSA's. Because of the short (even direct) nature of the arrangement, it is likely that the grower is local to the region (although not guaranteed). This definition can be expanded to include 'shortened food chains' as an indication of locality, relying on the measurement of supply chains 'links' (Feagan, 2007) or 'tiers' (Bower et al., 2010), thus arriving at a 'local' definition through non-geographical measures.

Consumer Motivation for Local Consumption

But why the focus on local food in the first place? What are some of the reasons for participating in local food systems? The focus of the review now turns to examine the motivations of modern consumers participating in local food economies. Doing so not only provides a context for the upsurge of interest in local food, it also serves as a comparative backdrop to those benefits upheld by research, described further below.

Broadly, a consumer's perception of local goods generates feelings of goodwill and trust (Blake, Mellor, & Crane, 2010), although participants engage in local food systems for a wide variety of motivations, both selfish and altruistic (Zepeda & Deal, 2009). Some consumers believe that local foods are more nutritious (McEntee, 2010; Zepeda & Deal, 2009; Maiser, 2005), since they can be harvested at a peak ripeness and with minimal deterioration during transportation time. A distinct, yet related, reason centers on the belief that locally grown food simply tastes better (Maiser, 2005; Pollan, 2006). This belief relies on the understanding that local growers can produce vegetable varieties bred for taste, rather than those bred to withstand thousands of miles of transportation prior to consumption (Kingsolver, 2007). Others perceive that local food tends to contain less pesticides or chemicals (Zepeda & Deal, 2009), although it is important to note that the designation 'local' does not directly imply that sustainable farming methods have been used (Pollan, 2006). On the other hand, consumers do see benefit in the transparency available within local food production (Zepeda & Deal, 2009), as the consumer-producer relationships are generally shorter, and therefore allow more accountability. This is in contrast to corporate systems, which generally provide little information about the source of produce (Bower et al., 2010; King et al., 2010).

A Brief History of Gardening in America

These arguments provide a measure of insight into recent interest in local food. According to a report conducted by the National Gardening Association (Butterfield, 2009) 31% of US households participated in food gardening in 2008, constituting an estimated 36 million households. However, it should not be assumed that involvement in locally-produced food is a recent phenomenon. Modern-day gardening is built on a rich past and deep agricultural roots in America. This sustained history of food production can be traced all the way back to the

agricultural practices of Native Americans (practices which continue to this day), and continues through the techniques brought to the continent by European colonists, culminating in present-day gardening efforts (Tucker, 1993). Subsequent pages here will survey the rich history of gardening (local food production) in America.

Gardening in the U.S. has long been a community, grass-roots endeavor intended as a "means to address much larger social concerns, such as economic relief, education reform, and civic accord (Lawson, 2005, p. 287). Interestingly, a description of the nonprofit sector echoes a similar social origin: "The roots of America's nonprofit sector lie in the ancient traditions of charity, philanthropy, and voluntarism… [and an] emphasis on community, citizenry, and social responsibility" (Worth, 2012, p. 19). De Tocqueville's observation on American's propensity to form voluntary associations (Worth, 2012) could as easily apply to community-based gardening projects as to nonprofit organizations themselves.

Of particular interest to this study are those gardening and food-growing projects created for the purposes of benefitting society at large; a phenomenon that has been the case for much of America's history. "Growing food has rarely been the only agenda in urban garden programs… [they] have been established for many reasons- educational, social, economic" (Lawson, 2005, p. 4). 'Modern' gardening in the U.S. can be summarized into four historical categories, each of which contains elements of community or charitable benefit:

> (1) The urban reform and self-help gardens of 1890s to First World War (also paralleled in the Great Depression), (2) the war-time gardens of First World War and Second World War, (3) the grassroots community garden movement of from [sic] the late 1960s to the 1980s and (4) the great local expansion of community

> gardens, green cities and urban agriculture from the 1990s to the presentday. (Walter, 2013, p. 524)

Illustrative examples of each period follow. In the first period, vacant lots were transformed into gardens to provide "'self-help' charity relief (food, skills and income) to poor and unemployed people" (Walter, 2013 p. 525), with the additional purposes of city beautification and immigrant assimilation. In the second period, programs were again implemented to assist the poor through land, free seeds, and gardening advice (Tucker, 1993). Later, during World War II, victory gardens remerged as popular societal expressions of patriotism, intended to counteract food shortages in wartime (Gowdy-Wygant, 2013; Walter, 2013). Additional justifications for victory gardens were less focused on the impact overseas, but instead centered on the benefit to those at home. Increased morale, recreation, and nutrition were also touted as important outcomes (Lawson, 2005).

During the third historical period, gardens were often inspired by an environmental ethic and/or concern about farming practices, particularly surrounding residual pesticides on produce (Lawson, 2005). Although broadly inspired by environmentalism (or, depending on the individual, disillusionment with larger societal values and trends) the back-to-the-land movement of the 1970's was often characterized by individual motivations rather than concern for disadvantaged community members (Brown, 2011). Still, during this time in urban settings, gardens "became a vibrant part of urban movements for community development, ecological revitalisation, human health, food security and social justice" (Walter, 2013, p 525), motivations similar to earlier incarnations of gardening, but with their own particular flavor.

In the final period of the gardening movement, 1990s to present, Walter (2013) argues that the 'food movement' has grown to encompass multiple areas of concern and motivation.

These reasons range widely and include issues such as animal rights, backlash to genetically modified crops, food sovereignty, pollution, commercialization, and others. Despite new reasons reflecting contemporary issues, current efforts continue to evoke historical gardening ideals of grassroots community building, social justice, and community development (Lawson, 2005).

Contemporary Food Production

Historically, local-food-growing efforts in the United States have been described as gardens in various forms: particularly self-help gardens, victory gardens, and community gardens (Lawson, 2005; Tucker, 1993; Walter, 2013). In more contemporary literature the nomenclature has been expanded to include additional techniques including city gardening, (SPUR, 2012), vertical gardening, native plant production (Balmer et al., 2005), local food systems (Hendrickson & Porth, 2012), and many others. Particularly when applied to metropolitan and surrounding areas, these methods are collectively described as 'Urban Agriculture' techniques (Balmer et al., 2005; Bellows et al., 2004; Broadway, 2009; Golden, 2013; Hendrickson & Porth, 2012; SPUR, 2012; Surls et al., 2014). Mougeot (2000) provides a definition of Urban Agriculture as "an industry located within (intraurban) or on the fringe (periurban) of a town, a city or a metropolis, which grows or raises, processes and distributes a diversity of food and non-food products" (p. 10).

This definition not only encompasses many historical pastimes as community gardening, it also allows a broader perspective including non-garden methods of local food production. A publication by the nonprofit organization SPUR in California documents various forms of urban agriculture in its report Public Harvest (SPUR, 2012) including: Home/kitchen garden, community garden (plot-based), community garden (communally managed), demonstration garden/farm, market garden/farm, orchard, animal husbandry, aquaponics, large green-house,

and rooftop garden/farm. To SPUR's list, one might add production of maple syrup, honey, mushrooms, and other forms of food production.

While not exhaustive, this list provides some example of (and parameter around) what urban agriculture encompasses. The study examines these and other forms of urban agriculture as methods of producing local foods

Benefits of Urban Agriculture

Whatever the form, involvement in gardening and urban agriculture is rarely solely about raising food (Lawson, 2005). Historically these activities were touted as the instigation for increased morale, exercise, recreation, and other societal benefits (Tucker, 1993). In a more contemporary understanding, current literature reveals a rich depth of work about the benefits of food-growing activities. Relevant research tends to look either at the benefits of fresh produce *itself* (from a nutritional or hunger-relief perspective), or the benefits of gardening and urban agriculture as an *activity*. Collectively, these benefits can be combined into three primary areas: health impacts, social impacts, and economic impacts (Golden, 2013; Surls et al., 2014). Each of these research insights are explored below.

Health impacts. Health impacts are those tied to an individual's physical well-being, and can be realized through participation in food-growing activities, or through consumption of locally produced food. McCormack et al. (2010) discuss evidence of urban agriculture activities affecting nutrition related outcomes (although they do point out the need for additional well-designed research studies).

Quandt et al. (2013) explored the feasibility of using a CSA distribution method to improve fruit and vegetable intake in low-income, single-mother families. Although greater fruit and vegetable intake was reported, it did not reach significance within this study. Despite this, the

study did conclude that CSA participation "increased the diversity of foods available to families" (Quandt et al., 2013, p. 4). Bellows et al., (2004) go further, stating that fruit and vegetable intake is higher in gardeners than either non-gardeners or the average US consumer. Similarly, Bremer, Jenkins and Kanter (as cited in Gardening Matters, 2012) state that studies have shown that community gardeners and their children eat healthier, more nutrient-rich diets than do non-gardening families. Hayes (2010) also states that community gardens can increase access to fresh produce on a small scale, and Alaimo, Packnett, Miles and Kruger (2008) report that adults in households with a community gardener consumed more fruits and vegetables per day than those who did not participate (and were 3.5 times more likely to consume them at least five times daily).

Access to gardening can also address the challenge of food insecurity (discussed further below). Hispanic families participating in an organic gardening program reported a dramatic decrease of food insecurity. During the time frame of the program the frequency of being worried about food running out within the month decreased from 31% to 3%. In the same study, self-reported dietary intake of vegetables in adults (of several times a day) increased from 18% to 82% (Carney et al., 2012). Other literature on urban agriculture also report a change in dietary knowledge, and dietary practice (Bellows et al., 2004), or increased food access and food literacy (Golden, 2013).

In addition to the nutritional and food security-related benefits of gardening, studies were found to demonstrate the value of physical exercise in gardening. Bellows, Brown and Smit's (2004) review of benefit literature found that not only does gardening involve both fine motor and aerobic gross motor exercise; gardening is connected to reducing the risks of obesity, coronary heart disease, and glycemic control in diabetes. Brown and Jameton (2000) write that

the physical exercise benefits of gardening have been long known, and they also point to non-physical boons, including psychological and social benefits, a decrease in stress, and relaxation. The mental-health benefits of gardening should not be underestimated. As one study bluntly stated, "findings indicate that nature plays a *vital role* [emphasis added] in human health and well-being" (Maller, Townsend, Pryor, Brown, & St Leger, 2005, p. 1), and went on to document the varied benefits of exposure to parks, green spaces, and gardens.

Social impacts. Individual health benefits are hardly the only value to emerge from urban agriculture. Indeed, "the benefits of food production transcend the physical, mental and emotional health of the individual to leave lasting change on others and on the physical and social space of the community" (Bellows et al., 2004, p5). Social benefits influence dynamics, relationships, and interactions among social residents and also between residents and the built environment around them (Golden, 2013). Accordingly, the benefits of urban agriculture extend to affect the communities of which they are a part.

In one study, students participating in a gardening program not only experienced higher self-esteem following participation, they also demonstrated a decrease in ethnocentrism, a higher level of involvement, awareness, and commitment to the community (Hoffman, Knight & Wallach, 2007). Another study found that "community gardens increase residents' sense of community ownership and stewardship, provide a focus for neighborhood activities, expose inner-city youth to nature, connect people from diverse cultures, reduce crime by cleaning up vacant lots, and build community leaders" (Sherer, 2006, p. 7).

Golden (2013) categorizes urban agriculture's social benefits as: "Creating safe places/reducing blight, access to land, community development/building social capital, education and youth development opportunities, [and] cross-generational and cultural integration" (p. 8).

These benefits can increase pride of local residents in their community, change the capacity of community activism, and affect self-reliance (Surls et al., 2014). Furthermore, Bremer, Jenkins and Kanter (as cited in Gardening Matters, 2012) state that community gardening offers opportunities to establish relationships across social barriers, and Bellows et al. (2004) write that urban community gardens and farms help overcome social, health, and environmental justice challenges.

Another study centered in St. Louis, Missouri showed that neighborhoods with community gardens were more stable than those without. In a time when the city was losing nearly 50,000 residents over the course of a decade, neighborhoods with gardens lost only 6% of their population compared with 13% city-wide (Sherer, 2006). Furthermore, "The presence of vegetable gardens in inner-city neighborhoods is positively correlated with decreases in crime, trash dumping, juvenile delinquency, fires, violent deaths, and mental illness" (Bellows et al., 2004, p. 8)

Another key social benefit is community food security, the community's "ability to acquire culturally appropriate food through local, nonemergency sources" (Lawson, 2005, p. 270). Local-food arrangements such as those found in urban agriculture practices show significant promise for the community's ability to provide sufficient food and nutrition for all members, disadvantaged or not (Martinez et al., 2010).

Finally, the potential socio-environmental benefits of local urban agriculture are tremendous. The primary argument behind this assertion states that reduced transportation (or "food miles") corresponds to a reduced environmental impact through a reduction of greenhouse gasses or other means (Belli, 2007; Environmental Nutrition, 2011; Maiser, 2005). For context, the average supermarket item in North America today travels on average 1400 miles before arriving

at its destination (Brown, 2002). Still others contend that local farming practices are more environmentally responsible than commercial agriculture (Durham et al., 2009b; Zepeda & Deal, 2009).

Economic impacts. Economic impacts speak to the financial, employment, and economic capacity-building benefits which accrue to communities where urban agriculture occurs. Some arguments for urban agriculture center on supporting the local economy through the purchase of local food, or more specifically by supporting local farmers (Durham et al., 2009b; Maiser, 2005; Martinez et al., 2010; Singer & Mason, 2006). Several research studies support this belief. Swenson (2009) examined the possibilities presented by local food systems on Southeast Iowa's economy, and found that it had the potential to increase production output, job creation, and labor income. A study in Central Minnesota hypothesized similar results following the creation of a Central MN 'food hub' (Happy Dancing Turtle, 2012). In another peri-urban setting, an example comes from the Minnesota Initiative Foundation. In these areas farmers markets and other initiatives have helped to diversify small-towns, developing these communities into more vibrant local economies (Walljasper, 2012). Studies like these demonstrate the possibility for local food efforts to affect a region's economic development in a positive way.

Broadly speaking, urban agriculture efforts like community gardens "provide employment, education, and entrepreneurship opportunities for a wide variety of people, including students, recent immigrants, and homeless people" (Gardening Matters, 2012, p. 1). Surls et al. (2014) cite five major categories of economic benefits that urban agriculture provides. These include: "(1) job creation, training and business incubation, (2) market expansion for farmers, (3) decreased food expenditures, (4) savings for municipal agencies, and (5) increased home values" (p. 36).

Bellows, Brown, and Smit (2004) state that food production activities teach job skills and can provide entrepreneurial opportunities for participants. Golden (2013) also asserts that urban agriculture serves as a site for entrepreneurial activity and market expansion.

From a purely financial perspective, one study found that community gardens in San Francisco saved the Public Works department $4,100 per garden annually by preventing these sites from becoming vacant lots and informal dump sites (SPUR, 2012). Voicu and Been (2008) calculated that in New York City, the net tax benefit of community gardens over 20 years would be "in the aggregate, over $325 million or, per garden, about $512,000" (p. 277).

Other studies show that gardens increase property values in their immediate vicinity. In Milwaukee, Bremer et al. (as cited in Gardening Matters, 2012) found that gardens were estimated to add $9,000 per year to the city tax revenue, as properties within 250 feet of the garden experienced an added value of $24.77 with every foot. In New York City the highest effect was seen in the poorest neighborhoods, where property values increased as much as 9.4% within 5 years of the garden's implementation (Voicu & Been, 2008). A further study found that from 1990-2000, monthly rents for apartments near gardens rose a median of $91, compared to a drop of $4 for St. Louis as a whole (Sherer, 2006).

Barriers

Clearly, the benefits of Urban Agriculture are extensive and varied. Unfortunately, these benefits are not always accessible by all members of society. This is particularly true for those benefits stemming from personal consumption of vegetables, an issue nestled within a much larger concern of food access and hunger. Recently receiving wider recognition, the term 'food insecurity' is now used to describe U.S. households unable to access an adequate amount of food, generally because of economic hardship (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, & Singh, 2013; Public

Health Law Center, 2012). A report from the USDA documents that in 2012 almost 15% of all Americans were food insecure at some point during the year (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2013). The term food insecurity contains many gradations, including degrees of insufficiency, calories vs nutrition, physical access, and measures of time (Maxwell & Smith, 1992).

One reality of hunger and food relief is that not all foods are created equally. That is, food can vary tremendously in nutritional value, caloric content, vitamins, and other measures. The Food Research and Action Center's report and survey (2011) showed that 8% of respondents across the US had trouble accessing fresh fruits and fresh vegetables. Access was even more limited for minorities and the economically disadvantaged. One study showed that low-income families wanting to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines would have to devote 43% to 70% of their food budget to fruits and vegetables (Cassady, Jetter & Culp, 2007). This kind of economic hardship is partly believed to be responsible for the growing obesity epidemic currently observed in the US (Public Health Law Center, 2012). One well-documented aspect of this challenge is the idea of 'food deserts', areas with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables which further exacerbates issues of food insecurity and poor nutrition (Public Health Law Center, 2012; Ver Ploeg et al., 2009).

Beyond price or geographic access, other barriers to local food are rooted more within social contexts. Colsanti, Connor and Smalley (2010) describe how potential consumers from marginalized populations can experience negative social pressures, discouraging participation in farmers markets. In some cases this is because of 'cultural whiteness' embedded within markets. The authors note that direct-market spaces like farmers markets are not inherently equitable, as is sometimes believed. Hu et al. (2013) found that barriers to healthy food consumption not only included structural elements such as price and convenience, but also sociocultural challenges as

well. This included a (self-described) culture of unhealthy cooking methods, and a perception of healthy foods as existing outside of minority culture.

Despite these challenges, studies have also examined how various forms of urban agriculture (such as CSA's and farmers markets) can address food-access barriers. In one example of successful intervention, inter-agency partnering led to increased farmers market usage by food stamp recipients, thereby increasing access to fresh and local foods (Jones & Bhatia, 2011). In New York City, one study has shown that food movements (which include elements of urban agriculture) can have positive effects on access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income residents by raising awareness and establishing new service-providing programs (Freudenberg, McDonough, & Tsui, 2011). Other studies note that embedded 'whiteness' in farmers markets are beginning to be contested through small, individual acts which accurately portray diversity within vegetable producers and consumers (Alkon & McCullen, 2011). Though small, these contestations indicate an awareness of socio-cultural barriers within urban agriculture settings.

Involvement of Nonprofit Organizations

Thus far, this chapter has examined the motivations and growth of the local food movement, historical gardening movements in the U.S., and the benefits associated with modern-day urban agriculture. These areas were reviewed with the intent of providing a critical context for the ultimate destination of this literature review: the involvement of nonprofit organizations in food-production through gardening, farming, and urban agriculture. The focus of the literature review now turns to this topic. The remainder of this review will attempt to uncover how nonprofit organizations are involved with growing food, the extent of this practice within the sector, and other relevant information in order to gain insight into this phenomenon.

Literature documenting the benefits of urban agriculture (above) lays the framework for the modern nonprofit sector's involvement in these activities. Indeed, they provide the premise for nonprofit participation in local food and urban agriculture. These benefits represent the method by which an organization can articulate added value to society, therefore justifying food-producing activities within a charitable context.

Such justifications are not merely hypothetical. They have been used as the basis for nonprofit organizations participation throughout the supply chain, the "processes, trading partner relationships, and transactions that delivers a product from the producer to the consumer (King et al., 2010, p 1). As has been described above, local supply chains can be extremely short, as with direct-to-consumer arrangements like farmers markets or CSA programs. Local food can also move through 'intermediate' supply chains which involve one or more midway players before reaching the consumer, although these are typically not as complex as mainstream chains. Intermediaries may be processing facilities, wholesalers, food hubs, or other players (King et al., 2010). Examples show that nonprofits participate in local food systems as producers (Growing Power, 2014; Lawson, 2005; Seed Savers Exchange [SSE], 2015), intermediaries (Barham et al., 2012; Wittman, Beckie, & Hergesheimer, 2012), and as consumers (Health Care Without Harm, 2011).

The focus of this study lies primarily with those nonprofit organizations which fill the *food producing* role in the supply chain. For clarity, the term food-growing nonprofit (FGNP) will be used to designate such organizations. A well-known FGNP is Growing Power, a Milwaukee nonprofit founded by Will Allen, dedicated to "supporting people from diverse backgrounds, and the environments in which they live, by helping to provide equal access to healthy, high-quality, safe and affordable food for people in all communities" (Growing Power,

2014, n.p.). Among other activities, Growing Power provides 'market baskets' of fresh produce to underserved audiences, engages youth in agriculture-based development activities, and serves as a regional example farm for urban composting, vermiculture, and aquaponics (Allen & Wilson, 2012). Another organization inhabiting the role of producer, albeit with an entirely different mission, is Seed Saver's Exchange (SSE), based in Decorah, Iowa. SSE seeks to "conserve and promote America's culturally diverse but endangered garden and food crop heritage for future generations by collecting, growing, and sharing heirloom seeds and plants." (SSE, 2015, n.p.). These two organizations provide an example of FGNPs garnering attention on a national scale.

These two organizations are not alone. Further examples were found within the literature describing FGNPs. This includes several in-depth profiles of nonprofit organizations, such as Intervale in Vermont (Berman, 2011), Stone Barn Center for Food and Agriculture in New York (Donlevy, 2004), and as mentioned, Growing Power in Wisconsin (Yepsen, 2008). Additionally, many other works referenced the *existence* of FGNPs, although these typically did not offer further depth or insight to their activities. These included the organizations: Added Value in New York City (SPUR, 2012, Freudenberg et al., 2011), Cultivate Kansas City in Kansas City (Hendrickson & Porth, 2012), Earthworks in Boston, Growing Gardens and Zenger Farm in Portland, (Balmer et al. 2005), Massachusetts Avenue Project in Buffalo NY (Metcalf & Widener, 2011), Milwaukee Urban Gardens in Milwaukee (Broadway, 2009), Neighborspace in Chicago, (Balmer et al. 2005), nonprofits working for social equity generally (Golden, 2013), and many others.

These references are limited in their usefulness. While they do provide evidence that nonprofits are growing food, they fall short of offering more in-depth understandings of the

activities. Furthermore, each example is presented within the context of another research topic, such as food security, nutrition, or youth development, and therefore the nonprofit in question is included as incidental to the main question and given little further attention.

Only a few examples were found to address nonprofit food-growing activities at the sector level. Several articles make mention that nonprofits play a role within partnerships in urban agriculture (Henderson & Hartsfield, 2009; Jones & Bhatia, 2011; SPUR, 2012), and an interview by Efird & Allen (2014) offered the tantalizing promise that "thousands of youth-serving organizations around the country" (p. 13) are engaged in gardening and agriculture… but did not go on to substantiate the claim. One of the few examples addressing the role which nonprofits (generally) might play in urban agriculture was found within an inventory and analysis of urban agriculture in Portland Oregon. Balmer et al. (2005) listed the following as an 'opportunity' in its findings:

> Nonprofit Model: Urban agriculture programming can be expanded through local nonprofit organizations. These agencies would run various educational and social programs, providing maintenance, information, and guidance in the running of various agricultural projects around the city. Nonprofits may be able to manage some aspects of urban agricultural programming more effectively than the City. (p. 50)

In one of the only other examples commenting on the sector broadly, Brown (2002) found that urban agriculture projects may require "nonprofit status to be commercially viable" (p. 17), but that these projects can be difficult, because "trying to maximize earned revenues while maintaining a strong social agenda presents significant challenges, since each objective alone demands energy, focus, and creativity" (p. 17).

Beyond these two buried examples, no further works or references were found to document how the nonprofit sector engages in the local food economy, particularly in the role of producer. Nothing was found to describe how widespread the practice of growing food is among nonprofits, neither across a given geographic area, nor within specific mission-classification areas (such as hunger relief). This is not only true of nonprofits. At a larger level, "the true scale of urban agriculture is still not represented in the literature because most inventories and research have been isolated …and are often limited in scope, only looking at a few aspects of urban agriculture" (Golden, 2013, p. 16).

An indication of this reality is found in a report on local food commissioned by the McKnight Foundation. This report was instigated by McKnight's "internal conversations about how our work connects to the food system" (Walljasper, 2012, p. 1). The report itself focuses on local food systems, and although the foreword identifies three examples of existing nonprofits which are actively involved in local food systems, the report goes no further to identify, cite, or offer additional knowledge about nonprofits interacting with local food more broadly.

Contribution to Theory

Ultimately, little is known about how many nonprofit organizations grow food, how they do so, or why they have undertaken the activity. Lacking this research, there is little to guide nonprofit practitioners currently directing (or considering implementing) food-growing programs. This gap in the knowledge translates into a lack of meaningful content for nonprofits to draw from regarding the dynamics surrounding FGNPs.

An increased understanding of nonprofit participation within this area would provide several benefits to nonprofits and the sector, primarily by offering a better understanding of nonprofits' implementation of these activities. Do similar nonprofits typically employ

comparable production scales, methods and designs, or are practices more varied? What pressures might push organizations to adopt (or innovate new) production methods? What similarities in structure exist among food-growing organizations, and why might they occur? Are FGNPs involved in all aspects of urban agriculture? How many nonprofits participate in this activity? How long have they done so? Because the literature lacks description of this phenomenon, these questions remain unanswered and unavailable to practitioners.

Beyond the practical questions of *how* nonprofits produce food (Do they use gardens? Farms? Containers?), lies a more existential question. How do FGNPs justify their involvement in these activities? Put another way, how do organizations articulate the value they provide to society by growing food? Why is it important that *nonprofits* run the food-producing activities they do? Is there a tangible difference between nonprofit operations and their for-profit counterparts?

Research documenting the benefits of urban agriculture provides the foundation for understanding how food-production activities confer benefits to *communities* and *individuals*. This is an essential underpinning for the justification of why *nonprofits* could or should participate in growing local food. Despite this, no studies were found to examine the reasons or justifications nonprofits offer for their work in producing food. Because the literature has little to say about nonprofit participation in this activity, this unfortunately leaves a gap not only in the practical, but also in the theoretical understanding of nonprofits and food production.

In short, when it comes to nonprofit food-producers, there is little to indicate best practices, most effective methods, description of a 'typical' case organization, or assessments of the benefits which FGNPs argue they generate. This study proposes to ameliorate this gap by exploring the practical dynamics and trends surrounding nonprofit food production. It will

particularly examine three areas: organizational structure, production-distribution models, and the charitable purpose of the food producing activity.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study explored the question: What are the opportunities, issues, and challenges facing nonprofit organizations in the Twin Cities region that are producing food as a component of their mission? Additionally, it asked the following sub-questions. How and to what degree do these factors impact:

- The nonprofit's organizational structure?
- Their food production & distribution models?
- The stated purpose of the activities and communication around created value?

Methods and Design of the Study

These questions were investigated through a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is an inductive methodology, focused on "process, meaning and [building] understanding" (Merriam, 2009, p. 266). Specifically, this study employed a grounded theory approach to examine the research question. Grounded theory is a qualitative approach designed to "construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). Because this method is used to construct understanding of an issue or phenomenon, it is therefore an appropriate match for a research question intending to explore a topic with little existing literature.

In circumstances where existing theory is lacking, it can be difficult to ascertain what research areas are most relevant and germane prior to engaging in the course of study. Charmaz (2006) asserts that grounded theory allays this challenge by providing a systematic process for conducting research that also maintains an adaptive capacity. This allows the research to be "open ended yet directed, [and] shaped yet emergent" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 28). Because of this characteristic, unanticipated lines of inquiry or revelation that become apparent during research

can be explored in more depth. In fact, contrary to other (quantitative) research methods, grounded theory exhorts the researcher to remain adaptive throughout the process, incorporating new data throughout the project, even late into the research (Charmaz, 2006). This is not to say that grounded theory encourages wild or undirected inquiry. Rather, it provides a flexible, directed, and recursive construct by which to examine phenomena.

Sample Selection

In order to answer the research question, some understanding of the potential field of candidate organizations was required prior to selection of research participants. Indeed, Gerring (2007) states that "selection procedures rest, at least implicitly, upon an analysis of a larger population of potential cases" (p. 88).

The researcher conducted a preliminary population scan, collecting information on candidate organizations including: organization name, mission, program description, National Taxonomy of Exempt Organization designation (National Center for Charitable Statistics, n.d.), potential contact person, and contact information. Appendix A provides the preliminary scan of organizations identified as potentially eligible for inclusion in this study.

This field of candidates was refined through the use of a demographic assessment tool developed by the researcher, designed to gather further data about qualifying organizations. Appendix B provides the demographic assessment tool used to gather additional information and determine eligibility to participate. This tool was distributed through an online survey instrument via sharable link. Questions in the survey tool were designed to identify candidate organizations and categorize them based upon various qualities of their food-production activities, including such factors as: longevity, program budget, percent of organization budget, staffing schema, types of food produced, distribution mechanism, food recipients, and others. The survey was

piloted by a retired nonprofit leader familiar with organizational food-production, and adjusted based on responses to the survey. Additional volunteers piloted the study checking for question clarity, procedural logic, and flow.

The survey was initially distributed directly to representatives of organizations identified in Appendix A (n=47). It was also distributed through the following means: by posting at the MISA (Minnesota Institute of Sustainable Agriculture) blog, through the SUSTAG (Sustainable Agriculture) email listserve moderated by MISA, the local COMGAR (Community Gardeners) listserve moderated by e-democracy.org, by requesting that key organizational players in the field forward along to candidate organizations, and through personal networking. A total of 28 eligible organizations provided responses to the assessment.

Respondents to the survey represented the candidate field for research participation. Initial criteria for sampling included: (1) the organization is a legally-formed nonprofit organization, (2) the organization meaningfully participates in food-growing, and (3) the organization is in the urban or peri-urban region of Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN.

The definition of 'meaningfully participate' (1) was that the organization intentionally engages or facilitates staff/volunteer/participants in a food-growing activity of some kind. Scale of production was not a criterion for inclusion. The definition of 'urban or peri-urban' (2) was drawn from Mougeot's (2000) definition of urban agriculture; whereby the organization produces, processes, or distributes food in/to a central urban area. Notably, any of these activities can occur in the urban environment, thereby including organizations based in rural areas but which distribute (or participate in other food-related activities) in urban locales.

Despite the criteria delineated above, it is worthwhile to note that grounded theory intentionally accommodates for unexpected revelations and insights (Charmaz, 2006). This

methodology not only allows, but requires the researcher to "set aside, as much as possible, theoretical ideas or notions so that the analytic, substantive theory can emerge" (Creswell, 2007, p. 67-68). Thus it may have become apparent during the course of a study that the criteria above were constraining in unanticipated ways, restricting a full and holistic understanding of the dynamics surrounding the research question. As an example, even though the research question focuses on *food-growing* organizations, it may have been appropriate to expand the examination to include *food-distributing* organizations to better understand the field. Similarly, research may have indicated that it was necessary to include organizations that are organized in ways other than 501(c)3 form. Despite these contingencies, some level of practicality must exist to provide a starting point prior to beginning research, thus the project commenced with the criteria outlined above.

Merriam (2009) asserts that in qualitative research, sampling should be inherently non-probabilistic, because the nature of this kind of research is not to *generalize*, but to describe, discover, and understand. This leads to *purposeful sampling*, which guides the researcher in choosing samples that are *information-rich* and particularly appropriate to the research question (Merriam, 2009). In addition to this guideline, the sampling method initially followed 'maximum variation', which "documents diverse variations and identifies important common patterns" (Creswell, 2007, p. 127) within population sizes. Using purposeful sampling across a breadth of variation provided a wide-scale perspective on the subsector when answering the research question.

A variation in sampling was determined by plotting organizational responses to two questions in the demographic assessment tool. These questions were: (a) "Which best describes why your organization produces food?" and (b) "Which best describes the primary recipient of

the food your organization produces?" (Questions 8 and 20 in Appendix B). Table 1 plots each organization according to these questions and created groupings from which to select organizations for inclusion in the study.

In order to provide maximum variation, an organization was chosen from four of the six response types for question (a): "Which best describes why your organization produces food?" in Table 1. This was an appropriate sampling due to the even distribution of organizations across these six categories (Community Improvement =7, Education =5, Social Justice = 5, Youth Development =4, Hunger/nutrition=4, Revenue generation =3). The sampling allowed insight into the apparent variation in nonprofit motivation for food-growing purposes.

Organizations were also chosen to represent various responses to question (b): 'Which best describes the primary recipient of the food your organization produces?" Response distribution for this question showed much greater stratification, with the majority of organizations producing food for "customers" (n=11) or "program participants" (n=9). Selected organizations reflect this trend, with representatives being selected from each of these categories. The four sample organizations hold additional variation beyond the two dynamics represented in Table 1 (although these provided the primary selection parameters). The initial profile selections were also chosen according to distinctive qualities relating to the research question. Each provided an information-rich source by which to examine organizational structure, production/distribution model, or the purpose of the activity. Table 2 summarizes these organizations' basic characteristics across these dimensions, and provides a snapshot of distinctive qualities lending the organization for study. It also documents 'reserve' organizations selected if primary organizations had not been able/willing to participate in the research. Reserve organizations were not required for this research project.

Table 1: Organizational response array

Which best describes why your organization produces food?

Which best describes the primary recipient of the food your organization produces?

	Community Improvement	Education	Hunger/ nutrition	Revenue generation	Social Justice	Youth Development	Total
Did not answer	Pleasant Garden/ United Nectar	Minnesota State Horticultural Society,	The Food Group	*eQuality Pathways to Potential	Arrive Ministries	Project Sweetie Pie	6
Customers	Urban Ventures/ CityKid Farm, Main Street Project	Dodge Nature Center, Buttermilk Falls CSA @ Philadelphia Community Farm	*Dream of Wild Health, Our Community Food Projects	Latino Economic Development Center, Minnesota Food Association/ Big River Farms	Fresh Starts Farm/Project Superman	Urban Roots, Spark-Y: Youth Action Labs	11
Another organization	-	-	-	-	Church of Corpus Christi's Giving Garden	-	1
Program participants	United Family Medicine, *Appetite For Change, MN Green, Summit Hill Community Garden	Celeste's Dream Community Garden	Paradise Garden	-	Hmong American Farmers Association, Hope Community	*Youth Farm	9
Staff	-	Happy Dancing Turtle	-	-	-	-	1
Total	7	5	4	3	5	4	

*Denotes organizations included in this study

Table 2: Sampling

Organization	**Purpose of the activity** (per survey response)	**Production & distribution model**	**Organizational structure**	**Summary of distinctive characteristics**
Dream of Wild Health	Hunger/Nutrition	Multiple: farmers market, CSA, food shelf, participant	Nonprofit	Provides an illustration of a hunger/nutrition-driven effort (a major mission-area for this study) as well as multiple distribution mechanisms. Also provided a unique cultural perspective.
Appetite for Change	Community Improvement	Multiple: farmers market, CSA, social enterprises?	Nonprofit. Runs & owns two social enterprises	Excellent example of a focus on social/community aspect of food. A grassroots-orientation & an arrangement with multiple social enterprises offered an intriguing organizational structure for study.
eQuality Pathways to Potential	Revenue generation/ job creation	CSA –employment for adults with developmental disabilities.	Nonprofit rents from eQuality Farms LLC	Solid counter-example to organizations specifically organized for 'food reasons'. Nonprofit/LLC arrangement offers interesting structural example. Production/ distribution model also unique from staffing perspective.
Youth Farm	Youth Development	Sent home with Program Participants	Nonprofit	Provides a normative example of youth development program (a major mission-area for this study). An organization with longevity offers an important perspective to the research question
Reserve organizations- In the event of primary organizations' unwillingness/inability to participate				
Happy Dancing Turtle	Education	Multiple: Staff, CSA, wholesale	Nonprofit	Education is an archetypal mission area for food activities. Food production is primarily for educational/ demonstration purposes, which is a unique characteristic. Multiple distribution methods offer variety to the study.
Corpus Christi Church (Giving Garden)	Social Justice	Donated to food shelf	Nonprofit (church) umbrella, volunteer-run activity	Distribution system is unique: Delivered to another organization for ultimate food dispersal. A volunteer-run structure provides an alternative example to more 'professional' organization examples.

Data Collection

This study collected data primarily through semi-structured interviews with key informants at participating organizations, supplemented by examination of organizationally produced documents and online material.

Interviews. Appendix C provides a list of interview questions used to examine the research questions. These questions were administered through semi-structured interviews with key informants at case study organizations. Semi-structured interviews use questions which allow open-ended responses, and seek to capture participant's interpretation of their experience (Charmaz, 2006). Probes were used as follow-up prompts, encouraging further elucidation, clarification, or expansion on participants' statements (Merriam, 2009).

This interview format was ideally suited for a grounded theory approach, as it allowed a breadth of responses. This enabled the participant to respond in ways which were most relevant to their experience, increasing the likelihood of the researcher discovering issues relevant to the research question. In contrast to this approach, directed, closed-ended questions (pre-determined by the researcher) often provide highly concrete data… which also completely miss the true experience of the participant, leaving the researcher with irrelevant data. In short, semi-structured interviews should be "flexible enough to allow the discussion to lead into areas which may not have been considered prior to the interview but which may be potentially relevant to the study" (Goulding, 2002, p. 59)

True to the nature of a grounded theory approach, in initial interviews unexpected themes sometimes emerge, which can subsequently be incorporated into later interviews to test theories or conceptual ideas (Charmaz, 2006). Interviews were conducted with key informants at organizations. Participants were selected based on their familiarization familiarity with the

organization's food-producing program, both logistically (how does the program run?) and theoretically (why does the organization run the program?). Participants for all organizations were Executive Directors. Suitability was determined in collaboration with organizations, by inquiring about suggested interviewees, and by providing sample questions/probes to give an example of the scope and nature of the interview.

Documents & Online Material. Additional data sources were written materials published by the organization, such as annual reports, grant applications, program brochures as well as digital/online material. These were examined in order to explore the messages communicated within each, and also to discern the "nature of the data" (Merriam, 2009, p. 153)… their purpose, intended audience, and key concepts. These materials provided insights around program description, program motivations, or communication about the benefits of the program. Insights extracted from document examination served to supplement information from interviews. In some cases, this contributed to the capacity to triangulate the accuracy of key facts and organization messages (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003).

Data Analysis

Ultimately, qualitative analysis is the process by which the researcher seeks to answer the research question through the various faculties available to them. This may include inductive or deductive reasoning, constructing connections between concrete data and abstract concepts, 'trying on' and testing hypotheses, and eventually constructing a theory around the issue being studied (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009)

More specifically, within the grounded theory methodology, this study used a constant comparative analysis method, a constructivist approach designed to build a substantive (practical) theory, or theories, surrounding the issue examined (Merriam, 2009). This practice

involves continually monitoring collected data and comparing between (and among) data segments in an effort to identify emergent patterns within the data (Merriam, 2009; Charmaz, 2006).

In grounded theory, a recursive series of coding and memo-writing allows the researcher to extract themes and patterns from data. Coding can take multiple forms, but involves the process of "defining what the data are about" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43) and which "simultaneously categorizes, summarizes and accounts for each piece of data" (p. 43). The coding process is where the researcher begins to take the first analytical leap, interpreting raw data and identifying the underlying concepts beneath each. This first step is crucial in allowing the researcher to establish emergent concepts which will ultimately form the theory in subsequent steps (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

This process is continued through memo-writing, a practice used to distill a researcher's thinking, capture thought processes, and record hunches (Charmaz, 2006). Ideally this practice serves to "stimulate critical thinking about what you see and to become more than a recording machine" (Merriam, 2009, p. 172). Memos should be written throughout the length of research project, as they serve to provide points of reference for the researcher to refer back to at later times. Through memos, a qualitative researcher explores emergent concepts, defines categories and ideas, examines relationships between themes, and gives substance to emergent theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990) provide practical tips, steps and practices regarding the purposes and creation of memos.

Coding, memos, and emergent theoretical categories all contribute to a researcher's understanding of the topic studied. Theory is then materialized by employing analytical processes, which can include sorting, diagramming, or integrating theoretical concepts

(Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These processes also help to identify the need for additional theoretical sampling, or to establish saturation (Charmaz, 2006).

After meeting with each interviewee over the course of study for this research project, the researcher transcribed the interview, and proceeded with initial coding for each. Initial codes were consolidated into a more succinct series of consolidated codes, and categorized according to major themes. Codes progressed and evolved following each interview; and additional clarifying questions were added in subsequent interviews to examine emergent questions and themes.

After all four interviews were complete, the researcher examined consolidated codes and categories, and began constructing potential theories which began to emerge from patterns and responses. These hypotheses were tested by checking them against the initial codes and the original interview transcripts, to ensure that the methodology allowed theory to develop *from the data* (Charmaz, 2006). Following the development of several theory drafts, the researcher revisited the transcripts and conducted a secondary coding sequence (more similar to axial coding), in order to test the theory and assess if additional insights could be gleaned that may have been missed upon initial coding. Through these methods, the researcher followed a grounded theory practice by testing, considering and re-examining the theory that emerged from the data, providing insight to the original research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

Four organizations participated in this study: Appetite For Change, eQuality Pathways for Potential, Dream of Wild Health, and Youth Farm. A semi-structured interview of approximately 60-90 minutes was completed with the Executive Director (ED) of each organization, which provided the bulk of the data used to inform the results and analysis in the pages below. Appendix C provides the semi-structured interview guide used for data collection, and includes guiding questions and possible follow-up prompts. This chapter provides a brief summary of each participating organization, and presents major themes that emerged from the research process.

Organizational Summaries

eQuality Pathways to Potential. eQuality Pathways to Potential (eQuality) is a non-profit organization that "provides day services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families" (eQuality Pathways to Potential [eQuality], 2015). Founded in 1998, the organization now serves 160 individuals, operating in 18 locations in and around the Twin Cities. (eQuality, 2015). As a mission, eQuality "challenges individuals with developmental disabilities to maximize their potential and actively participate in life's opportunities by delivering community based, individualized programs that encourages their growth" (eQuality, n.d.a.). They do so by partnering with local business sites to provide employment opportunities to associates. Licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, (eQuality, n.d.a) eQuality supports associates in diverse work places. Some placement sites maintain required staff ratios to support the experience and safety of work teams of six to eight associates, while other sites offer independent job placements for those associates equipped to do so (eQuality, n.d.b.).

In addition to job placements at business around the Twin Cities, eQuality started eQuality Farm in 2009 as a supplemental job site and entrepreneurial project. Like all their job sites, eQuality Farm provides meaningful work to eQuality associates, however it is designed as an alternative option for individuals desiring more diverse tasks than other job sites typically offer. Throughout the growing season, a team of eight associates travels to the 11 acre farm in Buffalo, MN to provide the labor for all aspects of the farm, from transplanting to harvesting. Using a staffing model built upon a team of associates, a farm director, and support staff, eQuality Farm provides a CSA which primarily serves group homes and residential providers for adults with developmental disabilities. Additional associates assist with delivery of shares to group homes and provide the staffing for two farmers markets where sales of vegetables and flowers support the farm's operations.

Appetite for Change. Appetite for Change (AFC) is a grassroots organization in North Minneapolis with the mission to use "food as a tool, building health, wealth, and social change" (Appetite for Change [AFC], 2015). An organization deeply dedicated to serving and being led by the community, AFC works to affect systemic change that "strengthens families, creates economic prosperity, and encourages healthy living" (AFC, 2015, n.p.). They do this through a suite of programs which as a whole, are designed to impact the food systems in the North Minneapolis community. This includes their Appetite for Growing Gardens, where AFC staff work with community youth to grow, harvest, aggregate and sell produce; activities which use the gardens as primary training and programming spaces. This food-growing program is supplemented by the Fresh Corners initiative, a project designed to increase the capacity of local urban farmers to build up and participate in the local food system. AFC provides "training and technical assistance… resources and information regarding business planning, farming

techniques, and local policies governing planting, distributing, and selling produce" (AFC, n.d.a., p. 1) to growers within the Fresh Corners program

Beyond these production-oriented activities, AFC operates two social enterprises focused on the distribution end of the food equation. The first is Kindred Kitchen, a business incubation effort offering a "shared commissary kitchen open to small food businesses" (AFC, n.d.b, p. 3) who need affordable access to commercial kitchen space. AFC supplements the rentable space with classes and technical support. The second, and newest, social enterprise is Breaking Bread Café. This eatery is a socially-conscious establishment seeking to provide healthy options to the neighborhood while creating jobs and giving employment skills/training to community youth (Breaking Bread Café, n.d.). Both Kindred Kitchen and Breaking Bread Café are intended to function as part of the local food ecosystem, ideally purchasing food from area growers (e.g. Fresh Corners or AFC gardens), and serving as examples of how business can incorporate healthy food sourced from local producers.

AFC also offers several other community-based programs, including Community Cooks, a program designed to bring community members together, cook and eat meals, and discuss topics important to the community.

Dream of Wild Health. Dream of Wild Health (DWH) is a Native-community nonprofit organization with the mission to "to restore health and well-being in the Native community by recovering knowledge of and access to healthy Indigenous foods, medicines and lifeways" (Dream of Wild Health [DWH], n.d.b, n.p.). Their work is centered on 10-acre farm in Hugo MN, where the organization operates the bulk of their programming as "a model of cultural recovery put into practice" (DWH, 2014b, p. 4).

The organization offers extensive opportunities for youth ages 8-18, designed to educate Native youth about their history, cultural roots, gardening, and nutrition through participation in farm programming. In part, this work supports the organization's two farmer's markets stands (also staffed by youth), and Native CSA offering (DWH, n.d.a.).

DWH also serves as steward for more than 300 culturally-significant seed varieties, maintained by the Native community for generations. These include "corn, beans, and squash, plus several sunflower varieties, indigenous tobacco, and different plant medicines" (DWH, n.d.c., n.p.) which represent a critical link to a culturally-significant diet for Native community members.

Youth Farm. Youth Farm (YF) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1995 with the mission: "We Farm to Grow. We Farm to Grow Food, Community, and Leaders" (Youth Farm [YF], n.d.a, n.p.). YF operates 17 farm sites in five neighborhoods in the Twin Cities metro area (YF, 2013a), serving youth aged 9-24 years old. YF is dedicated to youth development outcomes using gardening as a tool. YF uses a model of developmentally-staged programs, where youth can progress from participating as Youth Farmers (ages 9-11), All Stars (ages 12-13), Project LEAD (ages 14-18), and finally as Farm Stewards (ages 19-24) (YF, 2013b).

YF runs programs throughout the year, transitioning between summer experiences and after-school programs for participants as the seasons change. Although gardening is a central tenet of their work, other activities involve cooking, preserving, and other community-based activities. A major component of YF's identity is built around including youth in decision-making and planning (within developmentally-appropriate contexts). An example of this is Project LEAD youth helping to determine YF's food distribution statement, which informs how the organization chooses to distribute produce year to year. Food grown by YF is primarily used

within programming for snacks and meals, preserved for school-year programs, and sent home to youth participants' families weekly.

Major themes

Over the course of research, several themes emerged as promising avenues of inquiry. In qualitative studies, the role of the researcher is to discern and direct the investigation in ways that provide rich, relevant insights into the meaning of the participants' experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For this study the researcher focused on emergent patterns informed by the research questions, and identified three overall themes. The first examines patterns around organizations' missions, priorities of benefit areas, and methods of defining their relationship with food. The second theme centers on economic factors, specifically around organizational viewpoints on financial models and balancing earned income with programs. The final theme deals with program design, and examines adaptive distribution methods, participant involvement, and intersection with non-food programs.

It should be noted that original research will be referenced throughout the following sections. When not specifically identified, the source organization for quotations will be indicated within a parenthetical citation using the following format: (YF Executive Director). All interviews were held with Executive Directors of each of the four organizations. Interviews took place on the following dates: AFC, July 30, 2015; eQuality, August 20, 2015; DWH, September 15, 2015; YF, October 21, 2015.

Theme: mission area and priorities. Interviewees were asked to respond to the guiding question "How does this (food-growing) program contribute to the mission of the organization?" Interviewee responses trended into several patterns, identified below. Interviewees:

1. Consistently identified their programs as creating benefits in multiple areas.

2. Identified a primary purpose over others (yet still claimed secondary benefits).
3. Indicated an 'attitude' toward the role food plays in achieving their mission.

Multiple benefit areas. Across all interviews, each leader recognized that their food-growing activities conferred multiple benefits to participants and communities. At eQuality, the ED stated, "not only is this a population that can learn to grow things, and make money doing so, but [they] also can benefit from being able to use, and eat, and sell, and purchase those vegetables. So kind of a multi-pronged approach." For AFC, the view is that "the whole food system has intersections with health, economic development, and social change/movement building, community building, civic engagement… all of those areas, as well as impacting education." In addition to youth programming, Youth Farm's ED stated that within the context of youth programs, the organization is "providing food access, and nutrition, and healthy food." And for DWH, the ED described that "relationship with the land leads to relationship with food, so that you regard your food as medicine. And in turn your health improves. Everything improves! The food, the land, the water quality get improved." Leaders from each organization identified multiple benefits from their programs, and it was evident that each viewed their activities as creating value for individuals and communities in multiple ways.

Identifying a primary purpose. Although organizations acknowledged broad benefits, most identified a primary purpose to their food-growing activities. As an example, Youth Farm's ED stated that youth development is "very much the priority in our organization," and all programming is accordingly designed to support youth development. When asked to prioritize the value eQuality Farm creates, the ED identified "employment and skill building" as primary benefits, adding that "secondly would be the nutritional and then the health and wellness

component of it, as it relates to the general community, but the group homes particularly," with educational opportunities constituting a third priority.

AFC was an outlier in this area, not because they did not have a clear mission priority, but because that priority operates at such a broad level. As the ED stated, "using food to build health, wealth, and social change is our mission, but … you need at least 30 seconds after that to explain how." A pervasive theme within AFC's interview involved the messaging difficulties associated with having a broad focus. Even so, AFC does hold a priority of social change as a priority… through the mechanisms of many other benefit areas.

Although DWH identified a priority area as well: "helping Native people reconnect with traditional and indigenous foods and medicines," (DWH Executive Director) this also proved to be a broadly focused mission, which the organization supports through work in health, access, nutrition education, and cultural education, among other initiatives.

Even though organizations demonstrated prioritization of food's benefits, each readily 'claimed' secondary benefits. Leaders spoke of using secondary benefits to their advantage by strategically adapting their messaging (in grant proposals, for example) to highlight benefits that held the most weight with constituents.

Attitude toward food. A subtle difference within DWH's approach to food revealed an underlying theme across all organizations. This theme has to do with an organization's attitude towards food itself, and how it relates food to its work and mission. Both YF and AFC (with eQuality displaying similar patterns) used almost-identical wording to describe "food as the tool" for other work. This attitude stood in contrast to DWH's view, which appeared to hold that food was more than a tool in its work. As the ED described, "it's really part of a holistic sense of food production, that if we want these kids to grow up to be healthy adults, then they have to have a

very good, strong relationship with their food. Grow it, cook it, and have an income that allows you to purchase it." This perspective stood in contrast to other organization's attitudes toward the role food plays.

Theme: economics. Another major theme-area developed from the guiding question "What is the design of your production/distribution model, and how does it function?" From this, the theme of funding an organization's food-growing activities became apparent. These primarily sorted into two main categories.

1. Organizations held specific views about how their programs are (or should be) financially supported.
2. Interviewees identified the challenge of balancing mission-achieving and earned-income generating activities.

Holding a specific viewpoint. When it came to the structure and function of production and distribution, organization leaders often used financial terms as one method of describing their activities. Within this context it was apparent (throughout interviews and documentation) that organizational leaders held explicit stances about how their farming should be supported financially. Although each organization has identified such a strategy, approaches are unique to each organization.

eQuality believes that their farm operation can ultimately support its own operations, although this objective has not yet been achieved. DWH's goal is "to be able to support half of the farm's expenses (staff and direct expenses) through the income that it generates." On the other hand, AFC's Executive Director viewed the income generated from food sales as only a small portion of the whole (so far). Youth Farm sees production activities as almost completely non-income generating, saying that their "goals aren't really around running markets, or making

money" (YF Executive Director). Although each organization held a very specific view about how their work does or should function, these examples show that views were not in alignment from one organization to another.

Balancing activities. Most interviewees identified a challenge of balancing mission-achieving and income-generating activities, specifically as viewing programmatic elements as an opportunity cost for potential sales. Example language describes income generation as drawing focus away from programs, while "mission work becomes a distraction from making the enterprise be somewhat self-sustainable" (YF Executive Director).

An example comes from DWH's Farm plan, which states that "generally DWH has sold its produce at prices 30% below what other local, organic food producers sell at" (DWH, 2014a, p. 2), in order to ensure fresh and healthy foods are accessible to their target audience. This was similarly communicated by DWH Executive Director when it came to staffing. "A lot of farmer time goes into education, working with kids, working with volunteers [instead of vegetable production]." eQuality's balance was exhibited primarily through staffing considerations, identifying the need for a "job coach that is more specialized than usual, requiring an individual with "a lot of background in farming, [but who] also supports our associates out there." eQuality associates provide much of the labor for the farm, but "different people need different levels of supervision. So some people are able to work relatively independently, while others require a greater number of check-ins." YF's ED shared the sentiment by saying "we try to temper what our [growing] plan is based on how many young people we have involved. I mean we found sometimes we've gotten over-aggressive with our farm plans. When we don't have enough youth... that's a bad imbalance for us." AFC's growing operation also involves youth, and their

salaried co-founders dedicate a substantial amount of their time mentoring youth in their gardening projects, ostensibly drawing from other organizational duties.

Theme: program design. Finally, a third major category of themes centered on the design, structure, and implementation of organizational programs. This closely paralleled the guiding question "What is the structure of the food-growing activity and how does it integrate with the broader organization?" Within this theme, organization leaders identified program designs which:

1. Demonstrated distribution mechanisms adapted to each organization's needs.
2. Involved participants in all aspects of food growing, distributing, and associated activities.
3. Exhibited strong ties and interactions with other organizational programs and structures

Adapting distribution mechanisms. The distribution systems of each organization were mostly well-developed, with the exception of AFC, who identified distribution as a primary barrier for growth of the program. Other organizations exhibited mechanisms such as CSA's, farmer's markets, using food within programming, or sending food home with participants.

These mechanisms were adapted to each organization's situation and mission. An example comes from eQuality's ED: "We have a little bit of a different model with most of our CSA shares. We try to market to group homes and residential providers. Not exclusively, but most of our shares go to them." DWH offers an indigenous food share, designed to provide indigenous and healthy foods to members at low cost, and sells primarily at markets that are "convenient to Native families." Both DWH and YF 'self-distribute', by using food within programming for meals, snacks, and education purposes. "First and foremost, that food goes

back into our programs, but most of the rest of it in the summer goes home with them [participants] to their families" (YF Executive Director). Although still developing their distribution, AFC has also adapted its existing distribution to support its purposes, with a primary priority to "sell at the aggregation table at the farmer's market. Or to sell to the [Breaking Bread] café -so essentially selling it to ourselves …but also to sell to other vendors like the café," thereby using their own programs as a demonstration for others in the local economy.

Involving participants in all aspects. Results from each organization's interview and document review showed that organizations involve their participating audiences across all programmatic opportunities available from food-growing activities. At AFC, Youth are involved in the garden "watering, harvesting, maintaining, weeding, planting," as well as aggregating and selling at farmers markets. eQuality associates not only plant, weed, and harvest, they deliver CSA shares & provide the sales force at farmer's markets. DWH exposes youth to cultural farming practices, as well as harvesting and distribution at farmers markets. Youth Farm engages youth in farming practices, but also in education around cooking and preserving throughout the year. These results indicate that organizations engage their participants over the entire course of the growing and distributing process, rather than involving audiences in only one or two activity areas.

Integrating with other programs. Data indicated that organizations structure their programs to integrate with other elements of their organization. This is particularly true for organizations which have programming not directly related to food production. An example from eQuality is their farm & environmental education programming for associates that otherwise have no connection to the farm. AFC directs a portion of their food to their social enterprise Breaking

Bread Café, thereby reducing food-purchase expenses, and providing a proof-of-concept for distribution to other community vendors.

DWH and YF are more directly focused on food-growing as a primary function, and these organizations do not have non-farming programs as distinct as AFC and eQuality. Even so, each makes connections to programs that occur outside the growing season. YF preserves food for use in winter after-school cooking classes, and DWH offers school year programs focused on food advocacy, nutrition, and food access.

Each of the three major themes identified above and their sub-categories provide the foundation for subsequent discussion and theory development within this study. As with any qualitative study, these themes represent general trends and patterns. While each organization is obviously unique and faces environmentally-specific scenarios, these themes offer an opportunity to examine the commonalities among issues and challenges that food-growing nonprofits (FGNPs) might face.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, & Theory

The following chapter provides synthesis and interpretation of the study results. The chapter begins with an examination of each of the three theme categories: Mission areas and priorities, economics, and program design. The discussion examines these themes in the context of all four organizational samples. Each theme category is explored below, within which similarities are examined, examples are contrasted, and underlying patterns are considered. Following discussion for each category, implications for nonprofit leaders are addressed. The chapter closes by proposing an explanatory model (theory) as a tool for examining the patterns which emerged from the research.

Framing a Food Philosophy

Discussion. What can be gleaned from the first category of themes, centered on how organizations relate food-growing activities to their mission? First, it is clear that organizational leaders are accustomed to the many benefit-areas that urban agriculture confers to societies and individuals. This was apparent not only in their universal identification of these benefits stemming from their work, but also in their tendency to prioritize a primary mission area. This indicates a need for clarification or act of distinguishing.

It can be inferred from responses that charitable work around the topic of food can represent many things to many people, ranging from nutrition, to access, economic impacts, education, physical health, or others. As the literature review demonstrates, each of these are indeed areas of potential impact. This can affect organizations by creating ambiguity around the mission area a FGNP intends to impact. Because the broadly-defined category of ‘food’ is less descriptive than it appears at first blush, it is necessary for a ‘food nonprofit’ to more clearly define what that term means. In part, this is accomplished through a mission statement: the

identification of a primary focus. If this is not done (or done poorly), organizations risk confusing constituents about their true work in the midst of the many potential mission areas associated with food.

Each participating organization has clearly defined a given mission area as their priority over and above the myriad other benefits that go along with food growing. These 'primary missions' represent the umbrella under which any other benefits fall that accrue as outputs of their work. Organizational leaders acknowledged and even claimed other areas of impact, including nutritional improvement, access to healthy food, physical or mental health improvements, economic benefits, community improvement benefits, and others… but these areas were relegated to secondary priorities. Table 3 identifies the primary and secondary mission areas for the FGNPs within this study.

Table 3: Primary and secondary mission areas of nonprofits within the study

Organization	Primary Mission area	Secondary Mission areas				
		Access	Nutrition	Health & wellness	Education	Others
Appetite for Change	Social transformation	x	x	x	x	Economic & community benefits; Youth development
Dream of Wild Health	Cultural recovery	x	x	x	x	Environment; Youth Development
eQuality Pathways to Potential	Employment & Skill-building		x	x	x	
Youth Farm	Youth development	x	x	x	x	Community benefits

An example showing how organizations assign priorities of significance within their work comes from Youth Farm. Project LEAD participants at YF recently developed a statement defining the goals and rationale to guide YF's food distribution. Sustainable land use, increasing food access, promoting community wellness, and food justice were among those priorities identified in the resulting document (YF, n.d.b). YF does indeed stand to make an impact in each of these areas, but from the organization's perspective the most meaningful result of developing the distribution statement was the growth opportunity represented for the youth engaged in the process. By designing the initiative to be youth-identified and developed, YF created a rich, significant experience for those participants which offered the chance at authentic growth and contribution to the community.

In this example food distribution provided a valuable experience for youth, but towards other ends than access or nutrition. This is an important concept for two reasons. First, this shows a ranking of importance which allows YF to clarify their primary purpose to outside audiences. When asked, Youth Farm's ED was easily able to describe the meaningful results of such an activity from the organization's perspective. Second, it provides insight into the role food plays in the story told by the organization. It demonstrates a view towards how food is used, and the purpose for doing so.

The phrase Food Philosophy is a term identified by the author to describe a pattern in which organizational leaders self-defined the relationship between the organization, its activities, and food. At the most fundamental level, it frames the nonprofit's approach to food-related work. A Food Philosophy can clarify the organization's stance of how it plans to accomplish its work, its approach for doing so, and which food-related outcome(s) it intends to claim.

An explicit Food Philosophy is apparent within Appetite for Change's actual mission statement: "Appetite for Change uses food as a tool building health, wealth, and social change in North Minneapolis" (AFC, 2015, n.p.). This statement not only makes clear the intent of the organization's work, it identifies the mechanism by which to achieve said goal: food. This represents an important element of an organization's Food Philosophy, as it defines the organization's view of- and relationship to- food itself.

Both YF and AFC unequivocally identified food "as a tool" to other means. AFC has gone so far as to consider the matter previously, using specific planning language. AFC's ED shared that for them, "the *process statement* is <u>how</u> your mission is going to lead you to your vision." For AFC, their process statement describes "how do you get from food to impact generational poverty, or food to increasing civic engagement, or food to affecting health disparities or education gap or whatever it is?" The process of describing how food contributes to each of these outcomes represents one function of a Food Philosophy. Similarly, YF believes that "food for us is the tool to engage young people in quality leadership opportunities" (YF Executive Director), a concept demonstrated clearly in the food-distribution plan illustrated above.

eQuality provides a slightly different example. This is an organization dedicated to providing employment opportunities, and it does so mostly in venues which have nothing to do with food. Indeed, their mission statement makes no reference to food whatsoever. The organization describes its work at eQuality Farm by writing: "Instead of relying upon other employers for jobs, eQuality is determined to create meaningful and more diverse work opportunities through our own entrepreneurial efforts" (eQuality, 2015, p.3). Although food-growing work provides benefits to employees, and this activity generates outputs which impact

their target audience in positive ways, these remain secondarily-claimed benefits behind employment and skill building. From this prioritization alone eQuality's food philosophy emerges: food is the tool, a venue for the organization to provide employment for associates.

In a contrasting food philosophy, one organization communicated that food is central to their mission as *more than a tool*, having value in and of itself. In a sense, food does function as a tool for Dream of Wild Health; as a method of restoring health and connections to cultural practices. However it is also an integrated part of a holistic system (DWH Executive Director) that recognizes the value of culturally significant varieties of vegetables …and living organisms broadly. This goes beyond the literal value of the actual type of corn or bean; this food philosophy holds that there is value in relating with vegetables (among other living organisms) throughout the cycle of planting, cultivating and eating. Within this framework, although benefits such as increased nutrition may be actualized using food as a tool, this Food Philosophy maintains that food holds value beyond as a means to an end. This fundamental difference in approach is more than nonprofit practice; rather this reflects deeply held cultural values… which are reflected within the organization's approach. DWH's Food Philosophy is more accurately an expression of a deeper cultural viewpoint taking shape within the context of a nonprofit organization than a nonprofit management strategy.

Because DWH is an outlier within this sampling, it is fair to question whether their Food Philosophy is truly unique, or if it can be found in other FGNPs. Organizations outside the dataset provide other examples of Food Philosophies which hold food and plants as central (as more than tools). Although the scientific veracity of the techniques are still under debate (Turinek, Grobelnik-Mlakar, Bavec, & Bavec, 2009), biodynamic agriculture strives to achieve holistic farm health in all components of a farm including plants, animals, and people

(Biodynamic Association, 2015). Accordingly, nonprofit organizations which employ biodynamic practices view food plants as an essential component of a healthy farm 'ecosystem'. The Food Philosophy of such organizations inherently view food as more than a tool because of the essential role food plants play within the farm setting. A local example of such an organization is the nonprofit Philadelphia Community Farm (Buttermilk Falls Farm, n.d.), located in Osceola WI. Seed Saver's Exchange (SSE) provides an example of a similar Food Philosophy, but one that stems from different cultural roots. Described earlier, SSE is dedicated to preserving America's vegetable heritage varieties by preserving, collecting and sharing seeds. They do this for over 20,000 varieties in their collection, and offer more than 2,500 to the public for grassroots preservation (SSE, 2014). For this organization, food is not only the tool; it is also the purpose of the organization's work. These examples begin to provide evidence that a 'food-as-central' Food Philosophy exists at a larger scale and is not confined solely to DWH.

Although examples are useful towards explaining the concept of a Food Philosophy, an alternative way to understand the idea draws from a common nonprofit management tool to assist in defining the term. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004) identifies the idea of the logic model as a tool for communicating the "picture of how your organization does its work – the theory and assumptions underlying the program" (p. III). The logic model is comprised of five components, depicted in Figure 1, from the Kellogg Foundation. These five parts provide a visual way to represent how an organization believes their program will accomplish the change they intend to influence.

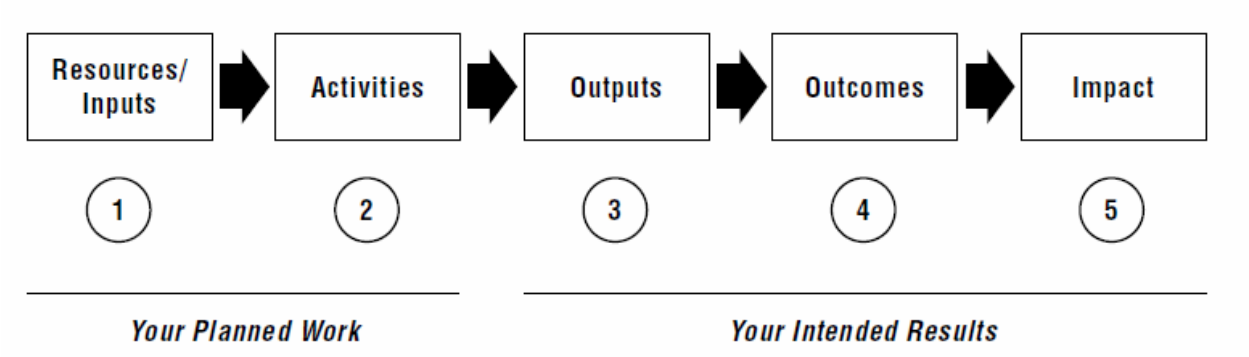

Figure 1: The basic logic model (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004)

To further define an organization's Food Philosophy, one can examine where the organization might place 'food' within a logic model. Although this question was not asked explicitly, inferences can be made based on interview responses and descriptions of the organization's work and impact. It is clear that each organization identifies farming as an 'activity' of their work, with the accompanying inputs of seeds, plants, staff time, etc. Thus, food plays a role as an input (in the form of seeds/transplants), and as part of activities (weeding, harvesting, etc.). Similarly, each of the four organizations would classify food as an output of their work. As YF's ED stated, although they focus on youth development, "one of the outputs of that [work]… is food."

At the outcome and impact level, an organization's Food Philosophy truly begins to emerge. Those organizations with the strategy of 'food as a tool' go on to measure outcomes and impacts in terms of their associated mission area: empowered youth, economically-robust communities, an engaged citizenry, meaningful employment opportunities, steps towards a socially just society, etc. For organizations like DWH however, outcomes and impact would implicitly include food as a component of success. For them, examples may include restoring human relationships with plants and the land, sustained varieties of culturally-significant vegetables, or health for all elements within a holistic system (including living organisms such as

food plants). The way in which an organization defines its outcomes/impact to include food- or not- says a lot about how it views food and food activities: In essence, its Food Philosophy.

Implications. Why is it significant that nonprofit leaders identify their organization's Food Philosophy? In a practical sense, it represents a question of communication. When messaging to constituents, will an organization portray itself as a 'youth development nonprofit'? A 'community-investment nonprofit?' A 'nutrition and access nonprofit'? These characterizations clearly oversimplify what is ideally a rich and complex conversation between a constituent and the organization, but beyond the matter of categorization, real consequences can be at stake. An example comes from AFC's Executive Director, who describes the difficulty of clarifying their organization's mission -and its relationship with food- within the setting of a funding proposal.

> My proposal …really focused on the youth employment and economic development work that we're doing, and at the end they ask 'Is there anything else you want us to know', and I said 'Look, you're going to read this proposal and think it's about food. It's not about food, food is just the vessel. It's just the tool, just the currency. But the actual work is employment, and training, and social capital building.' (AFC Executive Director)

The implication here is that funders have difficulty looking beyond the food aspect of the AFC's proposal, situating it within -or disqualifying it from- certain funding programs. Similarly, other constituents (donors, community members, and others) may fail to appreciate and understand the true work of a nonprofit, too easily writing their work off as 'food-related' and never digging in further. In this specific instance, by having a clearly-defined Food Philosophy, AFC was better poised to communicate the intended impact of their work. Similarly, other organizations can benefit from the clarifying effect a Food Philosophy can have.

A philosophy is more than just a question of marketing. Framing an organizations' approach can also pay dividends by allowing staff to have defined priorities against which to gauge competing projects. One YF employee reportedly appreciates the organization's clear philosophy, saying "I love that we can focus our work… [on] what we do. I'm never put in this position to try and do something that isn't focused on our mission" (YF Executive Director). The context of this statement alludes to the challenge of mission drift; in effect YF's Food Philosophy functions as a reminder to staff that although new farming projects may be tempting, they serve as distractions to the organization unless they serve as development opportunities for youth. Having this clear focus is obviously a desirable state for any nonprofit employee. Beyond the immediate guidance such framing provides, it can also serve as a yardstick in longer-term organizational planning.

Determining a Business Model

Discussion. The second major category of themes centers on economic matters. This includes specific views held by leaders about how programs should be funded and the issue of balancing income generation and mission-driven activities.

A useful comparison illustrating these two themes comes from a look at DWH's and eQuality's approaches to farmers market sales. DWH balances two factors when making decisions about where to participate in farmers markets. On one hand, markets represent an opportunity for revenue-generation, but on the other hand, DWH aspires to impact food access for the Native community through market sales. As a result, the organization's planners choose not to sell produce at some markets which may be better -attended (and therefore more lucrative), because those locations are not frequented by their target audience. The ED describes their strategy as "maximizing these earned income possibilities in a way that still fits mission."

As a result, DWH participates in markets that are more convenient to Native families, but at the literal cost of doing more business.

In a contrasting example, eQuality also sells at farmers markets, but with a different goal in mind. Although the organization does seek to impact access through distribution (in the form of CSA shares for group homes), their market sales are primarily a revenue-driving activity and an opportunity for associates to develop sales skills. Because markets are not intended to address access, eQuality does not determine where to run farmers market stands based on this factor. As a result, the organization views market sales as an activity which more seamlessly meshes opportunities for associate's skill-building and earned income generation

This comparison provides useful insights into the economic dynamics leaders face within this theme. Both organizations operate the same activity but with drastically different underlying assumptions and goals. While the activity presents a dilemma of sorts for one organization (balancing mission & sales), for the other the activity is straightforward.

Ultimately, each organization within this study seeks a financially-sustainable model to drive their work. Data made clear that each of the four organizations held a specific view concerning what kind of model to seek, although the role of earned income varied widely among the sample. While a successful model *may* include elements of earned income, according to results they need not necessarily do so. Importantly, each organization self-defines how it will approach financial sustainability; a lofty goal that requires examining sources of revenue, allocating resources, financial structures of programs and others. Bell and Schaffer (2005) describe these activities (and others) as *financial leadership*, a key need among nonprofit leaders. Within this project, the term 'Business Model' will be used to describe the result of deliberations and financial decisions organizations face when choosing how to construct their operations.

While only a small portion of the whole, the idea of a business model is certainly one critical result of financial leadership. In general the themes within this category relate to the Business Model which organizations choose for supporting their work.

A common dilemma of any nonprofit organization is that of balancing mission-accomplishing tasks with more lucrative revenue-generating activities. A classic understanding of this question within the nonprofit management field is represented by a dual-bottom-line matrix, described by Bell and Schaffer (2005). Modified slightly (to reflect an activities' earned-income potential), it is represented in Figure 2. The matrix is intended as a tool to help leaders assess mission accomplishment and financial sustainability of their programs, and is divided into four quadrants.

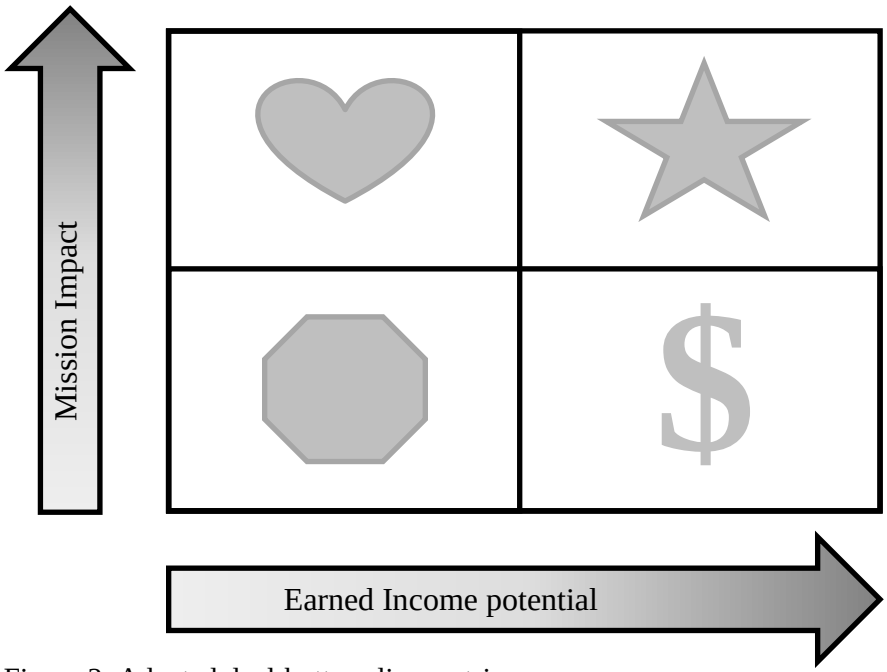

Figure 2: Adapted dual-bottom-line matrix

The '*Stop*' quadrant represents programs that contribute little to the organization's mission, and which require financial support (i.e. the program does not support itself through

earned income). Leaders are encouraged to discontinue or transform these programs. The '*Moneymaker*' quadrant includes programs with a high opportunity for financial sustainability… but which do not contribute to mission at a high level. Leaders are encouraged to increase the mission impact for these programs. The '*Heart'* quadrant includes those programs which have a high impact on mission, but which require other financial support to run. Finally, the '*Star'* quadrant describes those programs which have a high mission impact and a high degree of financial sustainability through earned income.

When adapted to think specifically about food production and distribution activities, this tool is useful for examining FGNP's programs. It provides insights into the various Business Models FGNPs might adopt when operating a similar activity (growing food). The application of the tool within this study is appropriate because of the recurring theme that emerged from interviews of balancing 'mission work' and production/ distribution efforts, especially when considering the potential for earned income from food sales.

Despite the broad appeal of earned income in the nonprofit sector, none of the four organizations in this study communicated that they had 'profitable' farming operations. It should be noted that the scope of this research project was not sufficient (nor was it attempted) to provide financial analysis of farming operations- either as stand-alone programs or within the context of the broader organization. Because of this, no effort will be made to try and plot organizations' locations within the four quadrants based on financial data. Even with this in mind, certain inferences can be reasonably made regarding where organizational leaders might *view their own programs* as residing. (Although subtle, the distinction is an important one, and constitutes the difference between extracting participant's own meaning-making and enacting external financial scrutiny on an organization's program.)

To begin, it should be made clear that each organizational leader sees value in the programs they operate; they view their food-growing activities as having a positive mission impact. This research project will not attempt to evaluate or rank mission-impact because qualitative research emphasizes the experience of the participant, For the purpose of this section of the discussion the analysis will accept that each organization views its programs as 'successful' at meeting their mission. Thus analysis will focus primarily on the upper quadrants of Figure 2.

eQuality represents the organization with the most optimistic views about its farm operation sustaining itself financially. Currently, eQuality Farm generates earned income through its CSA & farmers market sales, and the Executive Director indicated their desire to explore additional revenue streams in the future. The organization also relies on traditional nonprofit revenue sources, such as fundraising, grants, and state contracts; sources which supplement the farm's earned income and which sustain the operation. When asked about achieving financial sustainability, the ED described eQuality farm as being "closer [each year]… in the ballpark", and agreed that the ultimate goal is to support farm operations with earned income and fee-for-service funding. Although not yet achieved, the goal is viewed as an attainable one, which would indicate that eQuality leadership sees the *'Star'* quadrant as a very real possibility for its farm operation and Business Model.

DWH operates a very similar-sized farm (10 acres vs 11 at eQuality Farm), and also runs both CSA and farmers market distribution; however their view on the economics differs from eQuality's. In 2012, DWH developed a four-year Farm Operations and Business Plan as a method of examining future production, estimating ongoing sustainability, and ensuring ongoing programming (DWH, 2014a). This business plan offers a detailed examination of farm

operations, and gives insights into DWH's conception of the farm's Business Model. Using the language of '% self-funded', the plan states a goal of eventually reaching "50% when excluding infrastructure improvements. Self-funding at this level would represent an [sic] significant expansion of DWH's ability to reinvest in its programs in a sustained and self-determined way" (DWH, 2014a, p. 2). As reported in Chapter 4, this goal was verified verbally by DWH's Executive Director. This gives a very clear idea of how DWH might view the farms' business model: as one that can partially, but not wholly support itself. Even when reaching their target goal, DWH anticipates supporting the farm's operations with alternative funding means (grants, donations, etc.). This balance is an intentional, strategic choice made by organizational leaders and speaks to the theme of 'balancing' presented in the results. In this case, DWH is balancing between the two axes of the matrix in Figure 2. The goal of 50% self-support would indicate that the organization views its business model as some mix of the '*Star'* and *'Heart'* quadrant-perhaps very close to the (indistinct, abstract) border of the two.

Beyond income and financial balances, a broader concept of reciprocity underlies Dream of Wild Health's entire approach to farming (DWH Executive Director). This belief speaks to the organization's commitment to soil fertility, wildlife diversity (the farm has intentionally planted 2 acres as a pollinator meadow), watershed health, and at its core, the relationship of humans with the earth. Taken as a whole, these views also provide additional clues to how the organization views its business model.

Among all four organizations, data culled from AFC's interview was the least indicative of organizational leader's goals of their farming program. Although money made from food sales are reinvested in the program, the ED characterized this amount as "a small, small portion of what it costs to operate the farms." Although little of the interview served to further elucidate

the organization's view of the business model, it may be safe to assert that for now AFC perceives their farming program as securely within the '*Heart'* quadrant; worthwhile to run, but contributing little in the way of income.

Choosing a business model can be very intentional. Youth Farm was distinctive within this study as the sole organization without the goal of using food production for earned income purposes. Instead of distributing with the intent to bolster financial health, food is almost exclusively used in programming or sent home with participants free of charge. This has not always been the case however. YF's Executive Director described that,

> When the organization started, it was based more on a sort of a farmer's market model, or community stands [model]. And we found that (1) we weren't able to distribute enough produce, and (2) we never made any money. So it was like a double-loss. And after a while it was like 'this is the lesson that young people are learning'.

This language of 'double-loss' aligns remarkably with the dual-bottom-line matrix. At that time, organizational leaders effectively identified their program as fitting within the *'Stop'* quadrant, having low mission impact and low earned income potential. During this period not only were food sales not sufficient to be sustainable, the effect of operating in such a way began to impact the experience of the participants. After examining this reality, the organization made an intentional and strategic shift in its business model, moving away from earned income to rely almost entirely on other financial means. Now, YF supports its programs through traditional nonprofit funding mechanisms, including grants, donations, and federal awards. By pursuing a funding mix that is not reliant on earned income, this has allowed the program to become more focused on activities which support youth development, and eschew the dilemma of balancing

earned income within the context of food production. This may come with drawbacks of course, as more administrative time must be directed to securing funding, however this represents a conscious decision made by organizational planners.

Implications. So what does this mean for nonprofit managers? To varying degrees of explicitness, leaders described farming as a tough business to be successful in financially. Within this context, the data did not show a single business model as inherently better than others or more likely to thrive. Within the assumptions of each individual strategy, organizations are distinctively 'successful', as each defines success. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this indicates that there is no silver bullet to the dilemma of choosing a Business Model. Rather, a common thread among organizations indicates the need for constant attention to the shifting balance of mission and economics. Notably, DWY and YF represent the two sample organizations with the most longevity in their farming operations, and both exhibited at least one instance of intentional reassessment: Youth Farm overhauled their approach to funding programming (as described above), and DWH employed an external consultant to assist with the creation of a formal Farm Business Plan. The lesson for leaders may be that reassessing frequently is a wise practice (although re-examinations might take many forms).

Another implication seems to indicate that robust distribution mechanisms are keys to a successful Business Model, a finding unlikely to be a surprise. However, the example of eQuality is informative, as the organization has evidently identified an unfilled niche market in the form of residential group homes. Offering CSA shares to this customer base is likely a key competency that allowed the organization to succeed at the level it has so far. This is especially noteworthy since establishing a farm operation represents a significant shift in operational style for the organization. Previously, eQuality operated primarily as a service organization, but now

operates a production-oriented program. As noted above, AFC identified distribution as a major challenge to their own potential growth, however this should be balanced by their relatively new arrival to the farming business. Echoing recommendations above, AFC leaders are actively exploring new distribution methods (again balancing mission and income), another example of reassessing programs.

Integrated Program Design

Discussion. The final category of the three main themes concerns how organizations have structured their programs. Throughout analysis of the data many individual codes and snippets of interview referenced organization's program designs. These coalesced into the three sub-themes listed in the Results: Distribution mechanisms adapted to organizational purpose, participant involvement throughout the food-growing process, and intersections with other programs.

The first of these themes speaks to how organizations have structured their distribution mechanisms. As noted in results, distribution poses a major challenge for AFC. Despite this challenge AFC is still thoughtful about how food is distributed, prioritizing sales in the community (increasing access), selling to their own café (demonstrating economic viability), or using it within educational programming. Each of these prioritizations supports AFC's mission, and are adapted to serve this purpose.

Self-distribution was a common theme for YF and DWH, as both organizations route part of their harvests to meals, snacks, and educational experiences within their programing. YF's ED described their reasoning in the following way:

> We're cooking for young people all summer long, and then all school year long we're doing afterschool cooking classes… So why don't we just give the food

> back to ourselves? So we'll save money that way... [and then] we're not trying to make guesses about… the impact of that food. …We know that this 4,000 lbs. of food was raised in this neighborhood, and it went here [into programs].

This example shows how organizations are strategic about the design of their distribution process. In this case YF not only demonstrates the financial and evaluative benefits of thoughtful distribution, it also directly addresses their access goals by providing food directly to community members (participants and their families). DWH also uses food in their programming for educational cooking and nutrition classes, and relies on similar thinking to arrive at this decision. Although mentioned in previous discussion of balance, DWH's choice of where to offer a farmers markets booth provides an example of intentionally using distribution tools to serve the purposes of the organization as well. Finally, an assessment of adapted distribution mechanisms would be remiss not to note DWH's Indigenous Food Share (IFS). This adapted CSA, offering indigenous foods, is specifically marketed to Native consumers. This clearly works towards the organization's mission through cultural, nutritional, and access means.

Collectively, these examples demonstrate the strategic decision making used by organizations when choosing among the wide array of distribution types available to them. Organizational leaders leverage intended effects by pairing distribution with programming, thoughtful location choices, targeting audiences, or using alternative pricing structures. These strategies indicate that FGNPs are thoughtful about how to maximize the impact of their food-growing operations by adapting distribution mechanisms to suit their purposes.

The concept of maximizing impact is also realized in other areas, including the ways participants are involved within farming activities. It was apparent from the data that organizations universally involve participants throughout the steps of growing food. The terms

'gardening' and 'farming' mask the complexity and variety of the tasks involved to bring a vegetable from seed to harvest (as any gardener can attest). Steps can include planning, ordering, planting, transplanting, watering, weeding, mulching, pruning, harvesting, packing, transporting… the list could go on. For eQuality, this complexity constitutes a major distinction from other job sites they partner with, which offer positions that are more repetitive in nature. Operating a farm allows the organization to offer meaningful work for associates desiring more diversity of tasks. Other organizations also capitalize on the opportunity to engage their participants throughout these processes. As described in results, participants might sell at farmers market stands, plan farming activities, harvest, deliver, or participate in educational experiences.

It is through these diverse tasks that the broad benefits of food production are realized. Although organizations identify primary mission purposes, they universally claim secondary benefits such as health and wellness, nutrition, and others. These benefits are created through participants' involvements in the varied tasks of farming. If participants *only* engaged in nutrition education, then an organization could claim that benefit, but not those of health through exercise (associated with growing food). Similarly, if participants were simply given food, although access goals may be met, without accompanying education it is unlikely participants would truly receive the benefit of nutrition.

Just as organizations strive to maximize the potential benefits to participants within their programs by involving them in multiple aspects of food production, organizations also seek maximum benefit at a programmatic level. This concept references how leaders integrate food-growing activities with other organizational programs when possible. One of the clearest examples comes from eQuality, which provides farm-based educational programs to clients who

otherwise do not work at the farm site. In effect, this allows eQuality to benefit from an activity they are already running and extend the benefit to other participants.

A slightly different example comes from AFC, who has intentionally designed their food production to support their cafe operation. This is similar to the theme of self-distribution described above for YF and DWH, however it is distinct in that AFC's programs are more separate, both operationally and in terms of participants.

Overall, these themes can be summarized in the idea of 'Integrated Program Design', which describes the interconnected and interrelated nature of FGNP's programs. This is exhibited in organization's horizontal integration between activities (where participants are involved), and its outputs (uniquely-adapted distribution mechanisms), linking elements of an organization's logic model, but also how disparate programs play off each other's strengths.

Implications. The unifying thread of these three subthemes and the implication for leaders is that they should consider how to maximize the opportunities available within food-growing activities. Operating a farm is no small feat, and it appears that FGNPs structure their programs to make the most of this effort.

A (theoretical) contrasting example might reveal an organization where individual steps in the growing process are isolated from each other. This might involve separate teams of growers, harvesters, and distributors, without additional programming. This image is clearly not the case however, as evidenced by the four sample organizations. Instead, each exhibits a program design that maximizes interdependence of programmatic elements related to food production.

The implication is that if an organization goes to the trouble of growing food, they should take advantage of the opportunities available within that activity. An example is evident in the

pattern of self-distribution (a form of internal vertical integration). If an organization is growing food as well as using it (and potentially purchasing it), this is an obvious way to streamline processes through integration. Although this example is straightforward, leaders should also consider more subtle or nuanced opportunities to integrate food-growing. This can occur through potential connections with other program areas, alignments between (and within) programs, or in distribution methods.

Theory: Connections Between Themes

The chapter thus far has discussed three categories of themes, examining each individually from others. Although valuable, a characterization of three disparate themes would not accurately portray the relationships of one with the others. The focus of the chapter now turns to an examination of the theoretical placement of each component and the relationships between each. Doing so moves the results of this study away from individual themes and allows the exploration of a more unified theory describing the opportunities, issues, and challenges faced by FGNPs.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) encourage qualitative researchers to use *integrative diagrams* as a tool for "representations of analytic thinking that are used to try out and show conceptual

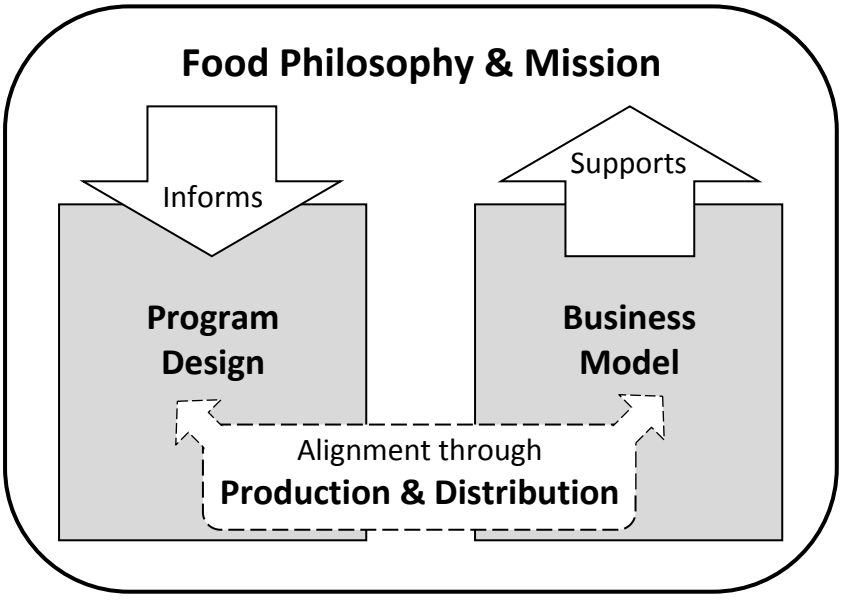

Figure 3: A relational model of themes experienced by food-growing nonprofits

linkages" (p. 198). A diagram of this sort is presented in Figure 3, which intends to describe the *relationships between major themes* uncovered within this study. This model attempts to provide a theoretical framing of the issues facing FGNPs, and from this perspective it functions as an explanatory model characterizing the results of this study. An additional view of the model is through an analytic lens, which provides nonprofit leaders with a framework to allow assessment of organizational structure, efforts, and linkages.

Each major component of the model (Food Philosophy, Program Design, and Business Model) has been examined in the pages above. The following discussion examines major relationships between each element. It begins by describing how Food Philosophy informs Program Design, moves on to consider how a Business Model supports Food Philosophy and Mission, and closes by examining the alignment of Program Design and Business Model through an organization's production and distribution activities.

Food philosophy and program design. In a nonprofit setting, the mission provides guidance and direction for the rest of the organization's work. Accordingly, for the organizations included in this study a mission statement identifies their intended area of impact, and to varying degrees, describes how they intend to do so. A Food Philosophy is more amorphous, relating not only to the mission, but also to the organizations' logic model, their beliefs about process statements, their vision… and the role food plays throughout each of these elements.

It appears that the importance of a food philosophy stems from foods' multifaceted benefits and the potential confusion surrounding mission work in this area. Because of this, a Food Philosophy must exist in conjunction with mission. Whereas the Food Philosophy describes the organization's relationship to food, it does not describe the organization's primary

purpose; this remains the function of the mission. Because of this foundational role, Figure 3 depicts Food Philosophy and mission as the backdrop for the rest of the model.

This component informs the activities and strategies an organization employs to influence its area of mission impact (how it designs its programs). This is reflected by the arrow indicating that an organization's Program Design must be informed by the Food Philosophy and Mission. This is a critical relationship, as the Food Philosophy is achieved through the work actually occurring within programs. Therefore, this relationship is revealed in the way activities occur.

Both YF and DWH engage youth in farming and through educational classes. Although these may seem to be the same activity, they differ insomuch as they are informed by their underlying Food Philosophy. Whereas YF structures and runs its activities primarily to maximize youth development opportunities, DWH emphasizes its work in a way which cultivates cultural identity. Although both operate educational offerings, the content and pedagogy of these programs differ because of their separate Food Philosophies.

In another comparison, eQuality employs associates at their farm primarily as a method of providing meaningful employment for associates. AFC also employs participants (youth) but does so as a skill-building activity, preparing youth for *future* employment in other settings. This is not intended as a permanent position for their participants, as eQuality intends. AFC views the opportunity to work with food-related tasks as a means to another end; informed by their Food Philosophy.

In each of these examples, organizations design their programs according to the Food Philosophy which frames their work. In some cases food remains the tool by which to achieve an unrelated outcome, whereas in others food is a central component of the outcome itself. Because programs and activities are the central point of where/how organizations accomplish mission,

this is where a Food Philosophy is realized. Put another way, programs look the way they do because they are informed by the Food Philosophy behind them. Thus it is appropriate to depict Food Philosophy as informing Program Design in Figure 3.

Food philosophy and business model. Although a Food Philosophy directly informs an organization's Program Design, it does not necessarily inform its Business Model. Instead, it appears more important that the organization's chosen Business Model supports its ability to enact its mission (and therefore it's Food Philosophy). The data within this study indicate that many kinds of Business Model can be successful for FGNPs, therefore the precise type of model chosen does not impact direction of the relationship.

This should not be misconstrued to imply that organizational leaders need not examine their own Business Model to determine its effectiveness, merely that the scope of this study did not determine the efficacy of one approach over another. For the time being, this indicates that as long as the organization can satisfactorily determine a method of funding mission-impactful work, the precise method of doing so appears less critical. Both mission and funding are crucial components to this relationship however, as the following example shows.

DWH's Executive Director described an opportunity for earned income in which a local ice cream shop offered to purchase basil from the organization and create a new branded flavor.

> We could earn income, it would support this Native organization, it would support our programs, but we're all about health. So for us to go and sell our produce to ice cream does not [support our mission].

To frame this example within the context of the Theory in Figure 3, the organization was presented with a business model that did not support its Food Philosophy and Mission. Because of this, leaders decided against the proposition. Similarly, YF's determination to alter its

previous approach is an example of a Business Model inappropriately matched to support their mission. In both cases, the Business Model did not support the Mission/Food Philosophy, prompting leaders to discontinue or decline their use. By contrast, organizations currently enact Business Models which *do* support Mission, through their accompanying Food Philosophies. Because of this relationship, Figure 3 shows Business Models as supporting Food Philosophy and Mission. As recommended above, leaders would be wise to frequently assess their chosen Business Model's capacity to support mission, and adapt when appropriate.

Alignment through embedded production and distribution. Figure 3 shows 'production and distribution' as embedded within the elements of Program Design and Business Model. It is situated as such because this activity operates as an element of the organization's Program Design (organizations design their production and distribution), as a driver of the organization's Business Model (distribution activities can contribute earned income- or not), and as an alignment of the two elements. To be fair, almost any charitable activity could be argued to play a role spanning these two areas, however production and distribution are called out in this model (among other possible activities) because it is a distinctive activity for FGNPs. Furthermore, this is a primary method by which FGNPS ensure the two larger elements of Program Design and Business Model are in sync.

An organization's Program Design defines its production and distribution by very nature; the organization designs how the activity will occur in a way that supports mission. As an example, food production can be informed by the corresponding program's intent. DWH grows 'market vegetables' (for use in farmers market sales and IFS deliveries) separately from their seed-saving plots (for preservation of culturally important varieties). The production of each is informed by separate elements of the mission, and the programming interacting with each area is

similarly different. In this context, organizational planners have intentionally *designed* their production, thereby embedding production within Program Design. This is true on the distribution end as well. Previous examples have already described how organizations adapt distribution mechanisms to align to mission purposes, further lending support to the model's depiction of production and distribution within Program Design.

An organization's production and distribution must also reflect their chosen Business Model. Most obviously, chosen distribution methods must appropriately match the organization's anticipated revenue levels. YF mainly distributes food internally and sends it home for free to participant's families. Their business model correspondingly anticipates no earned income from this activity. By contrast, because eQuality's business model anticipates earned income, they structure their production in a way that results in saleable items and in quantities that will satisfy goals. These examples reveal how production and distribution must also reflect Business Model, placing production/distribution within Business Model in Figure 3.

But what of the relationship of Program Design to Business Model? How do these two elements interact? Figure 3 depicts the two as being in alignment through the chosen methods of production and distribution. This speaks to a previous theme of balancing mission work and earned income efforts. While this theme was apparent *within* Business Models, it is also present at this larger level. To use slightly different language, recall Brown's (2002) statement regarding nonprofit food-growing operations: "trying to maximize earned revenues while maintaining a strong social agenda presents significant challenges, since each objective alone demands energy, focus, and creativity" (p.17) Production and distribution represents the way Program Design and Business Model are aligned and balanced.

An example comes from AFC, in which a potential distribution method is *not* in sync, revealing challenges resulting from misalignment. One of AFC's goals is to increase vegetable access for North Minneapolis residents, partially as a response to community desires for more convenient locations to access fresh produce. Because of this, the organization designed a distribution mechanism that aims to make produce available at corner store locations. From a Program Design perspective this addresses the identified need, and directs the corresponding distribution activities. AFC has not found high rates of success within this model however, because the business model does not support the intended outcomes. Despite thoughtful design, the public has not been willing to purchase produce at corner store locations. Although "people do want produce, they want it to be affordable, attractive, and sold in an environment that they're comfortable buying in" (AFC Executive Director). In this instance, the Business Model is out of alignment with the Design, and the program has not yet become successful.

An alternative example shows more successful alignment. The Program Design of eQuality's farm operation relies on associates providing the labor for production. Because of the services provided to associates, the organization is paid per diem revenue by the state. This money is partly used to provide an "onsite job coach… [to] meet all of [associates] physical needs, keep them safe, [and] keep their supervisory requirements" (eQuality Executive Director). While this per diem absolutely supports associates' needs, in some form it also provides a subsidizing effect for the organization's farm operation. The Program Design for production very likely has a positive effect on the organization's ability to operate its chosen Business Model; the two are well matched, indicating good alignment between the elements.

Further Research

Grounded theory methodology allows a researcher to construct understanding of an issue or phenomenon where theory does not yet exist (Charmaz, 2006). The theory presented within this research study should be understood within this context. Prior to this project, no existing research was found describing the issues facing FGNPs, and the theory outlined above (and in Figure 3) represents the first attempt to do so. This represents a major limitation within the study, as the theory has not been widely tested.

When possible, a grounded theory methodology encourages the researcher to seek feedback on developed theories from research participants (Charmaz, 2006). This allows the participants to reflect on the accuracy of the theories, identify if the findings resonate with their experience, and provide affirmation (or denial) of results. The opportunity to seek this feedback is the logical next step for this project, and would provide invaluable insights into validity of the theories.

At the broadest level, research should be done to assess the validity of the theory by examining a larger sample. Expanded sampling need not be merely a larger quantity of organizations examined. Additional work could examine the theory's fit for FGNPs with alternate mission priorities than those examined here: for example, hunger relief or business incubation. This would allow the opportunity to examine if the themes found within this study similarly apply to organizations operating in different mission areas. An alternative line of inquiry may explore if results hold across geographic variation; particularly compared to more temperate areas with longer growing seasons. A point of personal interest for the researcher lies within the applicability of the theory for FGNPs operating in rural settings.

Expanding beyond a food-related focus would be valuable, as this would examine the theory against the context of the broader nonprofit sector. Does the theory hold value for other subsectors? Is it specific to food-growing activities? Does the concept of a Food Philosophy translate to other mission areas (e.g. do other mission areas have distinctive philosophies which guide their work)? To some degree the concept of a Food Philosophy rests on the wide array of potential benefits represented by food. It may be worthwhile to discover if other mission-categories hold the same dilemma, or if food is unique in this regard.

Finally, it would be interesting to plumb the depths of causation regarding the concepts presented within this study. For example, how do organizations arrive at an Integrated Program Design? Is this a natural progression by trial and error for any nonprofit that takes on food-growing activities, or do leaders strategically design integration in advance, to take advantage of the unique opportunities presented by food as a mission area? While certainly not comprehensive, these questions provide possible future research that would further expand on the work done within this project.

Conclusion

This study used a qualitative, grounded theory methodology to examine the question: What are the opportunities, issues, and challenges facing nonprofit organizations in the Twin Cities region that are producing food as a component of their mission? The results demonstrated varied strategies and programs around food-growing operations. Furthermore, this study identifies food as a richly complex field for charitable work, with many facets and much nuance.

As with all nonprofit organizations, FGNPs described above endeavor to find suitable methods of sustaining their programs financially. Perhaps unique to this subsector, the organizations in this study face a ready-made saleable inventory as an output of their work: food.

Much of this study examines how organizations respond to this reality. Should they attempt to capitalize (financially) on this opportunity? If so, what strategy should the organization take in pursuing earned income? How can a balance be best struck between revenue and mission work? How should participants be involved in these activities? What benefit should be communicated about farming efforts? Each of these questions arise because of the broccoli, tomato or basil that results from organization's activities… and each organization answers them differently. The results of this project show there is no singular answer for any of these queries, a reality which is reflected in the fascinatingly differentiated approaches depicted above.

For organizations wishing to establish gardening or farming programs, leaders need not waste time seeking the 'right way' to implement such an activity. Rather the organization ought to consider their own unique circumstances, perhaps using the theory described here to examine the role and structure of such a program. Working through the descriptive/analytical model presented in Figure 3, leaders could begin by defining their own Food Philosophy and how it relates to their existing mission. Having an appropriately defined (and communicated) Food Philosophy would provide the new endeavor with clarity in communication and direction of efforts. Following the model's indication, this should directly inform Program Design, where leaders should ponder how best to adapt and maximize the opportunities within food-growing activities. This planning should incorporate integration when possible, both for individual participants, and between organizational programs. Finally, a suitable Business Model should be assessed… By no means a simple task, and one which requires ongoing attention, thoughtfulness, and responsiveness to change. As leaders apply the model, they would be well advised to attend to the balance between Business Model and Program Design, and in particular consider how this balance is manifested within production and distribution operations. In all

likelihood this balance will change periodically, requiring leaders to re-examine the assumptions and purposes of their work.

Charitable farming is a layered and complex topic, with many opportunities for adaptation, tweaking, and customization to fit organization's needs. This is reflected in the wide array of strategic approaches demonstrated by FGNPs. Accordingly, rather than identifying specific best-practices in widespread use, the results & synthesis of this study provide a framework for nonprofit leaders to examine their work. By applying attentiveness and strategic thinking, this model can provide leaders with an additional tool to increase their organization's capacity to impact the individuals and communities they serve.

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Appendix A: Preliminary Scan of Potentially Eligible Organizations

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
Appetite for Change	Appetite for Growing	Community Garden: grow food for Community Cooks workshops. Youth Interns learn how to grow (and sell) fresh produce to local vendors. Community space for gathering, learning and building community around fresh foods	Appetite For Change uses food as a tool to build health, wealth and social change.
Arrive Ministries	Church Refugee Gardens	Friendship Gardens, Welcome Gardens, and others are provided by local churches as places for refugees to grow food and/or for congregation members to donate food to local services.	Empowering the local church to demonstrate God's love as we welcome and bring lifelong transformation to refugees and immigrants in Minnesota.
Children's Farm	Pre-school	Preschool built around the idea that kids develop best in an environment where they can DO.	Organization runs a summer school camp program for children ages 3 to 10 and a pre-school program during the regular school year for children ages 2 to 4
Community Homestead	CSA & garden	Residential community including developmentally disabled adults, who work in and contribute to the farm/CSA	To establish and maintain a community in which people live and work together so that individuals with developmental and other disabilities can reach their fullest human potential.
Dodge Nature Center	Family Garden Program, other farming?	Community Garden w/raised beds. Education programs w/animals and vegetables	Providing exceptional experiences in nature through environmental education.
Dream of Wild Health	A Native CSA, Education programs	A CSA offering Native foods; seed-saving program; educational opportunities for children and families	To restore health and well-being in the Native community by recovering knowledge of and access to healthy Indigenous foods, medicines and lifeways.

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
eQuality - Pathways to Potential	eQuality Farms	As an entrepreneurial project, eQuality Farms was created in 2009. eQuality pays the wages to a crew of eight adults with developmental disabilities to work at the farm and farmers' markets, as well as providing therapeutic-educational opportunities to 40 individuals.	eQuality - Pathways to Potential challenges individuals with developmental disabilities to maximize their potential and actively participate in life's opportunities by delivering community based, individualized programs that encourages their growth.
Project S.U.P.E.R.M.A.N.	Fresh Start Farm	Partners with Fresh Start Farm (LLC) to provide economic development for underserved individuals, youth development, and produce for food shelves and community projects	Unknown
Frogtown Farm	n/a	Demonstration farm and educational site	To make our neighborhood healthier and greener.
Grace and Hope	Live Earth	Demonstration farm for composting and healthy soils. Provides vegetables to families that cannot afford healthy food.	Empower our environment, enrich our soils and feed a healthy community while alleviating poverty.
Great River School Community Garden	Unknown	Garden as part of school activities	Great River School, an urban Montessori learning environment, prepares students for their unique roles as responsible and engaged citizens of the world.
Growing Hope Farm	Seed to City	Volunteers help raise food which is directed to urban partners for distribution to underserved audiences	To impact the lives of vulnerable youth and families in our communities by providing access to healthy food, a unique natural setting and life-changing learning.
Happy Dancing Turtle	n/a	Eco Camp for children, demonstration site for sustainable living through tours, & school group visits	To build, demonstrate, and promote sustainable living in ways that are economically and ecologically practical

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
Healthy West 7th	Community Gardens	Community Garden	Healthy West 7th seeks to improve the health and wellness of Saint Paul's West End in measureable ways by building relationships throughout our community founded on the unique strengths of our neighborhood
Heritage Park Neighborhood Association	Heritage Park community garden	Community Garden	Working to together educate and empower the residents of Sumner-Glenwood and the Heritage Park community by creating a welcoming, self-sustaining unified community environment that values and embraces diversity.
Hmong American Farmers Association	Multiple	Provides trainings, alternative markets, business development around Hmong farmers	The mission of the Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA) is to advance the economic, social and cultural prosperity of Hmong American farmers in Minnesota through economic development, capacity building, advocacy and research.
Hope Community Youth and Community Gardens	Community Garden	Community Garden	Hope Community is a catalyst for change, growth and safety. We are building a sustainable neighborhood model through community organization, active education, leadership and affordable housing development.

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy	Farm to Institution program	Works to increase fresh healthy produce from our local growers into school and childcare meals, as well as testing and promoting curricula and educational models that encourage food literacy as children make the connection between those locally grown foods and the farmers who produce them.	IATP works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems.
Kaleidoscope Kids	Children's Garden	The Children's Garden is in partnership with the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. It provides students in the Summer Kids program an opportunity to experience hands on science, nutrition, and health while learning about gardening through planting, maintaining, and harvesting herbs, vegetables, and flowers. At the end of the summer the students harvest the produce and share it with their family.	To provide a creative, educational, and nurturing environment for children to learn and grow in character and community for success in a changing world.
Land Stewardship Project	Farm Beginnings (and others)	The Farm Beginnings Program works to get more successful farmers on the land and organize for a system in which family farmers can flourish.	To foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture and to develop sustainable communities.
Latino Economic Development Center	n/a	Business incubation/support & economic development efforts for Latino farmers.	To transform our community by creating economic opportunity for Latinos.
Main Street Project	n/a	Farmer training, entrepreneur & business incubation, food systems thinking.	increase access to resources, share knowledge and build power in order to create a socially, economically and ecologically resilient food system.

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
Metro Blooms	n/a	Providing rain garden workshops and support for installing rain barrels and other water conservation resources.	To promote and celebrate gardening, to beautify our communities and help heal and protect our environment.
Midwest Food Connection	School Program	MFC Educator bring exciting, practical and interactive lessons about healthful eating to schools in the Twin Cities area.	Midwest Food Connection envisions a society in which all people can improve their quality of life by consuming healthful foods and by supporting a local economy of sustainable food producers. Midwest Food Connection will contribute to this vision by empowering elementary school children to make healthy and responsible food choices.
Minnesota Landscape Arboretum	Various Urban Gardening programs	Children's Urban Gardens (Educational), Garden youth employment, demonstration gardens.	The mission of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, as part of the University of Minnesota, is to provide a community and a national resource for horticultural and environmental information, research and public education; to develop and evaluate plants and horticultural practices for cold climates; and to inspire and delight all visitors with quality plants in well designed and maintained displays, collections, model landscapes, and conservation areas.
MN Food Association	Big River Farms	Beginning farmer/immigrant/refuge training program, running a CSA, also does some direct sales.	Minnesota Food Association's mission is to build a more sustainable food system based on social, economic and environmental justice.

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
MN State Horticultural Society	Garden-in-a-Box	Provide gardening opportunity for low-income families and school to growing their own vegetables.	We connect plants and people.
Open Arms of Minnesota	Open Farms	Urban Garden producing food for distribution through Open Arms programs.	With Open Arms, we nourish body, mind and soul.
Our Community Food Projects	Many	Community Gardens, and Youth CSA. Focuses on food inequity and grassroots organization.	Our Community Food Projects is committed to increasing access to healthy food, and minimizing the gap in economic inequality.
Philadelphia Community Farm	Buttermilk Falls CSA	CSA, education programs, environmental conservation.	To restore health and vitality to people, animals, plants and the earth.
PRI Cold Climate	Apprenticeship Program, Urban Farming Certification Program	10 month Mentorship program to give skills of gardening, building, and other sustainable living skills.	With creativity, knowledge, and passion we design and demonstrate permaculture systems for living sustainably in colder climates for individuals and organizations working towards healthy communities and ecosystems.
Project Sweetie pie	n/a	Greenhouse and educational training facility, mobile food store, education around composting, and a scattered garden network across North Minneapolis.	We create producers, not consumers. We create opportunities, not just promises. We are a gateway to the trades.
Renewing the Countryside	Multiple	Farm-to-school initiatives, training for farmers, education.	Working for a more just, vibrant and sustainable rural America.

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
Sister's Camelot	Urban Gardening	Community Garden Program and Organic Food Share program.	Sisters' Camelot is a collectively run 501c3 non-profit organization working to promote sustainability, strengthen community, and raise awareness about food justice. As an organization, we model a way to unconditionally share free healthy food in our communities.
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet	Celeste's dream community garden	A community garden (shared plot). Experience-building opportunity to learn gardening, build community with earth and others.	Moving always toward the profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction.
Spark-Y	School Program, Sustainable Education Lab	To help youth discover knowledge and empowerment we use programs focused on urban agriculture systems including: aquaponics, vermicomposting, algae cultivation, and mushroom cultivation.	Our mission is to empower youth with knowledge, job preparation, and life success skills through hands-on sustainable education.
Summit Hill Association	Summit Hill Garden	Community Garden & CSA-style garden to increase access to those without land.	Our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our neighborhood through a wide range of community projects and programs.
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota	Deep Roots Beginning Farmer's program	beginning-farmer curriculum that emphasizes all three tenets of sustainability, plus provides extensive skills training. A unique aspect of Deep Roots is its commitment to community development and mentoring, a perfect fit with SFA's Farmer-to-Farmer Network® organization.	The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota supports the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through farmer-to-farmer networking, innovation, demonstration, and education.

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
The Food Group (formerly Emergency Foodshelf Network)	Harvest for the hungry, produce rescue at farmers market	Purchases produce from Minnesota and Western Wisconsin farmers, donating the fruit and vegetables to our network of food shelves, on-site meal programs, and hunger relief agencies free of charge.	The Food Group is an innovative food bank dedicated to serving the hunger needs of our changing communities.
The Minnesota Project	Fruits of the City, Garden gleaning project	Volunteers harvest food and give to food shelves.	The Minnesota Project champions the sustainable production and equitable distribution of energy and food in communities across Minnesota.
Union Park District Council	Merriam Station Community Garden	Community Garden	seek to actively transform a previously neglected tract of land into a true community treasure.
Urban Oasis	n/a	Classes on nutrition, composting, and preserving.	Urban Oasis cultivates a healthy, resilient, and prosperous community by strengthening the local food system and increasing access and enjoyment of sustainably-grown, affordable, whole food.
Urban Roots	Market Garden Program	Market Garden Crew youth interns plant, maintain and harvest seven vegetable gardens, run a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, operate a farmers market stand, sell produce to local restaurants, create and sell products, use food in our cooking program, distribute produce to youth interns & their families, donate to local food shelves and more.	To build vibrant and healthy communities through food, conservation and youth development.

Organization Name	Name of possible food-producing program/ activity (if applicable)	Summary of possible food-producing program/ activity	Organization Mission
Urban Ventures	City Kid Enterprises (City Kid Farm)	CityKid Enterprises is a hunger and nutrition initiative directed by Urban Ventures that uses food to build thriving and healthy families in Minneapolis: educating youth about gardening and agriculture and providing the Mobile Market with fresh produce to sell. Nutrition education programs.	Urban Ventures is dedicated to breaking the cycle of generational poverty one person, one family at a time.
Women's Environmental Institute	Education programs, demonstration and education farm, CSA, Eco-Retreat Center	Organic farm school, demonstration farm, CSA, cultural heritage projects, supports two urban farm projects, environmental & food justice programs, retreat facilities.	WEI is an environmental research, renewal and retreat center designed to create and share knowledge about environmental issues and policies relevant to women, children and identified communities especially affected by environmental injustices; to promote agricultural justice, organic and sustainable agriculture and ecological awareness; and to support activism that influences public policy and promotes social change.
Youth Farm	n/a	Site-specific youth leadership and neighborhood development programs.	We grow leaders. We grow food. We grow community. We grow progress.

Appendix B: Nonprofits in Urban Agriculture: Demographic Assessment

* indicates required question

Introduction:

This survey is part of a Graduate Thesis in the Nonprofit Management program at Hamline University. The survey intends to examine nonprofit organizations in and around the Twin Cities that are involved in producing local food. It is comprised of 27 questions, and should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Responses to this survey will be used to identify candidate organizations for continued research as case studies. (Additional consent will be obtained prior to case study participation)

By completing this survey, participants agree to allow the researcher to analyze and quote responses as necessary. Participation in this survey is voluntary, and respondents have the right to discontinue at any time.

Questions may be directed to the researcher: Marcos Stoltzfus at ************@hamline.edu** or advisor, Dr. Reid Zimmerman at *************@hamline.edu**

Do you agree to the above terms?* *Yes / No*

Organization information: The following questions seek to gather demographic and categorizing information about your organization:

1. **Does your organization produce food as part of its activities?***

   (Choose one) Yes / No / I'm not sure (please explain)

2. **What types of food does your organization produce/grow?***

   (Check all that apply) Vegetables / Herbs / Fruit / Grains / Poultry / Eggs / Fish / Pork / Beef / Honey / N/A / Other (please specify)

3. **What is the name of your organization?***

4. **Which best describes your organization's legal status?***

   (Choose one) Nonprofit organization / Community organization (does not hold legal nonprofit status) / For-profit business / Other (please specify)

5. **What is your organization's overall budget?***

   (Choose one) $0 /$1- $4,999 / $5,000- $9,999 / $10,000- $24,999 / $25,000- $49,999 / $50,000- $99,999 / $100,000- $249,999 / $250,000- $499,999 / $500,000- $999,999 / $1,000,000- $2,999,999 / $3,000,000- $4,999,999 / $5,000,000+

6. **How many staff and volunteers does your organization have?***

   (choose one for each: Staff -Full Time Equivalents and Volunteers)

   0 / Less than1 / 1 / 2-4 / 5-9 / 10-24 / 25-49 / 50-99 / Greater than 100

7. **Which best describes why your organization produces food?***

   (Choose one) Youth Development / Hunger/nutrition / Education / Environmental conservation / Community Improvement / Social Justice / Revenue generation / N/A / Other (please specify)

8. **Which describe additional reasons why your organization produces food?**

   (Check all that apply) Youth Development / Hunger/nutrition / Education / Environmental conservation / Community Improvement / Social Justice / Revenue generation / N/A / Other (please specify)

9. **What year did your organization begin producing food?***

   (if not applicable, please enter 'N/A')

Food production: Scale The following questions seek to understand the scale of your organization's food production activities. Please answer to the best of your ability.

10. **What is the annual program budget for the portion of your organization involved in producing food? ***

(Choose one) $0 / $1- $4,999 / $5,000- $9,999 / $10,000- $24,999 / $25,000- $49,999 / $50,000- $99,999 / $100,000- $249,999 / $250,000- $499,999 / $500,000- $999,999 / $1,000,000- $2,999,999 / $3,000,000- $4,999,999 / $5,000,000+

11. **On average, how many pounds of food does your organization produce annually?**
12. **What is the dollar value of the food your organization produces annually?**
13. **Which option best describes the scale of your organization's food production activity?***

(Choose one) Smaller than a garden / Garden / Multiple gardens / Farm / Multiple farms / Other (please specify)

14. **Approximately how much land does your organization use annually to produce food?***

(Answer either in acres or square feet)

15. **What is the status of the land your organization uses to produce food?***

(Check all that apply) Owned / Leased / Donated / Other (please specify)

16. **Compared to your last growing season, how do you anticipate the level of your organization's food production will change in the upcoming growing season?***

(Choose one) Much less food produced / Somewhat less food produced / About

the same food produced / Somewhat more food produced / Much more food produced

Food Production Model: The following questions seek to understand who *produces* food at your organization and who *receives* it.

17. **Who is primarily responsible for producing food at your organization?***

(Choose one) Staff / Volunteers / Program participants / Other (please specify)

18. Who is additionally responsible for producing food at your organization?*

(Check all that apply) Staff / Volunteers / Program participants / Other (please specify)

19. Which best describes the primary recipient of the food your organization produces?*

(Choose one) Staff / Volunteers / Program participants / Customers / Another organization / Other (please specify)

20. Which best describes additional recipients of the food your organization produces?*

(Check all that apply) Staff / Volunteers / Program participants / Customers / Another organization / None / Other (please specify)

21. **Which best describes how recipients pay for food received?***

(Choose one) Recipients pay full market value / Recipients pay a portion of market value / Recipients do not pay / Other (please specify)

22. **In what ZIP code(s) does your organization produce (grow) food?***

(Enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example 00544 or 94305)

23. **In what ZIP code(s) does your organization distribute food?**

    (Enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example 00544 or 94305)ZIP code 1

24. **Which best describes your organization's primary food distribution method?***

    (Choose one) Community Supported Agriculture / Farmer's market / Mobile market / Farm stand / Food shelf / Harvested on-site / Wholesale / Other (please specify)

25. **Which best describes your organization's food additional distribution methods?***

    (Check all that apply) Community Supported Agriculture / Farmer's market / Mobile market / Farm stand / Food shelf / Harvested on-site / Wholesale / Other (please specify)

26. **Please provide a brief description of your organization's food-producing activity. How is food produced and distributed?***

27. Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your response is critical to the success of this thesis project! If you would like to receive a copy of the final project, please indicate your name and email address below. (Names and contact information will not be shared or reported within the research project).

    Name / Email Address

28. **Other comments?**

Skip logic: Redirected from Question 2, answer = 'No'

1. **What best describes your organization's relationship to local food?**

Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Introductory questions

- Please briefly describe how your organization is involved with growing food.
- What is the history of your organization's food-growing activity? Why or how did the idea originate?

Purpose of activities and communication of value

Guiding question: How does this program contribute to the mission of the organization?

Probes:

- What need does this program seek to address?
- Please describe your food recipient(s).
- When communicating to stakeholders, what does your organization argue is the biggest outcome of this program?
    - Does your organization perceive multiple benefits to your food-growing activities?
    - If so, how do you determine which benefits to highlight when communicating to stakeholders?
- How does the organization measure outcomes or impact?
- What sets apart your food production activities from a for-profit counterpart?

Production & Distribution model

Guiding question: What is the design of your production/distribution model, and how does it function?

Probes:

- What opportunities does this model allow the organization to pursue? What works particularly well with this model?
- What challenges are present within this model?
- How do those who participate in *producing* (growing*)* food benefit from their participation?
    - Is the intent of the program? How has the program been structured so that this outcome is achieved?
- How do those who *receive* food benefit?
    - Is the intent of the program? How has the program been structured so that this outcome is achieved?

Organizational structure

Guiding question: What is the structure of the program (the food-growing activity) and how does it integrate with the broader organization?

Probes:

- What factors influenced the form/structure of this program?
- How does this activity integrate with other activities the organization implements?
- How is the program supported through staff and/or volunteers?

    - Does the program have staff dedicated specifically to the program? What does this look like?
- How is this (program) sustained?
    - What does the funding mix for the program look like?
- How does the scale of the organization's food production match *why* it produces food?
    - Could the organization could still be effective in meeting its purpose at a smaller scale? A larger scale? Why or why not?
- What is the legal status of the program, and how does this relate to the larger organization?
    - Is the program a full part of the organization, a wholly-owned subsidiary, etc. Why this arrangement?

What else do you feel is important to know about your organization's food production activities?