

Summary

Visioning Creative Collaborations for Behavior Change



Introduction

This workshop was convened to examine interdisciplinary, creative projects and collaborations that can address health, nutrition, and sustainability-related behavior and behavior change by bridging disciplines and building a new narrative around food and diets. Bridging food, art, and humanities helps to get us outside of our collective boxes because the arts are consumptive, therapeutic, and participatory. Art and humanities can help mediate cultural collisions with scientific logic/reason because “culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

Session 1: Foundations

Inspiration

Culture complicates everything, and cultural aspects of health are the hardest to address. For example, cultural practice can both discourage and encourage meat consumption based on religion, economics, geography, and social mores and folkways. Behavior change has to start with the individual but lasting change has to be long-term (generational culture change). Individual change can happen when interventions are embodied in how they see themselves and their identity (intrinsic motivations with broader impact). Engagement through participation and hands-on experience is powerful (urban gardening, sharing a meal, a shared cultural experience, etc). Any solutions and interventions need to be culturally appropriate relative to the community. We must also consider ethical and moral implications of interventions oriented towards behavior change. What makes an intervention good or bad, and who gets to decide?

Issues of Interest

- Structural/power issues beyond personal choice and behavior (food access, ethnography, mental health, self-efficacy, socioeconomic inequalities, etc.)
- Community behavior, interactions (food as a “social glue” and participatory device)
- Scaling from local, regional, national, and global in the context of multicultural settings across all scales
- Seeing artists/humanists as co-creators with natural/social scientists from the beginning rather than just helping to illustrate findings at the end

Session 2: Key Issues

Behaviors are an issue of scale (local, regional, national, and global). One size does not fit all, and there are a variety of barriers and challenges to behavior change. Models and exemplars are critically important. We must also determine what we mean by “eating well” and making “good” choices about food as well what those words mean in various community contexts.

Institutions

Challenges

- Differing methods of evaluation between collaborative partners to measure success, impact, and effectiveness (how do we evaluate small, deeply engaging projects?)
- Career trajectory and tenure requirements that don't necessarily encourage or incentivize faculty to engage in collaborative, nontraditional projects
- Expertise and issues of trust between institutions and the public
- Ethics of imposing “good” interventions on people in a democratic society (how do we empower people with options without telling them what the “good” life is?)

Opportunities

- Creative Measurement Lab: in development at HIDA@ASU and focused on creating new ways of evaluating change in communities and impacts because traditional measures are very narrowly defined; could use lab to understand where to intervene and why and to create appetite for funders and policymakers
- Using expertise to build a structure or place to help people think rather than force beliefs on them; for people to come to discover themselves and how they choose to act regarding well-being and nutrition; and help people understand their reasons for what they're doing, then do interventions with consent that are more effective
- Art is a great facilitator between the institution and the public

Community

Challenges

- Fear and distrust of institutions (governmental, corporate, etc.) and sometimes benevolent systems due to greenwashing or views of elitism or paternalism
- External motivation and incentive (how do we meet people where they are and also make sure to reward “good” behavior change or existing “good” behavior?)
- Community buy-in; need to show long-term benefit and continued engagement with community
- Cultural issues that can overwhelm intervention: bison as Native American heritage food; Hindu scriptures and plant-based foods (right-wing politicians in India try to force plant-based diets where population is 70% meat eaters, 30% plant-based); aesthetics of food (“ugly” food becomes food waste in the U.S.); emotional attachments that defy scientific logic/reason

- Self-reporting doesn't always match behavior

Opportunities

- Meet the community halfway by making easier lifestyle changes, integrating more plant-based vs. heavy meat, choosing healthier/more sustainable meat options (ex: bison is a healthier meat plus good use for grazing lands)
- Find common end goals even if pathways to get there are different (ex: Tea Party and Greenpeace are both pro-solar though one values energy independence and the other values the environment)
- Try new lenses to examine dietary issues like the health benefits, disease prevention/maintenance, and economic costs of diet and nutrition as well as bioethics and well-being (what does it mean to flourish as a human being or live a life worth living?)
- There is an abundance of expertise and local knowledge in the community
- Generational shift: millennials adopting similar lifestyles to older generations (slow food, urban gardens, adaptive reuse of old buildings, etc.)

Session 3: Finding Common Ground

An exploration of ideas, themes, and exemplars that can set the stage for collaboration in teaching, research, and programming. Storytelling, narrative, and community seems to be the unifying thread through all of these project ideas and concepts.

Narrative Building

- Mental model: food narratives
 - Identity (*storytelling*): stories about people's lived experience, process of self-discovery, and a critical look at conscious values-making (question the narrative we are fed)
 - Intervention (*storymaking*): use narrative as rhetorical device to enact positive change
 - Implementation (*storyliving*): embedding expertise in a grander narrative
- Challenge: how do we analyze/evaluate?

Media-based Projects

- Movies/video/TV shows as a way to affect behavior change by turning distrust into action, making food processes more transparent, or providing education
 - Model - PSA: Ad Council's ["Extraordinary Life and Times of Strawberry"](#)
 - Model - Documentary: ["Supersize Me"](#) or ["Fed Up"](#)
- Collaboration between artist/filmmaker and food researcher
 - Model - Documentary: ["The Best Garden You'll Ever Eat From"](#)
 - Model - Matt Moore's [Digital Farm Collective](#) to bridge gap between farmer and consumer
- Visual storytelling
 - Model - Visual Narrative: ["Beyond the Plate"](#)

- Literacy: Uttaran Dutta's computer program creates visual language determined by community that can express problems through common language established by images and audio rather than text for rural, illiterate communities in India (interested in extending this project from a global context to local Native American populations and immigrants)

Community-based Projects

- [Feast on the Street](#)
 - Convening community using food as a social glue
- [UK's Incredible Edible](#)
 - Community networks that create social cohesion around growing, harvesting, cooking, selling, and eating food
- [Cultural Engagements in Nutrition, Arts, and Sciences \(CENAS\)](#)
 - Incorporating community gardens and cultural ties as well as health as key to cooking
 - Could partner with schools with free/reduced lunch program and use/create community garden
 - Could incorporate "ugly" produce into education so they understand it is normal for produce to vary and that it is still edible
 - Could relate "ugly food" to body positivity and mental health by showing that people's bodies vary as much as fruits and vegetables (and perhaps prevent anorexia, bulimia, or other food-related emotional disorders)
- [Micro Museums](#)
 - Small, educational pop-up exhibits placed in public spaces (could make one based on food theme)
- Collaborations with healthcare facilities
 - Could partner with doctors to educate public through interactive exhibits in office (customized by discipline and topic)
 - [FARMACY Program](#): doctors write prescriptions for produce at local farmer's market to get patients eating healthier/better

Experiences

- Zombie Apocalypse + [Escape the Room](#)
 - Allow people to work together to prepare for survival scenario, assess skills, and what they are lacking (including an ability to grow food?)
- Virtual Reality
 - Could we change the way we value farmers, farm workers, and food by giving participants a virtual experience?
 - Model - VR in National Parks: Google Arts and Culture ["Hidden World"](#)

Potential funding opportunities:

<http://kalliopeia.org/>

<https://www.neh.gov/grants/public/digital-projects-the-public>

<http://www.artplaceamerica.org/our-work/national-creative-placemaking-fund/introduction>

<http://kresge.org>