

# GROW

dignity  
democracy  
diversity

to grow good\* food systems

\*resilient, ethical, triple sustainable

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# The next 15 minutes...

- Food Dignity 101
  - Partners
  - Hypothesis and hypertheses
  - Approaches
- A few sample findings



# Food Dignity Partners

## 5 community initiatives

- **East New York Farms! (ENYF!)**, United Community Centers, Brooklyn, NY
- **Whole Community Project (WCP)**, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Tompkins County, NY
- **Feeding Laramie Valley (FLV)**, Action Resources International, Albany County, WY
- **Blue Mountain Associates (BMA)**, Wind River Indian Reservation, WY
- **Dig Deep Farms & Produce (DDF)**, Deputy Sherriff's Activities League, Alameda County, CA

## 5 project-wide partners:

- **University of Wyoming (UW)**
- **Action Resources International**
- **Cornell University**
- also Ithaca College and UC Davis



# Food Dignity Objectives

- Education
  - Sustainable food system (SFS) minors at UW and CU
  - SFS “products”
  - Community-engaged student learning
- Extension as community organizing
  - Community organizing support package x 5 organizations
  - Dissemination and netbuilding
- Research – rigorous storytelling x 6
  - Lessons from 5 case studies for SFS
    - Garden harvest measures
    - Tracking \$150,000 in minigrants
  - Lessons from FD case study on role of universities



# Food Dignity Hypothesis

“Our project title, ‘Food Dignity,’ signals both our **ethical stance** that human and community agency in food systems is an end in itself and our **scientific hypothesis** that building civic and institutional capacity to engage in sustainable community food systems for food security action will improve the sustainability and equity of our local food systems and economies.”

*Food Dignity proposal to USDA/NIFA/AFRI, June 2010*

“The people hold thousands of solutions in their hands.”

*Via Campesina* declaration

*December 9, 2010*



# Food Dignity “Hyper-theses”: 1

Investing in community and regional food systems offers ethical and possibly practical alternatives...



Dig Deep farmers check out D-Town Farm operations

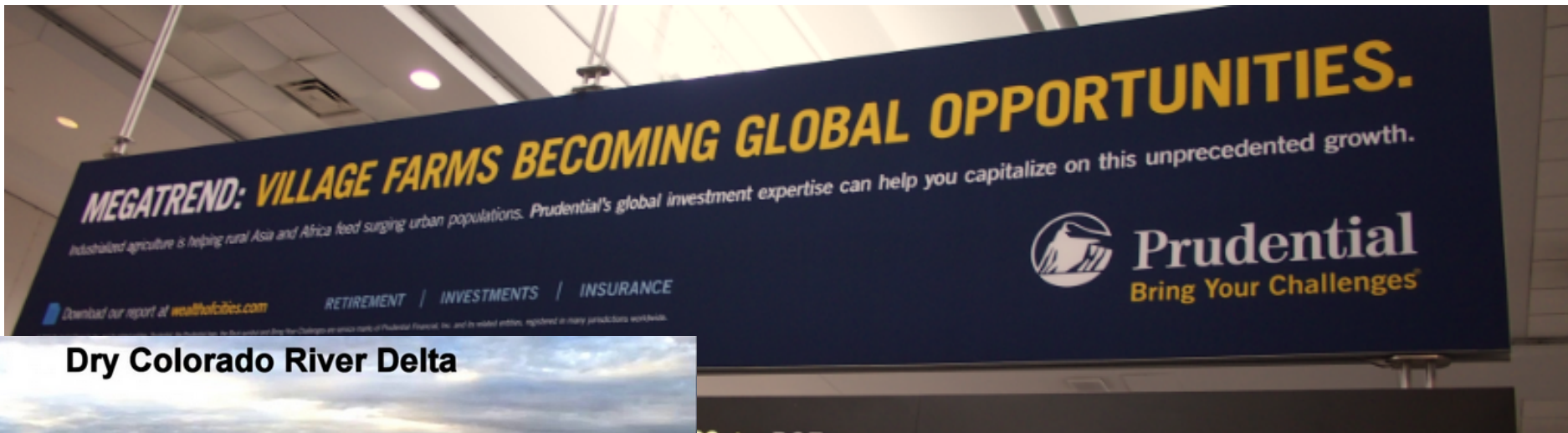


Wind River Indian Reservation  
Tribal Farmers Market



# Food Dignity “Hyper-theses”: 1

...to a fossil-fuel & forest burning, soil-eroding, mono-cropping, land-grabbing, river & aquifer-emptying, malnourishing, industrial food system.

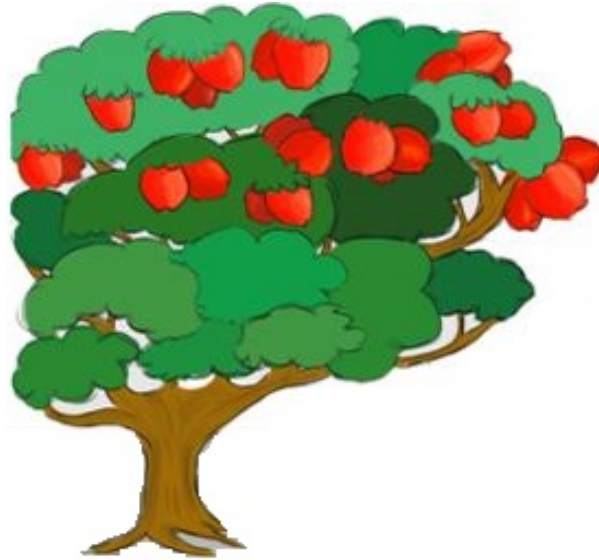


**Dry Colorado River Delta**



# Food Dignity “Hyper-theses”: 2

We are (and should be) in the midst of a Kuhnian scientific revolution, away from centering reductionist epistemology\* and technology...



\* Producing conclusive and generalizable knowledge as top priority.





# Food Dignity “Hyper-theses”: 2

...towards post-disciplinary radical axiology (knowledge generation in service of ethics).



Date	Crop type	Weight (ounces)	Food Use				Notes
			Eat	Store	Share	Loss	
e.g. 7/15	Beets w/ stems & greens	14.7	X				Some beets damaged by gophers. Just cut around gopher bites and ate the rest. Ate beets, stems, and greens
e.g. 7/30	carrots	32.3	10.3	12	10		Used in tonight's stir fry, froze some, and gave some to a friend
e.g. 7/31	radish	2.3				X	Estimated weight. Our best radish disappeared the day before we were going to harvest!
7/3	scallions	4.2 oz	X				<i>weight includes green part which we eat</i>
7/3	Rhubarb	5.02			X		<i>we give Rhubarb away</i>
7/6	scallions	2.4 oz	X				<i>(ditto 7/3)</i>
7/9	scallions	3.9 oz	X				<i>(ditto 7/3)</i>
7/9	Chard	9.3 oz		X			<i>second planting due to Gopher damage + freeze for the year.</i>
7/16	Chard	8.7 oz		X			<i>ditto - usually pick for 3-4 weeks</i>
7/20	Chard	2.1			X		<i>1st planting</i>

Team GROW  
harvest log



1<sup>st</sup> WY Food  
Equality  
Leadership  
Summit



# Approaches: 5 +1 case studies

- How do, can and should US communities work to create sustainable and equitable food systems that generate food security?
- How should universities and extension help?

## Methods:

- Digital storytelling
- Interviews and narrative inquiry
- File collection and coding
- Participation & observation
- Pathway modelling
- *Minigrant tracking*
- *Garden harvest measures*

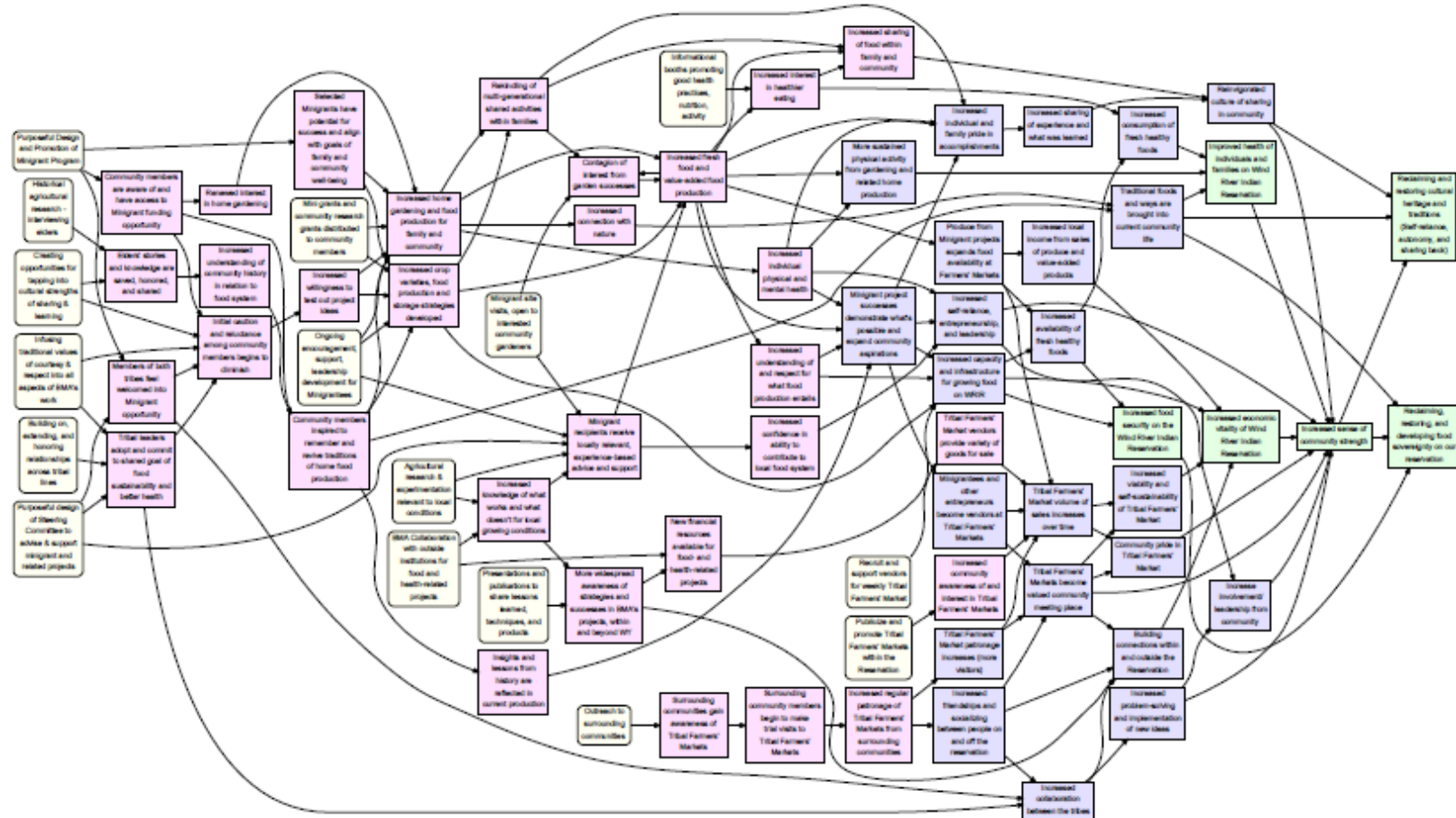
"The Truth About Magic" by Christine Porter, University of Wyoming



"Roots Rising" by Damon Brangman, Whole Community Project

# Pathway model: BMA in Wind River Indian Reservation

## Blue Mountain Associates Food Dignity Project



**Legend**

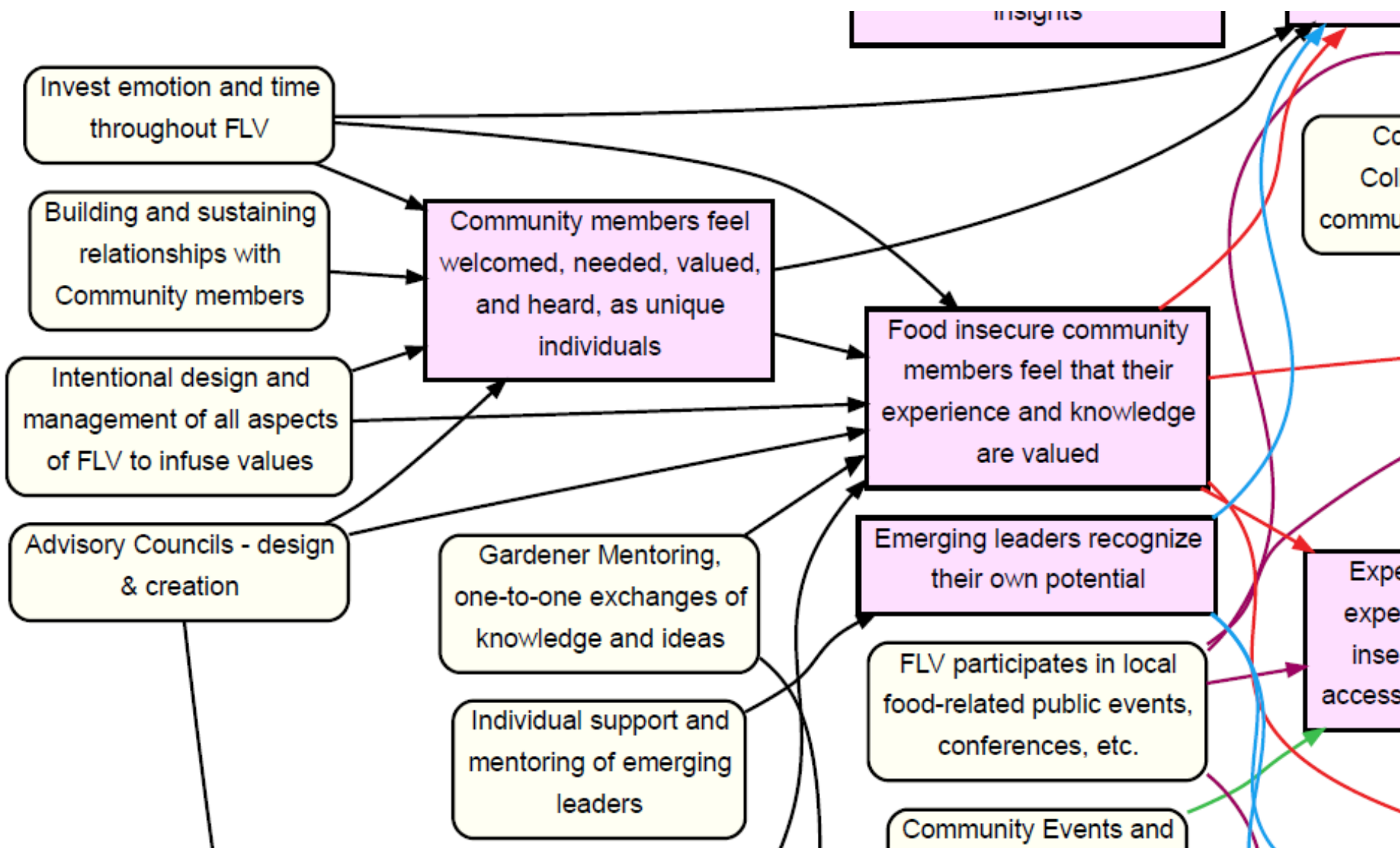
Activities	Short-Term Outcomes
Mid-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes

Context: The Northern Arapahoe and Eastern Shoshone living on the Wind River Reservation were originally Great Plains Indians, with hunter-gatherer lifestyles and diets based on natural foods. Health, community well-being, and traditional culture have been undermined through assimilation and limitations of life on the reservation. Growing conditions are challenging, unemployment is high, and rates of diabetes and heart disease are high. Accessible food now is dominated by external food suppliers and highly processed foods, fast food outlets, etc. Utilization of natural foods is extremely limited. BMA's initiatives recognize and work to overcome historical conflict between three significant groups residing in the region: the Northern Arapahoe, Eastern Shoshone, and non-Indian communities.

From Netway on 7/24/2015



# Snapshot from FLV pathway model



# Approaches: extension as community organizing

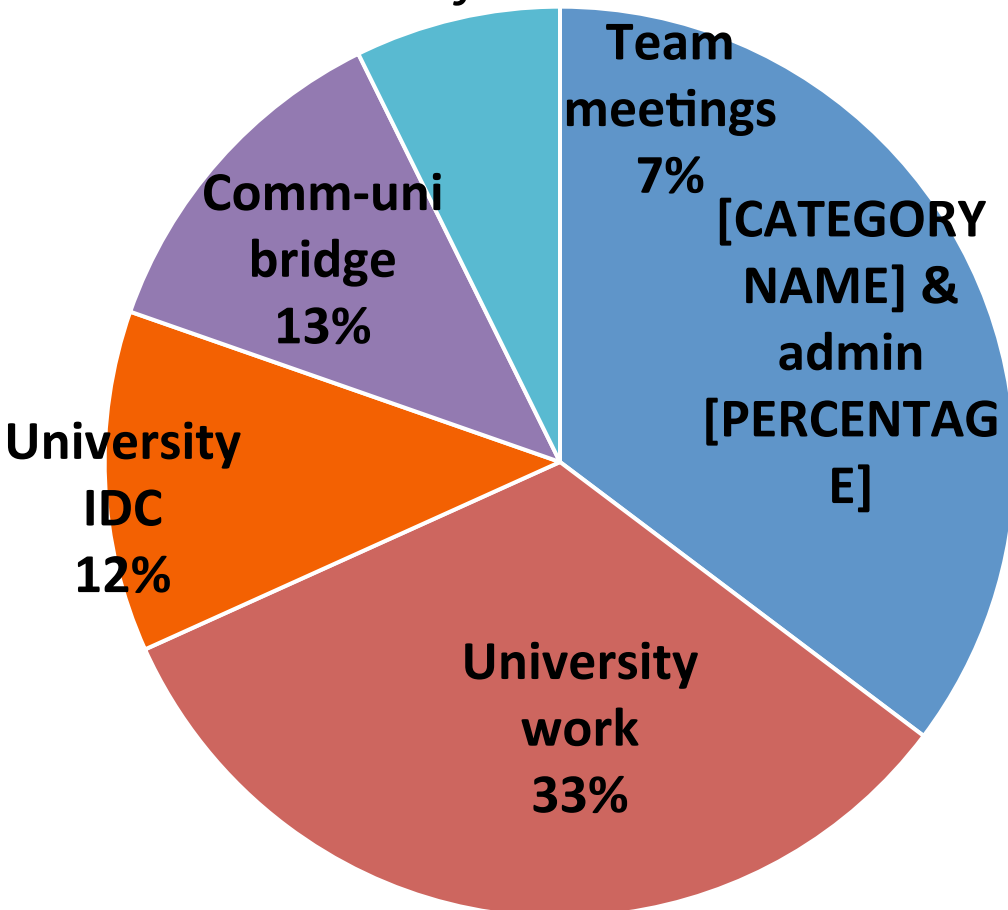
## \$350,000 “community organizing support package”

- community organizer (half-time)
- steering committees/citizen leadership
- research
- minigrants for individuals (\$30,000 total per project)
- community-university liaison (Laramie & Ithaca)
- *added in year 2*: leadership development



# Approaches: towards equitable research relations

- Co-designed action and research.
- Lots (and lots) of storming and struggle.
- Moved \$250k from university to community partners.
- Still inequitable.
- *Follow the five million.*



Community work & admin (incl. 10% IDC that USDA disallowed)	\$1,758,000
University work	\$1,643,000
University indirect	\$603,000
Comm-uni bridge	\$615,000
Team meetings (7)	\$364,000



# Finding: big garden yields

- **Method:** 30 Laramie gardeners, with range of expertise and demographics, weighed every harvest.
- **Results:** The average 253ft<sup>2</sup> plot yielded enough to supply an adult with the daily USDA-recommended amount of vegetables for nine months.



- **So what?**
  - Support gardening as a diverse and distributed agriculture...
  - that provides diverse and distributed benefits (including, per further findings, health, community infrastructure, cultural resilience and enrichment, and biodiversity).

# Finding: minigrants worked

- **Method:** RCT of impact of \$40 gardening minigrants, given raffle-style at a gardening workshop in Laramie.
- **Results:** Grantees were more likely to increase their gardening space and, among those who had no garden the previous year, to start one.



- **So what?**
  - Invest directly in people.





# Finding: growing dignity, democracy and diversity

- **Method:** Courage, hope, commitment, gratitude, respect and sometimes even love (for growing). Or business as usual (for stunting).
- **Results and so what:** Working on it for our “report out to the world” in 2016-17.

*A snapshot now from Jemila, Whole Community Project, on strategies and early lessons from organizing grassroots community-led work in the food system.*



# Ask not only “who is at the table” but also, “who set the table?”

For example, these community food policy meetings in Ithaca, New York...



...and the Ithaca Farmers' Market

<http://econewsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Farmer-Market-by-Kris-Reynolds.jpg>



vs. the Food Security Dialogues...



Food Policy Tours...



Gardens for Humanity...



and Congo Square Market.



# Invest in individuals – money and mentorship

## RootWork Herbals, Amanda David



**RootWork Herbals Herbalism Class Series**

*Empower your life. Tap into your intelligence. Embrace botanical wisdom.*

**3/8/15- Welcome to Home Herbalism!**  
An introduction to the home use of herbs for health and vitality. Learn herbal terminology, proper preparation techniques, safety considerations, common uses, and resources for obtaining quality herbs and supplies.

**4/12/15- Kitchen Herbalism!**  
Your kitchen is already full of medicinal! Learn to use and prepare common kitchen herbs to address an array of common health issues. Materials include garlic, onion, ginger, thyme, black pepper, honey and more.

**5/17/15- Backyard Herbalism!**  
Your backyard is really full of medicinal! Learn to identify and sustainably harvest an array of easily found common weeds. Proper uses and preparations will also be covered for plantain, dandelion, burdock, chickweed, motherwort, yarrow and more.

**6/14/15- Garden Herbalism!**  
Your garden should be full of medicinal! Learn easily grown herbs that do well in gardens or containers. Growing, harvesting, preparations and uses will be covered for mint, calendula, coneflower, echinacea, tulsi and more.

*Join your signs on the class discussion.*

*Subscriptions your gift through the Herbal Medicine Program, please contact:*

*Ursula Davis, the herbalist & making this and a RootWork Herbalist. I plan to bring, make a making, making, gardening, community health & which has been studying and playing with herbs for 12 years.*

*The herbs that healing, some of the most available in the herb.*

**To Have Life as a Herbalist, Contact:**

**Amanda David, (813) 941-1111**



# Enable and support community action and actors

## Dryden Community Garden: Community Water Catchment System Work Day



## Youth Farm Project



## Gardens 4 Humanity Congo Square Market ... and more.



# Connect, capacity build and network, network, network



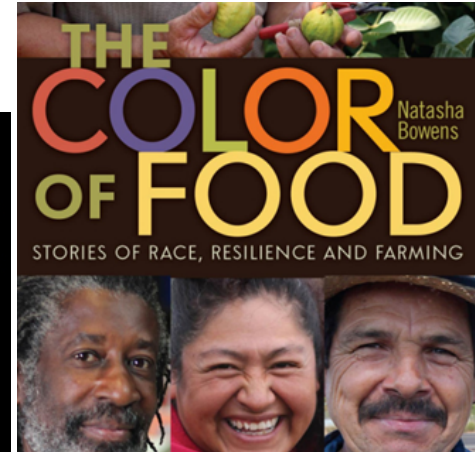
WCP team at **Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers Conference** , Brooklyn.

WCP team visiting **D-Town Farms**, Detroit



# Connect, capacity build and network, network, network

Bringing national leaders to Ithaca



**What's On the Table?**  
**A Menu for Food Justice**

Featuring **Malik Yakini**  
activist and educator who is committed to freedom  
and justice for African people

**Whole Community Project**

Monday October 24, 2011 11:30 am-2:30 pm  
North Star Pub 202 East Falls Street, Ithaca, NY 14850

## Food Justice Summit: Charity Hicks urges Ithacans challenge status quo

By Dialynn Dwyer reporter@ithacatimes.com | Posted: Wednesday, September 26, 2012 12:00

Co/organizing events



# Roadmaps to food dignity

- Commitment to changes that promote equity for everyone.
- Willingness to be uncomfortable in the process.
- Re-designing the wheel, when necessary, to travel a new road to a sustainable food system.
- Value and respect knowledge found outside the academy.
- How do we document and communicate the value of networking, capacity building, and mentorship that are central to this work?





# Gratitude

Thanks to you for listening.

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We value the fundamental dignity, worth, sovereignty, self-determination and the inherent power of all people. As members of the Food Dignity project, we are committed to principles and ways of working within our own work and in the changes we wish to inform and inspire in the world, by:

- combating all forms of racism, oppression and implicit bias;
- respecting and valuing the individual and shared journeys of the people, the project and the histories of our communities, including historical trauma;
- valuing authentic first-person voice and first-person knowledge;
- valuing the different ways that people live, work and relate to each other;
- valuing the act of listening and specifically listening long enough to achieve shared meaning;
- valuing seeing and being seen, listening and being heard, becoming real to each other, recognizing that an important kind of knowing is experiential and lived;
- valuing accountability to one another and to the work for both the intention and impact of our words and actions;
- and persevering through the challenges that come with our inclusion and engagement of differences;

as we strive to achieve equity for every human being and personal, institutional, structural and systemic transformations.