

REGENERATING THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Cultivating Community North Valley (CCNV) for the last six years has sought to bolster the connection of underserved people in the Butte County area of Northern California with production and consumption of fresh, nutritious specialty crops.

GOALS

- Development of a stronger and more vibrant community-based food network.
- Promote greater community integrity and empowerment of community members:
 - ✓ Physical health
 - ✓ Mental health
 - ✓ Nutritional well-being



Veterans Garden, Chico, CA

ACTIVITIES

--Holistic Approach to Address Food Insecurity

- Establishment of community and school gardens
- Nutrition and cooking demonstrations with mobile food kitchen (the *Edible Pedal*)
- Specialty crop production and preparation workshops
- Student-run university vegetable production project with CSA subscriptions to students, staff, and community
- Gleaning fruits and vegetables from local sources
- Stakeholders meetings brought together farmers, vendors, educators, agencies.



Community workshop on integrated pest management.



RESULTS

During the project over 500 people attending CCNV programs were surveyed regarding their change in behaviors. Over 80% reported an increase in use of specialty crops:

- **GROWING: 62%** reported growing more specialty crops than prior to attendance at project farming events;
- **SELLING: 67%** reported selling more specialty crops (fresh or value-added) than prior to attending direct marketing events;
- **PURCHASING: 59%** reported increased purchase of local specialty crop produce since attending project events;
- **PREPARING: 82%** reported preparing more produce at home than prior to attending project culinary events; and
- **EATING: 58%** reported habitually eating more specialty crops than prior to attending project events.

LESSONS LEARNED

Sustaining Community Gardens



Community gardens ran best with a plot-lease model. When the entire garden was run collectively, they tended to decline when the lead person left.



Participation in Workshops



Container gardening workshop at the Chico Community Children's Center

Attendance improved when workshops were relocated from a central location to the sites of underserved communities.

LESSONS LEARNED (cont.)

Continuity at the University Farm



Yields, marketing, and patronage has improved since shifting coordination from temporary student to permanent employee

UNEXPECTED RESULTS

Horticultural Therapy



The work with underserved communities around in Northern California has been impetus for beginning a class at Chico State University in horticultural therapy to connect students with possibilities for promoting horticulture production to facilitate human physical and mental well-being.

Chico Wildcat Food Pantry



The student-run Organic Vegetable Project at the University Farm has become an important provider of fresh vegetables for the food pantry on the Chico State University Campus.

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