



A SUMMARY REPORT OF THE PHOTOVOICE EVALUATION ACTIVITY FOR THE FEAST FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAM

Background

In response to a need for healthy, affordable food in remote American Indian communities, Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health (JHCAIH), in partnership with the Santo Domingo Pueblo, the Tuba City community on the Navajo (Diné) Nation, and the White Mountain Apache Tribe, supported a nutrition-focused initiative called “Feast for the Future” (FFF) to promote access to nutritious foods and healthy development for American Indian youth, families, and communities. The FFF programs included an Edible School Garden (ESG) school-based gardening curriculum for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, and a Traditional Foodways Education Program (TFEP) to support the transfer of traditional, hands-on food-based knowledge from farmers/elders to youth.



PhotoVoice Evaluation

The PhotoVoice evaluation method was implemented in Summer 2013 with 4th and 5th grade youth to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the ESG and TFEP activities on youth participants. A total of 44 youth participated in the PhotoVoice study, including 20 from Santo Domingo, 14 from Tuba City and 10 in Whiteriver. The majority (93%) of youth identified as Santo Domingo, Navajo, or Apache Tribal members.

The PhotoVoice Study consisted of a series of 9 sessions that assessed the understanding of participant’s current food systems, traditional food and traditional food systems, culture and identity, hopes for the future and the impact of the ESG and TFEP. The study culminated in a final session where students presented their work and findings to family, friends, teachers and other interested stakeholders (see table below).

	Purpose	Duration/Session	Location
Unit 1	- Introduction	3 hours	Classroom
Unit 2	- Instructions on photography	30 minutes	Class/Garden
	- Take photos in garden/ farm/ community	2.5-3 hours	Garden/Farm /Other
	- Contextualize, caption & codify photos	3 hours	Classroom
Unit 3	- Selecting photos and developing presentations	3 hours	Classroom
Unit 4	- Rehearse presentations	1 hour	Classroom
	- Give final presentations	1 hour	TBD

Current Food Systems

At the beginning of the PhotoVoice sessions participants were asked to identify their current food system including their favorite meals and their perception of the foods that are healthy.

PhotoVoice participants took photos of their food systems, and shared their favorite meals, including pizza, chicken, steak, hamburgers, and sodas.



"My grandma says that if we keep drinking pop you're going to get diabetic."

"We think it is important to have fresh fruits and vegetables available in our community so we don't have diseases like diabetes"

Traditional Foods and Traditional Food Systems

PhotoVoice participants were asked to describe and take photos of their understanding of traditional foods and traditional food systems. They spent time discussing the photos and their perceptions/ understandings of what these systems were and how they have changed.



PhotoVoice Summary



April 2014



"They were very active back in the day. They weren't lazy. They wouldn't put sugar into their traditional foods or salt or anything like that."

"The traditional food. It's fresh and you have to make it yourself but the other one. It goes through like a process."

"I wonder... how the ancestors made stew or how they got seeds."

Impact of the Edible School Garden and Traditional Foodways Education Program on Supporting Culture and Identity through Farming/Gardening Education

A major emphasis of the ESG and TEFP Programs are to support culture and identity through the gardens. Across all sites, students talked about local farming/gardening traditions as important to both continuing their culture and to their personal well-being, as well as how the Edible School Garden and Traditional Foodways Education Programs support culture and identity through farming/ gardening education.



"I want my family to know ... that it is important to go farming because it is a part of the culture."

"Without the farms, we would not have most traditional food"

"I want my community to know... the school garden is so important to us"



"...we lived like this long time ago and we still live like that. If we live like this we can be healthy."





"Traditional foods are important to my people. I have learned about Apache foods such as Apache Kool Aid in the Edible School Garden program. It is important for my generation to learn about these foods."

"Traditional foods help us know what is a part of our culture."

Hopes for the Future

Students have learned traditional farming/gardening practices during the Edible School Garden and Traditional Foodways Education Program: *"...we plant and farm"* *"I'm a farmer."* In ten years, PhotoVoice participants want to see gardening/farming continue and grow in their communities, with *"more kids getting involved with farming"* and *"a lot of fields everywhere."*



"I would like to see the children that go to school here now, I mean in the future, to learn what we learn and we taught them to do."

"We also believe that younger generations need to learn about respecting the land by keeping it clean and also learning about planting gardens and cornfields."

"The elders are counting on us."

"Lead a happy, healthy life!"

Conclusion

Across all sites, students talked about local farming/gardening traditions producing healthy food, being important to continuing their culture, and expressed hope that farming/gardening traditions would persist and grow. Youth also recognized fruits and vegetables as healthy, and named chili and corn as important traditional foods. Youth in Santo Domingo felt especially proud of their abilities to grow their own food. Tuba City and Cibecue youth spent more time contrasting the merits of locally grown food with food purchased from stores, characterizing store-bought food as “full of chemicals,” “processed,” and “unhealthy.” Cibecue youth expressed a lack of familiarity with traditional foods and language. PhotoVoice participants in all sites shared that knowing their traditions is important to their well-being, and that gardens/farms helped to keep their culture alive. All of the participants expressed enthusiasm about, and were engaged with, the PhotoVoice Project as a tool to share what they have learned from the Edible School Garden and Traditional Foodways Programs.



“I want my community to know... that we learn a lot from Photo Voice.”