

2018 Michigan Good Food Summit

Breakout Session #6: Elevating Equity in the Food Policy System Process

10:30 am

Speakers: Rachel Santo, Center for a Livable Future; Kibibi Blount-Dorn, Detroit Food Policy Council; Karen Bassarb, Center for a Livable Future

Rachel explained the Center for Livable Future's project on food policy councils' program. Explained what a food policy council is. Policy is define broadly: from governments agencies to institutions rules, practices and laws.

Ice breaker:

- How many of you have attended food policy council meetings or are in one? Half the room
- How many were you born in Michigan? 75 percent of the room.
- Eat kale? 90 percent of the room.
- Register to vote? 90 percent of the room.
- How many of you get 8 hours of sleep? 25 percent in the room.

Kibibi: Break into groups of 6 about 10 minutes. What is equity to you? How do you define equity? What are the characteristics of equity?

Characteristics identified:

- Accessibility for those most affected by issues
- Voices at the table and lower the barrier
- Differentiate equality and equity (resources available)
- Cultural Relevance
- Equity as an ongoing effort to even the play field taking in consideration historical inequities
- Most people do not access to tools/resources to even the playfield (cutting board, kitchen appliances)
- Everyone should have what they need (socially, independence, economically)
- Whatever resources available should be available to everyone and individuals should have a choice
- Importance of causation of inequalities
- Agree upon floor that we not left people go under
- Equity is not only watching the game is participating in the game
- Reparations and historical restoratives justice
- Equity is dynamic and is going to look different to every individual

Kikiki: We can't make assumptions about disparities and inequities a certain group is experience we should be actually engaging with them. We have a collective and personal journey to equity.

Here are some examples of how food policy councils can bring equity to their work from my work in Detroit.

- Strategic Planning Process
- Equity is also representation at their table when developing our strategies and policies.
- Food Justice and Equity training for all council members so we are in the same page.
- Identify the most affected of who is getting affected and be mindful to create avenues of participation in the policy process.
- Sharing the work we are doing with the community. Before the completion of any project/policy we ask for feedback to see if we are reflecting their issues correctly. And we are adding their feedback as part of our campaigns and priorities.
- Provide multiple ways to participate. Create different layout of forums to engage with all of them.
- Revised our mission statement to included and reflect our equity values.

Karen: How did we embed equity in our institutions and food policies councils? Here are some examples.

- Pittsburgh Food Policy Council: Revised bylaws to change representation, decision making process to reflect equity, create tiers of engagement for stakeholders that is less hierarchal.
- Dame County, Wisconsin: Partners in Equity, small grants to increase equity in projects in underrepresented communities in their food policy county territory.
- Northside Fresh, Minnesota. Policy Action Team: education of members in policy process, score cards of candidates in mayoral elections, them change to lead community conversations to create a definition of food justice and an action pamphlet for the new candidates. Candidates forum with small group so they will learn community priorities around food justice.

Handout Questions:

1. How had you implemented equity principles in your food policy council?
2. What steps or actions did your organization take to address racial equity in your organization or policy work?
3. What challenges did you encounter in your effort?
4. What change have you seen because of your effort?
5. What advice would you offer other food councils or similar organization trying to address racial equity in their work?

Examples/Ideas from the audience:

- Do your own work? Understanding your privilege, understand racism in America to understand racism in the food system and careful of your language.
- Change name from policy council to something that is more exciting to community members
- In order to get feedback, go to POT, basketball games, other communities' spaces.
- Be creative when disseminating documents community members: basketball schedule as a handout about org.
- The Michigan DOH has an equity score card on the language in the RFP to evaluate impact inclusion and equity
- Food Justice training for Caucasian members
- Staffing and hiring practices
- Translating important key documents to engage more community members
- Relationship building comes first. Ongoing communication and engagement is needed
- Teach in culinary education, bartender school, and other formal/informal education about equity and fairness on the restaurant industry
- Invite churches to be part of the process
- “Front burnery”-built equity in the process
- Hire equity officer to spearhead efforts internally and externally
- Create intentional spaces to learn about food justice, equity
- Host Racial healing trainings
- Be more welcoming-leave professionalism behind –open door policy
- Why would people be interested in attending- think and target their perceptions when recruiting and engaging.

Rachel: Labor is one of the least engaged issues that food policies councils in North America engaged with. [Shinning a Light in Labor](#) has some case studies from Center for Livable Future.

Question: How do we get full time staff in food policy councils?

Kibibi: We need to educate funder and foundations on the need to fund

Karen provided a list of resources. Please email us your resources that you use to add to this list.