

AWARENESS IS KEY: GAUGING THE AWARENESS OF FOOD INSECURITY ISSUES

Session: B, Breakout Room #2

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An overwhelmingly large portion of the population faces some form of food insecurity issues, whether they realize it or not. These issues create an instability in our society. The purpose of this study was to gauge an understanding of the awareness of food insecurity issues in our society, both locally and nationally. In addition, I aimed to analyze if gleaning initiatives are sufficient enough to be an actual solution to this societal issue. I interned for City Fruit, which is a gleaning organization. My role was to harvest fruit in residential neighborhoods, public parks, and public orchards around Seattle and then donate it to various food banks and other food donation programs. In addition to this work, I interviewed three of City Fruit's clients with the hopes of gaining insight to their reasoning and motivations behind letting City Fruit harvest their fruit. I also collected data from many scholarly journal articles that provided great knowledge and evidence. The main points that I found were that many people are simply unaware of the food insecurity issues at play. All three of my interviewees indicated that they cared about not wasting food, which was why they signed up for City Fruit's service but were unaware of the issues that are being faced in regard to food insecurity. In addition, gleaning initiatives are found to be a very short-term fix, but not sustainable enough to be a serious long-term solution. My results are significant because they highlight that food insecurity is a real threat to many people's well-being in our society, as well as the level of awareness is very low.