



**SUSTAINABILITY GRANT
2014 FINAL REPORT**

**NAME OF RECIPIENT: Home is Where we Live- LifeCycles Project Society-
From The Ground Up Project**

PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: March 31, 2015

Upon completion of a project, the applicant must submit a final report. No grant applications will be considered from organizations that received funds in the past, but did not submit a final report. All final reports need to be filed by March 31 of each year. If the project is not complete by that time, an interim report should be submitted with an actual date for the end of project. The final report should answer the following:

1. Were the project objectives clearly met? What did you indicate you would do? Were you successful in carrying it out?

Yes, our project objectives were clearly met. Our project had 3 main goals:

1. Increase food literacy and foster the development of long-term community capacity and well-being among low-income communities.

We achieved this goal, by building a peer leadership team of 10 marginalized vulnerable people, many who identified as having multiple disabilities and barriers. The peer leadership team attended 10 workshops, focused on food literacy skills and leadership.

2. Develop a best practices guide to support successful community gardens that engage and support their clients in transitioning towards independence.

The best practices guide was researched, developed and completed in 3 stages. 1. Gathering of background best practices research from other food based organizations in North America. 2. Draft copies were given to the peer leadership team and gone through as a group to capture their experiences of food literacy activities and inclusion. 3. The new draft went to several editors in the community to ensure accessibility.

3. Provide job skills training and potential future employment with LifeCycles Through social enterprise projects.

As mentioned above the peer leadership team, participated in 10 workshops- including public speaking and presentation skills. We hope that the peer leadership team will continue to be involved in LifeCycles activities, and hope to work with them into the future.

2. What were some of the successes you experienced? What positive impacts were felt by your target audience?

Successes:

- Having members of the PLT participate in 10 workshops, and give feedback on any barriers or challenges they faced while participating in food literacy activities (fruit tree picking, heritage orchard work party, canning workshops) and having the team present their findings to the City.
- Completing the best practices guide.
- The positive experiences of the participants, the eagerness for continued participation, and the learning that supports the best practices guide.

Positive Impacts:

Through our project we found that community gardens and food literacy programming have value in all communities because they promote; social engagement, community mobilization, skill sharing, and may provide jobs and training for people in the community. Additionally, community gardens and food literacy programs were said to be important by members of the Peer Leadership Team (PLT) by giving them; greater control over their food, a sense of accomplishment, a feeling of being a part of something bigger than one's self, and an ability to connect with other community members who may be facing similar challenges (peer support). All of these are reasons community gardens and food literacy programs are socially and politically relevant to members of marginalized communities, as well as organizations who work with them.

3. What were some of the learnings from undertaking this project?

The learnings came from gathering feedback from the peer leadership team after they had participated in a number of food literacy workshops. Here are some of the learning for working with vulnerable populations on food literacy projects.

Members of a marginalized community should be directly involved in decisions that affect them. Challenges and needs are unlikely to be fully understood by an outside person or organization and as such organizations and community groups that are seeking to support food justice in the community must do so at the direct leadership of the community. Committing to having projects directed by the community necessitates accountable and diverse community representation.

We also found that a community garden or food literacy project would need to be meaningful to participants through capacity and skill building. This builds self-reliance and sustainability into the project, supported by people or organizations that are knowledgeable about the project. It helps participants to and gaining a greater awareness of their own capacities and perceived limits.

With living systems and gardens, meaningful participation ensures project success and benefit the community in the way it was intended. A community garden and or food literacy project will also need to be guided by the community in terms of the location so

that such projects do not risk displacing people who are already using the space (relocation is unsatisfactory explanation for creating a garden in a space that is already being used).

Additionally, other services in the community may already be doing work to address food security and individuals and/or organizations working on new food literacy and/or community gardening projects should connect with existing services in the community to get a sense of what is already available to build relationships, and seek out partnerships, with other organizations.

To encouraging marginalized populations participation in food justice projects organizations or communities groups should make a substantial effort to provide financial compensation, in-kind support, food, and equipment to participants that may be experiencing poverty. This may mean that organizations or individuals will need to ask for donations, apply for additional funding, and/or allocate existing funding towards removing the income related barriers that can, and do, prevent people from being able to participate in community projects and programming.

Lastly, having an understanding of anti-oppressive practices and principles will support you and/or your organization to work across differences that may arise in the community and to be able to better support and understand the many different people that you work with.

The following commitments shape all community gardening and/or food literacy projects:

1. The gardening project, or food literacy project, originates from interest in the community. An issue is more relevant, and a project is more feasible, when the community identifies a need.
 2. The community participates actively and fully throughout the entire process from garden creation, planning, planting, nurturing, harvesting, and distributing –or through all of the steps of the food literacy programming.
 3. The beneficiaries of the project are the members of the community themselves
 4. The project encourages a greater awareness of participant’s capacities, and supports the building of skills necessary for sustaining the project over the long-term.
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4. Please attach a statement of actual project revenue and expenses (for the project only). Any unused funds must be returned to the City of Victoria.

Please return completed report to kstratford@victoria.ca