

**Context:**

- The food justice issue has a myriad of issues that inform one another.
  - Food deserts: areas where it is difficult to buy affordable or good quality fresh food.
  - Food Insecurity: being without reliable access to a sufficient supply of affordable, nutritious food is certainly a growing problem, even as we as a country produce more food and food waste grows.
    - One in eight Americans lives in a household that struggles to put food on the table.
    - One in every five children in the U.S. is uncertain about having food to eat.
  - Lack of nutritional knowledge accompanies both of the above problems. How can one develop a taste for fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein when the only food in a neighborhood is fast food or gas station stock?
- In spite of producing more than enough food, and often wasting an embarrassing amount of it, many people in our area are hungry. Although these hungry people want to feed their families well, it is very difficult to do so.
- The roots of systemic racism run very deep and greatly impact the food injustices many communities face today.

**Criteria Fit:** A properly selected food/hunger project could certainly fit all our criteria (proper scale, multifaceted, good fit for our congregation, attractive to our community, measurable outcomes, transformative)

**Sample ideas:**

- 1) Working in Community Gardening/Urban Farming.
- 2) Developing business skills through farmers' markets/hospitality work.
- 3) Working with children and parents to help them develop life skills like cooking/recipe development.
- 4) Commit to the work of an organization like Bread for the World, promoting legislative solutions to the hunger crisis.
- 5) Opening a restaurant/bakery/coffeeshop etc.

**Traps:**

- Without careful preparation we could fail to form relationships with the communities most affected by hunger/food justice and thus be perceived as outsiders, with little idea of the true dynamics involved.
- Falling back into the familiar food pantry model, which, as we saw in *Charity Detox*, may prevent self-sufficiency.
- Misidentifying the goal. We must be outcome focused, not output focused. We shouldn't measure our success by meals served so much as number of people who no longer need those meals.
- Forcing our ideas about food/health onto another group of people who may have a different outlook.

**Possible impacts:** Carefully developing the scale of our work would be important, but the payoff could be great.

- Following sample ideas 1 and 2) above - Growing Home is a social enterprise in Englewood, an underserved community on Chicago's south side. Believing that urban agriculture combined with local food enterprise can be a catalyst for change, all their produce is grown, harvested, cleaned, and sold within a 20-mile radius. In 2017 alone, Growing Home enrolled 51 people, 88% completed the program, 84% of graduates earned jobs along Chicago's food chain, gaining positions with urban growing facilities, wholesalers, retailers, and restaurants and 87% of graduates retained their job for at least 30 days!
- Following sample idea 3) above – 57% of parents agreed that their child ate more fruit after participating in the Purple Asparagus Delicious Nutritious Adventures program. 44% agreed their child ate more vegetables. 76% of parents prepared one or more Purple Asparagus recipes, and 66% were inspired by their child's enthusiasm for healthy foods to cook other recipes at home.
- Following sample idea 4) above – Congress passed the Global Food Security Act in early July. This legislation authorizes U.S.-led, long-term solutions for small farmers so that they'll be able to feed their families and communities for years to come. For more than a year Bread for the World fully committed to advocacy before Congress for its passage.
- Following sample idea 5) above – Homeboy Industries, much of whose work is in the food industry, provides hope, training, and support to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated men and women allowing them to redirect their lives and become contributing members of our community. They operate a farmer's market, a bakery, a café, a diner, a catering company and they produce tortilla chips, salsas and guacamoles sold in grocery stores.

**Connections with other areas/issues:**

- If kids have food for breakfast and lunch, they may be able to do better in school.
- If people have good paying jobs, they can afford to buy food for their families.

- Good nutrition provides stability, leading to fewer mental health issues that contribute to violence.