

A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF BLACK LEADER SELF-DETERMINATION FOR URBAN  
FOOD JUSTICE: A CRITICAL RACE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Robert Tyrone Bass

Doctorate of Philosophy  
In  
Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education

Kim Niewolny  
Antoine Alston  
Onwubiko Agozino  
Hannah Scherer

May 13, 2019  
Blacksburg, Virginia

# A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF BLACK LEADER SELF-DETERMINATION FOR URBAN FOOD JUSTICE: A CRITICAL RACE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Robert Tyrone Bass

## **Abstract (Professional)**

Leaders within the black community are among the most important assets for black people in America. Given all that black Americans have experienced and still endure from social, economic, and political disenfranchisement, it is necessary to explore the values, beliefs, experiences, and practices of current leaders or those organizing for food justice with youth in black communities. This research explored the experiences of self-determination and empowerment of African American community organizers and educators, providing community-based educational opportunities to youth. It also sought to understand the values, beliefs, and experiences of the participant leaders pertaining to community empowerment, youth development, and food justice. A critical race theory (Bell, 1987; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) lens was utilized to conduct a narrative analysis of 10 black leaders in the Triad area of North Carolina. The researcher inquiry involved a narrative interview, using narrative inquiry practices (Saldana, 2016) that were both audio and visually recorded. Narrative inquiry is a methodological tool for capturing and co-interpreting the personal stories of people, their personal experiences and their interpretations (Clandinin, 2007). A narrative videography was developed to reach a wider audience and include the direct experiences of black leaders. Upon completion of the data-collection process, the leaders were brought together to view the video and discuss excerpts from their narratives in a single focus group. The study itself explored each leaders' views on what food justice looks like in their community, how self-determination influences their approach to black youth development for food justice, and their experiences of

racial and micro-aggressive barriers to their work. It was found that the participants were very knowledgeable about what they needed to secure food justice in their communities. It was also found that the leaders often experienced racism and sometimes it was internalized racism, which often led them to the work with black youth empowerment and community food justice.

### **Abstract (Public)**

African Americans have been among the most disenfranchised and marginalized populations in American history (Anderson, 2001). Although today is not as physically reflective of this as the days of slavery and post-slavery Jim Crow, racism is still as pervasive now as it was then, (Alexander, 2010). Critical Race Theory is the theoretical lens of this study thought it is primarily utilized in modern law to understand the presence of race discrimination in the decision making of court officials (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). This research was a narrative inquiry exploration to understand the experiences of self-determination and empowerment of African American community organizers and educators providing educational opportunities to youth for food justice.

The researcher utilized narrative inquiry as methodology in a community-based context to explore the perceptions and attitudes of African American leaders as organizers and educators in the Triad area of North Carolina as they pertain to community empowerment, youth development, and food justice. Using a critical race theory lens, each of the 10 adult participants had been identified as an asset to the black community regarding agriculture and youth empowerment practices. They were then interviewed after consent to audio and visual recording. Influenced by the Whole Measures for Community Food Systems (Abi-Nader et. al, 2009), interview questions were developed and applied to highlight the values and beliefs associated with a just community food system, efforts to counter unjust food access and the racism within it.

Participants were asked to contribute to a single collective focus group discussing various excerpts from their narratives. Findings support that each participant was knowledgeable of the food justice issues and what was needed to create it in the communities they worked. Participants expressed several themes related to critical race theory, critical pedagogy and community food work.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the men and woman who fought for the freedom of black and brown people. I am grateful for the ones who challenged the oppressive nature of the status quo. People like Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., Huey P. Newton, Malcolm X, and Brother Ezell Blair of the A&T Four. Through their collaborative movements, these great few created a legacy. They teach black people to learn to love themselves and each other. I am in debt to these individuals and hope to continue the legacy of increasing my consciousness of the world around me and helping others to see the reality for themselves.

I am even more grateful for my father and mother, Robert and Shirley Bass, who sacrificed their lives, providing me with love and never allowing me to look down upon myself. It was through them that I learned to be humble and to always consider others, regardless of my own situation. I would also like to thank my older sister, Saprina Campbell, who practically kept me attached to her hip as a child and never let me forget who I was. My younger sister, Brianne, who has always looked out for me. My brother, Christopher Bass, who has always helped inspire my entrepreneurial spirit and my knowledge to do so through his own trials, successes, and wisdom.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the many coaches, mentors, and professors who have always encouraged me to test my limits physically, mentally, and at times, emotionally. Without their constant push, I may never have learned to understand the value of never giving up on myself and others. I wish to thank my awesome advisor, Dr. Kim Niewolny, of Virginia Tech, who for much of my time in the doctoral program, pushed me and guided me to exceed my own expectations and thoughts. Dr. James C. Anderson II, a former advisor who progressed into

another position at the University of Georgia. Your wisdom and spirit were a blessing to my overall development as a leader in my community and as a scholar. Thank you to my committee who brought so much value to the direction of my research: Dr. Antoine Alston of North Carolina A&T State University, Dr. Onwubiko Agozino, and Dr. Hannah Scherer of Virginia Tech. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my wife Joeanna, and my children, Marina and Lyra, who prayed for me, encouraged me, and were truly a motivating factor in the completion of my dissertation. Thank you all for believing in me.

## Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Problem Statement.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Purpose Statement and Research Questions.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Key Terminology.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Significance of the Study.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Limitations of the Study.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Exploring Poverty and Food Security: A Barrier to Food Justice.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>History of Slavery, Racism, and Jim Crow: Barriers to Black Advancement.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Community Food Systems: A Critical Approach.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Empowering Black Communities for Development.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>The Role of Black Leaders in Youth Development.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Conceptual Framework.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Critical Race Theory.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Critical Pedagogy.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Community Food Work.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Ontology and Epistemology.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Researcher Reflexivity.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Narrative Inquiry as Methodology.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Narrative Videography.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Research Methods and Design.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Participant Selection and Description.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Data Collection &amp; Analysis.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Questions of Reliability and Validity.....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Research Question 1: What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Advocating for Food Justice.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Nutrition and Health Education for Food Justice.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Increased Accessibility for Social Justice Action.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Increasing Self-Awareness for Black Identity.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Research Question 2: What does black community self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Leading Experiences in Sustainable Farming.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Environmental, Personal, and Community Health .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Role Modeling as Authentic Black Experience.....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Inherited Resilience and Elder Wisdom for Youth.....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Structural-Determinism as a Catalyst for Self-Determination.....</b>	<b>104</b>

<b>Research Question 3: How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community members influence, if at all, the organizing and educating of black youth?</b> .....	107
Intentional Hinderance.....	107
Systematic Racism and Discrimination Exciting a Power Shift.....	111
Summary of Findings.....	115
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION &amp; CONCLUSION</b> .....	118
<b>Discussion</b> .....	119
Structuring Food Justice.....	119
Youth Involvement for Empowerment.....	121
Cooperative Outcome of Self-Determination.....	123
Exploring the Power, in Unity.....	125
<b>Conclusion and Recommendations</b> .....	126
Recommendations for Future Research.....	126
Recommendations for Future Practice.....	127
<b>References</b> .....	130
<b>Appendices</b> .....	142
Appendix A: Piori Table 1.....	142
Appendix B: Stakeholder Matrix.....	143
Appendix C: Recruitment Letter.....	144
Appendix D: Interview Script.....	146
Appendix E: Informed Consent Document for Participant Audio/Visual Recording and Narrative Inquiry.....	150
Appendix F: Informed Consent Document for Participant Identity Release and Participation in Focus Group.....	154
Appendix G: Collective Reflection Focus Group Script.....	156
Appendix H: Monique' Narrative.....	157
Appendix I: Shae's Narrative.....	169
Appendix J: Mike's Narrative.....	182
Appendix K: LeShari's Narrative.....	194
Appendix L: Amina's Narrative.....	204
Appendix M: Larry Barron.....	232
Appendix N: Shawyn's Narrative.....	243
Appendix O: Kamal's Narrative.....	253
Appendix P: Shannon's Narrative.....	259
Appendix Q: Sister Moor Bey's Narrative.....	275
Appendix R: Focus Group Transcription.....	292



## CHAPTER ONE:

### INTRODUCTION

Food security in the U.S. was built on the backs of enslaved Africans and sharecroppers, but paradoxically, African Americans are disproportionately susceptible to being food insecure (Wilson, 1987). Many of the changes and innovations of the U.S. agrofood system have been and still are influenced by consumer convenience, preference, and necessity. This is similar to the transformation of the slavery system from human capital to industrialized machinery. The market that supplies food to consumers has had a major impact on family-owned farms that were once maintained by their surrounding community networks. Lyson (2004) states, “Smaller, family-labor farms have declined substantially in number as larger, increasingly industrial-like operations have become the main source of food and fiber.” (p.2) With fewer farmers, people became more reliant on labor jobs within these larger industrial operations. Over time, competition was encouraged with innovations in food-preparation methods and industrial outputs while monopolization of the market was in process, causing a decline in hired workers. “However, beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as the first wave of industrialization swept over the agricultural landscape, the number of non-family hired laborers began to increase.” (Lyson, 2004, p. 43). Supply chains cornered the market while crippling farmers into a state of dependence on large corporate industries to take what they had grown and manipulate these products into less nutritional, processed goods to meet the demands of consumers who are constantly influenced to want variety. Lyson (2004) elaborates that the U.S. has control of about 85% of processed vegetables that are contracted to farms while 15 % of the same vegetables are produced on large corporate farms, stripping food processors of significant control over suppliers and decreasing farmer independence. In this chapter, I discuss the food justice movement,

community food work, poverty in America, the experience of African Americans, education and community development, and the role of self-determination and empowerment, which are important to highlight African American leaders as organizers and educators in the Triad area of North Carolina.

African Americans in so-called food deserts face an injustice. Food desert is a term that has been used to describe communities that have limited adequate access to healthy and affordable foods and indication of a community that is food insecure (Winne, 2008; Canto, Brown, & Deller, 2014; Wright, Donley, Gualtieri & Strickhouser, 2016). This injustice is centered not just around food security but how food security is prevented by food injustice and the racialized, gendered, class-specific turmoil that has plagued America for well over 200 years. To understand what a lack of social justice can create, one must understand first what social justice means for those who have been disempowered and marginalized by not only class but more so by the color of their skin. African Americans have made exponential advances and continue to make efforts to advance in the general sense but are hindered by forces outside of their control that continue to marginalize them (Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 2011). For example, African Americans are forced to digress or compromise moral resolutions because of restrictions in opportunities, such as loan acquisition and access to resources (Wilson, 1987; Greenberg, 1993; Wilson, 2011). From post-slavery to present, this situation has prevented African Americans from obtaining the necessary assets to not only develop wealth but to provide for their families and most importantly, receive the education necessary to be self-supporting in regard to foodways. Edge (2007) describes foodways as the way in which people communicate the cultural, social, and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food. Most foodways accessible to African Americans in low-income neighborhoods are the direct

result of poverty and contribute greatly to the high levels of obesity and malnourishment (Wilson, 1987; Lyson, 2004).

Food justice activists demonstrate that institutional racism contributes to economic inequality and food insecurity, which has stripped communities of color of their local food sovereignty, preventing many of them from eating in the way the food movement describes as appropriate (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; White, 2018; Penniman, 2018). Much like the participants in this research, food justice activists are a part of a movement that seeks to challenge racial inequity as a component of achieving food security (Guptill, Copelton, & Lucal, 2013). Limited resources, such as land and monetary income play a huge role in the available options for increasing food security. The decisions that encouraged the convenience of inexpensive foods subsequently have set African Americans in a position where they must consider who should have the power to control their food (White, 2018; Penniman, 2018). With increased public attention to diet-related health diseases, activists within the food movement argue that responsibility falls on the corporate industries, whose processed junk is loaded with cheap fillers in high-calorie foods (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011). Yet, given the rise in obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol, mainstream efforts tend to focus only on white culture. Hillstrom (2011) describes the growing epidemic of health-related disease and poor nutrition access within the black community as ground zero. Inundated with white, racialized, and class-privileged opinions, it is clear that the same groups being excluded are imposed with false responsibility to provide for themselves with little to no resources. Simultaneously, issues such as class and racialized experiences affect the establishment of access to healthy food and nutritional information (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011).

The globalization of the U.S. agrifood system sparked vast numbers of ecological, social, and economic issues rooted in inequity and disparity (Allen & Wilson, 2008). Allen and Wilson (2008) emphasize that the globalization of the U.S. agrifood system impacts the distribution of food in the world. The inequalities that existed previously are now amplified by climate change, environmental degradation, and population growth (Rotner, 2016). Growing dependency and reliance on processed goods and corporate control has led to an inequitably broken food system (Wilson, 1987; Giancattarino & Noor, 2014).

Community food work is essential to the food justice movement that has started to progress and grow throughout the country. More people are becoming aware of the significance of growing food, identifying ways to provide better quality, culturally appropriate foods, and building stronger community relations around food (Lyson, 2004; Giancattarino & Noor, 2014; Bowen, 2015). Although a number of food movements have created new spaces for social change, there is criticism of the ways in which these movements create just opportunities for access along the food system. Specifically, Slocum (2004) illustrates how racism and white privilege play significant roles in our food system and describes their institutional and structural forces in American culture. Cabral (1970) took a post-colonial stance on culture, describing foreign domination as two choices: Eliminate the indigenous population of the dominated group preventing any chance of cultural resistance, or impose dominant ideals without damaging the culture of the dominated population in harmony with economic and political cultural salience. Racism has prevented many groups from obtaining and retaining necessary resources to grow their own food. White privilege is the catalyst that supports the claim that African Americans are less than or below everyone else in the racial construct of white supremacy. Slocum (2004) states that the historical practices of white privilege should be acknowledged in food systems and

community food groups should include knowledge of historical genocide and the generational effects of this racial construct. It is quite necessary for community food organizations to address racism, sexism, and white privilege within their work, considering America's history of slavery, what it has done and still does to families of color. Slocum (2004) states that "the systematic oppression that communities of color experience as a consequence of racism is a factor in food insecurity." (p. 3). Inadequate housing and food access are among several issues that racism has encouraged and created within communities of color. Community food work should address these issues extensively in order to adequately interact and influence positive change. That change will come from within the organization itself, first by acknowledging the ways in which it may or may not be perpetuating white privilege and class. By having knowledge of the consequences that structural racism inflicts, working with communities of color, designing programs, conducting research, shaping budgets, making decisions, and promoting community food systems, change can be facilitated much more effectively (Slocum, 2004).

Poverty in America has long been a concern. Looking at poverty among African Americans today, DeNavas-Walt, and Proctor (2015) reported that from 2013 -2014, African Americans went from 25.3% to 26% poverty while whites went from 10% to 10.1% in the same time period. Since 1973, whites have managed to range between 7% to 10% with limited controlled fluctuation compared to African Americans who have ranged from 24% to 35% (DeNavas-Walt, & Proctor, 2015). African Americans are exposed to several forms of discrimination. Aside from the ramifications of slavery, Jim Crow, and years of racial oppression, the criminal justice system has contributed significantly to this epidemic. Black youth are subject to become part of what is known as the School to Prison Pipeline (SPP). The SPP is the direct result of the zero tolerance policies many schools imposed after the federal

government passed the Gun-Free Schools Act in 1994 (Gjelten, 2017). This law set the standard for the zero tolerance policies that followed, making even the most minor offenses legitimate reasons for expulsion with each occurrence documented on a child's permanent record to follow them through their lives. Gjelten (2017) provided that the zero tolerance offenses vary among districts but usually incur the same harsh punishment for offenses such as:

“Bringing any weapon to school, including seemingly innocent items like nail clippers and toy swords, having any alcohol or drugs on campus, including tobacco and over-the-counter medications like aspirin or Midol, fighting, including minor scuffles, threatening other students or teachers, or saying anything that could be perceived as a threat, insubordination, which could include talking back to a teacher or swearing in the principal's office, and any behavior considered disruptive, like cutting in a lunch line” (p. 1).

African American students are the target of these offenses, which in turn leads to exclusion from classrooms and introduction into the school to prison pipeline system (Alexander, 2010). Alexander (2010) stated, “Rather than rely on race we use the criminal justice system to label people of color as ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind” (p.2). This is not to say that zero tolerance policies are not somewhat effective, but in regard to African American youth, the system is far from unflawed or un-biased. By labeling African American students as criminals, they are open to the legal discriminatory practices that were once used to exclude black people during post-slavery Jim Crow era, which I discuss in further detail in Chapter 2. The African American experience left a legacy of a system that

influenced the thoughts of black Americans about their contemporary American circumstance and in many ways contributed greatly to their oppression by white Americans (Jenkins & Tryman, 2002). Over the years, the United States has witnessed black leadership develop in several ways, with the teachings of such leaders as Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey. These men encouraged controversial initiatives to challenge the current cultural norms of white supremacy and Western influence. The assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and even John F. Kennedy haunts the possibility of other leaders who would be willing to provide a voice for black Americans in this country. Black leadership is considered to be in a state of crisis because there are too many who would assimilate to Western norms rather than combat white supremacy or challenge it for its contributions to the oppression of African Americans (Keiser, 1997).

Taking note of the direct marginalization of predominately African American-populated schools, it is difficult to overlook the limited resources. The downfall of such a system of inequality is that people of color often are victims as a result of it, yet it does not help that there is limited representation in leadership roles that have the power to change the outcome (Broad, 2016). Youth are often influenced by the things they experience in life. Freire (1970) denotes that experience is our greatest teacher. One way in which this form of education is facilitated is through media such as television, music, and print. It is through these mediums that both the oppressed and oppressor have been conditioned to think and view a world that dehumanizes people of color while glorifying and setting a standard of normalcy to this way of thinking. Freire (1970) describes dehumanization as that “which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, it is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human” (p. 44). An example of this would be the nouns used to describe black people who have been accused of committing a crime or in recent times, when

justifying the oppressive violence of police toward African Americans. Yet when describing a white person's actions, same crime or often worse, the tone and preservation of reputation is taken into consideration. What seems to be a coincidence could also be seen as purposeful and tactful. Freire (1970) makes this point as well by explaining that dehumanization is the direct result of an unjust directive that provokes violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed. Despite the experiences of the oppressed, what remains visible is the resilience and perseverance displayed through African Americans still self-identify as human regardless of the tragedy and disposition of slavery in America, (Du Bois, 2007).

To begin to understand the role of self-determination and empowerment, it is necessary to understand culture as it pertains to a specific group of individuals. With African Americans, the focal point in this research study, it is important to understand what culture means. Ackerman-Leist (2013) describes culture as the beliefs, behaviors, and values with which a specific group of people relate with one another, though culture also provides a sense of belonging that is often used to communicate one's relation to an area, region or in this case, racial identity. "The term culture refers to the set of values, knowledge, language, rituals, habits, lifestyles, attitudes, beliefs, folklore, rules, and customs that identify a particular group of people at a specific point in time" (Stajcic, 2013, p. 6). Expansion of the definition is necessary to avoid the generalization of culture as a sense of uniformity that, for example, would assume that the way both poor and oppressed people choose to live is a lifestyle choice. Cabral (1970) and Procter (2004) describe culture as a condition that African Americans must struggle with on a daily basis in order to transform their circumstances of wellbeing. It is a constant struggle between those who wish to impose their own special interests and those who resist domination. It is necessary to highlight that African American culture has been shaped based on African Americans' experiences, both



good and bad, over the years from before the establishment of this country through current schooling, media, and even society's perception of them (Anderson, 2001; Proctor, 2004). With that said, African Americans have little to lead with other than the ideals of those who do not look like or relate to them. Anderson (2001) states, "When we fail to challenge what we see and believe, we allow distorted views to lead to inappropriate behaviors" (p.32). Inappropriate behaviors are actions that are not tailored for the benefit of oneself and their people. Motivation is often used to describe the efforts toward progression, but motivation without empowerment is void, leaving people incapable of taking action without the ability or resources to do so (Anderson, 2001). Motivation is nothing but a tool to get someone excited about something, such as a football coach giving his or her team a pep talk after a rough first half. The players may be motivated to do their best, but if the coach did not spend time with the team watching film from the other team, practicing plays, physically conditioning the players to prepare them for what they are up against, then motivation is all it will be. To empower someone is to prepare them to act on the power that already exists within them.

### **Problem Statement**

People should have better choices of what they put in their bodies and full autonomy on what is provided for them and their communities, (Wittman, Desmarais, & Wiebe, 2010). This notion of community autonomy is best categorized as food sovereignty (Wittman, Desmarais, & Wiebe, 2010). As leaders and scholars, we must understand that the lack of justice and equity in urban and rural foodways prevents the necessary progress required to sustain these food communities or even provide choice when the market is determined by those in power positions who make decisions for the oppressed (Wittman, Desmarais, & Wiebe, 2010). Desmarais (2007) states that food sovereignty creates an environment of improved social relations, free of

domination and inequity between generations regardless of gender, ethnic background, or social class. There seems to be a systematic misunderstanding and concern from the status quo, toward the importance of food sovereignty as well as inadequate motivation for African American youth to be involved in the very food justice movement that could open doors to a more prosperous future for everyone.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of this research is twofold. First, it is to acknowledge the phenomenon of black poverty in America and the long-standing pattern of racism, marginalization, discrimination, sexism, and violence in this country. Second, which is related to the first, is to better understand the role that racial discrimination has played in the food system. In order to do so, this research will highlight the role of African American leaders in creating ample opportunities for self-empowerment, determination, and capacity for social change in youth through the teaching and learning of agriculture in their communities. To that end, this research was an exploration of the experiences of self-determination and empowerment of African American community organizers and educators who provide community-based educational opportunities to youth. These individuals are described as leaders, which is defined as those who are organizing for food justice with youth in black communities. This research utilizes a critical race theory lens and narrative inquiry approach to understand the values, beliefs, and experiences of African American leaders in the Triad area of North Carolina, as they pertain to community empowerment, youth development, and food justice. To that end, the following guiding questions frame this research project as applied to community leaders who are organizing for food justice activism with youth in the Triad area of North Carolina:

- What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?

- What does self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?
- How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community members influence, if at all, the organization and education of black youth?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This section introduces three theories that can be utilized to assist in comprehending and acknowledging the plight of black people in America, as well as a two other theories that help address the historical and contextual prevalence of racism and prejudice: Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), Freire's (1970) Critical Pedagogy, and Community Food Work (Slocum, 2007). Social Justice Theory (Rawls, 1971), and Post-Colonial Theory (Smith, 1999) is also used as a reference to expand on critical theory within this research. They serve as a bridge for examining the community food work of the participants and connecting critical race theory with critical pedagogy. Community food work is used as a framework to understand the food justice work that each participant is involved with.

#### *Critical Race Theory*

Derrick Bell's Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been a useful tool for not only law as he first intended, but also for expressing the racial connection to education access (Dixson, A. & Rousseau, C., 2006). It was the intent of this research to apply Critical Race Theory to the issue of food insecurity in African American communities. Critical Race Theory is defined by Delgado & Stefancic (2012) as a movement consisting of activists and scholars who seek to clarify the relationship between race, racism, and power, which includes economics, history, cultural context, group-and self-interest, feelings, and unconscious bias. Much of the literature review seeks to make the same connections in response to poverty among African Americans. Beyond

Derrick Bell's (1987) emphasis on African Americans who have fallen victim to constitutional law, there is much need for more connection to realms outside of the legal system, such as poverty and food insecurity, which have a direct connection to economics and education. CRT encourages people of color to utilize the experiences they have had with racism to their advantage when communicating to whites who more than likely can't fathom their experiences compared to people of color or perhaps, they do and potentially remain unaware to their disease (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). This disease is racism and prejudice and affects people generationally and almost genetically. A white person is more likely to experience the world through the tradition of privilege because of the color of their skin, yet if not exposed to other cultures and understanding of the world, the only thing to expect as a person of color is for history to repeat itself. While the privileged group may feel they are doing right, they, in fact, have been predisposed to a mentality and way of life that will hinder progression in cultural awareness.

### *Critical Pedagogy*

Critical theory is the foundation of critical pedagogy, which Freire (1970) describes as a means of liberating the oppressed by recognizing the societal norms that in fact perpetuate docility. Critical pedagogy enables us to question the ethical and political nature of our own teaching practices and the current education system as it stands (hooks, 1994; Lu & Horner, 1998). The one thing that stands to be questioned is how one might document the lived experience and who deems the experience as valid. Lu & Horner (1998) discuss how experience and discourse go hand-in-hand and by not acknowledging this factor, one gives way to the experience of one to be either overshadowed or undercut. One example of this is when discussing the difference between the Black Lives Matter Movement and the emergence of the All Lives Matter Movement. Despite the lived experiences of African Americans, the discourse

against the BLM movement made strong attempts to overcast the understanding that if all lives truly mattered, there would be no need for the Black Lives Matter Movement. Thus, there is a failure to acknowledge that dialectical relation leads to the danger of one discourse speaking in the name of experience against other discourse (hooks, 1994; Lu & Horner, 1998).

*Social Justice Theory.*

Social Justice Theory, also known as Rawls' Theory, is viewed by Rawls (1971) as a generalization of justice that accompanies fairness. Justice and fairness may be used as a measurement tool for Social Justice Theory (Abi-Nader et al., 2009). Social justice embodies thought and critique around the possibility of everyone being treated equally and equitably. Rawls (1971) adds that justice and fairness are dictated by groups based on their own circumstance and cultural traditions. Rawls (1971) further explains:

“Thus, we are to imagine that those who engage in social cooperation choose together, in one joint act, the principles which are to assign basic rights and duties and to determine the division of social benefits. Men are to decide in advance how they are to regulate their claims against one another and what is to be the foundation charter of their society. Just as each person must decide by rational reflection what constitutes his good, that is, the system that ends which it is rational for him to pursue, so a group of persons must decide once and for all what is to count among them as just and unjust.” (p. 207)

As Americans, this hypothetical system of thought toward injustice is predicated on the ideals and opinions of the dominant white group to apply to all groups. There are several accounts in history where even legislature was in support of the injustices faced by African Americans. The 1700s and 1800s were a vital time for not only changes but for creating the perpetual cycle of injustice that preceded modern ideology in America (Du Bois, 1967). There was, in fact, a time in which African Americans were legally bound by constituents of brutality such as the Act of 1700, warranting punishments such as castration, whipping, branding, and even forbidding the congregation of four or more black people in one space (Du Bois, 1967). This affected both free and enslaved blacks while enabling whites with rights to further control and exploit blacks as human capital and property. Legislature even endorsed the protest to deny freed slaves the opportunity to be hired, declaring the notion dangerous and injurious to the republic. All the while, free blacks were seen as useless and sluggish. Unfortunately, the result has shown that there is, in fact, a lack of justice and fairness across economic, political, and social realms. Andrzejewski, Baltodano, and Symcox (2009) described several root causes for war, violence, and hatred: greed and imperialism, coercive power of the state, arms industry and military, economic racism and inequality of global resources, propaganda and censorship, over-consumption and exploitation of global resources, ideologies of superiority and self-centeredness, patriarchy and male domination, as well as the selling of violent culture, militarism, and war. What are most salient to the topics at hand are greed, over consumption, and economic racism.

### *Post-Colonial Theory*

Post-colonial theory is rooted in post-colonialism, which is related to people considered indigenous. Smith (1999) describes indigenous people as those who originally inhabited lands

that have been colonized or taken over by another group of people who stake claim of that land through force or other means, only to, in turn, consider themselves “indigenous” (p.7). This has been the pattern of European influence and practice throughout the history of America and other countries such as those in Africa. Smith (1999) states, “Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. Research is always up for question because of colonization. The same system of research in which America operates is predicated on the colonizers and their ideals at the expense of the colonized. It is these same ideals that charter the nature of our schools, our governments, and even various institutions that are in charge of representing the colonizer. Simply put, post-colonialism is designed by Western philosophy for the sole purpose of conspicuously noting the colonizer’s power to define that which they supposedly control (Smith, 1999). Post-colonial theory for African American scholars legitimizes the claims and historical accounts of racism that have occurred throughout American history while also providing a platform for reasoning behind reiterating the patterns of oppression.

### *Community Food Work*

Community food work is also known as alternative food practices (Slocum, 2007). Slocum describes community food work as practices “that advocate more ecologically sound and socially just farming methods, food marketing and distribution, and healthier food options across the US,” (Slocum 2007, p. 522). As a framework, community food work may be defined to better recognize the interconnections and complications of food systems issues, like sustainability of farms, access to food and health equity, resiliency of the environment and social justice (Ligrani & Niewolny, 2017). Community food work provides attention to the environmental and local issues that the current food system does not address (Slocum, 2007).

Community food work urges practitioners to advance towards more sustainable food production methods while challenging the racial injustices that exist both in and out of white spaces where alternative food methods are practiced (Slocum, 2006). Alternative food practices may also be critiqued for the racial context behind being able to produce and access organic foods in low-income minority neighborhoods. For example, the movement itself is based and promoted with a strong sense of whiteness (Slocum, 2007). What lacks in this situation is the cultural context of other groups that alternative food practices are often leaving out, such as the indigenous practices that have existed prior to colonization (Smith 1999; Slocum 2004). Not to mention the African practices that were already in place before alternative methods were redeveloped to counter and claim ownership of agricultural production methods while excluding those who do not assimilate or are unable to challenge the power behind such a movement (Slocum, 2007). White spaces seemingly spread their knowledge that originally was provided to them from indigenous Americans and Africans, revamp it and redistribute it in their liking, therefore rewriting the narrative and whitening out their sins with a stroke of a pen (Cabral, 1970; Smith 1999; Slocum, 2004). Using community food work as a frame for understanding the practices of the leaders, may offer opportunity for reclamation of agricultural methods and provide a broader cultural relevance in alternative food movement literature.

### **Key Terminology**

There are several terms that are pertinent to topics that will be further explored in this research. Agricultural literacy describes the understanding and knowledge necessary to synthesize, analyze, and communicate agricultural knowledge (Frick, Kahler & Miller, 1991). Literacy refers to the result that the organizers and educators examined in this study are striving for in regard to the youth and communities they are interacting with in their work. **Community**



**food security** is a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). Justice holds a place in not just a social realm but through food and economic viability. To address communities that commonly do not receive equality, the food justice transformation of the current food system includes but is not limited to the elimination of disparities and inequities (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). Discussions around justice often lead to more in-depth conversations around community autonomy. **Social justice** is the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within a society (Social Justice, n.d.). A term used to express that is **food sovereignty**, which is a movement articulating the right to define one's own food system, usually associated with small farmer viability in a more modern sense, throughout discussions of both rural and urban community food work and development (Lang & Barling, 2012). When people gain their autonomy, there is a constant push to define one's individual foodways and question how food can be made available for future generations. This idea is circulated through the terms, food sustainability and foodways. Food sustainability refers to food systems designed to exist for the long term (Lang & Barling, 2012), while foodways refer to the patterns that establish what we eat, as well as how and why.

**Community food work** is described as, "A framework for understanding the interconnections and complexities of food systems issues such as farm sustainability, food access and health equity, environmental resiliency and social justice." (Ligrani & Niewolny, 2017, p. 1). Community food work is used as such in this study in connection to critical race theory and critical pedagogy which will be covered later in this text. **Food justice** is another term in which intertwines throughout this study. Food justice is described as, "A multilayered concept that identifies different issues, groups, constituencies and strategies", much like the ones the

participants provide in their narratives (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2013). In further discussion the terms African American and black will be used interchangeably to represent the same group of people throughout this study. Though one term implies derivation from a particular locality, the other, is in fact also accurate in its usage as it describes people of color who have origins both on the North American continent and abroad and are not exempt from the racial barriers that exist in society because of the color of their skin.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research reflects the need for black community leadership and food justice work. There is also methodological, practical, and theoretical significance to this study. This study explores the effects of miseducation exhibited in predominantly black schools as a direct example of the lack of funding to provide students with programs and materials necessary for agendas such as agriculture sciences that could easily open doors for agricultural practices being incorporated in the homes of black families. This, too, may discourage active leadership from educators who are not supported or empowered to advocate change. Witnessing leadership skills from the perspectives of black organizers and educators could indeed help African American youth practice leadership, self-sufficiency, and the skills that could influence the result of their success in life with better choices and the knowledge to lead others into better practices and ideologies. By making black communities more aware of food security issues that directly affect them, informed decisions and actions may take place to impact changes in policy and practice. In practice, using narrative inquiry to provide examples of other black people expressing self-determination, leadership and food justice work, helps to make the necessary connections theoretically between critical race theory, critical pedagogy and community food work.

By creating a video narrative component to this study, it contributes to the methodology of narrative inquiry as well. Also, youth, regardless of their literary ability as well as adults, may be provided access to information that they may indeed retain to either encourage the rise or partnership of leadership within black communities for the current and future generations and under what circumstances we eat (Guptill, Copelton, & Lucal 2013). This allows people to both see and hear the stories of leaders that are both salient to their life experience as well as their neighborhood culture. “Culture is created, shaped, transmitted and learned through communication, and communication practices are largely created, shaped and transmitted by culture” (Stajcic, 2013, p. 6). This study also allows the exploration of the critical role that black leaders play in black community education and food justice work. By providing a diversified means of communication from the academic to community levels, culture may continue to be shaped and/or influenced (Stajcic, 2013). Video in this narrative inquiry serves as a medium of change, for reshaping or confirming the views of African Americans as leaders or organizers and educators in society. Videography is designed to capture the natural everyday situations of the participants that occur with or without the researcher present (Knoblauch, Tuma, & Schnettler, 2013). In this study, these natural occurrences are expressed in narrative-inquiry-style interviews instead of raw observation, giving voice to those who may identify with groups that have been historically marginalized and silenced. This study focus adds to the body of literature on critical race theory and critical pedagogy from the lens and perspectives of black scholars and community members alike.

### **Limitations of the Study**

African American youth in food deserts have shown little involvement in agricultural practices. There has been little research conducted regarding African American advancement,

therefore providing few examples in the mainstream of information to set examples for the progression of African Americans as a whole. African Americans are often imprisoned in their minds and in life. There needs to be an influx of scholarly attention to African Americans for the sake of addressing food security and critical race theory for the public to interpret and take action in critical reflection of our ideologies and influence more productive hegemonic cognition in regard to social justice. Mainstream society lacks the image of current black leadership, which perpetuates the current hegemonic perception of negativity. The interviews and data collected from the selected participants may not reflect that of a general population from state to state or region to region. The researcher also acknowledges his own cultural bias as a direct product of the barriers that exist for him as an African American man.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Bread for the World (2017) recognized that the condition of food insecurity is a direct result of poverty, racial discrimination, and gender discrimination. In general, policy makers and leadership have ultimately failed African Americans who live in poverty, leaving little to no room for a foundation of trust and security to be formulated (Henkel, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2006). To be more specific, food insecurity is one of the leading issues surrounding those who live in poverty, especially for African Americans, afflicted with diseases and illnesses like diabetes and heart disease (Drewnowski & Specter, 2004; Berman, 2011; Bread of the World, 2017). Poverty is often identified by income, but I explore poverty as not only a disposition, but also in terms of limited access to healthy and affordable foods. Often these spaces are considered food deserts, or areas in which there is limited to no food access to healthy and affordable foods (Winne, 2008; Food Desert, n.d.). This is not to say that these areas do not have food; instead, they have an abundance of over-processed, inadequate forms of nutrition, which often are the main cause of health-related diseases in these communities (Lyson, 2004). I also explore Critical Race Theory by addressing poverty, food security, cultural awareness, black leaders, and community food systems in black communities. In addition, an even deeper look into the factors within black communities that influence youth empowerment and black leadership will be discussed.

#### **Exploring Poverty and Food Security: A Barrier to Food Justice**

To have access, financially and physically, to obtain food through socially acceptable means is to be food secure. To understand why African Americans living in poverty are in need of food justice, there must first be a consideration of how poverty is associated with food

security. African Americans residing in so called food deserts face forms of cultural, economic, political, even social discrimination as well as several forms of neglect (Anderson, 2001). Despite the wicked problem (Hamm, 2009), there is still an epidemic of hunger in America among low-income minority communities that highlights poor access (Grochowska, 2014). Wicked problems are issues that have no one true solution and are often too complex to warrant an easy fix (Grochowska, 2014). For example, as a result of the production of over-processed foods, minority communities are subject to diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Diabetes and heart disease are the two leading causes of death among African Americans. Heart disease in 2009 was present in the lives of 44.4% black men and 48.9% black woman age 20 and above in America and 46,334 men and 48,070 women had died from this disease since 2009 (American Heart Association, 2013) Diabetes, on the other hand, has claimed the lifestyles of 13.2% of all African Americans aged 20 years or older with African Americans inheriting a 1.7 times greater possibility of developing diabetes compared to non-Hispanic whites. (American Diabetes Association, 2017). This information alone does not necessarily reflect the wrong doing of the associations, but of the diets of the individuals who are contracting these diseases. What CRT brings forth is the generations of African Americans who have been displaced from their culture and still practice poor eating habits and racism in the food system, which derives from slavery in America (Holt-Gimenez & Harper, 2016). Corporate dependency monetarily services the wealthy and gradually removed generations of people away from cultural practices such as hunting, gathering, and farming all together. From a CRT standpoint, with the understanding that disease is an epidemic associated with the diets or provisions allocated to the general public, there is an imbalance in African American patients, and, their access and food education is now in question. Yet, the diet recommendations of both the American Diabetes and Heart

Associations promote what the World Health Organization considers to be the cause of these diseases and cancer regarding nutrition, such as over-processed meats laden with several cancer-causing chemicals (Simon, 2015). The notion that this systematic platform is connected to racism against African Americans seems limited, but the methods of these health organizations are contradictory because the things that cause cancer such as poor diet, cigarettes and lack of physical activity, seem to be either promoted or encouraged within those same communities by the people who fund those health organizations, and in regards to food, through those health organizations (American Diabetes Association, 2017; American Heart Association, 2017). What sense does it make for the corporations who profit from drug and food addiction to regulate and supply aid to those they profit from and the problematic phenomena they have created? A Harvard study was conducted in 2012 under the National Institute of Health to understand the effects of eating unprocessed red meat and processed meats, while understanding their connection to heart issues and diabetes.

“The overall findings suggest that neither unprocessed red nor processed meat consumption is beneficial for cardio metabolic health, and that clinical and public health guidance should especially prioritize reducing processed meat consumption.” (Micha, Michas, & Mozaffarian, 2012, p. 1). With institutions that support the consumption of these products, they are also promoting neighborhoods lacking food security with an abundance of overpriced, high sugar, high fat, over processed foods and liquor stores which deem these areas as food deserts (Canto, Brown, & Deller, 2014). Food insecurity is apparent when families have limited resources, limited access to healthy and affordable food, depend on systems such as the SNAP programs, and make a living through socially unacceptable means (Holben, 2002).

Many of these same factors and circumstances of food access can be associated with poverty (Canto, Brown, & Deller, 2014). This analysis also explores why agriculture is a valuable tool for counteracting poverty in black communities, Anderson (2001) notes the need for change is evident, and the one thing that stands to keep African Americans away from building infrastructure of any kind is the excessive spending outside of their communities and not enough black owned businesses to keep black dollars circulating within the community.

For many African Americans, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is necessary to help feed their families (Canto, Brown, & Deller, 2014), with nearly 9 million African Americans participating and surviving with incomes at 56 percent of the poverty line (CBPP, 2007). “The SNAP program is designed to offer nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities. SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net” (USDA, 2014).

Lin & Harris (2008) discussed how the adversity of poverty is spread disproportionately among ethnic minority groups and even more so for single-parent homes. Thomas (2014) expressed, however, that “research has shown that SNAP beneficiaries will buy fresh foods at farmers’ markets if given the chance thus indicating that the problem may be one of accessibility and availability rather than preference” (p. 2). Often, African Americans are subject to inaccessibility when the nearest food market may not be as easy to get to when the bus runs only once an hour or community members have to find rides and walk long distances to obtain these goods. “In the United States, food insecurity is evident when families have limited resources, insufficient access to food, depend on food assistance programs, skip meals, substitute nutritious foods with less expensive alternatives, and seek assistance from soup kitchens and food



pantries,” (Holben, 2002, p. 158). Therein lies the plight of the underrepresented populations of African Americans in food deserts.

### **History of Slavery, Racism, and Jim Crow: Barriers to Black Advancement**

To obtain a clear grasp of how African Americans are impacted by poverty, limited agricultural exposure, and overall access to resources, we must first take notice of the issue and its historical context. To begin, racism, as an institutional practice in U.S. colonial history was illustrated in the state of Maryland with the Doctrine of Exclusion of 1638, which officially made it legal to discriminate against blacks for any reason (Anderson, 2001). The exclusion of human rights and privilege has been engrained not only in the minds of African Americans but also in Europeans. There is an expectation to perpetuate this normalized belief. Smiley (2005) discussed the nature of the law, which excluded blacks from the benefits that were afforded to whites. The law also proclaimed that blacks must remain noncompetitive with whites, except in sports and entertainment. What that meant for African Americans is that they were forced to practically worship white men and woman, assimilate but never allowed to fully integrate within this system of privilege Europeans had constructed. Additionally, the Meritorious Manumission of 1710 was ultimately the idea that enslaved blacks could, in fact, receive reward for their faithful service and loyalty to their white masters (Morris, 1996). For example, the reward could be their freedom on the deathbed of their master or for saving the life of a white person and in many cases snitching on another enslaved person who tried to escape.

Slavery in America was one of the most gruesome forms of slavery known to human history. African Americans were stripped of all dignity and identity, while forced to assimilate both culturally and physically to white supremacist ideals, beliefs, and abuse. For Anderson (2001), African Americans were and have been recognized as all but human beings in American

society. African Americans were essentially considered property, not people. What this means is that the enslaved were conditioned to think that way too. Land technically had no value unless one owned, slaves, but some abolitionists would argue whether a soul could be owned. Many southerners in America indeed felt as if it were so (Morris, 1996). Anderson (2001) describes racism as a wealth and power-based relationship between those who are black and those who are not. Racism in its essence is designed to maintain a certain group's dominance over another based solely on the color of their skin. By assuring African Americans are not provided access to necessary resources for survival, this in turn makes them unable to compete economically as well as totally reliant on the white majority for what they need to survive.

From a post-colonialism lens, the post-bellum era serves as a perfect example of how the classification of blacks have stripped them of their ability to self-identify through economic control and physically brutal practices of oppression from the colonizers of America (Du Bois, 1967). As freed slaves started families and their children became skilled and much more educated, the freeborn children should have had more opportunity for skilled craft jobs (Du Bois, 1967). The color of their skin was an issue, though, and the legislative push for exclusion of black paid workers only limited the black population both old and young to occupational servitude (Du Bois, 1967). Unfortunately, very few blacks and whites were even qualified for jobs as servants. Du Bois (1967) notes the whites' perception of these positions and the blacks' disappointment and incompetence. Positions of servitude were commonly viewed as positions that would not warrant promotion or advancement, yet instead of moving toward the training of servants, whites initiated a plan to displace African Americans. Du Bois (1967) describes how the word "servant" and "Negro" went hand-in-hand, and white Americans refused to work servant positions because of that perception of servant work. Instead, highly trained white

English servants and Swedes who were better paid were brought in to displace blacks while in the same instance, being paid 50 percent more than the displaced members of society.

Racism is constructed on the perceptions of a white status quo, or the way in which white people view black people, while fortifying slavery and Jim Crow. These ideas are not just visible but constructed and revamped over time. For example, the United States Constitution's Amendments 13 through 15 (The U.S. Constitution Online, 2018), which used to be specifically catered to blacks in America, are now what Anderson (2001) and Alexander (2010) describe as colorblind due to the changes that the majority co-opted in the 1860s during Reconstruction. Furthermore, the treatment of African Americans is still a concern as one would see in the past and present occurrences of over-policed black neighborhoods and murders of black men and woman to racial violence (Alexander, 2010). Not to mention the sheer numbers who are incarcerated for non-violent crimes and used as able bodies in the private prison industrial system's legal slavery ring (Alexander, 2010).

Cultural bias plays a huge part in all that racism stands for and perpetuates. Without it, Jim Crow Laws would have been invalid. The organized efforts of white supremacists developed a system of oppression that was used to control the minds and bodies of the enslaved and the generations to follow them. Smith (2007) and Alexander (2010) describe how Jim Crow Laws still flourish due to the dominant white culture. Anderson (2001) and Rossing (2013) further explain that African Americans do not hold power to practice racial discrimination and oppression against the white majority because power is the determining factor in a group's ability to be racist. White people have the power to change the course of a black person's life with a simple phone call to the police. This, too, is the same for things such as quality food and water acquisition.

Black farmers have had a hard time maintaining their lands for years due to land loss and buyout (Gilbert, Sharp, & Felin, 2001). Black farmers are also few and far between and have little support from institutions like banks for loans and mainstream overseers who may seek to buy land for their own financial gain (Gilbert, Sharp, & Felin, 2001). Modern-day farming has evolved so much so from the basic plow and cow concepts. Technologies have advanced, crop yielding has evolved, and traditional methods, though very vital, are being overshadowed by genetic modification. Black farmers exist as a direct connection to black communities yet tend to be absent from the classroom conversation. The primary underlying issue with limited black farmers and their consistent decline is that youth are not motivated or encouraged to participate in agricultural practices or seek careers in that field (Gilbert, Sharp, & Felin, 2001; Brown, 2018). Farming is not seen as something to aspire to, especially with the possibility of higher paying fields outside of agriculture (USDA, 2007). Somewhere along the line it has been forgotten that, “The farmers, rural landowners, and agrarian organizers who are a part of the radical black agrarian tradition have historically served as the vanguard and custodians of revolutionary moments for African descendants and people of color (Williams & Holt-Gimenez, 2017, p. 61).

Giancattarino and Noor (2014) stated that “Corporate land ownership has challenged the economic viability and sustainability of small family farmers and farmers of color, especially as more farmers become contract-farmers and tenants on their land, no longer able to compete against agribusiness,” (p.16). The relationship between people and the land has diminished due to corporate dependence and the disconnect between producers and consumers (Giancattarino & Noor, 2014). This is even more so prominent in underrepresented populations. Bell (2015) states that the number of African American farmers has fallen from 14 percent to 1 percent in a span of

less than 100 years. Not only does that suggest a decline in African American producers but also a decline in land ownership that, as stated before, is essential to the production of food. The Federation of Southern Cooperatives that started in 1967 has worked to maintain African American family- owned farms by facilitating training in forestry, sustainable agriculture, marketing, and management and addressing the concerns and demand for their cause to state legislation and the U.S. Congress (Bell, 2015). Penniman (2018) proclaimed that decades of discrimination from the USDA, violent white supremacists, and the legalized exploitation of black peoples' property, is the cause for the mass dispossession of their land.

Corporations make it even more difficult to access land and ownership because of their continuous abuse and over usage of fertile soil to drive over-consumption. (Roos et al., 2017). Such is the result of the years of exploitation of African land and its people for the human capital and resources rich throughout the continent that do not belong to those who have devised efforts to extract and exploit those resources, i.e. blood diamonds (Andrzejewski, Baltodano, & Symcox, 2009). More often as people of color resist, there is retaliation from those who wish to continue to seize that which is not theirs, manifesting imperialism. Supply, demand, and marketing have contributed significantly to Americans' perceptions of what we need and want. Therein lies the cause of overconsumption and overproduction in the agrifood system, in which mass production of goods was considered a gift to the powerful and a curse to the powerless. Even though higher production meant more food and less expenditures for those in power, it also meant fewer jobs to support the purchase of food by consumers (Lyson, 2004). Economic racism is at the core of decision making in regard to the housing markets, store placement, or even educational access, just to name a few. Andrzejewski, Baltodano, and Symcox (2009) refer to economic racism and inequality of global resources as a direct result of imperialism, which

concentrates wealth among very small groups of individuals, such as the oil industry, the agriculture industry, or even the cable industry. Rawls (1971) makes a valid point that, “The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance” (p.208).

In reference to black farmers and the struggles that are present in their attempts to acquire land and establish farms post-slavery, the cases of Pigford vs. Glickman and Pigford vs. Johanns create a frame of reference for these circumstances (Jordan, Pennick, Hill & Zabawa, 2007). Jordan, Pennick, Hill & Zabawa (2007) discussed how black farmers demonstrated and collectively organized to convince the U.S. Congress to appeal a statute of limitations that prevented farmers from filing complaints of discriminatory practices in the misdistribution and misallocation of loans by the USDA Farmers Home Administration. This case truly shows the resilience and will to persevere of African American farmers, regardless of how unnecessary this experience. Many of the same practices have historically been used to keep black people from obtaining jobs and seeking homes (Smith, 2007; Alexander 2010). Anderson (2001) mentioned that in a race-based society, blacks receive an inheritance of disadvantage while whites acquired ownership and control of nearly everything of value along with a system of oppression that keeps blacks non-competitive and powerless. This can be attributed to the inability of Africans Americans to access jobs that pay equal to their white counterparts, or even perhaps forge a greater wedge and distraction to the root causes by paying black women even less to create competition among blacks (Du Bois, 1967).

Accessing education has been an uphill battle for African Americans since slavery and cultural genocide. At one point it was unlawful and socially unacceptable for African Americans to be literate through the Anti-Literacy Laws and cultural preferences of whites from different areas (Monaghan, 2000). Blacks were led to believe that knowing how to read was against the

law, which often resulted in slaves being tried if their masters did not admit to teaching them (Monaghan, 2000). Yet, the only way forward or to gain some element of “freedom” was to obtain a Western education. Dixson & Rousseau (2006) discussed the experience of African American parents’ involvement in providing their children with an opportunity for educational advancement, describing the inability to access schools that first would allow them to attend. This meant that black parents had to find ways to send their children to neighboring city schools that would allow their children to attend (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). White elites were against the idea of those who once were property being equal or perhaps feared that they would ultimately surpass their children (Du Bois, 1967). Getting an education meant more than just the acquisition of knowledge. In a life of illiteracy in a changing world that requires some level of mathematics and reading skills, having access to education affected the ability of African Americans to vote as well because of the competency testing some states required. That illiteracy extends to agricultural knowledge not being offered in black schools.

With limited exposure to sustainable agricultural resources and education, people are continuing trends that have long been shown to slowly deteriorate the presence of adequate and healthy food options (Berman, 2011; Wright, Donley, Gualtieri & Strickhouser, 2016). Youth are often uncertain about what agriculture entails, often guessing, with underdeveloped ideas that contradict reality. Hess & Trexler (2011) expressed their concern in a study that showed that their students failed to display a consideration of the diverse varieties of farms, their purpose, or the social practices involved in conventional farming. African Americans have a limited relationship with agriculture outside of slavery due to the lack of attention to the historical truths of America.

Agricultural literacy is needed to equip the next generations with the skills to adapt and subsist in a world that seems to be growing worse as the years pass. Children struggle in school and often have not been able to receive adequate nourishment outside of the two meals provided to them in school (Holthaus, 2014). It is estimated that 13.6 million children under the age of 12 in the United States live in families that must cope with the risk of hunger, while 30 million acres of farmland, or 3.1% of the total, were lost in the United States from 1987 to 1998 (Holthaus, 2014). There needs to be change in diets and demand for healthy and nutritious food in poverty-stricken neighborhoods (Holthaus, 2014). Frick, Kahler & Miller (1991) discuss how in order to achieve the adequate improvement and conversion of agrifood systems, there must be an understanding that this is a goal not intended to be accomplished overnight. Urban schools often cater to predominantly black students and at the same time are underfunded, supplying limited essential tools to properly educate their students or challenge the narrative of the status quo. Standardized testing and requirements for learning leave little to no room for fact-based conversations around slavery, race, and detailed American history because it reflects the thoughts and perceptions of the dominant culture, which is white (Le, 2016). Both Anderson (2001) and Bell (1987) speak of how students are already deprived of their cultural history and told otherwise while learning something different but in the same token are forced to assume that the truth should be negated because of the dependence that is created on the school system to prepare children for graduation, college and in most cases, the Prison Pipeline System. In low-income schools, students are not taught to succeed and attempt to live the American dream through exploration of various fields and teachers are not provided with adequate time and academic freedom to do anything different (Le, 2016). When people are not being educated on agriculture,



they lose their position of power as citizens, to influence democratic reform, allowing someone else to make the decision of what is best, for them (Hess & Trexler, 2011).

Developmentalism has taken an interesting position in our world, opening the ideals of endless opportunity (Peet & Hartwick, 2009). The concept of developmentalism is described to “monopolize dreams of progress and destroy alternative conceptions of the future” (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, p. 3). The introduction of developmentalism into the world has allowed once-local markets to transform into global marketplaces. This opportunity also opened the door for industries and corporate structures to impede on foreign land to save money in cheap labor and neglect environmental restrictions while pushing the USDA to support industrialized agricultural practices (Peet & Hartwick, 2009; Williams & Holt-Gimenez, 2017). Either way it goes, we are responsible for the wellbeing of this planet we share: “Whether consumer-based development remains a minority activity or becomes a majority activity among Earth’s inhabitants, either way is unacceptable for social (divided planet) or environmental (unsustainable planet) reasons, or both” (McMichael, 2008, p.1).

Peet and Hartwick (2009) also define developmentalism as “[a] battleground where contention rages among bureaucratic economists, Marxist revolutionaries, environmental activists, feminist critics, postmodern skeptics, and radical democrats” (p. 4). It is quite significant that developmentalism stakes its claim in various countries in the world that operate on a system fueled by the currency. Politicians have a reputation of taking from the people they serve while hunger is becoming a dynamic and widespread issue in America. Intentions are quite flawed when we live in a world where “Class, ethnicity, gender, and regional location distribute incomes extremely unequally within each country” (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, p. 7).

A prime example of the effect of developmentalism can be seen on an institutional level as applied to agriculture education. The New Farmers of America (NFA) started in Virginia as a localized movement in 1927 but was established in Virginia 1935 to promote agricultural leadership, character, thrift, scholarship, cooperation, and citizenship (NFAR, 2005). The NFA serviced segregated schools, which was informed by and resulted in several forms of racial and social injustices. For instance, the Future Farmers of America (FFA) was established to service white male youth in agriculture while the NFA was established separately from FFA for black males. Not only were these organizations race-based, they continued to attribute to the underservice of woman in general. The NFA was not legalized and recognized under the U.S. Department of Education until 1941 upon which the FFA National Advisor stripped the current and founding black educators who were advising the NFA of their roles, (NFAR, 2005). Though African American leaders were appointed, there was still an assimilation process for the program and its members to function under the FFA's guidelines and close watch. It was not until the Civil Right Movement did these systems change. The NFA ultimately merged with the FFA and in turn the black jackets of the NFA and cotton symbol were now to match the FFA navy blue jackets, with the corn and owl symbol. Woodson (1933) made a correlation that when African Americans find themselves within the systems of learning through the lens of their oppressor, they in turn get accustomed to interpreting their struggle as a reason to notify others to not pursue the same route because there would be no room for development. Woodson's (1933) notion implies that African Americans could no longer have a space within agriculture, therefore potentially decreasing the motivation to be to follow a path of genuine interest and self-worth as an African American. This follows the established notion that whites are often given more opportunity and access than blacks generally (Bell, 1987). Like the NFA/FFA, when interest and

participation decrease, funding for agriculture education falls short in black neighborhoods. Then goes the resources to maintain the programs to educate students on how to be self-sufficient and maintain historical, cultural practices of their own

Another form of institutional racism in agriculture following the logic of developmentalism is with the Black Panther Party of Oakland, California. The Black Panther Party came together to develop the Free Breakfast for School Children (FBSC) program that provided nourishment for youth in the community before school in 1969. The program as Mascarenhas-Swan (2013) described it, had started out providing breakfast for just a few children at a local church and expanded to such an extent that they were soon providing breakfast for more than 10,000 children a day. The success of this program sparked a major concern for the need within African American communities. This too, is relevant today with underserved populations in need of food security, community education, and development. Yet, in the wake of a breakthrough, the chance at equality was diminished by the reputation that accompanied the party in their early years. Mascarenhas-Swan (2013) explains how the party was known for its focus on armed self-defense and patrol of the police, which later led to the arrests and brutal murders of party leaders. There was no account of party members killing anyone, yet the FBI ordered executions of men who sought change in their communities and fought oppression in American society (Hilliard & Cole, 1993).

According to Potorti (2012), J. Edgar Hoover's racist disdain for the Black Panthers was motivation enough to order the immediate infiltration and shut down of the FBSC program and the Black Panther party as a whole. Hoover opposed how the Panthers were fostering positivity, which led to an FBI raid and the destruction of the FBSC program facility (Hilliard & Cole, 1993). Potorti (2012) also recounted the lengths to which the FBI went to destroy the Panthers.

They not only raided the Free Breakfast for School Children program but destroyed food storage facilities and equipment and sent letters to Panther party leaders to turn them against each other. This effort destroyed the relationships that the Panthers had with local business owners and community advocates who played a huge role in the development of the Free Breakfast for School Children program. What stands out is the federal government's refusal to address poverty within African American communities, instead, the government sought ways to criminalize them (Holt-Gimenez, 2011).

### **Community Food Systems: A Critical Approach**

An ideal community food system requires the formation of new relationships that help build better economies, conserve local landscapes, promotes entrepreneurship, enlighten and educate, and generate new friendships (Ackerman-Leist, 2013). This definition is not realistic and does not account for the prevention of food justice and access that African Americans too often endure. Food justice is explained to be a direct opposition to the marginalization of low-income community food access while in the same notion, advocating for people having the skills, knowledge and choice to grow their own food (Broad, 2016; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). Moreover, the lifestyle and course of African Americans is dictated by the concentration of poverty in isolated and segregated communities that are often neglected and unsovereign (Anderson, 2008). With that said, the idea of a sustainable community would easily involve food because at this point, African Americans rely on corporations to provide their daily nutritional intake through several forms of high-fat, high-sodium, and over-processed foods (Holt-Gimenez & Harper, 2016). The motivating factor of this study is to help build a network of people within a given area or neighborhood and organize them for community sustainability. Community food system practitioners need to be mindful that the foodways of the communities they serve have their own

distinct culture. Foodways refer to a group of people's diets, traditions, and cultural practices surrounding food (Ackerman-Leist, 2013). Foodways create the space for groups to interact with each other in the sense that food is the driving force that brings them together. The issue with this definition is that it does not consider food access, which has been a major contributing factor to the foodways for many black, urban, and poor communities (Alkon, Gillis, DiNuccio & Chavez, 2013). Foodways represent food choice as well. Historically, African Americans are limited from having access to what they can choose for healthy and affordable food in their communities (Alexander, 2010; Penniman, 2018). Throughout this section, we discuss the approaches of community food systems practitioners for the purpose of understanding what role community food systems play in tackling poverty and community food security.

The role of community food systems (CFS) practitioners continues to evolve as demand for CFS becomes more popular among community members, elected officials, and community organizations (Ventura & Bailkey, 2017). Community practitioners wear several different hats that require cultural awareness, central values, and communication with stakeholders, such as producers, growers, farmers, processors, aggregators, retailers, distributors, educators, practitioners, organizers, consumers, eaters, engaged citizens, residents, youth, family and communities, and policy makers (CES, 2017). Community practitioners are tasked with helping to influence decisions that impact culture and the livelihood of communities (CES, 2017). To consider food a daily element of one's life, holding traditional and cultural practices of growing, cooking and consumption; community-based food systems activism is seen as a feasible, practical strategy for contesting the effects of food injustice and absolute racism (Ventura & Bailkey, 2017).

The Whole Measures for Community Food Security (CFS) (Abi-Nader et. al., 2009) model was developed to aid practitioners and community members in planning and evaluating food security within communities. Abi-Nader et al., (2009), describe community food security as a state of being provided access to safe, healthy, and affordable foods that are culturally appropriate through a sustainable means that encourages and promotes resourcefulness and social justice for everyone. Through the Whole Measures for CFS, the quality and character of a community food system can be measured by six values-based fields. These fields often overlap in their relevance to a community's needs and goals for food system change. For Abi-Nader et al. (2009), these six fields are: justice and fairness, strong communities, vibrant farms, healthy people, sustainable ecosystems, and thriving local economies. The primary purpose of this tool is to engage communities in dialogue guided by values-based decisions for social change in their own communities. This level of thought and reflection to the role of social justice in local food systems nature may lead to the empowerment of communities of color; however, little is known about socially just food system change work in low-income areas where mostly African Americans reside (Alkon, & Aygeman, 2011).

Campbell, Carlisle, and Feenstra (2013) discuss how food security and community viability are under threat because low-income communities face many transgressions due to limited community practitioner involvement and the community struggles to acquire assets. Three major factors that prevent community practitioners from effectively engaging in communities of color are: (1) difficulty finding price points for farmers that would provide better access to direct community sales in low-income communities of color, (2) difficulty confronting racial bias and racism and (3) the history of local food efforts perpetuating whiteness by reinforcing pre-existing privilege (Campbell, Carlisle, & Feenstra, 2013). Community

practitioners are also faced with challenges that prevent them engaging in the communities with the most need. Overall, practitioners are becoming more aware of their inability to interact with the people of the communities they intend to aid:

“Workers in long-standing activist organizations have commented that more and more time is spent on paperwork, whether it be in terms of financial reporting requirements for local government funders, monitoring and evaluation requirements for international aid agencies, or democratic accountability procedures required by membership organizations. These reporting requirements mean less and less time for social action” (Kenny, 2002, p.285).

Practitioner absence can lead to animosity with one’s job or even between the community members and stakeholders. “Tensions arise when workers involved in advocacy work have to do more and more service provision as agents of government, in order to subsidize their major commitment to ‘giving voice’ to the views and needs of disadvantaged groups” (Kenny, 2002, p. 285). It’s also important for communities to be aware of the tasks that prevent practitioners from engaging as much as they would like. Communities are made up of what Green and Haines (2011) describe as a group of people who live within the same proximity and share common interests. Communities share everything from schools, churches, religious practices, to even the complex factors of life, love and comradery. It takes resources to develop a productive community and for relationships among the people to develop and grow. There is little to no expectations for communities of color to access what is not made available when decision makers often overlook the most distressed communities in favor of supporting communities where the dominant white society resides (Green & Haines, 2011).

Community food system work is connected to food justice work where food sovereignty is the goal. Food sovereignty is described by Ackerman-Leist (2013):

“Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”

(p. 142-143)

Community food systems are ideally meant to promote a separation from corporate markets because of inequality and racial, discriminatory practices (Ohmer, Meadowcroft, Freed & Lewis, 2009). Wittman, Desmarais, and Wiebe, (2010) state that “practical and political expressions of food sovereignty are and will continue to be diverse because they emerge out of, and are integrated into, a wide variation of local conditions” (p. 33). African Americans are subconsciously devoted to capitalistic behavior yet too often do not invest their dollars in each other by spending their money at stores that do not contribute any return of their dollars to their communities (Anderson, 2001). This continues the trend of black communities lacking wealth and economic vitality. Support for unjust capitalistic system practices eliminates the choice of the underprivileged, disenfranchised, unemployed, homeless, and oppressed from opting out of the so-called industrial food system (Anderson, 2001). Therefore, community food systems practitioners face a challenge that involves structural and social boundaries when involving themselves with communities of color.



Disadvantaged neighborhoods stand to greatly benefit from the increasing importance of community agriculture and sustainable community development (Ohmer, Meadowcroft, Freed & Lewis, 2009). Malik Yakini, the founder and executive director of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, has found a way to establish a seven-acre farm in Detroit to target the community needs and self-determination of underrepresented African American youth (Grillo, 2013). His consciousness and values are centered on addressing poverty and racism, including limited access to healthy and affordable foods. The Detroit Black Community Food Security Network is rooted in the values of justice, equity, democracy, self-determination, and love. Malik emphasizes the notion that humans were not put here to dominate the planet; instead it is our responsibility to take care of the Earth (Grillo, 2013; White, 2018). His garden staff are primarily youth and some adult volunteers who are able to develop life skills and a healthy work ethic to continue promoting growth and development within their own communities. The Detroit Black Community Food Security Network has illustrated the relevance of the popular quote “give a man a fish and he’ll eat for a day, show a man how to fish and he will never go hungry.” Through community education and development, the African American youth in Detroit communities are finding purpose in maintaining a sustainable food system and helping to uplift others while leading by example (Grillo, 2013; White, 2018). African American leaders (both past and present) are thus organizing movements and educating black youth to become involved in agriculture as a core development practice.

Leah Penniman is another leader in the food justice movement that found peace in her connection to nature. She and her partner Jonah were inspired to feed their community in the South End, Albany, NY, recognizing that the people in their community were experiencing a food apartheid. In response, Leah founded the farm share called, Soul Fire Farm. Once a week,

the farm provides even share boxes containing eight to twelve vegetables each, a dozen eggs, sprouts, and/or poultry for the members of the South End Community (Penniman, 2018). They practice cooperative economics or Ujimaa, an African American principle of Kwanzaa. Cooperative economics is a concept of shared work and wealth (Penniman, 2018). Leah commented that due to the apparent issues of racism, discrimination and the value of black farmers, it was imperative that they expand their work to empowering black youth who have been court-adjudicated, institutionalized, and state-targeted. One of the issues that they face is youth experience fatalism which operates as a form of internalized racism, that perpetuates the ideas and stereotypes of the status quo (Pyke, 2010; Penniman, 2018). Leah calls for a united social movement to uproot racism and help black youth conquer their fears of inadequacy (Penniman, 2018).

### **Empowering Black Communities for Development**

African Americans face challenges that are centrally grounded in how people view them in society. It is through this research that we hope to find agriculture as a necessary means of community development for empowerment of black communities. One way in which agriculture has empowered people is through civic agriculture. Lyson (2004) and Bagdonis, Hinrichs, and Schafft (2008) describe the idea of civic agriculture as a blueprint for food system change based on the re-localization of food and farming practices that are tightly embedded in the social, economic, and cultural practices of a given community. Civic agriculture has allowed local farmers to grow their market for the benefit of the local community. Lyson (2004) also emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical transition of agriculture from human capital management, to industrialization, and onto modern-day agriculture, to better understand how and where power is concentrated in the food system. Doing so could influence a stronger

presence of leadership within poor communities that will ignite a unification and gathering of collective resources to build and sustain stronger black communities affected by poverty.

Community organizations are made up of what Green and Haines (2011) describe as a synergistic residential partnership among like-minded members of a community, sharing everything from their environment to cultural practices and teachings. The relationship of the people within these communities is necessary, but without resources to develop productive community initiatives, even relationships diminish. Too often resources are poorly distributed to less affluent communities (Green & Haines, 2011). This leaves little room for progression within underrepresented populations whose resources are limited, such as access to healthy and affordable foods to promote healthy living, diets, and relationships among members.

Empowerment of black communities generally starts in the political sector. The direction of empowerment has been used to counter the push for motivation in discussions concerning the oppressed because of empowerment's lasting ability compared to motivation's tendency to come and go (Anderson, 2001). Within African American communities, there is a dynamic relationship with power and empowerment to sustain black inclusion in economic advancement, build stronger communities, and find cultural consciousness (Anderson, 2001). Black communities are in need of empowerment, which can take on several forms and will be discussed. Alongside the understanding of empowerment in black communities, black leadership will be reviewed to learn their role in empowering black communities in youth development. Youth development refers to the mental, physical, and cultural enrichment of youth in this research (Travis & Leech, 2014).

Black empowerment is presumed to be influenced through activism especially in the political realm. Jennings (1992) calls for politics and protests to be one in the same because political behavior of African Americans has always been represented as a response to racism. For

instance, the impacts of racism can be illustrated through the difficulty of black elected officials to receive the support that would empower them to better aid black communities in the political sector. With racial hierarchy in place, black elected officials are constrained to a white, racist, and economically privileged system in which they are often forced to engage in or be pushed out. Despite black politicians' strides and aims to reach equality, neither their rank nor position grants them access to equal power among their white counterparts (Jennings, 1992). African Americans have struggled to gain acceptance as a topic of priority with the Democratic Party, for example. There is much to be required of one who chooses to step into this role of leadership. Jennings (1992) discussed that in order to effectively consider oneself a part of this black political renewal, one must be conscious and embrace the causes of poverty by challenging the economic order despite the trials that may arise.

Jennings (1992) argues that black politics needs a transformation. Black youth have lost faith in the political system of America. Marable and Clarke (2009) attribute this to reasons stemming from inconsistency among politicians from both the Republican and Democratic parties, feelings that their vote will not count or help, and that there is a lack of information about the candidates themselves. With little to no support from black youth and even less salient representation within the political sector, black youth are challenged to assimilate to policies in which a white dominated society has constructed to address the needs of the status quo. This leads to the primary issue of disengagement in the political process all together.

### **The Role of Black Leaders in Youth Development**

Black leadership has gone through several transitions over the course of the Civil Rights Movement's origins in the 1890s. Today this seems far removed, yet in reality, those who took witness of these times and changes are still very much alive. This section describes the black

leadership within itself and continues with a discussion of the challenges that they encounter with impacting youth.

Black leadership in America really took shape in the 1890s out of the teachings and writings of those who led the cognitive realm years before, such as Marcus Garvey, Carter G. Woodson, Booker T. Washington, and W. E. B Du Bois. For example, Du Bois (1972) recognized the compulsive nature of whites separating people into races as the most effective instrument to maintain control of African Americans and other people of color whom they deemed inhuman. Out of their efforts for black consciousness and action arose notable leaders in their place such as Malcom X, Martin Luther King Jr., Louis Farrakhan, Sista Souljah and several other noted activists, scholars, and most importantly, examples for black youth during the Civil Rights Movement. “Black leadership is the product of an intellectual and political journey toward an understanding of the political culture of black America” (Marable, 1998). Many black leaders found themselves at odds on the approach of black empowerment yet often could be seen as similar in their principles and underlying notions. One example of this is W. E. B. Du Bois’ notion of separate but equal that gave whites in 1895 a sense of security that blacks would not interfere with their institutions. Louis Farrakhan’s views of black nationalism challenges white institutions by encouraging blacks to remove themselves from that which has brought so much disadvantage to black families and black community development (Marable, 1998).

The constitution of the United States is a direct reminder of why black leadership has been under so much scrutiny. The U. S. Constitution, in fact, eliminated the idea of democracy for all Americans by directly promoting Jim Crow Laws, affirming representative government and democracy, and acknowledging slave trade and human enslavement (Marable, 1998). What this meant was that there were laws set in place and designed to instill white supremacy and

black subordination within both the political and social sectors of America. The greatest expression of black leadership came during the first and second black reconstruction eras. The first era symbolized the freeing of slaves (Marable, 1998). This period allowed several leaders like Booker T Washington, Anna Julia Cooper, and Fredrick Douglas to access the political realm to give African Americans a voice and black men a vote through this transformation. Even with this success in freedom, there were still social constraints that prohibited advancement in the political realm regarding certain rights and liberties. This time period fostered several instances of white discomfort, despair, and greed, with a lack of labor force for industrialization, resulting in blacks tacking the blame for their circumstances (Nelson, 2003). Much like in WWII, the depiction of black people was slandered by common terminology and visuals that described the physical features of blacks as well as stereotypical norms of that time. Caricatures of the “lazy, improvident, dishonest Negro” offered justification for treating African Americans as second-class citizens” (Nelson, 2003, p. 29). African Americans experienced forms of exclusion, discrimination, and threats due to whites’ discomfort, which resulted in heinous acts that became normalized in American history and still practiced in some parts of the south today (Bell, 1987; Alexander, 2010; Anderson 2001; Penniman, 2018). From segregation, lynching, and denial of civil rights, men, women, and children found few places of comfort and peace; yet this time also gave rise to a new form of black leadership to take place (Nelson, 2003). These leaders and several others paved a way for African Americans through their consistent sacrifice and resilience. Not too long before, the introduction of sociology was fashioned to justify the nature of racism and discrimination against blacks. In 1883, Lester Frank Ward published a book called “Sociology,” which marked the formation of academic justification for views on black inferiority (Nelson, 2003).

The second reconstruction era was during the time when blacks finally received certain political rights yet not enough to be considered equal. This period brought on more radical leadership within the black community. Marable (1998) describes these leaders (Fredrick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, A. Phillip Randolph, Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Jesse Jackson) as carrying a “black messianic” style. Black messianic style refers to the merge of both secular and spiritual thought in which African leaders in the forefront of this movement were extremely articulate and communicated programs that piqued the interests of other African Americans both spiritually and mentally (Marable, 1998). This period led to a state of consciousness among African Americans and was passed down into the 90s through several scholars, activists, and even through music.

Black youth are in a critical position in society. Many current practices are not centered on the needs of African American youth unless facilitated by members of those communities. Travis & Leech (2014), however, utilized a model that focused on empowerment-based positive youth development while focusing on strengths-based, developmental, culture-bound, and action-oriented activities. Positive youth development is described by Arnold & Silliman (2017) as a framework to aid youth organizations in demonstrating the impact of youth programming. Centralizing programming around these principles may have a serious impact among African American youth. African Americans may benefit from understanding the relationship between people and the environment, while reinforcing developmental assets and the importance of a sense of community and their role in the community. Travis & Leech (2014) designed their program around what they referred to as the Five C’s of positive youth development: connection, caring and compassion, character, confidence, and competence. The downside to this model is its generalization toward African Americans. Few youth empowerment programs have incorporated

this type of positive youth development based on the unique and historically significant needs and aims of black youth. Despite the interconnectivity and legitimacy of the Five C's, there is still a need for further exploration of positive youth development among black youth. It is not that youth development dimensions are invalid for youth of color; rather, greater specification of evidence can help articulate the dimensions' relevance for their social and cultural realities (Travis & Leech, 2014; Brown, 2018). The primary dilemma pertaining to black youth is the continued marginalization that aids in maintaining poverty among black youth and their families. African American youth face obstacles such as socioeconomic inequality, residential segregation, poor school quality, the prison pipeline, criminal justice system, and especially historic inequality—all of which have failed to aid African Americans in becoming empowered and prevent opportunities for development (Travis & Leech, 2014).

African American youth empowerment can take form within service learning. This method not only exposes black youth to tools and life skills but helps expedite self-generated empowerment to encourage social change. The nature of empowerment for African Americans requires a conscious experience that will enrich their cognition mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Claus & Ogden (1999) state: “Service experience, when set in a framework of substantive reflection, can also motivate and empower young people to think critically about the world and to act on it with a growing sense of purpose, agency, and optimism. In this way, service learning promises constructive youth development, as it contributes to a clearer sense of identity, self-worth, efficacy, and belonging and it can motivate and prepare young people to work for valuable social change.” (p. 1). This particular type of learning doesn't just empower young black youth but can instill certain standards and habits that reflect a nature of service and



can even be a humbling experience. Youth can also build up a work ethic that may have been untapped prior to their experience.

Zakiya Harris is considered a cultural architect, artist, and chief education officer with an intersectional role in entrepreneurship, 21<sup>st</sup>-century education, and creative transformation (HTH, 2017). Zakiya's work as a consultant and programming strategist has helped her to encourage accountability across several groups through educational and innovative experiences for youth to identify as environmentalists and agents of change (HTH, 2017). Malik Yakini notes the economic potential of food production and food security, is situated within a larger context that must understand the historical trauma of the African American experience (Felton, 2015). Leah Penniman, seeks to interrupt the school to prison pipeline by cooperating with Albany County courts, allowing youth to choose to complete Soul Fire Farm's training program instead of facing jail disciplinary sentencing (Penniman, 2018).

Zakiya Harris, Malik Yakini and Leah Penniman are just a fraction of the organizers and educators involved in black youth empowerment. Their work may serve as an example for current and future leaders who seek to counter the current food system faults as well as empower black youth. This research may serve as a necessary tool that may be added to their own works as well. The need for more research-based inquiry of black communities is best facilitated by those who intend to safeguard their reputation with the best in conduct, while protecting the traditions and culture. Also, it is essential that black youth be led and mentored by those who look like them, share similar backgrounds, a connection to land and total respect for their humanity (Penniman, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

Hunger and poverty are not mutually exclusive. As explored in this review, poverty is not only a disposition but a means to exclude a group of people from obtaining equal rights regarding food security. Black leaders need more support from both internal and external groups and institutions to educate black youth, create and empower sustainable communities, while providing African Americans with a safe space to express their own forms of cultural practices and beliefs. In the same sense, American agriculture carries a rich tradition of exclusion and marginalization that does not acknowledge the impact, influence, resilience or the narrative of African Americans in the food movement. It is through black leadership, agriculture, and youth empowerment that African Americans may in fact find their rightful place in the current food revolution. This must be accomplished outside of the terms of the status quo so that culturally appropriate community food systems may be improved, and food justice will be visible (Broad 2016; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010).

It is important to understand that African Americans have a unique experience in a society that criminalizes, excludes, and limits progression. By understanding the power structures that exist, we find that poverty and food insecurity are indeed related through accessibility or a lack there of. The same factors limit access to food for black communities and encourage the need for black leaders to become involved in the youths' lives to prepare them for the world and the cultural barriers of our society.

## **Conceptual Framework**

*Critical Race Theory.* Critical Race Theory (CRT) can be applied to food access disparities associated with underrepresented populations. America has a history that reflects its

current and ever-changing oppressive nature that often effects the perceptions of both those oppressed and the oppressors (Khalifa, Jennings, Briscoe, Oleszweski & Abdi, 2014; Freire, 1970). White Americans are culturally taught both racism and colorblindness and are sheltered from the effects of daily racial discrimination that African Americans must endure even on a subconscious level (Alexander, 2010). Black people are often perceived as criminals instead of victims and even when victimization is evident, there is still some sort of implication that black people are not even human (Bell, 1987; Smith, 2007; Sengupta, 2009; Alexander, 2010). For example, after he was killed, Trayvon Martin was criminalized for posts he made online doing suggestive criminal acts. Racism and social class play a large role in the options for advancement made available to impoverished communities (Alkon & Aygeman, 2011). The people who seem to notice this issue are those who experience this marginalization and restriction of resources.

Critical Race Theory was originally developed by Derrick Bell in the 1960s, though he was inspired by early scholars such as Carter G. Woodson. Woodson's (1933) analysis on race and helped to aid researchers with a frame of reference on how to approach race in education. It is even more important that race be associated with the ability of African Americans to obtain food security. The government seems to not only perpetuate but operate within the same frame of reference. This inevitably connects Critical Race Theory's aim to transform and eliminate racial oppression to post- colonialism (Gottesman, 2016). Post-colonialism describes the consequences of external control and economic exploitation of a group of people, much of which is related to limited access to food, economic resources, and education. CRT gives way to the chronicles and experiences of people of color in a way that gives credit to their stories and backgrounds in racism that Western philosophy would not normally allocate space for (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Narratives can provide a stage for the stories and voices of the countless people affected

by some trauma, in this light, racism and prejudice as a long-standing issue in America. Racism is rooted in the social, political, and economic realm, which is dictated by how people view the world and themselves in it. Delgado & Stefancic (2012) critique liberalism as colorblind or having formal conceptions of equality rooted in equal treatment of everyone regardless of their differences, while noting that whites who continue to benefit from privilege have little to no intention or incentive to facilitate equitable circumstances for people of color.

Post-colonialism aligns with CRT and can be interpreted for its relation to the term indigenous; in the context of colonized people, African Americans are colonized (Smith, 1999). This theory can be used to illustrate how Western society reaffirms the conditions that are both past and present in which afflict people of color. This theory may also be used to address that which oppresses people through the capabilities of Western research to deny the indigenous claims of racial discrimination, cultural destruction, and hidden history from a critical race perspective. Post-colonialism can also encourage critical analysis of the systems of imperialism (Smith, 1999). The need to understand the effects of external control and economic exploitation can be seen through those who are impoverished.

*Critical Pedagogy.* From a critical race theory and post-colonial lens, it is important to understand community education and development from a social justice perspective. Understanding how to navigate the political complexity of community education is best explained through critical pedagogy. Paulo Freire (1970) first established the discourse and practice of critical pedagogy as a means of challenging the current power structures in education, deeming it as political in the sense that permits learners to imagine the world outside of the dominant views of oppression and marginalization. The purpose of critical pedagogy is to explore and expose—to change—the classist, racist, patriarchal hierarchy in which societal

hegemony has promoted (Freire, 1970). This section briefly discusses critical pedagogy, what it is, and basic principles and connections between critical pedagogy and methodology that may help to shape the conceptual framework of this study.

Critical pedagogy is described as an approach to teaching and learning that challenges the power structures within education to combat the oppressive nature of current pedagogical structures due to its ability to oppress people (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Oppression of the mind is powerful in a sense that it can remove one's autonomy and decision-making power. Critical pedagogy seeks to give that power back in efforts to allow our minds to develop and see the world for what it can be, not for what it is to our oppressors. Freire's (1970) concept of the banking system best describes the purpose of critical pedagogy in the sense that students are told what to learn and memorize, ideally making them the bank metaphorically. As the teacher deposits the information, the students are expected to retain and memorize what they are told. Without question, students will never learn to think critically about the world around and then become dependent on what people tell them (hooks, 1994). One way to think of this system is to understand how capitalism requires labor. In order to assure that workers are made available, teachers must produce subordinate workers. Therefore, the businesses own the bank accounts, or in this case, the students. The banking system permits the teacher to feel they are the most intelligent in the room while there is an assumption that the students know nothing. Freire (1970) and hooks (1994) deem this situation as being oppressive in nature when students' minds have in fact been suppressed to never realize that learning is reciprocated on both spectrums between teacher and student.

As instructors approach more critical pedagogical practices, they need to become more aware of the ever-growing diversity of their classrooms to adequately adapt to the cultural needs

of their students and assure they receive the necessary resources to critically think and express the nature of their thoughts and experiences (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Paris & Alim, 2017). As previously stated, the relationship between teachers and students is a reciprocal one with learning taking place on both ends of the spectrum. Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) express the significance of teachers, or in this case leaders, needing to be non-judgmental and inclusive of the various cultural backgrounds of their students in order to maintain a reputation as an efficient facilitator in both the school and the home community. The community setting is where black leaders often reside and interact with youth the most outside of school. The problem embracing the American education system is how to ensure that all students, especially racial/ethnic minority students, achieve (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 67). Home community plays such a large role in how a student may be best approached in learning. With instructors who are knowledgeable of the students' diverse backgrounds and home community, there is a greater chance of the instructor learning from the student as well. With a culturally relevant instructor comes culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy provides a means for schools to both acknowledge and uplift an educational experience that is identical to the culture of the youth, their values, and understandings. (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Paris & Alim, 2017).

*Community Food Work.* Community Food work serves as a framework that supports exploratory understanding of food justice (Ligrani & Niewolny, 2017). Community food work or alternative food practices are, “those that advocate more ecologically sound and socially just farming methods, food marketing and distribution, and healthier food options across the US,” (Slocum 2007, p. 522). Community food work, as a framework, can be defined to better recognize the interconnections and convolutions of food systems issues, like sustainability of farms, access to food and health equity, resiliency of the environment and social justice (Ligrani

& Niewolny, 2017). Community Food work takes into consideration the environmental and local issues that the current food system has failed to divert (Slocum, 2007). Community food work pushes practitioners towards more sustainable methods of food production and challenges the racial inequities that exist both in and out of white spaces where alternative food methods are practiced (Slocum, 2006).

Community food work is being utilized to recognize the alternative practices the participants in this study are facilitating for black youth. Understanding the alternative food practices within black communities may provide example for white spaces to be more cognizant of how exclusive and homogeneous their spaces are. Slocum (2004) argues that racism intersects class and gender, while also making people food insecure. The connection of critical race theory, critical pedagogy and community food work is enabled through post-colonial and social justice ideals. Together, an even greater understanding of food justice, self-determination and black community education can be established, while supporting social justice and food security.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

This research explored the experiences of self-determination and empowerment of African American community organizers and educators who provide community-based educational opportunities primarily to youth. The participants were referred to as leaders, which is defined in the context of organizing for food justice activism with youth in black communities. Specifically, this research utilized a critical race theory lens and narrative inquiry approach to understand the values, beliefs, and experiences of African American leaders in the Triad area of North Carolina, as they pertain to community empowerment, youth development, and food justice. To that end, the following guiding questions framed this research project as applied to community leaders who are organizing for food justice activism with youth in the Triad area of North Carolina:

- What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?
- What does self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?
- How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community member's influence, if at all, the organizing and educating of black youth?

Practitioner-based research can prove to be a very effective focus of inquiry. Practitioners have a direct connection with and to the people they serve and work alongside. Just as researchers gain an understanding from a practical sense, they gain a better understanding of their practice through exposure to research (Mclaughlin, Hawkins & Townsend, 2005). Through clearer understanding of their personal work, practitioners are tasked with investigating their approach to community development, yet on another end of practitioner work, there is a push toward mainstream institutionalization (Ellis, 2012). Perhaps discovering the response that these



organizations have toward the idea of a top-down approach will shed light on the issues that accompany such a way of operating. Practitioner research takes a bottom-up approach (Ellis, 2012).

With shared space to provide and receive wisdom in an environment of collaboration, it can be expected that the community-to-university partnerships will in turn be strengthened and increased (Nelson & Dodd, 2016). It would help to include the proper training, participatory research practices, and assessment of the challenges and benefits of building community to university partnerships. Scientific research is an investigative activity that can enable us to find reason to view the world differently than our assumptions (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). In the same token, researchers help to create a catalyst for leadership advancement, principles of reciprocity, community problem solving, and social change (Park, 2007), all of which seem necessary for my approach when working with community members, organizers, and educators throughout this research process.

### **Ontology and Epistemology**

Ontologies and epistemologies are research paradigms that are presumed as basic beliefs or what Guba & Lincoln (1994) describe as, “A worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world,” the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (p.107). Paradigms are instrumental in allowing researchers to gather some legitimacy to their analyses. It is not the expectation of a researcher to convince the reader of one’s own theory, but to present the information in such a manner that logic has no other vindication to dispute the researcher’s theory. Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that paradigms are

not formed on the basis of proof because there is no way of convincing the reader that what they feel is absolute.

Ontology reflects the form and nature of reality that we believe to be true (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Critical realism influences my ontological approach to this research. “Critical realism indicates that the relation between the real world and the concepts we form of it is the focus of the research process” (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002, p. 15). This is to say that people construct their own understanding of the world based on their experiences and the environment in which they are subjugated. For example, the environments in which many people of color are predisposed to are communities lacking adequate nutrition and poor in resources to build and reserve their right to form community. From critical realism, spawned interest in its second movement, dialectical critical realism. Dialectical critical realism is the theory and practice of exploring change in thought process, entirety, and ethics (Bhaskar, 2017). While in the same light realizing one’s own environmental influence, there is an account for the existence of other ideals that exist to describe other environments.

Epistemology refers to the ontological outcome and how we manifest our beliefs of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructivism influences my epistemological approach to this research. Constructivism encourages conceptual growth through the sharing of various perspectives and observations in the narratives. Constructivists are ever changing the way they view the world and illustrate that knowledge because experiences do not occur more than once and while sharing perspectives, derives the notion of influence on thought (Bruner, Vygotsky & Feuerstein, 2008). To lead with this position is to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge. This process is known as assimilating, which causes the researcher to take on a new outlook and reevaluate previous understandings (Teachnology, 2017). Social constructivism is a

vital theory in regard to narrative work. Social constructivism looks not just at the environment that shapes our worldviews but the people and interactions that nurture our beliefs. Therefore, initiation of cognitive growth is constructed through social interaction and then through the individual (Amineh, & Asl, 2015).

Bringing critical realism and constructivism together assumes my position that African Americans are predisposed to the food injustice they experience in their communities due the oppressive structures in society. Through the shared experiences, as illustrated in their narratives, new knowledge may be added to critical race theory and narrative inquiry practice, creating a clearer depiction of the racial undertone of food injustice and amplify the voices of more black leaders in community food work. A constructivist view may also encourage future collaboration of ethical, social researchers with communities of color. I also take the stance that a person's reality is ever changing, and the nature of that change is determined by the power, experience, and critical reflection of that individual's circumstantial understanding.

### **Researcher Reflexivity**

My experience as a Greensboro, North Carolina resident and black male is filled with several instances where I personally experienced racism and prejudice. My mother and father worked hard to provide us with everything that we needed to live happy and healthy lives. I am the third of four first-generation college graduates in my immediate family. I was always encouraged to stand out and be a leader. I wish to address the limited agricultural exposure that is prevalent among African American youth. By facilitating the process of collaborative thought and narrative storytelling amongst the participant community leaders, I intended to provide an avenue for addressing the issues of their communities and encourage further action toward

community sustainability. This comprised of the gathering of narratives for each individual and then a group session where their narratives were brought together to form dialogue around common occurrences.

What really interests me is exposing adults, parents, and children to skills that may be utilized and passed down from generation to generation. It is the expectation to aid in building a stronger sense of community among African American youth so that through their cohesion, there can be a greater influx of self-efficacy and motivation to start and continue agricultural practices or careers. In my research I intend to focus on African American leadership and understanding their involvement in black youth empowerment. I also wish to explore the barriers that prohibit access to healthy and affordable foods within their communities through the lens of critical race theory and narrative inquiry. I have found emotion coding to be most helpful in exploring narrative pieces beyond the point of just a chronicle. I think this aspect can add value to that realm of research in agriculture. People have such strong backgrounds that they often keep to themselves, and yet so many could benefit from the wisdom shared within these tales of one's connection to food and the food justice work.

Qualitative research is recommended for use in community sector work. It takes into consideration contextual content that influences the outcome of inquiry. Qualitative research creates space to tell the story of marginalized and underrepresented people in a way that allows both the researcher and participants to foster reciprocity. I have personally experienced that with narrative inquiry through the Appalachian Foodshed Project (Niewolny, K., D'Adamo-Damery, P., D'Adamo-Damery, N., & Landis, R., 2014). The experiences of African Americans are often unrecognized and unexplored in academic research, especially in the realm of poverty. Poverty is often criminalized and said to be a self-inflicted condition for African Americans (Greenbaum,

2015). The Moynihan Report plays a large role in perpetuating false theories, poor insight, and lack of qualitative experience into the struggle of African Americans living in poverty. It has also established stereotypes that are still relevant to the way African Americans are viewed in society today (Greenbaum, 2015). There needs to be a better emphasis on the root issues associated with this phenomenon (i.e. Western influence, capitalism, and white privilege). Qualitative research pushes the researcher to assess oneself first and even further to explore what it means to feel the way one feels before establishing a relationship with the participants or, in my case, the community. In that self-assessment, issues such as unconscious bias may be addressed in hopes it will not interfere with the research analysis. My interaction with each participant is of equal importance. As a narrative videographer, it was my intent to make meaning with respect to the narratives of each of the participants. As a black man who understands the history of oppression, prejudice, and racism in America, I could be seen as a traitor to my community to some for providing insight into the lives of valued black leaders in my community. This research is designed to gather information for the sake of research, but the academic realm has not always been so generous to the black community and the people who identify with other salient communities. What can be praised is the acknowledgment of black leaders as vital components to the advancement of people of color like myself. I would not be in this position had it not been for my extended village pushing me to fulfill my destiny.

I believe that qualitative research has a greater capacity to impact the researcher as well as participants. In the same token, quantitative research can make an impact as well, but without the contextual pieces that explain the numerical figures in a way that benefits, unlike Charles Murray and his racist and controversial interpretation of African American intelligence. My connection to the African American community fuels my intentions to help those communities

establish an understanding of the complex factors that limit progression. What concerns me the most about qualitative research is the amount of data to be collected. Can you have too much data, and can it be overwhelming for one person to transcribe their findings? I worry that I might miss something vital or perhaps even lack enough information to interpret properly. There is also the possibility that my interpretation may offend someone or a group of people. That is not my intent, which is why I am reminded that asking questions to clarify someone else's thoughts is an effective tool when conducting narrative style interviews. My passion for conducting a narrative videography is rooted in my love for visual arts. I also find this type of research is underexplored and doing something this unique could perhaps create a new wave for academic researchers worldwide to model and continue practicing. Through this process, I am encouraged by Clandinin (2007) to understand that I am co-constructing this research and it is vital that I am sensitive to the wishes of the participants as well as the people who could potentially view the material after publication.

This research challenged me as well. I chose the path of a doctorate, and I will admit that there were some expected barriers studying in a college town where there was not as many people who looked like me. Though, I found a space in my research topic that helped me to interpret my own past and present experiences while also advancing my academic terminology and becoming a stronger leader in my community. The process in fact, brought me closer to my community as an insider/outsider and expanded my network beyond the city of Greensboro, NC. I created not just a professional relationship with the participants but a personal one. It was because of that I feel it benefited the research inquiry as well as the outcome of the narrative inquiry process while respecting the voices and experiences of these individuals. Learning

through an experience such as this will greatly aid my future work in expanding my research career, the work I plan to do in my community and others.

### **Narrative Inquiry as Methodology**

Narrative inquiry is a fairly new method of qualitative research. Qualitative research is one type of research that gives way to the study of things in their natural settings that involves the researcher's assumptions about interpretation and the action of human subjects or respectfully, participants (Clandinin, 2007). To effectively utilize narrative inquiry, the researcher must pay close attention to method in order to properly analyze and understand the lived experience of the people and things under observation or being interviewed. Clandinin (2007) states that the narrative inquiry process shapes both the method and phenomena of study with experiential starting points that are backed by literature, informing the methodology and/or reconstructing the researcher's interpretation of the experiences expressed in the narratives. Stephenson & Tate (2015) emphasize that everyone is a product of their environment, which is the determining factor of political, cultural, familial, corporate, and civic narratives. Narrative inquiry encourages collaboration between the researcher and interviewee from the dawn of the project to the interpretation and writing portion (Clandinin, 2007). Narrative inquiry requires that the researcher obtain consent from each potential interviewee, then after the interview process, the researcher must transcribe, interpret, and send it to the interviewee for review. After that, the transcription and interpreted interview can be used to address issues within phenomena (Stephenson & Tate, 2015). Using narrative style interviewing is a means of obtaining cultural insight within the grounds of critical race theory and practitioner experience, which could add substance to the continued research of CRT and food insecurity in communities of color. If it is

the nature of narrative inquiry to provide participants with a greater sense of self, then the process requires a great deal of sincerity and trust between the participant and researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Trust may increase over time or in just a few days of communicating. In conducting narrative inquiry, it is fluidly recognized that the researcher's responsibility is to go beyond just recording and reporting the narrator's reality (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Narrative inquiry is used to gather information to be analyzed and interpreted to give voice to the oppressed. Marshall and Rossman (2016) discuss how narrative inquiry provide the researcher, as well as the readers, with insight into a particular culture or a certain time in history, providing the social sciences with principles that surround biography. Besides giving voice to those who have been marginalized and disenfranchised, documentation also provides factual evidences of the historical, discriminatory action of the oppressor (Smith, 1999).

The intent of narratives in this multi-site case study was to continue the work of exploring the experiences of practitioners of color as leaders. The importance of using narrative inquiry is partially due to its ability to challenge power structures. It does so by giving voice to those without, providing a platform for understanding and changing the way we interpret historical accounts. Narrative inquiry is a useful tool for allowing people of color from several different backgrounds to have a voice in the academic world through storytelling and interview-structured dialogue (Saldana, 2016). This is important because over the course of history, people of color have been marginalized through standard social norms that do not permit the true expression of one's own culture to be mainstream. Storytelling opens the world of research to gain access to cultural phenomena, the issues behind it, and the lives of the people who are being interviewed (Saldana, 2016). By recording the human experience, analyzing, and interpreting



these narratives, academics can find ways to inflate better communication skills across various groups of people. Providing readers with a visual component will also give them more than just sound but also the opportunity for participants to not be the sole focus of the research (Clandinin, 2007). The nature of narrative inquiry is to establish trust between the participants and the researcher through transparency, active listening, engagement, and respect. Narrative inquiry is also used to understand phenomenological questions about groups, communities, and context through an individual's lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Understanding that participants are providing and sharing their information, it is also important to receive approval from everyone about what information may have been shared and what they may not wish to share publicly.

#### *Narrative Videography*

This study includes two methodological approaches, both narrative inquiry and videography. Together they are used to gather data and interpret the experiences of black leaders in the South, more specifically the Triad area of North Carolina. For several years, more frequently now more than ever, researchers have been utilizing photographs and video to observe, interview, interpret, and analyze qualitative data (Haw & Hadfield, 2011). Video offers an asset that just reading a document, allowing a means of examining power relations within the research process (Forsyth, Carroll & Reitano, 2009). Video is easily accessed, understood, and can, in fact, reach more people at once via electronic social platforms (Haw & Hadfield, 2011). Jewitt (2012) expressed that video has been used for various purposes pertaining to this particular research such as, social class, race, human interaction, workplace studies, as well as numerous cultural aspects of everyday life.

Clandinin (2007) categorizes what has been expressed as narrative videography as visual narrative, which consists of other forms of visual data, such as photos or story core, for example. Visual components are necessary in ways that can impact several groups of people on a large scale (Forsyth, Carroll & Reitano, 2009). The visual helps to capture the experience of the participants through narrative inquiry style versus being considered an interview. Experience is an exclusive collection of cognition, sensitivity, doing, grief, handling, and perception (Clandinin, 2007). Narrative inquiry in itself is an experience that is reciprocated between both the researcher and the participant(s). From acknowledging the experience, it is important to understand that experience is different for everyone and variable to each person's perception of those experiences because they are shaped by the social, cultural, and institutional narratives of everyone involved (Clandinin, 2007).

Video recording equipment was utilized to develop a narrative videography. Video has been widely used to extend social research within the realms of sociology, anthropology, education, and psychology (Jewitt, 2012). Visual narrative is an intentional, reflective, active, human process in which researchers and participants explore and make meaning of experience both visually and narratively. The intent of this multi-site case study was to incorporate the participants in the analysis process of both the narrative and video processes. In doing this, participants were personally assured that they are being represented and interpreted in a way that is acceptable and consented to. After recording the narrative style interviews, the individual audios and/or videos were edited using Virginia Tech's innovation space computers and software, where each participant video was uploaded, edited, and compiled together in a single narrative video that was expected to exceed no more than one-and-a-half hours in duration. Much of the outcome of these narrative video were predicated on the interactions and comfort of

the participants themselves. Clandinin (2007) explains that there is limited arrangement for theoretical positions and ethical arrangements when conducting visually oriented research. What can be assured is that there is initial consent and active participant review of all visual and textual materials collected in this multi-site case study before publication approval. Doing so may empower participants to decide what is ethical or not under their own terms.

Stephenson and Tate (2015) describe storytelling and its ability to build new relationships and community capacity that supports grassroots work to gather community-centered insights and turn this same data into credible digital narratives. Video thus seems to be a very effective way of portraying the community and its people. “Digital video now provides a portable and permanent source of data that can be manipulated, edited, and viewed many times” (Haw & Hadfield, 2011, p. 196). This will also give way to other voices within the community. Some voices can be communicated through imagery. Video has potential for breaking ground in both current social science studies and those to come. It has also become more widely discussed as an investigative tool of social science but has been practically abandoned both theoretically and methodologically (Jewitt, 2012). The nature of the video and its approach was to help answer the research questions with excerpts and clips from each of the consenting participant interviews and to generate dialogue on a wider scale beyond North Carolina. Some of the challenges to videography are time management, equipment issues, and large amounts of rich data, which could potentially be overwhelming yet if managed properly, can truly flourish into something of substance to the social sciences (Jewitt, 2012).

Video was used to decolonize, even with its colonizing ability, the video has the power to give voice to the participants and encourage other voices in their communities to be heard. However, the issues around theoretical, ethical, methodological, and technical challenges still

exist (Haw & Hadfield, 2011). Haw & Hadfield (2011) describe the process of videography in eight steps: Extraction, reflection, projection and provocation, participation, and articulation. Clandinin (2007) emphasized how seeing allows the researcher, participants, and viewers to build a stronger connection to the literature because their body and mind sensoria can, in fact, be stimulated to connect them to people, nature, and self. Although narrative inquiry is used often in methodology for investigating instruction, professional, and personal lives, and characteristics, bringing the visual component into narrative inquiry is something that has yet to be thoroughly studied (Clandinin, 2007).

## **Research Methods and Design**

### *Participant Selection and Description*

Critical realism calls for a priori theory, which according to Polleit (2011) “denotes a proposition (declarative statement) expressing knowledge that is acquired prior to, or, independently from, experience” (p. 2) The priori declaration is that African Americans experience racism on a holistic level that has systematically stripped communities of color from affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate foods, educational resources, agricultural exposure, as well as a perpetuation of these circumstances through the injustice system. Also, youth are influenced by the perceptions of adults in which they interact with. This priori is a systematic judgment functioning under the axiom of human action. Polleit (2011) describes axiom of human action as one in the same with priori synthetic judgement, consisting of two requirements. First, that this priori does not derive from experience but from academic text or documentation, and secondly, that it cannot be denied without intellectual illogicality. This research seeks to utilize critical race theory and critical pedagogy to guide inquiry into the community food work of each

of the participants within this study. The priori denotes that black leaders experience racism in their efforts to construct and organize opportunities for teaching agriculture and practicing alternative food methods with youth. A diagram expresses this priori logic in more detail and may be found in Appendix A.

A snowball sample resulted in 10 African American leaders who work with black youth in an agricultural educational context, as expressed in the stakeholder matrix located in Appendix B. Using a narrative inquiry approach, each adult was asked to participate in a semi-structured interview set to exceed no more than 90 minutes. Each individual was selected based on their known interaction in agricultural practices, education, and empowering black youth through agriculture in the Triad area of North Carolina. Using a convenience sampling method, the selection process started with my affiliations with various organizations and the people who ran these organizations and programs. Many of the participants were referred through networking and snowball sampling. All participants met me face-to-face and/or via phone call to be formally greeted and introduced. To acquire permission to conduct a narrative inquiry style interview with them, a formal email and recruitment letter, as indicated in Appendix C was administered to legitimize the narrative process. Potential participants were given a week to respond before a follow-up call was made to confirm that the email was, in fact, received. After responses were received, an interview script, as indicated in Appendix D was sent. After the preliminary documentation was administered and confirmed, a meeting was scheduled with each individual participant to conduct the narrative inquiry style interview. Upon which, two consent forms (Appendix E & F) were discussed and administered for participants to approve or decline their consent to be video and/or audio recorded, and the second form was used to request consent for their identity to be published and participation in a single focus group session. Copies of these

forms were also sent via email for participants' personal review and documentation prior to the meeting date.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Using a multisite case study design, I explored the individual experiences of each of the chosen 10 adult black leaders. A multisite case study is also referred to as a comparative case study and creates space to understand an individual, event, policy, program, or group via multiple interpretations of the same phenomena (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). These narratives are not meant to make generalized claims but to offer the academic world a vivid cast of reasoning and a template to genuinely engage in critical race theory with relation to black leadership in other areas of the country like the Triad area in North Carolina. The unit of analysis is social justice through a critical race theory and critical pedagogy lens as expressed through participant narratives of their work with African American youth and agriculture. Strategic methods were incorporated from my previous experiences through the Appalachian Foodshed Project (AFP) to collect the large amounts of data through these interviews and provide structure for conducting each of the narrative inquiry style interviews (Niewolny, K., D'Adamo-Damery, P., D'Adamo-Damery, N., & Landis, R., 2014). After receiving approval from the IRB (Institutional Review Board) and consent to include each participant, I conducted a 60-90-minute semi-structured audio/video recorded interview with each of the 10 potential participants. The narrative inquiry style questions were purposeful to initiate the conversation but were intended to provide ample room for further researcher inquiry. The interview script (Appendix D) included a brief summary of the Pigford v. Glickman case in the narrative interview questions to help frame the critical dialogue. The documents were provided prior to the interview for them to read and

respond to questions that related to both the case itself and the experiences and interpretations of the participants.

Upon completion of data collection, organization, transcription and some analysis, participants were aggregated via email and phone call to determine a date to meet for a single focus group and review their transcripts and video to approve further analysis and data inclusion for the focus group. After completion of transcription and editing of the narratives they were positioned in Appendices H through Q. The focus group (Appendix R) placed emphasis on the reactions and thoughts of each of the participants as they viewed the first video draft as well as excerpts from each other's narratives. Selected excerpts from the narratives were categorized into emerging themes. Understanding the context of the Pigford v. Glickman case provided background for making connections to the black farmers' experiences and their reason for making the case, that may aid in comparing the experiences of the participants. This topic also helped to generate a frame for group discussion in the focus group session when participants came together. Upon completion, each interview was transcribed and sent to its associated participant for them to read, view, correct, critique, and assure that their commentary has been respectfully documented. Next, each participant was asked to provide approval via email to initiate the analysis and focus group scheduling upon approval of both transcription and audio/video draft.

Analysis began during the transcription process, which involved a continuous reemphasis of each participant's narrative. The narrative responses were then organized by hand coding each interview based on the established priori constructs as primary codes: Critical Race Theory, Critical Pedagogy and Community Food Work. Next, sub codes were developed and categorized under the primary codes previously expressed. After the codebook had been generated,

ATLAS.ti was utilized to organize the codes and provide stable results for further analysis and interpretation of the results derived from the individual interviews. This method aided with organization of materials for the focus group as well. The individual videos were then aggregated, edited, and organized into a shorter narrative videography for participant review during the focus group sessions. Initially, focus group participants partook in a gallery walk that included excerpts from the narratives selected by the primary researcher. The researcher then brought everyone together to introduce themselves to each other. Participants were asked to spend some initial time viewing the gallery over a meal and the presentation of the narrative videography. After fellowshipping, participants were asked to provide introductions and some feedback with the use of questions outlined in the Collective Reflection Focus Group Script (Appendix G) to collect the thoughts, perceptions, and reactions to the excerpts as well as the physical narrative video draft. Participants were facilitated in a discussion around emerging themes related to social justice and discussed the presentation of the video data.

#### *Questions of Reliability and Validity*

This research takes more of a positivist and constructivist approach. Positivist social sciences equate regards the world as being made up of observable, measurable social evidences which have an objective reality in which variables may be identified and relationships can be measured (Golafshani, 2003). From a constructivist standpoint, this research encourages conceptual growth through the sharing of participants' perceptions and observations in the narratives (Bruner, Vygotsky & Feuerstein, 2008). This research was conducted in the methods of qualitative approaches, one of which is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry has long been established as a reliable source or inquiry. The position of the researcher in this study is as a narrative inquirer. Wang & Geale (2015) argue that narrative approaches do not attempt to



categorize research data while observing it objectively or generalizing in order to develop decrees; instead, its foundation is built on acknowledging the ever-changing human experience as dynamic entities. This is to say that narrative inquiry gives participants the opportunity to create a space of comfort and honesty while in the same token, changing the way researchers interact with the participant's environment. Narrative inquiry on a practical level has even aided nurses in understanding their patients, therefore leading to more productive nurse-patient relationships, requiring trustworthiness (Wang & Geale, 2015).

In order to facilitate transferability in narrative inquiry, there are a few considerations that must be made. Narrative inquiry is designed to encourage a consistent negotiation between the researcher and the participant to develop a deeper understanding of the participant's experience. Validity in qualitative narrative inquiry relies on the researcher's ability to equate numerical value to the phenomena expressed in this case, by the 10 participants' stories (Clandinin, 2007). To equate value is to be able to pinpoint an individual occurrence to establish whether it occurs again throughout the research. The researcher is entrusted by the participant with re-telling that story within the protocol of the desired research framework. With such an important responsibility, researchers must consider ethical standards in regard to dignity, confidentiality, and the overall well-being of the interviewee (Wang & Geale, 2015). This is of the utmost importance when conducting narrative inquiry because any violation of trust can be detrimental to the research process when qualitative researchers struggle to develop confidence among many quantitative researchers. However epistemologically, narrative inquiry relies on interpretation that is contextualized on the basis of social reality of human acts, in order to define a moral and practical world (Clandinin, 2007). Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) relate reliability in qualitative research to trustworthiness under the basis of credibility, transferability,

dependability, and consistency. As the researcher, trustworthiness is all that stands in the way of someone opening up to communicate and participate. Standards of conduct for interview procedures, group sessions, and evaluation are being utilized for this qualitative research. Rigor plays such a heavy role in qualitative research, yet rigor is not ensured by trustworthiness alone, but by executing theoretical sampling and adequacy, investigator responsiveness, methodological coherence, and active logical position, and capacity (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002).

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this research was twofold. First, it was to acknowledge through the literature, the phenomenon of black poverty in America and the long-standing pattern of racism, marginalization, discrimination, sexism, and violence in this country. Second, which is related to the first, was to better understand the role that racial discrimination has played in the food system both through the literature and the participant narratives. The research highlighted the role of African American leaders in creating ample opportunities for empowerment, self-determination, and capacity for social change in youth through the teaching and learning of agriculture in their communities. To that end, this research was an exploration of the experiences of self-determination and empowerment of African American community organizers and educators who provide community-based educational opportunities to black youth.

These individuals were described as leaders, which in this study was defined as those who are organizing for food justice activism with youth in black communities. The experiences of each leader were collected in video recorded narrative style interviews and analyzed by designating coded themes to several excerpts of each of their transcripts using ATLAS.ti. The same procedure was followed after a post interview focus group that was audio recorded. The primary themes of this study were chosen from the theoretical framework as Critical Race Theory, Critical Pedagogy, and Community Food Work because they provide the lens in which to view and critically think about the data. This section will explore the subthemes that were generated from the three primary themes, as context for answering the three research questions that were generated before continuing the study. The research questions were as follows:

- What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?
- What does self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?
- How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community members influence, if at all, the organizing and educating of black youth?

Participants were selected based on their known contributions to food justice awareness and snowball sampling. Originally, this study sought 14 participants but resulted in 10 participants total who contributed to the narrative inquiry process. Of those who were involved in the focus group, 8 participants confirmed interest in attending, though 5 were able to be present and contribute. Of the 10 total participants, there were six women and four men who completed the narrative interview piece. Of those who attended the focus group, three woman and two men.

The participants were given the options of remaining anonymous with the use of a pseudonym for their titles but only one participant decided to provide an alternative title of her own. The participants were as follows: Amina, a graduate student from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University who is in charge of a youth program and community garden at James Benson Dudley High School. Larry is a professional poet and youth instructor who focuses on cultural awareness and health consciousness, by promoting healthy living and consumption. LeShari is the Communities in Schools coordinator at Hairston Middle School who hired Mike, a farmer who co-founded the Man-Up Mission non-profit in Greensboro, NC. Shae and Monique are both cooperative Extension agents in Forsyth County. Shawyn is an Agriculture Education Instructor, athletic director and military veteran at Southeast Guilford High School. Kamal is the founder of Sankofa Farms located in Cedar grove farms where he mentors young

men and teaches them how to farm. Shannon is a cooperative extension agent in Guilford County. Last, is Sister Moor Bey, a mother, a healer, entrepreneur and current homeschool teacher to her two sons with several aspects of agriculture and self-sufficiency as a main component of her teachings.

### **Research Question 1: What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?**

Food justice denotes that there is more than just a simple fix to creating access to healthy and affordable food for low-income and impoverished communities. Broad (2016) reflects on food justice as a developing force that counter-acts the industrial and alternative food systems which continuously lack focus on equitable distribution and social justice as a primary focus. Participants often agreed with this notion of the food system being inadequate as they provided their views of what it meant to have food justice. Through the narratives, it was found that food justice was expressed in four ways that reflected branching themes of both critical pedagogy and community food work. The following sections reflect the need for sovereignty, nutrition and health education, access, self-awareness, reflective cognition, and empowerment of youth and the black community

#### *Advocating for Food Justice*

The need for food justice is a direct response to the marginalization of low-income communities regarding their food access while in the same conception, heavily associating advocacy with promoting people having the ability, knowledge and choice to grow their own food (Broad, 2016; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010). Advocacy in itself involves the act of recommendation and support for a general cause. Throughout the narratives, food justice is

primarily described as black communities knowing how to grow their own food and unifying to disrupt the balance of the current U.S. food systems that have historically marginalized them. In the following excerpt, Amina was very direct about her views of everyone in the community being accountable of their own responsibility in creating the change they wish to see in their community. She also relays how those who are aware of the food justice issues can inspire youth by passing on their knowledge, pushing community change and survival skills that can be used to develop improved economic and nutrition-based practice for community members.

Like if you believe in something if you believe that food deserts and food insecurity, it's a problem, then what are you doing to fix it? I'm teaching kids how to grow food, I'm teaching kids the importance of advocacy. I'm teaching the kids the importance of eating and learning how to eat fresh vegetables and what that looks like. -Amina (Appendix L, Lines 86-89)

When we talk about food, it should be local. You should know where your food is coming from. So, I think it's important as African Americans for us to take control of where our food comes from. Like that's the one thing we don't think about but, if we don't have food, we don't have nutrition then. Right. That's the difference between life and death. -Amina (Appendix L, Lines 106-110)

Growing, or at least knowing how to grow your own food and what it looks like in its natural state. I think it, it will help you change the way you eat or at least make you think about it, if you know what I'm saying. -Amina (Appendix L, Line 126-128)

LeShari talks about the need for diverse teaching methods being incorporated into the agricultural exposure of youth. Making connections to the other forces that not only influence agriculture but that effect their communities. She insists that policy and cross-curriculum practices be utilized to strengthen the overall knowledge and abilities of the students to succeed. Shae critiqued the current state of the food justice for black people explicitly in the Greensboro area in relation to what she witnesses in the more affluent areas of the city. Her contrasts

describe the organized limited access of people who live on two different sides of the train tracks. She advocates for community change by acknowledging the need for African Americans to separate themselves from the culture of discriminatory practice exhibited by several institutions who claim to serve the community, but in fact limit their services to only certain localities. Shea's viewpoint incorporates the existence of agriculture beyond just land and growing one's own food. She connects the need for black communities to involve themselves with literacy and the policy which regulates one's ability to provide food for themselves.

It's almost like it's just the food insecurity is like a seed and so many other things are coming off of that. So, educating one another on the food insecurity also says, okay, well in order to battle or overcome food insecurity, we also have to have all of these other elements in place like understanding one what policy is, um, who makes it, alters it and enforces it. And that's something completely separate from agriculture, but it directly affects agriculture. Um, so that's why I stated before that having the programs where students are introduced to policy, to debate, to law, to writing, to reading, to learning how to research and what that looks like. That's how that bridges, brings them to this point because once they understand that they are in this drought, now they have to figure out what they need to do to get out of it. And policy is a part of that. And educating them on what it is, what it looks like, and how to navigate it is how we're going to be able to pull our community together and pull us out of this food insecurity. LeShari (Appendix K, Lines 26-37)

East market is the east side of Greensboro, it's usually the low limited resource communities. And then when you think about it, we've only had access to one grocery store, not counting the Walmart that's up the road on the highway. Then you think about when you go to the west side towards, pass UNCG, Guilford College Road and all of those areas. You have a Harris Teeter, a Food Lion, a neighborhood Walmart and Harris Teeter all within five, five miles of each other and they're delivering. So you think about the shortage of access to quality food markets, you know, not, not knocking Food Lion, but why can't we have more of those options or nicer, safer food options for us and as far as the agriculture and food, not having the opportunities to learn more about food so we can grow it ourselves, making sure that we have the training for it also. -Shae (Appendix I, Lines 22-31)

Mike describes his youth, experiencing what he feels food justice looked like in his community. He also points out the absence of life skills that used to be more common than scarce as he explains watching the system change over the years. He has witnessed our society go from a more holistic nature to an economically dependent system in which has prevented several of these necessary skills to be passed down from generation to generation. He is advocating for knowledge of self and community care being provided once again as it was in his childhood. He also pushed for more skills like animal processing and plant production be passed to the current and next generation.

I was raised up on a farm and we came up in the ministry and the church there, mostly everyone was related and um, you know, so like I was saying earlier, I had a wholesome background in agriculture, everything from hunting to fishing, um, you know, growing your own gardens, processing your own meats and um, and had a great appreciation for nature. The skills that was taught in doing that, you know, because hey, you have to have a skill, you know, and someone that is given and taught and some of that just comes from having a connection with nature. And um, I saw a lot of what was being lost. Um, for instance, processing our own food garden aspect of raising our own fresh veggies. The, those things a bit lost without grandmothers, grandmothers and grandfathers gone...lost. So, we become an, uh, a community of people that don't know how to take care of ourselves basically. -Mike  
(Appendix J, Lines 52-61)

Amina had a very similar experience in the sense that she understood from an early age where her food came from because of what her parents exposed her to. She attributes that experience or lack thereof as the reasoning for why and what we choose to put in our bodies. This could also account for to the lack of involvement in securing one's place in the food movement. Amina advocates that the diets of black communities need to change, and to do so, people have to learn and experience the process of growing their own food and exposure to the process will help them to change the way they think about and choose food.



So, we ate a lot of organic foods. We went to, every Sunday we would go to the farm, we would travel like 30 minutes out and get our milk and get our um, homemade ice cream, um, organic ice cream, get a we would buy a cow. I mean there's times when we bought our own cow and had it slaughtered and all of those things. So, I could see, you know, meet the farmer and I, I knew where my food is coming from. A lot of people don't have that experience. Butter, you know, I know where, where, uh, I know where to get fresh butter from. A lot of people don't know that, they just see a package and so, understanding like where does your food come from? Growing, or at least knowing how to grow your own food and what it looks like in its natural state. I think it, it will help you change the way you eat or at least make you think about it, if you know what I'm saying. Like if this, why is this, this tomato coming from Chile or my onions coming from Chile when I can go to my back yard and make my own food. And then when we talk about, um, just the environment as a whole. What's gonna happen when we run out of fuel, you know what I'm saying? We can no longer get our chilies from. I'm just saying what is the natural disaster comes and we can't get the food that we need. We need to learn how to, how to at least know how to make our own food or at least have an idea of where to start, you know, you know that those kinds of things. -Amina (Appendix L, Lines 119-134)

### *Nutrition and Health Education for Food Justice*

Besides the need for knowledge on how to grow food and take action in the current food movement, many of the challenges the participants expressed in their narratives was the current diet of the people in the communities that they served. Bahr (2007) expressed that there is a significant difference in the nutrition education access but also in the prevalence of health-related diseases between black communities and white communities. This issue indeed presents several socioeconomic inequality issues that have created racial disparities within black communities.

LeShari interacts with several middle school youths and she describes what she observes in the school she works in, compared to other more affluent schools in the city of Greensboro. She also explains the nature of what she has learned while interacting with her students

experiencing food injustice daily. Her observations are reflected in this excerpt, proposing food education as a need, to influence food justice for African American youth and their community health.

I see it every day as my students come to my office all the time. Saying that they're hungry, they need food. Um, the fact that I see what they eat for lunch and that even though it's supposed to be something that's healthy and good for them, it doesn't necessarily always look that way. It's also not something that they necessarily want to eat. Um, and I see it in the food that they choose to eat, like they love to eat Oodles n' Noodles, and we all love Oodles n' Noodles, but they're not very healthy and knowledge goes a long way. I believe if they knew, if they had more knowledge about these types of foods and they knew how to grow them, and they were more available to them, that's what they would actually eat. LeShari (Appendix K, Lines 66-73)

Mike addresses the need for more educational opportunities for African American youth around agricultural practices while at the same time addressing that the knowledge is available. Despite our conversations of inaccessibility, information about agriculture is not only accessible but there are members of the community who are knowledgeable. It seems that he suggests we need to challenge the societal practices that perpetuate inability to participate in agricultural practices in African American communities. There is also a constant spiritual connection to nature referenced by Mike that associates what many African Americans have lost and need to regain in order to make a shift in their diet and involvement in the food movement.

I think the African American community, we need to re-learn, um, for example, when they say [go back to the table]. Um, we have the knowledge, we have the skills in the area of, knowledge about the food that we're eating, our health benefits, um, what's inside the food, how to grow our own, um, what's healthy, what's not. Um, you know, it's life to us, you know, we can't produce, we won't be productive if we don't. So, it's very, if we don't have the knowledge, you know, and if we don't go back to our roots. Raising our own, you know, what's in the food is what we put in the animal, um, you know, the vegetables that are true, things of

that, I think it's all about knowledge and it's good. It helps us financially, you know, what we're buying, what's on the market, where our savings come in, you know, and then just like obesity, the health benefits of just plain and simply raising your own food, eating your own product, you know, eating healthy, it's life. Mike (Appendix J, Lines 16-26)

Amina speaks of the need for a revival in the food movement, referring to it as a *renaissance*. This statement speaks volumes in response to what is visibly presented to the community in which she works. She describes vividly, what and how food is presented to the people in that area while expressing the needs and aspirations of the community members as it was presented to her.

Amina: We say like healthy eating, we say growing food, but like you go, I go to the Food Lion and the Walmart near my house and like, I try to buy the organic vegetables and they're all like mushy. They're just like yucky and they don't last.

Mike: Because they come from the storage.

Amina: We're not eating these organic fruits and vegetables either.

Researcher: They're not looking good either.

Amina: Yeah, but the thing is, like, we need to have it. There needs to be a renaissance and I think we're getting there. Uh, we need to start rethinking how and what we're eating, where it's being grown, all of these things. I think like, I think we're coming to that, but it's like you keep like I grow vegetables and I'll give them to people and people will look at me and be like, what do I do with Zucchini or what do I do with, with a fresh tomato or whatever. Cause they're not used to cooking with fresh vegetables. So, like, we're growing vegetables, but we also have to like show people in masses, how to also cook with it too so we can like change our own situation. -Focus Group, Mike and Amina (Appendix R, Lines 463-475)

Nutrition and health are discussed in the excerpts below as a necessary aim for black communities. Mike, LeShari and Larry all raise a valid point of consideration, which is mental health of the black community. Mike appeals for the development of food education classes for

youth to encourage better decision making of the youth, extending to the communities. The expectation of the course is to influence the youth in hopes that they will take that knowledge home and use it or pass it on to those around them. What is being expressed is that we have mental barriers that influence our decision making when it comes to food. He also makes a point to address leadership in black communities providing knowledge both in and out of the institutional setting. LeShari sees the situation of food injustice being combatted with the same knowledge Mike expressed, but she goes further, to say that its more than just exposure but it's the will to change or not knowing where to start without feeling they are losing something. Larry hit on the idea that in order for African Americans to move forward, they must move together in unity. Collaboration is necessary, in order for food justice to exist and for African Americans to take back power over their communities. It is in these three viewpoints that nutrition and health is found to face challenges deeper than one of access, but of choice, despite traditions and prior eating habits

But if we would have an agriculture program or did home cooking classes there, engage from the school to the home? You know food would be prepared, show them how to prepare it. And how that would help make the family more wholesome and to eat healthy. I'm just saying there's a whole lot of ways that we can do things. Someone doctor's degree and you had a patient that had obesity hey, get agriculturally involved. [inaudible] Some health issues... just teaching how to he held, he would bring the high blood pressure down, move that heart problem out the way. So, a lot of ways that we can collaborate and make things work to a point.  
Focus Group: Mike (Appendix R, Lines 911-918)

I believe that African Americans in this community, that they value nutrition. I have come to believe that they value nutrition. They understand that food is important. We must eat. My belief is that they still lack the knowledge to really go out and get everything that they need. They, um, may take advantage of the government assistance that allows them to have food in that sort of thing, but they may not be pushing the envelope and going beyond

that to actually wanting to have their own fresh food at home. So, but it is my belief that also, if they're given this knowledge, if this is made not only public, but if they are taken through this and they're made aware of exactly what is going on. I do believe that community will stand up and want what is rightfully theirs. LeShari (Appendix K, Lines 74-82)

Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, east Indian, every other race kind of takes care of their own. We can't say that about, about the Black community. So, you just desire to see that, [or worth influenced] uh, if they're not educated about it, how will they know what I'm saying? So by me educating and helping someone to come to understand our value and our worth in the foods and what we're putting in our bodies, that's going to ultimately a grant us the food justice that we desire because they can't look for the wrong doing if they don't, if they don't know what they're looking for. And as far as empowering black youth and sustaining the communities, I feel like if you train a child up to be what you want them to be when you leave. So, with me working with these children and these youth, it's like I'm ultimately helping to mold them into the individuals that they will be when they're no longer with me in these courses. So, you put the work in, you show them what it looks like, don't just talk to them. Larry (Appendix M, Lines 304-315)

### *Increased Accessibility for Social Justice Action*

Social justice in the food system is complex. For many of the participants, social justice is something that not only must be demanded but it requires access and exposure to necessary tools and resources in order for people to know how and what direction to make changes for their lives. It is very similar to how Freire (1970) describes the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor, and how in order for the current system to function, there is control over what the oppressed are exposed to in order to prevent people from going against the status quo.

Monique and Shae talk about the nature of their work in Winston Salem, NC. They spend a lot of their time working to empower youth by creating access to farms and farmers, both urban and rural. They are strong advocates for agriculture in the school system as well as empowering youth to find their voice. They also express the need for youth to become more aware of the

issues in their community and how they can respond and help facilitate change through access to their state and local officials. Both express the need for action amongst those presented with the information.

I think with my work um, it's really hard here, but I would hope that if I'm exposing them to community gardens, um, that they'll take the initiative like, well we need a community garden at our school so we can, you know, teach a lesson to see how, you know, we can go from farm to table. So, I would hope that through their access to, with 4H anyway, that they understand the importance of food security. Because, I mean, I, to be honest, I really haven't heard, start hearing of food deserts until recently when I was in Kentucky. It was like, oh, we got a food desert. I'm like, what is the food desert? It's a restaurant right there, what are you talking about? But it was more so having access to like a grocery store, having access to healthy foods, even though it is a grocery store in this area, it's still kind of further away from the students. It's not walking distance or if it is a grocery store, are they going to have the right product produce or is it going to be rotten. Or is it gonna be spoiled because of the demographics they serve. So, I think by showing them that they can understand that they have, they can be the change agent and I guess advocating for what food security should look like in your community because we do give them access to government officials. So, if you go meet your representative or your county commissioner or your senator, how can you advocate what you need for your area code or your zip code, like what do you need? Um, so I think that's how we're influencing them to be a better speaker about what they need and advocating for. Um, I think that just wraps up all the food security and empowerment and sustainability because they have to be able to advocate. They have to know what's in their community, what they will allow and don't allow. Um, so how can you advocate for it? How can you be a change agent if you're not trying to change and be of the change you need to see. Monique (Appendix H, Lines 314-334)

Sustainability of the community basically is empowering individuals to take charge and their community leadership skills. We have community development pieces to empower individuals to take charge near community. Be those watchful citizens concerned citizens to take when they see something wrong in their community. Whether if it's a school in their community that needs something new and renovation, just it's whatever is damaging their community. I want to empower them with the voices and resources

they need to make a change because I can give you the information all you want and teach it to you, but it's up to you about what you going to do with it because my job is to teach and implement. It's your job whether or not you're gonna absorb it and take it and do something about it. Shae (Appendix I, Lines 369-377)

Mike's approach to the issue is to provide the information of what is already around the black community and make the connection between both rural and urban African Americans. He calls for Black people stepping up and taking action while LeShari is working in that effort to make the necessary connections for the black community through after school programming. She is enabling youth to access resources to broaden their vision for the future of their communities.

I believe in self-help, uh, I'm hearing you and I'm standing in between, and I think that we should spend more time educating people on the resources that we actually do have. I know people in the country, uh, families that have 200 acres of land, and what are they doing with it?... Nothing, merely nothing. We have resources. There's still a lot of local farmers in the area, um, especially in the rural areas. I think there should be a point of networking between the rural area and the city, you know, so we can put that together since a lot of the farming is taken out of the city. But you know, we're right around the corner from any farm, 10 miles away, or 15 miles away, something like that. There's land there to do that. But I do believe that we should, I know that we should collaborate more. We should take the time to engage in what we are doing, as a race of people. And the only way it's going to be done, the changes are going to be made and we will see positive results is that we educate. -Focus Group, Mike (Appendix R, Line 190-200)

So, I'm trying to bridge the gap so that they can receive the knowledge that they need. So, they can learn how to get the resources that they need for themselves. I plan to do it through the program that I run here. I believe that agriculture is more than just food and I believe that it can start with that knowledge, but there's also other programs that grow from that as well. So, for me it's about giving them as many resources as possible for them to gain this knowledge. LeShari (Appendix K, Lines 83-87)

### *Increasing Self-Awareness for Black Identity*

Society has a way of choosing how and what people are, before the decision is made by us. Perhaps the most effective tactic of slavery was the forced removal of African and indigenous identity. Today, self-identity is one of the biggest barriers that effect change in the black community. Society decides what we eat, what we teach and how we operate as a group of people. Empowerment serves as the catalyst for all that is self-awareness and critical thought of place in the food movement and true emancipation from the status quo. Empowerment is health, which naturally influences the way one views themselves and their environment (Jones & Meleis, 1993).

Larry makes the point that even with the knowledge being presented to us, we have a generational issue. The elders are not as willing to hear or change the way they eat because they are used to certain traditions that the younger generation is identifying as a legitimate issue and hinderance to our health as a community. Despite what doctor's tell us and the many outlets of resources, people still want what they want. Though, what also is clear is that our grandparents were the keepers of this information but their children, our parents were led astray because the industrial revolution that was challenging even our grandparents to get away from farming and self-sufficiency.

It's gonna sound cliché but, the youth motivates me. Because I know like with us, in our age bracket, we're kind of getting a hold of this thing. We're kind of understanding what's going on. But if you were to talk to, like to talk to our parents, 50 to 75 percent of them are closed minded and they don't want to hear what we have to say. Well I'mma eat my bacon. I'mma eat my sausage on Sunday morning, I'mma eat 37 biscuits. And, you know what I'm saying? And this is really a situation where it's like you're okay with killing yourself, like you're okay with knowing that you are eating this, you putting this in your body is gonna kill you, you're cool with that. It's discouraging. You know what I'm saying? 00:11:53 It's discouraging to know that people can know what's right, what's



wrong, and they still blatantly choose what's wrong. That's almost like a parent and a child. And then I tell you not to do that. You did, but I wanted to do this. So, I'm still gonna do this. That's where our community is when it comes to vegan eating and fast food and it's like in seeing it, don't get me wrong. There's an awakening. We should pick our feet up. There's an awakening. People are coming to. People are realizing what exactly is going on, how the benefits of eating right and living long. Do you want eat terribly and die by 30 or do you want to eat healthy and live to be in a, in your eighties? If you look like our grandparents, they live for x amount of years. Like my granddad was like 80 when he died, at least 83. So, to think about that, the average life expectancy of a black male here is what like 50, 60 years old and that's discouraging bro. Like we're dying earlier and earlier. If you believe in the Bible and the things in the Bible, they lived to be hundreds of years old. What changed to where, if we're in their lineage, they lived hundreds of years old and we can't even hit seventy. We can't even hit three quarters of a hundred years. You see what I'm saying? Like what's different? What changed? Larry (Appendix M, Lines 64-85)

LeShari explains the importance of finding her place in providing youth with resources and bridging the gaps that plague black youth in the school system. She creates room for her students to have autonomy, voice and decision-making power to organize what they want to learn and how they want to grow.

I wanted to jump in with Communities in Schools because here I'm allowed to build a program that's catered to the youth at this specific site. And we have seven title one sites as of right now for the Greensboro CIS [Communities in Schools] affiliate, where they each have their own youth development coordinator that develops these unique programs for the students. So, with youth empowerment, my students are able to come to me and say, Ms. Clemons, this is what we want to see here. This is what we need. I'm interested in being a graphic designer. I don't know what that looks like with what I'm doing now, how old I am, what my grades are. You know, what I. How this looks for my future, what resources do I need? I just know that I think I might want to exist in this space. What does that look like? And my job is to go out and find a professional, bring him in and say these are the group of students that I have that are interested in doing what you do, coach them. And so, it goes back to the definition that I gave you for what youth empowerment looks like. Not only do I give them the

space to be themselves, but then I also provide them with the resource to be themselves 2.0. LeShari (Appendix K, Lines 197-209)

Sister Moor Bey homeschooled her children until high-school. Even though the teaching never ends when they are your own kids, she reflects that nature of being aware of oneself. She has a garden in her backyard that her sons have helped to create and design while also raising them to take those skills and help their community by starting gardens for others in their communities. She explains how vital it is that agriculture be a lifestyle and that it is infused in the decisions we make every day regardless.

We're doing the garden because I just want fresh vegetables and fruits that, you know, that's just what I want. That's how I want to live, and I don't... It doesn't make sense to, buying food like that, and when you have garden, that you can use and it's fresher, it tastes so good and it's so healthy. You see it right there. When I'm cooking, I just go and pick stuff out the garden and I come inside, and people have been here and comment like, I just love the way you just go outside and pick a couple tomatoes and throwing them in the pot or put them in the salad. You know, that's living, that's living. Not going and buying a burger, you know? That's not living. It's free, it's fresh and it tastes good. It's healthy. I love it, love it. I love the plants in abundance. That's, that's real wealth, you know? People have dollars and cents. You can't eat that. So what wealth is that really? You can go buy something to eat, you can't eat that, you can't use that for anything. I mean you could buy and spend on things like that, but that's real wealth. You can go out onto your land and pick something, that's wealth. Its green, that's good, that's life, that's wealth, health is wealth. You know, eating greens and having all these greens around you eating greens and consuming greens. That's health, and health is wealth. Sister Moor Bey (Appendix Q, Lines 177-190)

Mike expressed concern for the youth and their health. He makes it clear how much of an issue health related disease are, revealing the mental and physical issues that come with poor health. He recognizes his responsibility as an elder in his community and utilizes his own knowledge of resources to counteract poor health with educational opportunities and mentorship.

He also expands on the need for a spiritual connection with nature that will help communities get back to natural lifestyles for better health and overall well-being.

But seeing the youth suffer through it. So with obesity and um, knowing that, you know, they're not eating healthy and knowing that, what's putting, they're putting in side of them and knowing that the cycle can be changed, can be changed, you know, maybe not overnight, but little by little and um, and that encouraged me to step out and say, okay, let's, let's do some gardening projects. Bring some stuff back wherever, where we live in the city or any country where, let's bring some of this, you know, you can raise a plant anywhere. You can raise your tomato plant, you can, you know, there's so many things that we can do. Urban, when we're living in the urban areas or even the city, you know. Um, then further knowing that so many of our children and our race have never experienced country living or living outside of the city to have an appreciation for animals and for plants and to have the knowledge of how nature actually takes care of us and to have that appreciation for, you know, they was like, you know, they were born, born in the community, in the projects or wherever. Don't see me. I just looked at that point and they, you know, as a child, I ran barefooted in the ground and the sand, and I had a connection with nature, with the animals, with the birds, but you know, and, and they haven't, they haven't. And sometimes the first time they see a farm is at school in a book and it's sad because sometimes they're only 30 minutes away, but it's, and so we operate in that area where that aspect, not knowing the resources that are available to us, healthy living, healthy eyes, you know, lifestyles, healthy eating and just go straight to the same pattern of buying stuff that's bad and eating stuff that's bad. And then our work schedules and lifestyles, you know, just make it even worse because we need something quick, something fast. But um, yeah. Mike (Appendix J, Lines 61-81)

**Research Question 2: What does black community self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?**

Self-determination is associated with some level of action that is initiated by self-awareness. Participants expressed ways in which they have exhibited their self-determination in working alongside the communities and the youth they serve. Theory around self-determination

says that in order have it, a person must have certain psychological needs met for competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2009). Through the narratives, it was found that this answer expressed branching themes of critical pedagogy, critical race theory and community food work. The following sections reflect on the use of diverse educational methods such as farming practice, environmentalism, self-determination and resiliency.

### *Leading Experiences in Sustainable Farming*

When we talk about self-determination and what's required to develop that, we then get into the topic of exposure. It is through exposure that people are motivated to take charge and become self-determined with their connection to agriculture. People must be exposed to things outside of that which they wish to change. The participants expressed their methods and reasoning for what and why they do what they do in their communities. They explained how beneficial it was to expose youth to new educational experiences in farm sustainability and the affect it had on the children.

Monique explains that the lack of knowledge in the community warrants some level of difficulty around influencing change. Because of the habits and traditions of most communities, it could be difficult to be received when the information does not resonate. She expressed the need for farm exposure, providing youth with the opportunity to use their other senses to experience the information. LeShari, encounters the same issue but encourages finding their interests or value in agriculture through other outlets that lead to the farm. She holds the educator responsible for impacting the youth and empowering them.

As far as working with some of our African American communities, I feel like they don't understand the importance of agriculture and food and food access. And um in so many ways, depending on location of African Americans, they don't see no value in trying to grow their own or trying to eat healthier, make their own produce, you know, try to sell and make a business out

of it. Or Ag [agricultural] business, ag tourism, they don't see, you know, if I go get a farm downtown, um, I can bring our youth here to see an actual farm at work. So, I feel like, um, we just don't get it. I think with agriculture like we think is a grandparent's job when it's still as much relevant back then as it is today. More importantly today, because in this zip code, um, we have a few farms, well not even farms, we have community gardens, but this is a food desert, so they don't have access to local foods, but we got convenient stores with all that alcohol and lottery tickets and stuff in it. So, um, I don't think they value it as much because they don't know, they're not educated about it. Monique (Appendix H, Lines 28-39)

And I, you know, sometimes they might not be interested in it, but you meet them where they are and then you get them interested in it. So, some students may come to Agriculture and be like, I don't want to be outside Mr. Ruff and Mr. Starts cooking with them; and then he's like, hey, you like the food? Yeah, well it comes from someplace. Now let's talk about that. Um, so they do get, interested in it. -Focus Group, LeShari (Appendix R, Lines 228-232)

Larry is a local poet in Winston-Salem who has found his place in empowering youth to speak their mind and be themselves. He also encourages youth to eat well, exercise and make good decisions when it comes to their bodies and maintaining what he refers to as one's temple. What remains vital in order to increase the habits of youth is encouraging better practice and helping them develop the knowledge to speak what they want. As expressed in this excerpt, Larry describes why he does the work he does and how it has helped him discover how interested the youth are in knowing more about their food.

The most rewarding part of doing this work is changing a life. I worked with children from the age of three all the way through college. So, you see a three-year-old getting in front of a room and get comfortable speaking and expressing themselves. It's a different ballgame. You when you get to the middle schools and you start to educate them on eating and eating right and understanding what you're putting in your body, what you intake is ultimately affecting you in ways that you can't comprehend and you start to hear that come out in their writing and their work. I tell people if you want to really get to know a child, give him a pen and a pad and tell them to write their feelings down. They won't lie

to that paper. They'll lie to your face though. Larry (Appendix M, Lines 168-175)

What became more and more apparent was the need for collaboration in the African American community to form culturally appropriate groups and opportunities for access to agricultural information. Kamal provides a location for people to be exposed and interact on the farm while also acknowledging the importance of farm exposure. With the students he works with, he notices the impact of changing their environment and allowing them to take ownership in that environment has on them. He also expresses the need to reach more students by providing an accessible location for them to be exposed on a regular basis.

I think that the only way we can really, like fully reeducate the people, we got to have an agricultural center or something where we can teach our kids because [inaudible] the students at the farm, they can be with me and then as I'm dropping off, or we getting ready to be done, they're like man, we got to go back to school. Cause they know they're not getting the same information. -Focus Group, Kamal (Appendix R, Lines 503-507)

#### *Environmental, Personal, and Community Health*

By teaching environmental sustainability in community food work, the overall health of the environment may be impacted by equipping youth with tools to shape their own community environments (Alkon & Aygeman, 2011). Environment is referenced as more than just the physical world outside of human social interaction. Environment is also based on the interactions of people, mentally, physically and emotionally (United Nations, 2012). Participants often referred to youth who were empowered by their teachings of environmental caretaking and some became self-determined to come back and learn more or participate more in the participant programs. There was also, a sense of motivation that fosters self-determination in exposure to the information and opportunities provided by the participants.

As stated before, the environment is not just the plants, animals and air. It's also the mental and physical state of people and in this research, the community. Larry helps youth to recognize the nature of their environment does have influence, but they can effect change for themselves and those around them. He helps them realize that starting with their diet, they can shape their own path to breaking generational cycles they once thought they had to accept. Therefore, he works to improve the mental and physical state of the individual, to encourage improvement in nourishment.

I'm showing them that there's more, helping them understand that they have a voice, that they have choices to make, they have decisions, um, and ultimately empowering them to understand that just because mommy and daddy did it doesn't mean that you have to just because mommy and daddy ate this and ate terribly and they had this stroke that you don't have to. It's showing that you are your own individual. You have to know your worth. If you know that you're... If you have a mentality that you come from slavery, you will have a slave mentality. Do you have a mentality of I come from God's, you're going to treat your temple as such? So, it's about the mentality. You changed the way people think. Now I said that at the beginning. you changed the way someone thinks the actions will follow. We just think so low of ourselves. Larry (Appendix M, Lines 254-263)

Mike makes the correlation of nature to spirituality which overall impacts our mental, physical and community health as we transition into more wholesome lifestyles of eating properly and producing our own. He relates the process and logistical relationships of a community providing food for themselves will increase our appreciation for the environment and the people we share it with.

I am motivated to do this work because I see that that's a missing component. It was nurturing to us working together. We worked together and so it's a missing component now, um, and, and it needs to be brought back. We need to be reeducated on what a wholesome lifestyle work. The gardening aspect raised. It was therapeutic and in so many ways it was about togetherness. We worked the fields and we work to raise a product together. Um, if it

was, um, processing of animals. We did that together and we shared what we had, and it was healthy. We knew what the product was, we knew what we was putting into the product. And so now we, we don't even know what's in the food that we're eating. And um, you know, it's just, it's an awareness that needs to be made, you know, heart attacks and strokes, all the health issues that we're facing. But we missed that because nature to a certain extent takes care of us when we, you know, have the knowledge. So, I want to bring that, you know, make that aware to our children, to our youth. Um, I grew up with older parents and grandparents. We worked together in the garden they taught us and they, how the raise and how to produce and how to eat healthy. And our children deserve that too. We just living in the system and where we just accept whatever is put before us. Before we read the ingredients, where it come from and you know, the disadvantages of eating it. And we have to break certain cycles, you know, if, if healthier food is coming from the farmer which is healthier, it's healthier. And then we have to really understand that and start, um, ways of educating us, you know, how to go back to that. Mike (Appendix J, Lines 34-51)

That's the neat thing about agriculture. It's a part of everything, you know, your wood, your resources are just laying around, your dirt, your mulch. Your plastics. Everything's around. There are some companies in construction building something, moving dirt. They will give you sometimes the topsoil and stuff, there are a lot of resources out there in agriculture. -Focus Group, Mike (Appendix R, Lines 275-280)

Sister Moor Bey explains that by not passing down this knowledge of taking care of the environment, black communities face peril. By instilling agriculture and the importance of the physical environment into her children, they have an appreciation for it and have naturally made the connection to the state of their community environment and the people in it. She and her children are embedded in helping their community out.

It's important for young people to learn how to garden and take care of Mother Earth, too, to appreciate Mother Earth. It's very important because that's the younger generation and so if there aren't, if they're not any of them like beacons of light to say, ay, we can do it this way, it's going to be real trouble, you know. And passing the torch, that's just the way how we live and it's important



that that's how they live, and they enjoy it and it's necessary, it's necessary. That's how we are. We're nature beings, so you know, in addition to, in addition to knowing traditional book studies, it's important to know how to do natural studies. You know, so many people now seem to find themselves alienated from mother earth and they can't garden, and they don't eat vegetables or the dirt or you know, so unable to deal with it. It's incredible to me. And so now I've been meeting people that are coming around and asking about doing things like that. Literally asking, how do I grow? You know, how do I grow something, or you know, how do I grow a plant, is it this way or that way. And I've given away a lot of plants. We've given away, the children have given away many plants to people too, because we have an abundance. Yea they've, now that you ask me that, they help do a lot of stuff. Wow. Even surprising stuff, they just help people and people will tell me about it and thank them, things like that. That's how I met a few people because they were helping them. You know your boys helped me and they're so great. -Sister Moor Bey (Appendix Q, 10:41, Line 160-176)

### *Role Modeling as an Authentic Black Experience*

Experience is often the best teacher, as each black leader found themselves in the role of being the experience. They often set an example for the communities they interact with through role modeling, or what can very well be described as explicit teaching as an authentic material in critical pedagogy (Purcell-Gates, Duke & Martineau, 2007) In doing so, their example was deemed as role modeling as an authentic material of critical pedagogy. Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) discuss the nature of instruction centered around student experiences and the realities of their lives as being transformative curriculum that would help their decision making. It is through this, that experiential learning and role modeling may co-exist.

Sister Moor Bey is a member of the Moorish community in Greensboro, NC and she expressed what food justice looks like when she was asked her motivations behind having the agriculture as such a big component of her home schooling she responds honestly, how she is role modeling for her children.

Because that's how I want to live. I want to live a natural life so; the project is always living a better life. And you know, it's not a project, it's life... life. We're projecting into life, but it's not a project it's a journey and the journey is always going to have natural fruits and vegetables for me. I'm vegan, I don't eat meat. So, for me, it'll always compare, like, even though they don't normally eat vegetables like myself, their journey's always going to have a lot of plants and vegetables because we eat it here, they like it, they like to grow it. That's just part of our life. It's our lifestyle, our culture, our heritage. So, there is always going to be plants around. -Sister Moor Bey (Appendix Q, Lines 250-257)

Amina has been mentoring students using the garden project at Dudley during her capstone, in that project she built relationships with her students. Even after their departure from the program, she is willing to help create the path for them based on their interests and help them find a mentor, utilizing her own resources. Her views were expressed when asked what youth empowerment was to her.

So, it's understanding... it's also studying up on different career opportunities and saying, you know what, why? I have a friend that I ran into, a student, um, he's, he's a student at Dudley, but he's taking classes at A&T and I was at the gym and I saw him and I was like, oh, you know, how are classes going, and that kind of thing. And he was talking about, you know, he wants to do robotics. Um, I don't know. I don't know any robotic engineers, But I do know programmers. I have a, a, um, you know, Austin Blackman. Yeah. So, Austin Blackman is a software engineer. I was like, you should talk to my friend Austin, you know, or just giving them references on who they should talk to and different things like that. Oh, well, you know, talking to them about, well, I know someone who does this or you know, when you're in college, you should think about this or we should talk to your professors or just giving them little, um, our conversations are built on what they want to do. Um, and, and giving them suggestions on when they get to those places, when they get to college, what do they need to do? Because there is a, there was a map to success and people can go outside of that map and still be successful, but at least if you do certain, certain things, you will be, that's guaranteed success. Amina (Appendix L, Lines 519-534)

During the focus group, Monique, Amina and Kamal discussed how the youth have a way of expressing their mentality of farming and why it often has a negative connotation. On the other spectrum, when students are exposed to a farm, many also begin to realize that they lacked access and understood the importance of the experience. Amina stresses the importance of changing the narrative of farming for black people and break down the barriers of being involved in food production. Monique also expressed the importance of being the example and exposing them regardless of what the narrative tries to predicate because even her own thoughts were challenged by taking kids to the farm.

Amina: I understand what he is saying, like I had kids be like, alright, we slaves today and I'm like, no. Like we have to change the narrative.

Researcher: I believe it.

Monique: That's what I'm saying. Kids do not understand. (group laughter)

Kamal: When they say that, I get them.

Monique: Most of the kids do not understand, like they do not understand that concept. So, I mean, I get what you are saying. I think that is funny because I'm in Winston. I grew, I work, I live here [Greensboro], but I work in Winston; and I have yet to have, one kid, tell me they were slave. They had said, we didn't know nothing about this. Where did this come from? Because, where I'm at nobody went to them and took something agriculture based to them. So, I mean we've done an Ag. tour. I didn't think the kids would like it here? They were like, oh I had so much fun, can I go next year. I'm like sure, fine uh, yeah.

Amina: Because it's about that exposure, it's about like, it's something about being outside when it's not real, real hot, you know that like really nice fall day, or that really nice spring day and you're just outside and you're watering the flowers and the vegetables and it's just like, it's like this energy just kind of like hits. It's like being in those days, it's like a beautiful thing and you get to see a lot of the vegetables grow but like it's hard work to get there. You know, you plant the seeds or amending the soil and that,

that kind of stuff. And so, to get to that point or to like, you know, um, when you're in the process of re-doing or revitalizing an area, it can be hard work at first and then once you get past that hard ruckus, it's a beautiful thing. Focus Group, Amina, Monique, Kamal (Appendix R, Lines 304-325)

Kamal uses his farm and his knowledge for farming to work with youth in Durham both on and off his farm. He makes his way into schools that have programs to support the topic of food insecurity. He has maintained an image and example of self-sufficiency and resilience that he desires to share with others. He also makes the claim that black farmers and growers have to come together to show the public-school system the importance of these types of experiences and programs for the children they currently underserve as an institution.

I think the best thing to do for us is if you can work with the organization in the school that supports the mission and vision, work with them. Like communities in schools, I work with them in Durham [NC] and I go to a school every Friday to go over garden stuff with them. So, the people I have, are like you got full creative control of what you want to do. But the other end, the academy that I run, on my farm in Orange County. With every single black male, we have one student, he's El Salvadorian, but my perspective on people of Latinx decent, is, is, they're African in my perspective. That's just how I view them. But he, every single one of the kids, is from Durham public schools, but Durham public schools would not, I proposed the idea to them, first. And they shut it down. So, I was like alright, cool. Then I mentioned it, instead of going back and forth with the institution, it's better that we have full creative control because the school system isn't going to let you build up a child that would expose the school system. So, if you go in there and give the kids skills, they can actually practically use, they're not really for that. Because then it makes their curriculum look baseless. So, if we could like really come together and put our ideas and say we can create and support our own programs, that's what we do. Focus Group, Kamal (Appendix R, Line 558-572)

### *Inherited Resilience and Elder Wisdom for Youth*

The excerpts below involve the nature of experiences that each participant had that helped them to develop the direction and skill-set to work with black youth. As stated previously

role modeling may be expressed as an authentic material but that also creates leverage for discussion around inheritance. For example, what these leaders learned from their elders what they are now passing down to these youth and also the nature in which they make this information available. The nature of agriculture today is and has always been in opposition of the banking method (Freire, 1970). The information is not forced but accepted on their own terms and can be shaped to suit the needs and direction of each individual youth's experience (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

Kamal was asked how the Pigford vs Glickman case related to his own work and his response acknowledges how vital it is for African American farmers to exist and what that does for the following generations. In order for the information to remain relevant to our communities, there has to be someone doing the work, passing on the information for the up and coming, while also continuing the fight for black farmer justice.

The Pigford v. Glickman case directly relates to my work because one thing that we do with our farm, we try to get young black men into farming that's going to expand over to young black women when we have the resources to do that, but my work is, is part producing food. While also raising the next generation of farmers. Farming right now doesn't do that. It doesn't do a great job of incorporating youth. Uh, and we have a double task of a heavier load, as far as raising produce, getting our apiaries setup, getting into livestock and also educating six young men to do the exact same. -Kamal (Appendix O, Lines 14-20)

Shannon's education process towards agriculture started at an early age and she even found herself wanting to get away from it. She also found herself being directed back to it for the benefit of youth. Through her own process, she found a place of balance in creating educational experiences for other instructors to use with their kids and the even wider impact that she could make as an extension agent. Not only is she able to be a role model but she is able to help culture other to be role models for the youth they in turn impact with her lesson plans.

So, it was always the stories that led me away from agriculture. Like I'm not going to do this. They also led me back to agriculture full circle. So you know, that's how, that's kind of how I ended up in youth development work, you know, I don't want to say it was an attraction, it was just one of those things that happened and I, it, it was meant for me to do this work, you know, it just, it happened and I haven't looked back since, and you know, just being able to interact with my community and interact with, you know, the 4H'ers and the kids that just drew me to want to do it even more so. Now it was never one of those things where I'm going to do this for so long and then I'm going to leave. That was not the case for me. You know, I continued to stay in the field and I enjoy it, you know, I enjoy being able to not only at one point in time be hands on with the, with the kids, be hands on with the youth, but also I've enjoyed being in a role where I can kind of help contribute to the curriculum that's being implemented in the schools within the community centers and really, you know, guide the structure of that curriculum that's being implemented. So, you know, it's like you, you get the best of both worlds. You've had the experience where you're hands on, but it's also nice to have the experience that I can contribute to this, to what you're teaching, you know, and how can I bring in things that were, once, you know, no light has been shed on them. How can I make sure that those things are now being talked about and discussed within these youth settings? - Shannon (Appendix P, Lines 146-162)

Shawyn is an agriculture teacher at a high school in Guilford County. He is a role model for his students and colleagues. With the several hats he wears at the school, he shows people that he means business and tries to instill those same values into his students through example and utilizing the resources and knowledge he has gained from those before him. In doing so, he has gained two leadership positions within the school as the agriculture teacher and athletic director.

What I've tried to do is, again, try to try to be a good example for our black youth, our African American youth and letting them know that, hey, you know, I'm, I'm a teacher in my 25th year. I'll do it because I love what I do. Um, you know, I didn't have to go out here and, and, uh, become a lawyer. I didn't have to come out here to be become a doctor. You know, a lot of people feel that, you know, in black society to be successful, you've got to be a rock star. You've got to be an athlete, or you got to be a lawyer, you've

got to be a doctor. I tell kids, I've been a teacher for 25 years. I wake up every morning, I come to work happy. I'm not stressed out when I leave because I didn't go into something about the big money. I wanted to do something that I knew I could make a career of and enjoy doing every single day. So empowering black youth, you know, that's something I look forward to doing. Um, you know, is it a, a strain sometime, yeah, because you got to sell it, you know, our black youth said, man, I have no ag. Why, why I can't go into it. There's nothing I can I can get out of. And I'm like, man, it opens the door for so much stuff that you all just have no idea about. Just give it a chance, just give it a try. And some of them get it. Like I said, I had a young lady go on to become a vet. She bought into the program her first year, but we have some people who go on, you know, it may take them a couple of years, they may have to hit that bump in the road to understand, hey, well shoot, let me fall back on what I learned in Coach Newton's class and try to use that to move forward. -Shawyn (Appendix N, Lines 221-238)

Shae is at a point in her career where she realizes the significance of setting a positive example for people around her. She expands by acknowledging her own experiences in which she feels may be important in the building of community resilience and role modeling for people to know or have an idea of how to reflect those same characteristics. She she's the power of her influence as a leader and wants to provide foresight for youth so that they are given an opportunity to make the best decision early.

People who I thought didn't even... wasn't even checking for me like that, but they're looking up to me. They're watching my moves, so just to be able to empower and power them from experiences that I went through to better prepare them. Like basically what our parents were trying to do when we were growing up. Nine times out of 10, we didn't want to agree with what our parents were telling us, but they were just telling us what they learned and passing it on. Now that I'm older, I'm like, I should have listened back then, like two years ago. When you were trying to tell me this. I should have listened, but I just basically want to empower them with the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to just succeed and let them know that they can do and be anything that they want them to be. But also instill that quality of respect. Respect, because I feel like nowadays with generation Z, respect is something that is kind of lacking and just and then it

goes into the cultures where you got to know how to talk to a group of black students. You got know how to talk to a group of white students and so forth. Minorities in general. You gotta know how to communicate to these groups because they can deceive, they can see you before you see them. Shae (Appendix I, Lines 245-259)

*Structural-Determinism as a Catalyst for Self-Determination*

Structural-determinism denotes our system being unequipped to address the wrongdoing based on its structure and vocabulary (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Though structural-determinism may be viewed as a means of hindrance, what seemed to be expressed in the excerpts below was that participants were often motivated by adversity. That which was meant to hold them back only gave them fuel to assure that youth were provided with empowerment and led better than they were themselves. Participants found ways to address and counter-act the system themselves while recognizing the system was not intended to do it for them.

Kamal's primary focus is young black males. He strives to prepare those young men for society and farming through mentorship. In this excerpt he describes what is needed to get a group of young men organized enough to impact their own communities.

The purpose of the project is like multidimensional. One aspect is it teaches the young men leadership, other aspects teaching discipline, and accountability. In other aspects of teaching them how to be self-sufficient and other aspects also show them systematically, how race plays into what they'll be doing as they get older. The other aspect is getting food to our communities.  
-Kamal (Appendix O, Lines 113-117)

Larry expresses his view on what community is to him. Community is based on a group of people in a given area. Larry, better known as 'LB the Poet' explains that he accepts everyone who chooses to support him as his community, not just the individuals who look like himself. His approach encourages healthy relationships with everyone despite differences. He also



acknowledges the need for black people to not only collectivize, but to not be as critical about supporting each other and working with those who don't look like them.

A lot of people will say, yeah, my community won't support my community this, my community. I didn't have that. My community jumped behind, my community supports LB. You know what I'm saying, all the way down to have people to offer, alright well I'll provide all your students will notebooks. My organization will provide all your students with notebooks so they can write and keep a journal and write the poetry, write what they wanted. So, it's, I don't, I don't have that color barrier. And that's why I'm a firm believer bro. You get what you get what, you get what you put out, you get back what you put out. You know what I'm saying? I put out positive energy at all points. So I'm all for us, but I'm all for everybody because I believe in one love because at the end of the day Bro, like, like I tell anybody, like some of my closest, closest friends are of another race and a lot of times my biggest support comes from another race when I do it for my own. So, it's like, that's, that's something that I'm constantly trying to get people to understand is like, you got to get rid of that color barrier. Like I'm all for black, but we can say black power 100 times. But let a white person said white power, how you gone feel? Its gonna enrage you right? Gonna be upset. How, how can they say white power? Well why can we say black and expect them not to feel any type of way? It's a double standard. We got so tired of being the oppressed. We become the oppressor in a sense because I know a lot of us who literally won't ask for assistance from someone of another race. But if they can help you, why wouldn't you take the assistance? It's not like you're selling your soul. You know what I'm saying like, I'm not accepting assistance from Yada Yada Yada. And it's like, Yo, like what type of mentality is that to where you would rather be stuck here than to get a helping hand and elevate your business. So now you can help the people around you who look like you. We don't think that would be a benefit. Larry (Appendix M, Lines 203-225)

The common narrative of black people not being interested in agriculture seems to be a small observation for those who have attempted to create that narrative. Shannon found her thoughts around the topic to be challenged when she went into a project and didn't expect the major outcome of the work she was doing.

Never in a million years would I think that something such as a school garden, you know, this place in the back of a school would shed, would inspire someone else in their community to do something, to inspire them to recognize the need for not only youth to understanding where their food comes from, but for the adults as well. So, things like that. When a small project that you're just thinking, oh, this is just gonna be a school garden, we're going to, you know, teach them this, this and this. But who would ever thought that, you know, in reality an entire community would be affected, and the entire community would eventually have access to produce what they may not otherwise have had access to. So, you know, the small things like that, um, or in that instance kind of... you don't expect those things you just expect, or I just expected general outcomes. They tried new things, they liked it, you know, that's what I expected. Never in a million years would I have expected something like that to impact an entire community, not at all. Or the construction of additional, you know, raised beds at other schools, you know, to really talk about, you know, the whole concept of food and agriculture. So just that little project at the time expanded to something greater. -Shannon (Appendix P, Lines 408-421)

Shawyn speaks of the challenges that African American youth face in not being exposed to agriculture. He describes how black youth are often not able to find value in agriculture because much of their time is spent committed to sports and seeking careers that they visibly see others prospering in. In this, having more examples of black farmers and having them interact with youth more, may encourage youth to find ways to incorporate it into their lives as a supplement to their health while working other careers.

My intended outcome is to empower every single student that walks in my classroom, but I found out through the trials and tribulations, if you're successful, you can connect with one child in that class, you should be happy because there's plenty of times that you could give it a 100%, 110% and you won't sell it to a kid. They're not going to buy into it. But if you get an opportunity, you get that one kid who buys in and you see that person germinate through the process. I mean that makes you go back and try a little bit harder the next time. Because I mean, again, Ag is, it's hard to sell on black youth because they don't see the benefits and the jobs that come from agriculture. They always see about, you know, the LeBron's, the Jordan's, you know, the Le'Veon Bells of the

world, you know, making the big money through athletics and thinking that Ag is just a doormat. The last thing I possibly want to do, but as we get the word, out, we get them to get it to the IFAL programs, get them to the RAP program [Research Apprenticeship Program] at A&T, it'll open their eyes to, hey, hey, there's an opportunity for you, in the world of agriculture, we have a little window down in the classroom. I think, uh, there is no culture without agriculture. Everything in Ag, everything in the world comes through agriculture. So, we try to sell it that way. -Shawyn (Appendix N, Lines 239-253)

**Research Question 3: How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community members influence, if at all, the organizing and educating of black youth?**

Racial inequity and discrimination are documented as a common occurrence for African Americans (Bell, 1987; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Though these occurrences are not directly happening to certain individuals at once, participants expressed both being a witness to such situations as well as their own experiences. Articulated below are branching themes of critical race theory, with intersectionality directed towards race, power and its lasting effect on each of the participants.

*Intentional Hindrance*

Throughout the narratives there were instances of hindrance identified by each of the participants. Not all of them felt that they were themselves being hindered but did acknowledge the effect of what could be considered by others, as a barrier to their own personal development. When referring to hindrance and what would be considered intentional, race is a common factor that surely has a platform developed to hinder the progression and empowerment of black and brown people (Bell, 1987; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Shawyn grew up in a town where there were black farmers directly affected by the Pigford & Glickman case. In this excerpt he explains how difficult it was for black farmers to reach the major market as compared to their white counterparts. He also discussed how important having knowledge passed down from generation to generation was and is. Black farmers are the smaller scale farmers and were outcompeted by white farmers yet, in spite of hinderance, still reached out to their community youth to teach. Shawyn points out how access to knowledge and resources for farmers were often allocated to white farmers over black farmers. He also makes it aware that black farmers were often excluded from the larger social realms, like farmer's markets that would have given them access to potential buyers.

I mean, you think about traditions over time, each tradition is supposed to be passed down to the next generation and I think if we eliminate the, the achievements of the Black farmer that's eliminating a whole, you know, a lot of information that could have been passed on. I mean, we got so many black farmers that you don't even know about the great things for the American economy, but because it was such a small segment, only the Caucasian, uh, farmers were the ones who actually got stuff, you know, produced and put out there where the small farmer mostly your minorities didn't have that opportunity before them because the money, money aspect, you know. I remember Mr. Sanford, he had the uh, some of the oldest equipment. But then again, the farmer down the road who had 200, 300 acres has some of the best equipment. So, you know, looking at the economy and things like that, the Caucasian farmers had opportunity to go to the market and sell all the products. Where Mr. Sanford, he might've sold his in the local market to the neighborhoods, things like that. So, we knew there was a difference in the money, and it became, you know, him trying to make sure the community was taken care of where the other majority farmers were mass producers who were taking care of, you know, other markets. But I mean, even with Mr. Sanford, only having a few acres. He still tried to do the things to pass on the tradition to the local kids in the community. Shawyn (Appendix N, Lines 27-42)

Sister Moor Bey explores the environmental concern for the Earth. She states that it's been neglected and hindered by leaders who make decisions that don't reflect the best interest of

the people. She describes how people of color have an innate connection to the world and the preservation of life. She advocates that officials should support those who wish to care for the land with no questions asked instead of supporting destructive agendas.

It just sucks that, you know, at many turns, melanated people are treated differently and unfairly than their white counterparts. It doesn't make sense. It is what it is. But, um, you know, on bigger levels it just shows people's intention to not be fair, unjust and destroy mother earth. Because if you wonder if there's people that want to take care of mother earth and this money available for them, give them all the money they need and let them take care of mother earth, they want to do it. And by their own nature and divinity, they're caretakers, Brown people, melanated people, Moorish people, black people, they're all, they're caretakers of mother earth. They have been since the beginning of time, so you know, and there's monies available. So, it just, everything has to turn into a racial war, well not everything. Let me not claim that, but you know, it's sad that things always have to turn in... there I am claiming it again. See that's what happens because we claim it, it becomes so, that that racial inequity, it just doesn't make sense and people are just free to do as they want to. But it seems like sometimes they, they make choices that aren't to the real benefit of the people or mother earth and in the name of mother earth. Because agriculture is about planting and taking care of mother earth and the plants. So, in the name of that, you're going to use some, some inequitable standards and feelings of hatred or resentment to guide your... to guide your actions about nature and agriculture. It's unfortunate. So, all we can do is put light on those individuals that they come around, because mother earth needs help desperately. And anybody who wants to take care of mother earth should be greatly rewarded and um, you know, should be applauded for that. And given whatever assistance is available.  
-Sister Moor Bey (Appendix Q, Lines 22-41)

In this excerpt, Mike describes that many African Americans lack trust in their own communities. By choosing not to trust in each other or being able to, even with resources available, black people are intentionally hindering their ability to organize and unite to create change. Lack of trust within communities leads to major issues that affect our loyalty to black owned institutions, businesses, and faith leaders that are vital to maintaining the dollar within our

communities (Smith, 2007). Mike encourages people to come together to form their own food security therefore practicing cooperative economics and building trust

We have trust issues amongst ourselves as a race of people. That hinders us too. We have to tell the truth about it. I think that was something that somebody was talking about earlier about getting in the door, with my program versus your program. How can we collaborate to make it, make it all work, and for the better? And so, it's kind of... I've been puzzled. When you talk about resources, we have the resources, and we have the money. You know today, we all church folk, I'm sure we belong somewhere. We have the resources and we have the money. We deposit it in the bank Monday morning. We're going to deposit it in their bank, Monday morning. Everybody a part of it Black. That's our church. We got the money, church land. Cadillac is going to be parked on the yard. But the health issues surrounding all of this, the importance of going out and doing something in the agriculture field so people stop getting sick cause they're eating wrong, unhealthy. You know while we praying to the Lord, we supposed to be eating healthy too. You know, so this thing is big. -Focus Group, Mike (Appendix R, Lines 653-654)

In this excerpt, Monique describes how she experiences micro-aggressive behavior in the work place. She also discusses how it has often hindered her from acting to impact her target youth groups. Be it lack of support or being challenged on her direction; she often has to rely on the same individuals who make it a much larger task to finance her efforts. She refers to these situations as a game that she is forced to participate in to achieve her goals of producing and providing access to black youth.

I have experienced setbacks, based off a racial standpoint, um, and it's kind of hindered my work because what has happened so far is, it's been a whole lot of, how can I say, would they like to use the term is play the game. You gotta play the game. Um, and I feel like that if you're doing your work and you're really passionate about your work, you shouldn't have to play no game. Like I'm human just like you are. And because of the historical context, even if you want to go back to the case when you had people of a different color in some type of leadership role, um, they [white people] like controlling everything. And so, uh, sometimes it's hard. Sometimes they tell you they don't understand why you're doing

the work you're doing and why you're working with a certain group you're working with and try to dictate how you should work with that group. So, um, it's kind of, yeah, I would say is definitely has some type of a hindrance to my fruition. Monique (Appendix H, Lines 277-287)

*Systemic Racism and Discrimination Exciting a Power Shift*

Systemic racism is a cultural idea that is often accompanied by discrimination (Bell, 1987; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). For several of the participants, systemic racism was a common piece throughout the narratives. In several ways this negatively affected them but, in many cases, empowered them to take control of their own situations in life and provide opportunity to others like themselves. This resulted in dialogue around power and how that may in fact be shifted with unity amongst African American people (Anderson, 2001; Du Bois, 2007).

Amina and Shea describe the need for African Americans to be included food movement discourse. On one hand, Amina refers to the lack of black faces at the table when discussing changes that often are to occur in the neighborhoods of those not in attendance. She also reflects on the instances of people having verbalized their opinions of black youth that she herself found to be false in her own work. Shea on the other hand, calls out the lack of diversity and representation within institutions. She also recollects racially charged experiences that occurred through social media and how that affected her. Representation is vital to assuring that justice is equitably distributed.

Nowadays people aren't at the table, but we got to think about why people aren't at the table historically and that, we were shut out. You know what I'm saying? But it's just like we were, we were shut out of that narrative and now that's why we don't have people at the table. And so, for you to say, oh, they, they're not interested in the table and coming to the table and that's not, that's not true. You know what I'm saying? There are some historical reasons why we weren't at the table and that there were like people stealing land and killing people over pigs. -Focus Group, Amina (Appendix R, Lines 150-155)

You can say you for diversity all day, every day, but if your surroundings don't really state that for you. Then it's like you just trying to do this so you won't be evaluated by civil rights. And that's real. Shae (Appendix I, Lines 93-95)

Growing up in a kind of a racial hometown, nothing racist out there surprises me. Like we had a whole KKK rally in front of our courthouse in 2013 in Montgomery County, NC. So that alone just kind of... I always knew what was going on, but that event right there just kind of put it in my mind if they can allow this to happen, what else can you allow to happen and things like that? So, it put me in a more mature mind frame because I was older now and thinking. This is really who y'all are. And then to see with the whole political climate, Facebook people that I went to school with and consider friends, they're showing me who they are through this whole chaos, through the whole climate. So, I'm like I'm learning who you are all because of what's going on in the world and it's showing me that you probably, I probably wasn't your friend back in the day or just always that token black girl because I feel like I was just at token black girl growing up. Shae (Appendix I, Lines 96-106)

Shawyn explains how the issue of food insecurity goes beyond just African American people but in fact affects everyone regardless of their race. He explains that farmers are a limited resource across the board and that we all must be willing to work together to provide for each other. This excerpt provides an alternative view of the bigger picture in the sense that if one group steps outside of the box of the current agricultural system, other groups are still buying into it. Efforts to counter may be washed out because those same groups in the status quo are making decisions for the communities seeking change for themselves. Shawyn's response is to empower the youth to practice cooperative economics across nationalities and their so-called races, to create change in the food system collectively in order to maximize the economic power of everyone having access to healthy, affordable foods and agricultural literacy.

You know, most of the things we try to tell our students, uh, students in classes, everything comes from agriculture, but we all have to buy into that cultural concept is not just say, you know, the



minority or majority, you know, we all have to be in this thing together cause right now you got 1.2% of the population feeds the other 98.2... 98.8 percent of the population. So, we all have to buy into it. Black farmers, white farmers, Indian farmers, Native American, Chinese and Asians, we all have to buy into the concept of feeding one another because the one thing that's not coming back as a natural resource is land. -Shawyn (Appendix N, Line 11-17)

Kamal described an experience that happened in his youth that has stuck with him since then. He and his sibling were targeted by someone who was also African American that made a claim that was racially charged to belittle and demean them. Through that moment, he has worked to become the exact opposite of what that man was to him and his brother and uplift black males to be better than they ever imagined. He chose to allow what was said to him, encourage his growth and reasoning for being a leader and empower his community. He also discussed his experiencing on one side of town that is mostly populated by white people, compared to the other side that is black.

There are quite a bit experiences that led me to our African American youth. One, when I was in high school, we had a, um, a black figurehead that was supposed to lead and, and help the young black men. He didn't do it. He actually was very, very discouraging. He actually told me and my brother one time that we're going to be runaround boys for the white man, a black man did this and at a, at a traditionally white school. And when I heard that, that just gave me fuel to prove him wrong. What really helped us get through that is the fact that we have a strong we have a strong, what helped me get through that is that fact that we have a strong foundation with our parents so that they were able to help us, like point out that this brothers mentality had been lost, he's going on the wrong route. So, I was able to really cope with it. But then I thought about when I started teaching and being around young black men, how I would be if I was like that toward them. So that's, that's one experience. Another experience. It's just me seeing that um, food deserts are everywhere. And in Greensboro, it's an east Greensboro and a west Greensboro. In east Greensboro is where most of the black people live and we had terrible food outlet. But on West Greensboro, you have all these, all this abundance of healthy food options. That's where most of the white

people live and just being in that dynamic and even being harassed when you're on that side of town shows that this issue is a whole lot bigger. Then just food access. It's something systematic going on that does truly reflect and food access. But there's a larger issue going on here. -Kamal (Appendix O, Lines 49-67)

Sister Moor Bey is very strong woman who does not consider herself to be hindered by anything that is racially charged. Despite the systematic and physical forces that revolve around racial disposition, she has her own mind. She also understands who she is, while encouraging black people to look deeper into the history to find their position of power that is theirs for the taking. She challenges nationality as African American and black are often terms that are deemed as undesirable to a country that doesn't claim them or value their worth. She explains that our true nationality is to be awakened and it is because of that knowledge, she feels she is empowered to move forward despite opposition.

I don't think anything hinders my fruition. But I know that because I'm not giving anybody that power over me. But I know that had my forefathers land not been stolen, the economy would be even more developed (inaudible). And had Moor forefathers' true legacy, the Moorish Empire been known I would be benefiting more right now. It took me a long time to find out about that. That this here actually is, Mecca is Chicago, Illinois. Egypt, all those places that they speak of, this is Morocco, Al Moroc. This is actually the land of our forefathers, not in Africa, see had I known that, or had the truth to hear, still holding it as common knowledge, yea would have been, I would have benefited more because I would have known I was a Moor all along, so I would have grown up in the principles of love, truth, peace, freedom and justice. That would've been my motto from day one. Even though somehow, they subconsciously word the motto, love, truth, peace, freedom, and justice it you know, knowing those things gives you another perspective. Knowing that that's what we're supposed to follow, rather than just following it. So, you know things, those things may have hindered growth of Moors. Me directly, I'm certain that it affected me in certain ways because had I known the truth, and the truth been heard, I'd be in a different position. I wouldn't be who I am right now. So, I'm still grateful, um but hindering me, it's not going to hinder me. Only if I choose to let it, only if I choose to let it upset me and remind myself because once you keep repeating it,

that something is hindering you, it will hinder you. So, I don't claim anything because I'm infinite, infinite possibilities, so things may hinder the average person and hinder black people or African Americans because their status, those things will hinder them. Because they're fighting an uphill battle if you're trying to. You're trying to battle lawful with legal and imaginary stuff. You're not black or African American, you're trying to battle a whole system with the two lowest words. You know, so, that will hinder, but it's not going to hinder me because my eyes are opened to that. Agriculture wise, things will hinder you Monsanto is doing all kinds of wickedness to put all these blocks, you know, I guess it hinders people in general. You know, Monsanto is hindering people from growing things naturally or being afraid. I'm not afraid of anything. Monsanto is poisoning the soy tofu for the vegans; you know what I mean? They're poisoning our own products so that is hindering people from living a healthy and wealthy life. Me? They're not hindering me though because even if I don't have the best food, organic, which is why I try to grow mine, they can't hinder me, because my food and my protection and my liberty comes from elsewhere. People are on a higher level than food, we don't even need to eat. We used to be breatharians, live off of breath, you know, all this stuff is new stuff. But um nothing's going to hinder me, I am not claiming anything is going to hinder me at all. Nothing hinders me. Only what I choose to let hinder me, and I don't choose to let any thought, or any human creation hinder anything about my divinity. -Sister Moor Bey (Appendix Q, Lines 363-397)

## **Summary of Findings**

The narratives revealed several themes related to community food work, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory, many of which relayed overlapping ideology. These philosophies were reflective of the efforts and responsibilities of each of the participants. The work of each participant echoed concepts of youth empowerment, with a primary focus on African American youth, food justice, and self-determination. The goal of each participant is to empower not just youth but communities to become self-sufficient and expand their involvement in the food movement towards building food security in their communities. Participants take an approach to change through education, practice, mentorship and cultural awareness which was

often found to coexist. Due to the nature of the target groups and the social, political and physical barriers that inhibited such practice, participants help to raise the awareness of resources that are available and equip their students with the knowledge to act in their own communities.

Participants were found to be very familiar with the barriers to food justice in their communities. Through the narratives we found that black youth are in need of finding their own voice to address the issues that they themselves encounter. They also need access to nutrition and health education in order to make sound decisions and critique their current foodways. Through self-awareness, youth are able to retain historical knowledge of their own history, culture, and challenge the hegemony of the status quo. Aside from enriching the youths' ability to think critically, it was found that by empowering youth with resources and knowledge of what is available they in turn would be able to seek food justice for themselves and influence their communities.

Participants were found seeking to break down barriers by providing the necessary keys to developing food justice as expressed above. Of the participants' approaches, it started with providing education through schools, non-profit and federally funded opportunities. Students were able to access community gardening which often resulted in exposure to essential farming and growing practices. This exposure often turned into a means of providing food access to various faith organizations and direct to community consumption. Participants provided youth with valuable information and critical thinking skills that was then relayed and practiced at home, influencing the adults. This method counters the banking method in which Freire (1970) describes as being obsolete, resulting in an inability to increase critical consciousness. Our participants not only provided youth-centered mentorship but also, leadership training to empower the youth.

Participants were found to have both directly and indirectly experienced micro-aggressive and racially charged conflict. Not all of them respond in the same manner but did account for what is referred to as political, institutional and internalized racism. Pyke (2010) describes internalized racism as an adaptation to white cultural standards, believing in negative stereotypes and thinking that supports the status quo. Despite their experiences, participants all found ways to overcome the effects of double-consciousness (Du Bois, 2007). They recognize the responsibility that comes with preparing the next generation of environmentalists and seek to build bridges to success for black youth.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

This research study was a qualitative, narrative inquiry project that was twofold. The objective of this study was to first, recognize the iniquitousness of Black poverty in America and the constructed pattern of racism, marginalization, discrimination, and violence; systematically directed toward them. The second objective of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of the role that racial discrimination has played in the food system and black leader responses to it through youth development for self-determination. The study explored the role of African American leaders in creating opportunities for self-empowerment, determination, and capacity for social change for youth in black communities through the teaching and learning of agriculture. All participants were described as leaders, defined in this study as community organizers and educators providing community-based educational opportunities for food justice activism with black youth. The study explored the experiences of self-determination and empowerment of 10 African American leaders.

A critical race theory lens and narrative inquiry approach was applied to understand the values, beliefs and experiences of African American leaders in the Triad area of North Carolina, as they pertain to community empowerment, youth development, and food justice. To that end, the following guiding questions frame this research project as applied to community leaders who are organizing for food justice activism with youth in the Triad area of North Carolina:

- What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?
- What does self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?

- How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community members influence, if at all, the organizing and educating of Black youth?

This qualitative study included 10 people in the Triad area of North Carolina. They were found through a snowball sample that began in Greensboro, NC, branching out to areas of Durham, Winston-Salem and surrounding areas. Each participant was a part of a narrative style interview that was both audio and video recorded. Those same participants were requested to attend a single focus group that allowed for further discussion on the topics and development of themes from the initial interviews. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an in-depth discussion to explore the reasoning, causes and factors of the results. Next, recommendations will be provided for future research and practice.

## **Discussion**

This section will provide discourse related to the study findings and their connection to existing literature through the narrative inquiry practice. The areas of interest are to first explore the structuring of food justice and the participants' involvement in that undertaking. Then, the importance of youth involvement for empowerment will be reviewed. After that, self-determination will be explored as a catalyst for community collaboration. Lastly, the act of unification as a means of building power within black communities and what that means for expressing and developing leadership will be discussed. By utilizing narrative inquiry, participants were able to build a relationship with researcher and open up about their experiences of food justice work and the racial and micro-aggressive experiences in pursuing this work.

### *Structuring Food Justice*

Food justice has been at the forefront of the discourse expressed in this research. Through the narratives it was expressed how each leader viewed food justice as a possibility for black communities and what they were doing to initiate change. In exploring their backgrounds and

experiences related to justice, this provides evidence to the body of literature connected to critical race theory. It could be expressed that food justice could not be obtained without land justice (Penniman, 2018; White, 2018). What was found in the Pigford v. Glickman case responses were that there was no surprise that black farmers were being kept from the table. Penniman (2018) states, “As a result of decades of discrimination by the USDA, white supremacist violence, and legal exploitation of their property, Black people have been almost entirely dispossessed of our land” (p. 12). Despite the struggles of farmers accessing funds to grow crops, without crops, they would not be able to carry the financial weight of the land. The participant leaders in this research carried diverse backgrounds and have adapted the knowledge and built partnerships to create both land and food justice in their efforts. Much like the black farmers who first participated in civil rights activism through sharecropping, tenant farming, and domestic workers; the leaders in this study have found ways to encourage collective agency and community resilience for African Americans in their communities (White, 2018).

To provide a clear understanding of how food justice is being organized within the black communities, the clarification of what is needed to do so, had to be explored. It was found in this study to be led by those most salient to the communities being impacted. Therefore, addressing the need for more African American leaders in the triad area of North Carolina, advocating to increase black involvement in the food movement. Despite the presence of food deserts, grocery stores are making strides to provide some healthy and affordable foods. What has yet to be explored in that aspect is access. Yes, these stores have some healthy foods but besides the need to change the mindset of the customers to purchase those items, corporations are making their money off the government regulating what a family can get. SNAP, WIC and subsidized school meals are chosen by the regulators, not the consumers, which means, “Given that commodity



foods are subsidized by the USDA, the least expensive options in the grocery store are packed with refined starches and sugar” (Penniman, 2018, p. 241). That leads us to health and nutrition, what seems to be lacking in black communities because sugars and salts are highly addictive substances that clearly deter one’s mental capacity to choose nutritionally dense foods. Participants also had a way of connecting black cultural-awareness to owning one’s spiritual connection with nature and Mother Earth. This element of expression that was received from Mike, Sister Moor Bey and Kamal most prominently and truly reflected their commitment to the food justice movement. In the following section, there will be an elaboration of the work of each participant to impact youth through advocacy, nutrition and health education, access, creating cultural awareness and generating reflective cognition for empowerment. These elements may prove to be essential for the advancement and involvement of black youth and their communities in the food justice movement.

#### *Youth Involvement for Empowerment*

Participant leaders expressed the need for youth involvement in black communities, in order to provide them with the resources to be empowered. Youth have been described to be pushed away from the agricultural sector. Often, they are pushed towards sports and other limiting extracurricular experiences. Aside from that scenario, agriculture programs are almost non-existent within their schools. Being the example has been the common narrative of the leaders. As adults outside of their students’ homes, it is their responsibility to set an example for the impact in which they intend to make. The choices that are available to the community effect the community, not just the youth. Kids eat what their parents can afford or what they are provided and taught to consume.

Many of the participants found that once youth had been impacted by their programs and given access to vital knowledge, they often took the information home and shared it. “No land-based project is complete without the integration and empowerment of young people. As soon as we gain knowledge for ourselves, it’s incumbent upon us to share it with the next generation.” (Penniman, 2018, p. 245). This sharing resulted in the youth building community capacity, starting from within their own households. Despite theorists’ notions of African American youth not being interested, the idea was non-existent in this research. It was stated that the change in the youth resulted in some guardians getting more involved. Youth empowerment was often explained as providing youth with the necessary knowledge, tools, and access to resources. Which gives reason to believe that perhaps the unsuccessful programs for black youth by white research practitioners reflect the colonization of youth development (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

The word itself did not seem to be as complexed as the nature of the definition and what it meant to need empowerment. When describing knowledge, participants carried out providing information as learned experiences. The experiences ranged from food instruction, food preparation practices, hands-on farm sustainability, leadership training and offering alternative methods to participating in the food movement at little to no cost to the individual. One major benefit is that as members of the black community, they are being given access to farmers who may serve their communities. As it is a given right for everyone support farmers through direct market transitions, there is still a wealth of knowledge that they themselves hold to be passed down to the next generation, especially in the black community (Penniman, 2018).

Knowledge may indeed be described as a tool but to practice is how information is retained. In learning how to do, youth are given the ability to critically reflect on the information,

apply ingenuity and expand on the information that is provided to them. For instance, knowing one's rights as a citizen of this country may be a critical tool that realistically for African Americans, is necessary. With participants ranging from USDA agents, youth development coordinators in and out of the school system, farmers, and activists; access is best explained by the lengths to which these leaders go to bring knowledge and tools to the students. Kamal picks his students up and drops them off himself, providing leadership training and mentorship to young men. USDA agents Shannon, Shae and Monique, find ways to connect with individual schools and community groups to provide hands-on opportunities as well as fieldtrips to farms for students who may never witness one in their youth without the opportunity. Youth coordinators like LeShari and agriculture educators like Shawyn, organize opportunities for youth to engage in the not only the food movement but their chosen interests with individuals who are within their field of interest. Mike, Amina, and Kamal all participate as pillars in the food justice movement while working both in and out of school settings to provide access to farming practices and agricultural knowledge ranging from food preparation, palate expansion, cultural immersion and self-awareness. Larry works with youth directly to help them find their voice while encouraging a mental shift with health and nutrition information, self-awareness practices and public speaking. Sister Moor Bey has used all these practices in raising, home-schooling her children and providing a safe space for her community to be enriched.

#### *Cooperative Outcome of Self-Determination*

Several of the participants articulated different forms of solutions for black communities to make necessary strides, which in summary were unification, education, ethno-aggregation and separate economic structures. These concepts are described as cooperative economics in this section, better known as Kwanzaa's principle, Ujamaa; which indorses the right to regulate and

benefit from the resources of one's own lands in order to move away from the exploitative nature of capitalism, and instead work towards equitable standards by building mutual relationships and a just share of the goods of the world (Penniman, 2018). Amina suggests there needs to be a renaissance within black communities to increase awareness and participation in agriculture. Participants were habitually reflective of their racial and micro-aggressive experiences either motivating or directing their interests and approach to black youth empowerment. Mike and Shawyn both witnessed farmers in their communities who were affected by the Pigford v. Glickman case. Those same farmers still provided for their communities, be it food or knowledge. As it stands, both participants saw the value in agriculture and pursued careers and lifestyles reflective of the resiliency instilled by their elders. They both establish that there has been a disconnect and generational gap and outside force that has prevented the passing of knowledge. Over produced and processed foods are a large part of the blame. Corporate industrial movements have increased dependency, limiting choice and access to healthy and affordable foods. Then you have Kamal, a young farmer who works with young black males to maintain and provide capital to an entire farm that provides food for the community and educational space for youth. His motivation was stemmed by internal racism exhibited by an elder in his youth. The interesting thing was that his elder was a black man himself and tried to belittle young Kamal. We have explored the nature in which the USDA treats people in black communities and how they seem to be neglecting black people through its history as an government institution and through the Pigford v Glickman case. Fortunately, there are black USDA agents but even they expressed some level of hindrance whether it be funding, or prejudice exhibited by coworkers and higher ups.

Many of the participants see agriculture as a gateway to cultural awakening, self-awareness and progress for black communities. Agriculture is described to transcend all interests because of its environmental sustainability aspect. Participants referred to environment as more than just trees, plants and air. The health and wealth of the people who live it in these communities, the interactions of the people, and the state of black community trust were all considered to be vital components of environmental sustainability. The United Nations (2012) describes environmental sustainability to be laced with physical, social and political bonds. In considering the wholistic approach to youth development, participants were able to organize with groups like faith-based institutions and other community groups and societies that contributed either physical or fiscal aid. Amina partnered with a church that offered free food to the community. Amina's garden program contributed majority of its food to be redistributed to families in need. Her students were also a part this process.

#### *Exploring the Power, in Unity*

Several of the participants spoke of how black people need to trust in each other. A common example of this condition is entrepreneurial support within communities, or the lack thereof. What one will not pay with someone from their community, they will blindly pay that or higher in a white owned establishment (Anderson, 2001). Not one participant is working alone and regardless of how hands on their partners may be, to do what they do requires cooperative thinking. For change to occur in black communities, the narrative still stands that it will require unity. Sister Moor Bey has developed such a strong family unit that the entire family works on the property together, be it gardening, carpentry or everyday tasks in the home. Amina provides an example not just in the connections she made to produce the garden project but in the groups that she has become acquainted within the organizations of Greensboro and Winston Salem areas

talking to the parks and recreation people. Mike refers to the ideal amount of power that would come back to black communities if they were to be providing their own food for themselves. The focus group provided an opportunity for all the participants to collectivize around the issue of food insecurity in black communities and discuss ways in which they could collaborate to strengthen their efforts as a unit of support. Another reason for unity as expressed in the narratives is to counteract the white washed programs that often recruit black youth to exploit for the purpose of making themselves look good and prevent discrimination auditing of their organization. LeShari is the youth development coordinator for communities in schools at a predominately black middle school and she has utilized her power to create programs at her school for the kids in the CIS after school program. She not only gives her students a choice of what programs they want implemented but carries out those expectations by recruiting people who look like them and can understand them. Mike is one of those recruits for the program as they are working to resolve the food insecurity issue within that community by developing a community garden and collaborative space. This space will allow the members of the community to come and learn to cultivate alongside the youth of the school. Opportunities such as this are also indicative for helping community members build trust, network, foster lasting relationships with each other and most importantly, participate in environmental sustainability practices.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

Qualitative narrative inquiry practice may be very insightful for this body of research surrounding critical race theory and food justice. With only 10 participants, this research surely is not generalizable to an entire body of people. It is in fact a means of approach that could be replicated and could provide an accurate view of the nature of black communities within given

areas. It provides a highlight of some of the work that is being done to counter food injustice and racism in the food system. Because of the short amount of time I had trying to complete this research, it made the process seem rushed, but there were so many others who would have been dynamic additions to this work of providing a space for their voices to be heard. I wish I would have had more time to witness more of the participants in action working with the youth.

I believe for future research, it would also be imperative to give voice to the youth by interviewing them as well. Doing so, could provide more insight to leader practices and their impact on youth. It may be difficult to contact the guardians for approval, but I am certain that their stories and interpretations of the leader programs would add wealth to the study. The leaders were very involved in their students' lives and enrichment. Adding an ethnographic component with leaders, as participants, working directly with youth would be recommended to explore the culture behind the methods and practice of the leader participants. Doing so, would also provide example for other black leaders who are and intend to do work around food justice. I would also recommend that the video, given more time to produce be essential to the research process instead of just being solely a networking tool. I do feel as if narrative inquiry allowed the relationship between the researcher and participants to be much closer and provided a personal touch that allowed participants to feel comfortable with probing questions and not feel interrogated or studied. This allowed the participants to feel content with me co-interpreting their personal stories, experiences and their own interpretations (Clandinin, 2007).

#### *Recommendations for Future Practice*

This narrative inquiry approach brought out some recommendations for practice that the participants and leaders alike may utilize. This work serves as a means of expression and communication. Narrative inquiry may also serve as an outlet for these and other spaces of

community practitioner work. The narratives provided an opportunity for triad area leaders to reflect on their experiences as well as the boundaries in which they have overcome and how. I believe that continued efforts and creating spaces for general reflection with community members and leaders may help to bridge both generational and social gaps between youth and adults (Gilbert, Sharp, & Felin, 2001; Brown, 2018). If youth are present and can experience the message of their leader's narratives, these interactions may provide space for dialogue and developing civic epistemologies (Broad, 2016). Having these spaces available may perhaps help to foster healthy relationships and encourage more participation from community members and youth on an organizational level through commitment.

Having these necessary conversations and hearing the stories of others like themselves, black community members may become knowledgeable of agriculture's broadness and connection with the environment around them. Again, environment goes beyond just the natural world itself, the relationships that will be created and fostered through storytelling and collaborative work will give way to the cultural and spiritual awakening described by the participants (United Nations, 2012). Through continued practice, efforts towards organizing, planning, preparing and producing results as a community may be initiated (Anderson, 2001).

From an academic standpoint, universities should utilize more narrative inquiry practice to build relationships with and provide resources for black community leaders to continue their work. As educators, it is even more essential to provide support to black leaders doing food justice organizing by providing space for general reflection with black community members, leaders, and youth to help bridge the generational and social gaps between them. This too may help provide access to USDA funding through cooperative extension agents on campuses, as well as organizations universities have already partnered with that may aid in their continued



practice. Some of these organizations are ones like United Way and HEAL Food Alliance and other black leaders in their regions. With all of these resources available to black leaders, they in turn will have what is needed to help solve community issues, provide avenues for economic development, career development, and expand community education and stewardship (Brown, 2018). Funders should know that their monetary contributions should not be made to generate personal gain but to benefit the greater good. African Americans are fully capable of decision making and acting when resources are both scarce and equitable. It is not the responsibility of people outside the community to hold decision making power but to support the needs and decisions of the communities themselves.

The dissemination of the video would be essential to getting communities of all colors, interested in not only this topic area but this dissertation research. Perhaps efforts for outreach would be vital to providing this information to a wider audience so, it was provided on a public platform with the consent of the people involved. Through organized viewings accompanied with discussion in groups both large and small to help generate dialogue and cognition of this subject matter, with communities of color, efforts toward advancement may be increased. The link to the video is as follows: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQy5s2Sx1ys&t=1109s> . This research experience has fostered relationships among not only me but between the participants that may not have occurred had they not been arranged. The network that was built could indeed set an example for future leaders while fostering collaborative relationships across the region. The narratives gave the participants the opportunity to see themselves from a perspective that they may not have quite considered prior to the process. While the focus group created a space for shared experiences through dialogue and interaction, the physical act of this research became less academic and transitioned into a healing alliance.

## References

- Abi-Nader, J., Ayson, A., Harris K., Herrera, H., Habib, D., Hanna, J., Paterson, C., Sutton, K. & Villanueva, L. (2009). Whole measures for community food systems: Values-based planning and evaluation. Retrieved from <http://alivebynature.com/pub/WholeMeasuresCFS-web.pdf>
- Ackerman-Leist, P. (2013). *Rebuilding the foodshed: How to create local, sustainable, and secure food systems*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing
- Alexander Jr., R. (2010). The impact of poverty on African American children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The Forum on Public Policy. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ913052.pdf>
- Alexander, M. (2010). *The new jim crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press
- Aliakbari, M. & Faraji, E. (2011). Basic principles of critical pedagogy. *2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Humanities, historical and Social Sciences 17*, 77-85.
- Alkon, A. H., Gillis, C., DiNucci, N. & Chavez, N. (2013). Foodways of the urban poor. *Geoforum* 48(2013), 126-135.
- Alkon, A., & Aygeman, J. (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*. Cambridge, Mass; MIT Press
- Allen, P., & Wilson, A. B. (2008). Agrifood inequalities: Globalization and localization. *Development*, 51(4), 534-540. doi:10.1057/dev.2008.65
- American Diabetes Association (2017). Treatment and care for African Americans. Retrieved from <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/high-risk-populations/treatment-african-americans.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/?referrer=http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/high-risk-populations/treatment-african-americans.html>
- American Heart Association (2017). National supporters and sponsors. Retrieved from [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/National-Supporters-and-Sponsors\\_UCM\\_436493\\_Article.jsp#.WWUfvYjyvIW](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/National-Supporters-and-Sponsors_UCM_436493_Article.jsp#.WWUfvYjyvIW)
- Amineh, R. J. & Asl, H. D. (2015). Review of constructivism and social constructivism. *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Languages* 1(1), 9-16.
- Anderson, C. (2001). *PowerNomics: The national plan to empower black America*. Bethesda, MA: PowerNomics of America.

- Anderson, E. (2008). *Against the wall: Poor, black, and male*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press
- Andrzejewski, J., Baltodano, M. P. & Symcox, L. (2009). *Social justice, race, and environmental education: Transformative standards*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Arnold, M. E. & Silliman, B. (2017). From theory to practice: A critical review of positive youth development program frameworks. *Journal of Youth Development, 12*(2), 1-20
- Bagdonis, J., Hinrichs, C., & Schafft, K. (2008). The emergence and framing of farm-to-school initiatives: Civic engagement, health and local agriculture. *Agriculture and Human Values, 26*, 107-119.
- Bahr, P. R., (2007). Race and nutrition: An investigation of black-white differences in health-related nutritional behaviours. *Sociology of Health & Wellness, 29*(6), 831-856
- Bowen, N. (2015). *The color of food: Stories of race, resilience and farming*. Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers
- Bell, B. (2015). *Black farmers' lives matter: Defending African-American land and agriculture in the deep-south*. Retrieved from <http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/food-sovereignty-and-trade-mainmenu-38/1876-black-farmers-lives-matter-defending-african-american-land-and-agriculture-in-the-deep-south>
- Bell, D. (1987). *And we are not saved: The elusive quest for racial justice*. New York, NY: Basic Books
- Berman, E. (2011). Promoting food security: The community food security coalition. *University Libraries Faculty and Staff Publications, 7*
- Bhaskar, R. (2017). *Roy Bhaskar: What is critical realism?*. Retrieved from <https://roybhaskar.wordpress.com/what-is-critical-realism/>
- Bread for the World (2017). *Hunger and poverty in the African-American community: Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from <http://www.bread.org/sites/default/files/african-american-fact-sheet-february-2017.pdf>
- Broad, G. M., (2016). *More than just food: Food justice and community change*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press
- Brookfield, S. (1998). Theoretical foundation; Critically reflective practice. *The Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions, 18*, 197–205.
- Brookfield, S. D. (2002). Using the lenses of critically reflective teaching in the community college classroom. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 118*, 31-38. doi:10.1002/cc.61

- Brown, A., (2018). Reframing agricultural experiences, narratives, and careers for African American youth: A study of community-based programs leaders' motivations and educational space. Retrieved from [https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/84495/Brown\\_AR\\_T\\_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/84495/Brown_AR_T_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- Brown-Jeffy, S. & Cooper, J., (2011). Toward a conceptual framework of culturally relevant pedagogy: An overview of the conceptual and theoretical literature. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 65-84.
- Bruner, J., Vygotsky, L. & Feuerstein, R. (2008). Constructivist theories. Retrieved from <http://mennta.hi.is/starfsfolk/solrunb/construc.htm>
- Cabral, A. (1970). *National liberation and Culture*. Retrieved from <http://www.blackpast.org/1970-amilcar-cabral-national-liberation-and-culture>
- Cadieux, K., & Slocum, R. (2015). What does it mean to do food justice? *Journal of Political Ecology*, 22, 1-26.
- Campbell, D. C., Carlisle-Cummins, I., & Feenstra, G. (2013). Community food systems: Strengthening the research-to-practice continuum. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 3(3), 121–138. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2013.033.008>
- Canto, A., Brown, L. E., & Deller, S. C. (2014). Rural poverty, food access, and public health outcomes. *Choices: The Magazine of Food, Farm, and Resource Issues*, 29(2).
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) (2007). Facts about African Americans in the food stamp program. Retrieved from <http://www.cbpp.org/research/facts-about-african-americans-in-the-food-stamp-program>
- CES. (2017). An introduction to community, local & regional food systems. Retrieved from <http://articles.extension.org/pages/70445/an-introduction-to-community-local-regionalfood-systems>
- Clandinin, D. J., (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Claus, J. & Ogden, C. (1999). *Service learning for youth empowerment and social change*. New York, NY: Peter Lang
- Cowan, T. & Feder, J. (2013). The pigford cases: USDA settlement of discrimination suits by black farmers. *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved from [www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)

- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *Chi. Legal F.*, 139-167.
- Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M., Jakobsen, L. & Karlsson, J. C. (2002). *Explaining society: An introduction to critical realism in the social sciences*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M., (2009). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry: An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory*, 11(4), 227-268
- Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: New York University Press
- DeNavas-Walt, C. & Proctor, B. D. (2015). Income and poverty in the united states: 2014 Current population reports. *United States Census Bureau*. Retrieved from [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- Desmarais, A.A. (2007). *La via campesina: Globalization and the power of peasants*. Halifax: Fernwood.
- Dixson, A. D., & Rousseau, C.K. (2006). *Critical race theory in education: All God's children got a song*. New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group
- Drewnowski, A. & Specter, S. E. (2004). Poverty and obesity: The role of energy density and energy costs. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 79(1), 6-16
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1967). *The Philadelphia negro: A social study*. New York, NY: Benjamin Blom
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1972). *The emerging thought of W.E.B. Du Bois: Essays and editorials from the crisis with an introduction, commentaries and a personal memoir*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (2007). *The souls of black folk*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Edge, John T. (2007). Foodways. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. *A Volume in The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (edited by C.R. Wilson).
- Ellis, N. J. (2012). *Exploring practitioner research*. Retrieved from <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/8609/5/E.%20CHAP%204%20-%20Final%20-%20Exploring%20Practitioner%20Research.pdf>
- Felton, R. (2015). The educator and food activist: Malik Yakini, co-founder, the Detroit black community food security network. Retrieved from

<https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/the-educator-and-food-activist-malik-yakini/Content?oid=2349207>

- Food Desert. (n.d.). In *Dictionary online*. Retrieved from [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/food desert?s=t](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/food+desert?s=t)
- Forsyth, R., Carroll, K. & Reitano, P. (2009). Introduction illuminating everyday realities: The significance of video methods for social science and health research. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches* 3, 214-217.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Frick, M., Kahler, A., & Miller, W. (1991). A definition and the concepts of agricultural literacy. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 49-57.
- Giancattarino, A., & Noor, S. (2014). *Building the case for racial equity in the food system*. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Building-the-Case-for-Racial-Equity-in-the-Food-System.pdf>
- Gilbert, J., Sharp, G., Felin, M. S. (2001). The decline (and revival?) of black farmers and rural landowners: A review of the research literature. *Working Paper*, 44. Retrieved from [http://ageconsearch.tind.io/bitstream/12810/1/ltcwp44.pdf?origin=publication\\_detail](http://ageconsearch.tind.io/bitstream/12810/1/ltcwp44.pdf?origin=publication_detail)
- Ginwright, S. & Cammarota, (2002). New terrain in youth development: The promise of a social justice approach. *Social Justice*, 29, 4(90), 82-95.
- Gjelten, E.A. (2017). School law: What are zero tolerance policies in schools? Retrieved from <http://education-law.lawyers.com/school-law/whats-a-zero-tolerance-policy.html>
- Glass, R. (1964). Gentrification. Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/gentrification?s=t>
- Golafshani, N., (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-606.
- Gottesman, I. (2016). *The critical turn in education: From the Marxist critique to poststructuralist feminism to critical theory of race*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Gottlieb, R. & Joshi, A., (2010). *Food Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press
- Green, G.P., & Haines, A. (2011). *Asset building and community development* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Greenbaum, S. D., (2015). *Blaming the poor: The long shadow of the Moynihan report on cruel images about poverty*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press

- Greenberg, D. F. (Ed.). (1993). *Crime and capitalism: Readings in Marxist criminology*. Philadelphia, P.A.: Temple University. 279-333
- Greenwood, D. J., Levin, M. (2007). *Introduction to action research: Social research for social change*, (Ed. 2). Thousand Oaks, C.A.: Sage
- Grillo, C. (2013). *Malik Yakini: Growing justice in the food system*. Retrieved November 19, 2015, from [http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/news-room/dodge\\_lecture/malik.html](http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/news-room/dodge_lecture/malik.html)
- Grochowska, R. (2014). Specificity of food security concepts as a wicked problem. *Journal of Agriculture Science and Technology*, B(4), 823-831. doi:10.17265/2161-6264/2014.10.010
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2(163-194), 105.
- Guptill, A., Copelton, D., & Lucal, B. (2013). *Food & Society: Principles and Paradoxes*. Malden, MA: Polity.
- Hack the Hood (HTH) (2017). Zakiya Harris: Chief executive officer. Retrieved from <http://www.hackthehood.org/zakiya-harris.html>
- Hamm, M. (2009). Principles for framing a healthy food system. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 4(3-4), 241-250
- Hamm, M., & Bellows, A. (2003). Community food security and nutrition educators. *Journal of nutrition education and behavior*, 37-43.
- Haw, K & Hadfield, M., (2011) *Video in social science research*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge
- Henkel, K. E., Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2006). Institutional discrimination, individual racism, and hurricane Katrina. *Analysis of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 6(1), 99-124
- Hess, A., & Trexler, C. (2011). A Qualitative study of agricultural literacy in urban youth: Understanding for democratic participation in renewing the agri-food system. *Journal of agricultural education*, 52, 151-162.
- Hilliard, D. & Cole, L. (1993). *This side of glory: The autobiography of david hilliard and the story of the black panther party*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company
- Hillstrom, C. (2011). Lentils and Justice for All. Retrieved from <http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/lentils-and-justice-for-all-1>

- Holben, D. (2002). An overview of food security and its measurement. *Nutrition today*, 37, 156-162
- Holt-Gimenez, E. (2011). *Food movements unite: strategies to transform our food systems*. Retrieved from <http://rajpatel.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/patel-2011-food-movements-unite.pdf>
- Holt-Gimenez, E. & Harper, B. (2016). Food-systems-racism: From mistreatment to transformation. *Food First Institute for Food & Development Policy*, 1, 1-7
- Holthaus, G. (2014). *From the farm to the table: What all Americans need to know about agriculture*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Jenkins, R. L. & Tryman, M. D. (2002). *The Malcolm X encyclopedia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press
- Jennings, J. (1992). *The politics of black empowerment: transformation of black activism in urban America*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press
- Jewitt, C. (2012). An introduction to using video for research. (NCRM Working Paper Series). Retrieved from <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2259/>
- Jones, P. S. & Meleis, A. I., (1993). Health is empowerment. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 15(3), 1-14
- Jordan, J. L., Pennick, E., Hill, W. A. & Zabawa, R. (2007). Land and power: Sustainable agriculture and african americans. *Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) (1<sup>st</sup> ed.)*. Waldorf, MD: Sustainable Agriculture Publications
- Keiser, R. A. (1997). *Subordination or empowerment: African American leadership and the struggle for urban political power*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press
- Kenny, S. (2002) Tensions and dilemmas in community development: New discourses, new Trojans? *Community Development Journal*, 37(4), 284–299.
- Khalifa, M., Jennings, M., Briscoe, F., Oleszweski, A., Abdi, N. (2014) Racism? Administrative and community perspectives in data-driven decision making: Systematic perspectives versus technical-rational perspectives. *Urban Education* 49(2), 147-181.
- Knoblauch, H., Tuma, R., & Schnettler, B (2013). *Videography: Introduction to interpretive video analysis of social situations*. New York, NY: Peter Lang



- Lang, T., & Barling, D. (2012). Food security and food sustainability: reformulating the debate. *The Geographical Journal*, 178, 313–326.
- Le, A. (2016). A prison of education: The school-to-prison pipeline in low-income schools. *Themis: Research Journal of Justice Studies and Forensic Science* 4(4)
- Ligrani, R. & Niewolny, K., (2017). Community food work as critical practice: A faith-based perspective through narratives. *Journal of Agricultural, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 7(4).
- Lin, A. C., Harris, D. R. (2008). The colors of poverty: why racial and ethnic disparities persist. *The National Poverty Center Series on Poverty and Public Policy*, 1-331.
- Lu, M. & Horner, B. (1998). The problematic of experience: Redefining critical work in ethnography and pedagogy. *College English*, 60(3), 257-277.
- Lyson, T. (2004). *Civic agriculture: Reconnecting farm, food, and community*. Medford, Mass: Tufts University Press
- Marable, M. (1998). *Black leadership*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press
- Marable, M. & Clarke, K. (2009). *Barack Obama and African American empowerment: The rise of black America's new leadership*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing qualitative research* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.: Los Angeles, CA
- Mascarenhas-Swan, M. (2013). *Honoring the 44th anniversary of the Black Panthers' free breakfast program - organizing upgrade*. Retrieved from <http://www.organizingupgrade.com/index.php/modules-menu/community-organizing/item/942-honoring-the-44th-anniversary-of-the-black-panthers-free-breakfast-program>
- McLaughlin, C., Hawkins, K. B. & Townsend, A. (2005). *Practitioner research and enquiry in networked learning communities*. Cambridge, MASS: Cambridge Press
- McMichael, P. (2008). *Development and social change: A global perspective*. (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Micha, R., Michas, G., & Mozaffarian D. (2012). Unprocessed red and processed meats and risk of coronary artery disease and type 2 diabetes: An updated review of the evidence. *National Institute of Health*, 14(6), 515-24
- Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., Wiebe, E. (2010). Multisite case study. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n219>

- Monaghan, E. J. (2000). Reading for the enslaved, writing for the free: Reflections on liberty and literacy. *American Antiquarian Society*, 309-341
- Morris, T. (1996). *Southern Slavery and the law, 1619-1860*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press
- Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K. & Spiers, J. (2002). Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), 13-22.
- Nelson, E., Dodd, W. (2016). Collaborating for community food security: Emerging scholar participation in a community-university partnership. *Action Research*, 0(0), 1-22
- Nelson, H. V. (2003). *The rise and fall of modern black leadership: Chronicle of a twentieth century tragedy*. Lanham, MD; University Press of America
- Niewolny, K., D'Adamo-Damery, P., D'Adamo-Damery, N., & Landis, R. (2014). Appalachian Foodshed project community food system practitioner profile interview script. Unpublished Instrument.
- (NFAR) New Farmers of America, The (2005). *New farmers of america records, 1929-1965*. Indianapolis, IN: Ruth Lilly Special Collections and Archives
- Ohmer, M. L., Meadowcroft, P., Freed, K. & Lewis, E. (2009). Community gardening and community development: Individual, social and community benefits of a community conservation program. *Journal of Community Practice*, 17(4), 377-399.
- Parris, D. & Alim, S., (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press
- Park, P. (2007). Knowledge and participatory research.
- Peet, R., & Hartwick, E. (2009). *Theories of development: Contentions, arguments, alternatives*. (2nd ed.). New York: Guildford Press.
- Penniman, L., (2018). *Farming while black: Soul fire farm's practical guide to liberation on the land*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing
- Polleit, T. (2011). True knowledge from a priori theory. Retrieved from <http://mises.org/library/true-knowledge-priori-theory>
- Potorti, M. (2012). *To Feed the Revolution: The Black Panther Party and the Politics of Food*. Retrieved from <http://avery.cofc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Potorti-BPP-and-the-Politics-of-Food-Black-Power-conf-F12.pdf>
- Proctor, J. (2004). *Stuart hall*. New York, NY: Routledge

- Purcell-Gates, V., Duke, N. K., & Martineau, J. A., (2007). Learning to read and write genre-specific text: Roles of authentic experience and explicit teaching. *Newark*, 42(1), 8-45
- Pyke, K. D., (2010). What is internalized racial oppression and why don't we study it?: Acknowledging racism's hidden injuries. *Sociological Perspectives*, 53(4). 551-572
- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MASS: Cambridge Press
- Roos, E., Bajzelj, B., Smith, P., Patel, M., Little, D. & Garnett, T. (2017). Greedy or needy? Land use and climate impacts of food in 2050 under different livestock futures. *Global Environmental Change*, 47, 1-12
- Rossing, J. P. (2013). Dick Gregory and activist style: Identifying attributes of humor necessary for activist advocacy. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 50(2), 59-71
- Rotner, E. (2016). *Food equity: How structural racism reduces sustainability in the food system*. Retrieved from <http://sustainableunh.unh.edu/blog/2016/07/food-equity-how-structural-racism-reduces-sustainability-food-system>
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sengupta, G. (2009). *From slavery to poverty: The racial origins of welfare in new york, 1840-1918*. New York, NY: New York University Press
- Simon, S. (2015). World Health Organization says processed meat causes cancer. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/world-health-organization-says-processed-meat-causes-cancer.html>
- Slocum, R. (2004). Dismantling racism in community food work. Retrieved from [http://www.nycfoodpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Dismantling-Racism-in-Community-Food-Work\\_Rachel-Slocum\\_2004.pdf](http://www.nycfoodpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Dismantling-Racism-in-Community-Food-Work_Rachel-Slocum_2004.pdf)
- Slocum, R. (2006). *Antiracist practice and the work of community food organizations*. Malden, MA; Blackwell Publishing
- Slocum, R. (2007). Whiteness, space and alternative food practice. *Geoforum* 38, 520-533
- Smiley, T. (2005). Black think tank. *Take Pride! Community Magazine* pp. 15. Retrieved from <http://login.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/docview/229357919?accountid=14826>
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. New York, NY: Zed Books Ltd.

- Smith, S. S. (2007). *Lone pursuit: Distrust and defensive individualism among the black poor*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation
- Social Justice (n.d.). In Dictionary online. Retrieved from [http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/social\\_justice?s=t](http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/social_justice?s=t)
- Stajcic, N. (2013). Understanding culture: Food as a means of communication. *Hemispheres*, (28), 5-14.
- Stephenson, M. & Tate, A. S. (2015). *Arts and community change; Exploring cultural development policies, practices, and dilemmas*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Teachnology (2017). Constructivism learning theory. Retrieved from <http://www.teachnology.com/currenttrends/constructivism/>
- Thomas, C. (2014). Chapter 1: Voices of Hunger in America. In *Voices of Hunger in America*, 1-24.
- Travis, R. & Leech, T. G. J. (2014). Empowerment-based positive youth development: A new understanding of healthy development for african american youth. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 24(1), 93-116.
- The U. S. Constitution Online (2018). Amendments 13-15. Retrieved from <http://usconstitution.net>
- United Nations (2012). A framework for advancing environmental and social sustainability in the united nations system. *United Nations Geneva*
- USDA (2007). 2007 census of agriculture. Retrieved from [http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1,\\_Chapter\\_1\\_US/usv1.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/usv1.pdf).
- USDA (2014). Supplemental nutrition assistance program. Retrieved from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>
- Ventura, S. & Bailkey, M. (2017). *Good food, strong communities*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press
- Wang, C. C., Geale, S. K. (2015). The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research. *International journal of nursing sciences*, 2(2), 195-198.
- White, M. M., (2018). *Freedom farmers*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press
- Williams, J. M. & Holt-Gimenez, E., (2017). *Land justice: Re-imagining land, food, and the commons in the United States*. Oakland, CA: Food First Books

- Wilson, W. J., (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- Wilson, W. J., (2011). Being poor, black and American: The impact of political, economic and cultural forces. *American Educator*. Retrieved from <http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Wilson.pdf>
- Winne, M. (2008). Food deserts and the rural food gap. *Edible Santa Fe*, 28-29
- Wittman, H., Desmarais, A. A., & Wiebe, N., (2010). *Food sovereignty: Reconnecting food, nature and community*. Oakland, CA: Food First Books
- Woodson, C. (1933). *The miseducation of the negro*. Washington, D.C.: Dover Publications
- Wright, J. D., Donley, A. M., Gualtieri & Strickhouser, S. M. (2016). Food deserts: What is the problem? What is the solution?. *Social Science and Public Policy*

## APPENDICES

**Appendix A: Priori Table 1**

Construct	Proposition	Supporting Literature	Research Questions	Method
Critical Pedagogy	Black leaders play a vital role in impacting youth despite oppressive, systematic barriers to their work.	Critical Pedagogy is described as an approach to teaching and learning which challenges the power structures within education and combat the oppressive nature of current pedagogical structures due to it's ability to oppress people (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?</li> <li>2. What does self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?</li> <li>3. How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community members influence, if at all, the organizing and educating of black youth?</li> </ol>	Interview
				Narrative Inquiry
				Focus Group 1
Critical Race Theory	Black leaders experience racism and prejudice in their community food work and youth development endeavors.	Critical Race Theory was originally developed by Derrick bell in the 1960s, though was inspired by early scholars such as Carter G. Woodson. . Woodson's (1933) analysis on race helped to aid researchers with a frame of reference on how to approach race in education.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?</li> <li>2. What does self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?</li> <li>3. How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community members influence, if at all, the organizing and educating of black youth?</li> </ol>	Interview
				Narrative Inquiry
				Focus Group 1
Community Food Work	Black leaders organize alternative food practices to empower black youth and encourage food justice.	Slocum describes community food work as alternative food practices, "that advocate more ecologically sound and socially just farming methods, food marketing and distribution, and healthier food options across the US," (Slocum 2007, p. 522).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does food justice look like for members of the black community in the Triad area of North Carolina?</li> <li>2. What does self-determination for food justice look like in the Triad area of North Carolina?</li> <li>3. How do micro-aggressive and racially discriminative experiences of African American community members influence, if at all, the organizing and educating of black youth?</li> </ol>	Interview
				Narrative Inquiry
				Focus Group 1

**Appendix B: Stakeholder Matrix**

<b>Stakeholder Matrix</b>				
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	AC	A&T grad student/DHS gardens	W	Greensboro, NC (DHS)
2	LB	Health education/poet	M	Winston Salem, NC
3	LC	CIS coordinator	W	Greensboro, NC (HMS)
4	MR	CIS partner	M	Greensboro, NC (HMS)
	SK	Coop. Ext. Winston	W	Winston Salem, NC
5	MPB	Coop. Ext. Winston	W	Winston Salem, NC
6	SK	Coop. Ext. Winston	W	Winston Salem, NC
7	SN	Ag teacher @ SEGHS	M	Pleasant Garden, NC
8	KB	Sankofa Farms	M	Durham, NC
9	SW	NC A&T SU Coop. Extension	W	Greensboro, NC
10	SMB	Home School Teacher	W	Greensboro, NC

**\* CIS = Communities in Schools**

## **Appendix C: Recruitment Letter**

DATE

Re: Agricultural Intersection of Poverty: A Call to Action for African American Community Development Practitioners and the Empowerment of Black Youth

Dear [INSERT NAME],

My name is Robert T. Bass, a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in the Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education. As part of my dissertation, I am looking for African American leaders in the Triad area of North Carolina to participate in a narrative style interview to discuss the experiences and methods of people such as yourself who work with youth in agriculture and/or youth empowerment.

To accomplish this aim, I am seeking your participation in a 60-90-minute semi-structured interview to be completed this spring. The overall purpose of this interview is to explore the community-based experiences of African American leaders in Triad area of North Carolina. This interview primarily seeks to understand the knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned of black community leaders in the triad area of North Carolina. The outcome of this research is to understand the values, beliefs, and experiences of African American leaders in relation to social justice, community empowerment, youth development, food access, and food security.

There are no financial benefits to participating in an interview. However, you may receive several indirect benefits. This would include your “Black Community Leader” story to be learned and shared to help expand and craft effective “best practices” for you and other leaders interested in promoting black youth development and empowerment in North Carolina and beyond, while also highlighting the place-based work of your organization or institution.

Therefore, the results of the interview could be used in the following ways in which you could indirectly benefit from: 1) A leader profile booklet for regional dissemination 2) A feature and video profile in a narrative videography, made public on YouTube’s website for educational and outreach aims. We are also interested in producing one or more papers for publication in academic journals and possible presentations at professional conferences. You will also have access to your personal interview once it is transcribed and edited prior to public submission.



The interview will be set up in three parts: 1) your professional experience and background, 2) a specific project or program you would like to share in-depth, and 3) your reflections on this specific project or program. The heart of the interview is the project or program that clearly illustrates your work as a community food system practitioner and/or your work in youth development. We hope to audio record and video record each narrative interview to ensure that we accurately capture your story.

Your participation in this interview is no way required or compulsory. You have the right to remain anonymous in any publication or profile documents produced from your story. You also have the right to keep your identity known in any subsequent publications, including outreach materials and booklets for public dissemination. A consent form will be provided to you for review prior to a scheduled interview. A second consent form will be provided to you when I share your transcribed and edited interview with you directly. At that time, you may consent to the use of your identity in the previously mentioned publications.

If you would like to participate in an interview, I ask that you please reply to this email. I will be pleased to follow up to confirm a date and time that will be convenient for you. No travel will be required of you, as I am prepared to drive to your location of choice. Alternatively, we can conduct the interview over the phone or through a secure online communication tool such as Skype. If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me directly via email at [robert87@vt.edu](mailto:robert87@vt.edu) or by calling (336) 405-5017. You may also contact my academic advisor, Dr. Kim Niewolny via email at [niewolny@vt.edu](mailto:niewolny@vt.edu) or by calling 540-231-5784.

If you have complaints, suggestions, or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, please contact the staff of Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board, at 540-231-4991. Thank you very much in advance for your interest in this research and outreach opportunity!

Sincerely,  
Robert T. Bass

## **Appendix D: Interview Script**

Time 60-90 minutes

\*The following template below is meant to guide each interview. The questions within each sector are not meant to be asked in a specific order or explicitly. All questions should be answered at some point throughout the interview.

I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to allow me to interview you. Before we begin this interview, please take some time to read the Pigford v. Glickman case summary as this will help with framing your response around issues that may relate. (See page 3 & 4 of Appendix E Script).

This interview will be three parts. First, we will explore your professional experience and background. Secondly, any specific project or program you would like to share in-depth and last, your reflections on this specific project or program. You are not obligated to answer every question if you so choose.

### **Part 1: Background**

1. What is your job title and how long have you been affiliated with it?
2. What is it that you do exactly?
3. What motivates you to do this type of work?
4. What values and beliefs around food security and food access do you hold in regards to African American communities?
5. What attracted you to this job and what were you doing before you started this journey?
6. Were there any experiences in your life that led you to this work with African American youth?
7. Could you describe the demographic of youth you are involved with?

### **Part 2: Working with Black Youth**

1. What was one of the first major programs or projects you facilitated with black youth?
2. What was your role and purpose for doing the program or project?
3. What was the driving component that led you to be a part of this program?

4. What the most challenging part of this project or program? Why?
5. What was the most rewarding part of doing this program or project? Why?
6. Did you have any partners? If so, what were their roles?
7. Where did you find support for this program?

### **Part 3: Critical Reflection of Work**

1. What is youth empowerment to you and how do you see yourself in the role of doing so?
2. What impact has your work had on African American youth? How so?
3. How did your intended outcome compare to the reality of the result?
4. Have you experienced any set-backs from a racial standpoint that either influenced or hindered the fruition and outcome of your work? How so?
5. What type of community do you see yourself living and working in? How might your work influence the development of food security, empowerment of black youth and the sustainability of their communities?

## Summary

On April 14, 1999, Judge Paul L. Friedman of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia approved a settlement agreement and consent decree in *Pigford v. Glickman*, a class action discrimination suit between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and black farmers. The suit claimed that the agency had discriminated against black farmers on the basis of race and failed to investigate or properly respond to complaints from 1983 to 1997. The deadline for submitting a claim as a class member was September 12, 2000. Cumulative data show that as of December 31, 2011, 15,645 (69%) of the 22,721 eligible class members had final adjudications approved under the Track A process, and 104 (62%) prevailed in the Track B process for a total cost of approximately \$1.06 billion in cash relief, tax payments, and debt relief.

Many voiced concern over the structure of the settlement agreement, the large number of applicants who filed late, and reported deficiencies in representation by class counsel. A provision in the 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-246) permitted any claimant who had submitted a late-filing request under *Pigford* and who had not previously obtained a determination on the merits of his or her claim to petition in federal court to obtain such a determination. A maximum of \$100 million in mandatory spending was made available for payment of these claims, and the multiple claims that were subsequently filed were consolidated into a single case, *In re Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation* (commonly referred to as *Pigford II*).

Like the original *Pigford* case, the *Pigford II* settlement provides both a fast-track settlement process (Track A) and higher payments to potential claimants who go through a more rigorous review and documentation process (Track B). A moratorium on foreclosures of most claimants' farms will remain in place until after claimants have gone through the claims process. On October 27, 2011, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia granted final approval of the settlement agreement. Under the terms of the court order, claims could be submitted beginning on November 14, 2011, with a deadline for filing claims of May 11, 2012. Approximately 89,000 claim forms were mailed out. Nearly 40,000 of them ultimately were filed. Of those, approximately 34,000 were deemed complete and timely. A determination of the validity of the claims is expected to be completed in June/July 2013, after which the claims administrator will begin distributing payments to successful claimants. Preliminary estimates from the claims administrator suggest that 17,000-19,000 claims will be positively adjudicated under *Pigford II*, a lower proportion of successful claims than under *Pigford I*.

This report highlights some of the events that led up to the original *Pigford* class action suit and the subsequent *Pigford II* settlement. The report also outlines the structure of both the original consent decree in *Pigford* and the settlement agreement in *Pigford II*. In addition, the report discusses the number of claims reviewed, denied, and awarded under *Pigford*, as well as some of the issues raised by various parties under both lawsuits. It will be updated periodically.

### **Demographics**

The 2007 Census of Agriculture reported that 2.20 million farms operated in the United States. Of this total, 32,938, or approximately 1.5% of all farms, were operated by African Americans.

Over 74% (24,466) of African American farmers in the United States reside in Texas, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia and Louisiana.

Average annual market value for farms operated by African American farmers in 2007 was \$30,829. The national average for white U.S. farmers was \$140,521.

Overall, the number of farms operated in the United States increased by 3.2% between 2002 and 2007. Farms operated by African Americans increased from 29,090 to 32,938, an 11.7% increase over the five-year period.

In 2007, 348 (757 in 2002) African American farmers received Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loans amounting to a total of \$9.9 million. This averaged \$28,408 per participating African American farmer, about 32% of the national average (\$87,917). Average CCC loan value to white farmers was \$88,379.

Other federal farm payments to African American operated farms averaged \$4,260, half the national average government farm payment of \$9,518. About 31% of all African American farmers received some government payment compared to 50% of white farmers.

**Source:** 2007 Census of Agriculture, NASS.

(Cowan & Feder, 2013, p. 1)

## Appendix E: Informed Consent Document for Participant Audio/Visual Recording and Narrative Interview

### VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

#### Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects (FORM A)

**Title of Project: Agricultural Intersection of Poverty: A Call to Action for African American Community Development Practitioners and the Empowerment of Black Youth**

**Principal Investigator: Robert T. Bass (PI) [robert87@vt.edu](mailto:robert87@vt.edu) (336) 405-5017**

**Co-Principle Investigators:** Kim Niewolny [niewolny@vt.edu](mailto:niewolny@vt.edu) (540) 231-5784  
Antione Alston [alstona@ncat.edu](mailto:alstona@ncat.edu) (336) 587-5871  
Onwubiko Agozino [agozino@vt.edu](mailto:agozino@vt.edu) (540) 231-7699  
Hannah Scherer [hscherer@vt.edu](mailto:hscherer@vt.edu) (806) 834- 1956

#### **I. Purpose of this Research/Project**

The overall purpose of this interview research is to explore the experiences and reflections of black leaders in the Triad area of North Carolina. This interview primarily seeks to understand the knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned of the participants. The expectation of this research is to record (audio/visual) and share the stories and best practices of black leadership who focus on African American youth empowerment. It is through this effort that the researcher may grasp the experience of each leader and more specifically, ways that black leaders contribute to enhancing community empowerment, youth development, and food justice.

#### **II. Procedures**

This study will involve black leaders from the Triad area of North Carolina to participate in a semi-structured narrative videography interview with the primary researcher. That same individual will be contacting, interviewing, recording, and transcribing the interviews under the direct supervision of Co-PI, Dr. Niewolny. The researcher will audio and video record the interview with you. The interview should last no longer than 90 minutes. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

#### **III. Risks**

The potential risks for this study include misrepresentation, emotional dialogue, or recollection of sensitive personal experiences. Therefore, creating the possibility of personal information and identity being revealed to the general public via audio and/or video file. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board. Your participation in this interview is in no way required or compulsory. You have the right to remain anonymous in any publication or profile documents produced from your interview. You also have the right to share your identity in any subsequent publications, including outreach materials and booklets, for public dissemination. A second consent form will be provided to you when your transcribed and

edited interview is complete. At that time, you may choose to consent to the use of your identity in the final narrative video.

#### **IV. Benefits**

There are no financial benefits to participating in this interview. However, you may receive several indirect benefits. This would include your wisdom as a black leader to be learned and shared to help expand and craft effective tools for you and other black leaders in the area who encourage community empowerment, youth development, and food justice. Your participation will also highlight the place-based work of your organization. Therefore, the results of your interview could be used in the following ways in which you could indirectly benefit from: 1) A video profile of you as a leader in your community. 2) A valuable publication (videography participant); 3) Your participation may also provide a means of rich data to both community and academic sectors with building better relationships amongst African American communities. You will also have access to your personal interview profile and video once it is transcribed and edited.

#### **V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality**

You have the right to remain anonymous for this interview-based research. If you choose for full anonymity, your identity, and that of any individuals whom you mention, will be kept confidential at all times and will be known only to the research team. If you choose to share your identity, only your name and organization will be listed. No sensitive personal information will be solicited in the interview.

The interviews will be audio and/or video recorded, then later transcribed by Robert T Bass, the Principal Researcher. Confidentiality may be guaranteed by participants opting out of being video recorded. Should you choose to not be video recorded, you will also be exempt from the narrative videography portion of this study. When transcribing the interviews, codes or pseudonyms (i.e., false names) will be used for your name and any other individuals you mention unless otherwise consented. Any details in the interview recordings that could identify you will also be altered during the transcription process. These codes/pseudonyms will also be used in preparing all written reports of the research, unless you consent to sharing your identity for publication use.

After the transcribing is complete, the audio recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet in Robert T. Bass' office for at least three years. The transcriptions will be stored on a password-protected computer indefinitely.

There is a possibility that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech will view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for overseeing the protection of human subjects who are involved in research.

#### **VI. Compensation**

You will receive no fiscal compensation for participating in this study. But upon completion of the interviews, participants will be brought together in one - two focus groups to fellowship, review the video, narrative excerpts and determine themes while providing critical feedback.

## VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Similarly, you are free to withdraw from this research at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the research, any information about you and any data not already analyzed will be destroyed. You are free to choose not to answer any question.

## VIII. Subject's Responsibilities

As a participant, you are responsible for completing one interview session that should last 90 minutes. You are also invited to attend only one of the focus group sessions.

## IX. Subject's Permission

*"I voluntarily agree to participate in this research. I have read and understand this informed consent and the conditions of this research, and have had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent."*

**Please check either one or both boxes to consent or decline consent to audio and video recording:**

- I give consent to participate in the audio recording of my narrative.
- I **do not** consent to audio recording
- I give consent to participate in the video recording of my narrative
- I **do not** consent to video recording.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject printed name

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, I may contact:

Robert T. Bass

Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education

202 Litton-Reaves Hall

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, VA 24061

(336) 405-5017



[robert87@vt.edu](mailto:robert87@vt.edu)

Dr. Kim Niewolny, Associate Professor  
Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education  
282 Litton-Reaves Hall (0343)  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
(540) 231-5784  
[niewolny@vt.edu](mailto:niewolny@vt.edu)

Dr. Gary Sherman  
Associate Vice President for Research Partnerships  
Interim Associate Vice President for Research Compliance  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
(540) 231-6145  
[gbsherman@vt.edu](mailto:gbsherman@vt.edu)

**Appendix F: Informed Consent Document for Participant Identity Release and Participation in Focus Group.**

**VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects**

**Title of Project: Agricultural Intersection of Poverty: A Call to Action for African American Community Development Practitioners and the Empowerment of Black Youth**

**Principal Investigator: Robert T. Bass (PI) [robert87@vt.edu](mailto:robert87@vt.edu) (336) 405-5017**

**Co-Principle Investigators: Kim Niewolny [niewolny@vt.edu](mailto:niewolny@vt.edu) (540) 231-5784**

**Antione Alston [alstona@ncat.edu](mailto:alstona@ncat.edu) (336) 587-5871**

**Onwubiko Agozino [agozino@vt.edu](mailto:agozino@vt.edu) (540) 231-7699**

**Hannah Scherer [hscherer@vt.edu](mailto:hscherer@vt.edu) (806) 834- 1956**

**I. Purpose of This Research/Project**

The overall purpose of this interview research is to explore the experiences and reflections of black leaders in the Triad area of North Carolina. This interview primarily seeks to understand the knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned of the participants. The expectation of this research is to record (audio/video) and share the stories and best practices of black leadership who focus on African American youth empowerment. It is through this effort that the researcher may grasp more specific ways in which black leaders contribute to enhancing community food security, access and empower black youth in the region.

**II. Anonymity and Confidentiality**

You have the right to remain anonymous for this interview-based research. If you choose for full anonymity, your identity will be kept confidential at all times, and will be known only to the research team. If you choose to share your identity, only your name and organization will be shared. By signing below, you agree to decline complete anonymity of your “profile.” This means you permit your name and the name of your organization to be promoted in the final product of this research as well as the video ethnography and any publication that may derive from it.

**Subject's Permission to Share Identity in Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education publication**

*“I voluntarily permit the use of my name and organization in my profile. I have read and understand this informed consent and the conditions of this research and have had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.”*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Subject signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Subject printed name)

Robert T. Bass  
Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education  
202 Litton-Reaves Hall  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061  
(336) 405-5017  
[robert87@vt.edu](mailto:robert87@vt.edu)

Dr. Kim Niewolny, Associate Professor  
Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education  
282 Litton-Reaves Hall  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
(540) 231-5784  
[niewolny@vt.edu](mailto:niewolny@vt.edu)

Dr. Gary Sherman  
Associate Vice President for Research Partnerships  
Interim Associate Vice President for Research Compliance  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
(540) 231-6145  
[gbsherman@vt.edu](mailto:gbsherman@vt.edu)

## **Appendix G: Collective Reflection Focus Group Script**

Time 90-120 minutes

Script: I would like to address how much of a pleasure it is to have gotten to know you all and I appreciate your presence here today. Thank you all for taking the time to work with me in becoming a part of something bigger than us all. In this collective reflection focus group, we will be discussing some pieces of your narratives with each other and I will give you all time to share your responses amongst each other as we break bread together. It is my hope to bring together a group of individuals who can perhaps influence partnerships amongst African American leaders in North Carolina. Hopefully this process has and will benefit you as much as it has myself. Please take some time to explore the gallery of quotes I have pulled from each of your narratives. You may recognize some of these quotes and it is my intention that it will spark thought and encourage dialogue to aid and inspire us all in the work that we do.

After everyone has gone around the gallery of quotes, bring the group together at the round table for introductions, discussion and the viewing of the video.

Using the quotes from each narrative, ask the following questions to encourage dialogue amongst participants.

1. What resonated with you the most in the gallery walk?
2. Were there any lessons learned through this process and/or through reading and reflecting on the narratives?
3. What values have you developed or enhanced in this process?
4. How do you see our work fostering the creation of food access, sustaining food security, and black youth empowerment?
5. When you think of the future for black youth, what is it that you see and how do you think we can get to that point?

## Appendix H: Monique' Narrative

1 I am Monique Pierce-Brady, and I am a female. My race is black. My ethnicity is non-Hispanic  
2 and I am 30 years old. We consider it non-Hispanic when we do it. So, you got Hispanic and  
3 non-Hispanic when you do it for federal. That's how you report it for federal. You have Black.  
4 You have your race and then you have your ethnicity if it's Hispanic or non-Hispanic. So, when  
5 we do it, our forms, we'll ask your race. So, it's either you're white, black, African American,  
6 etc.. and then you're either Hispanic or not Hispanic. And so, if they are Hispanic, they're  
7 typically categorized as white. My job, I am considered a 4H agent, youth development agent  
8 and I have been a 4H agent for a year and three months, in this particular office.

9 So according to what I read, I'm understanding that it was formal complaints filed, but  
10 nothing was rectified during that time period to after a certain time, um, based off discrimination  
11 and that there was no equal pay for African Americans. Which is typical, based off their  
12 experiences. So yeah, that's, that's the main parts I took out of it. It's one of those things that, um,  
13 I guess I already knew like we were already automatically told that. We know that most of the  
14 time that if we have a complaint it's not going to be followed through or if it is followed through,  
15 doesn't come without any um, I guess any type of judgment. So, it's either you say something, or  
16 you don't say nothing at all, you just face all the consequences when you do say something. Um,  
17 and that we're not, although we might be great at what we do, we are not equally compensated  
18 for what we do. So that's what I take from it. So for my job it's technically, kind of set at like the  
19 case. So, you have your other farmers, and then you have your Black farmers. And so, with my  
20 job we have 4H youth developments that are employed through A&T [NC A&T State  
21 University] that are supposed to work with limited resource audiences and then we have 4H  
22 development agents that are applied through NC State. There are supposed to be working with  
23 traditional 4H'ers and youth. So, it's kind of the same model, kind of same setup. They have  
24 more resources than we do to go work in a community, a bigger budget and we have to do what  
25 we can. So, they might have a program assistant and it's just us, doing this, trying to do the same  
26 amount of work. So, it's kind of similar in the same sense, like we have to do more in our  
27 compensations list.

28 My beliefs around agriculture, as far as working with some of our African American  
29 communities. I feel like they don't understand the importance of agriculture and food and food

30 access. And um in so many ways, depending on location of African Americans, they don't see no  
31 value in trying to grow their own or trying to eat healthier, make their own produce, you know,  
32 try to sell and make a business out of it. Or Ag [agricultural] business, ag tourism, they don't see,  
33 you know, if I go get a farm downtown, um, I can bring our youth here to see an actual farm at  
34 work. So, I feel like, um, we just don't get it. I think with agriculture like we think is a  
35 grandparent's job when it's still as much relevant back then as it is day. More importantly today,  
36 because in this zip code, um, we have a few farms, well not even farms, we have community  
37 gardens, but this is a food desert, so they don't have access to local foods, but we got convenient  
38 stores with all that alcohol and lottery tickets and stuff in it. So, um, I don't think they value it as  
39 much because they don't know, they're not educated about it.

40 I think it's important for youth to know, to understand that there is jobs in agriculture and  
41 if they don't want to do it, then it's going to be governed by somebody else. It's governed by  
42 corporations and they're not understanding the health context behind it either because it's a lot of  
43 stuff health wise that we don't understand about food and um, they consider it as the job that they  
44 don't want to do. It's hard work, point blank period. It's hard work. I don't want to see something  
45 grow. I want to right now, microwave society. So, um, I think it's important for youth. I think  
46 it's; it teaches them determination. It teaches them patience and it teaches them about a process.  
47 Nothing is easily handed to you. So, I think that's why it's important for you to know and not  
48 only that, how can you go back and create jobs, how can you feed your family? What happens if  
49 they take everything away from us? Are you going to be able to survive? So that's why I feel like  
50 it's important for you to know about agriculture.

51 Um, I think what motivates me to do this type of work is teaching students that if they  
52 want to broaden their horizons for the most part, um, but my experience working with 4H, um, I  
53 realized that there's so much that they can benefit from, but they just don't know about it.  
54 Because it's a stigma attached to it. So that motivates me more to teach them a little bit more  
55 about it because it's a life skill development and I feel like because they are automatically, they  
56 don't know about it. I feel like they're kind of, they're not included in it. So, they can learn  
57 different life skills, just like another racial group, that can learn the same skills, they might not  
58 have cows, chickens and everything else attached to it, but they can't understand the concept of  
59 urban programing or urban gardening or other life skill development, just simply cooking. So, I  
60 think they can benefit from the lessons we teach.

61           The stigma of agriculture, particularly with our organizations is that African Americans  
62 don't do, participate or they're not a part of agriculture. The historical setup is, it was only for a  
63 white family. The man he was the farmer, he brought home, you know, he'd say the two day, the  
64 white list of homemakers, the kids helped, you know, on the farm, they participating in the fairs.  
65 They showed their animals and they show their crops or canning skills. Whereas, African  
66 Americans didn't have that same thing and in so many ways it's still kind of similar. Most of the  
67 kids are homeschool Christian, conservative white families. So, I was trying to, to overall  
68 extension, I was exposed to it when I was an undergraduate student and um, I was getting my  
69 degree in family, consumer sciences and when I was in my program all they wanted to do was  
70 pitch daycare is on us and I knew I didn't want to work in a daycare. And so, um, when I did my  
71 afterschool care we had a training with the extension program, and she taught us a segment on  
72 nutrition and I started looking more into it because that was my first exposure to it and I realized  
73 it was so many different opportunities and how I could use my degree. And when I was in Grad  
74 school I applied for an internship with the University of Kentucky and went to Frankfort,  
75 Kentucky, which is their capital and worked with their kids there. Kind of the same setup like it  
76 was here, um, had some awesome, met some awesome people and realized I didn't want to be in  
77 a classroom and that I appreciate... It's education, but you're not bound to four walls. So, if I  
78 wanted to work here, I can. If I wanted to work in a community I can, If I wanted to work at the  
79 fair, I can, but either way still altogether education. So that's what attracted me to it. Before  
80 extension journey, or before this journey in extension period?

81           So, before coming here, before getting a job at extension, I was an early head start  
82 teacher. So, I worked with low income families with a big head start in Greensboro. So, I've  
83 always had a passion for working with kids that were underserved or underrepresented, with  
84 limited resources. So that's what I did before coming here and working with the older ones. Just  
85 looking at our youth, like being a youth myself, you know, I think about all the experiences that I  
86 was able to have access to because somebody either helped me or told me about it or because it  
87 was recommended that I participate in. And um, I feel like that's, for our community, that's  
88 important to try to help the next generation. So that's what kind of led me to work with youth or  
89 try to be more involved with working with our youth. Um, just because of the access that I had  
90 by somebody working with me. So, it's starting from somewhere. So the youth that I'm currently  
91 involved with are considered, um, underserved, underrepresented, limited resources. Um, my

92 current program area I'm in now is predominantly African American and Hispanic, so, well  
93 Latina X and um, so that's my area of youth right now.

94 So, um, one of my major, I guess first programs with working with black youth  
95 previously before coming here, I was a family consumer science agent in Kentucky, in  
96 Louisville, Kentucky, Jefferson County through Kentucky State University. And so, I worked in  
97 there, um, west end of their city. You're probably not familiar with the west end, but the west end  
98 is pretty rough. Um, they have drive-by shootings on the regular. Um, and one of the local  
99 churches is mostly they're black churches I would say is dedicated in the west end of Louisville.  
100 in the heart. So, drive-by's are a regular for the kids, they can't walk the streets or if they do, you  
101 know, is a possibility that they might get hit and they were going through an era of gentrification.  
102 So, the school that they used was a highly rated school. Um, so they were, there are, they still are  
103 using the school, but they were trying to turn the dynamics of the neighborhood and move all the  
104 African Americans away. And so, um, the kids that were attending this camp were from the area,  
105 so they didn't have to pay to go to camp. If they can't afford it um, they provide them snacks and  
106 I think lunch and um, for two summers in a row I sponsored a charter bus through the university  
107 for them to actually go take a tour of our demonstration farm at the university, which half of  
108 them had never been out of Louisville, Kentucky. They never been on a bus. They didn't know  
109 that our bathroom actually was on a charter bus. Um, so we sponsored the school, sponsor them  
110 to go to the demonstration farm. They, toured the farm, got to see goats in the, um, paw-paws is  
111 really being there, so they got to see the paw-paw demonstration, beekeepers and um, then we  
112 ate lunch on campus and so for them that was like a big Aha moment for them because they  
113 knew they weren't trying to go.

114 Pawpaw is a native fruit. It's a mixture of like a peach and a mango and I mean, you  
115 could get it right off the tree, but they did a research study there at Kentucky State, um, and they  
116 made ice cream out of it. Um, it was pretty good. So, they got to see how the paw-paw is grown  
117 and that it was a native fruit of Kentucky and that if they were walking in a park that they might  
118 come across it and it was okay that they can actually eat it. So, they got to learn about that, how  
119 these work and operate. And so, the next summer we went to the aquaponics, um, department  
120 where they had the fish research there. So, then they went to the fish farm and got to see how  
121 they made like the fish food and how they grew tilapia and um, you know, the lifespan of tilapia  
122 and why they do the research that they do with the tilapia and everything. So, we alternated it



123 too, which is that most big land grant programs name. But it was just the fact that seeing city  
124 kids that never been to a college, never being out their own city. I mean that was probably one of  
125 my biggest programs that sponsored... that the school sponsored.

126         The purpose for me doing that particular project was because I knew that these kids, the  
127 environment they were raised in, all they saw was drug dealers. Um, it was a food desert, so they  
128 didn't have, you know, a restaurant or a grocery store within walking distance of their  
129 neighborhood. They had to get on a bus ride 30, 45 minutes sometimes just to get to a grocery  
130 store to pick what they needed up to come back. So, I wanted to show them that A. you can have  
131 your own garden. If you wanted to, if you needed it. And B, that they can go to college, um,  
132 because some of them probably won't ever step foot on a college campus if they make it. So, I  
133 wanted to show them that it was more to college than the University of Louisville or University  
134 of Kentucky. That it was an HBCU in their state. That offered these dynamic programs and had,  
135 dynamic students just the same. They just didn't get as much recognition. The driving component  
136 for me was partnering with the local churches, um, if us African Americans can't do nothing else,  
137 we could partner with a church. And you tell them you're offering free programs, and they on it.  
138 So, it was trying to build my program up. But I had been working with this church for a year. So,  
139 I had been doing their fall programs, teaching nutrition and wellness for their fall programs. And  
140 then I came back during the summer for a week and they had a focused program. So, it was a  
141 partnership that we created to get more African Americans involved in extension. So, to let them  
142 know that your tax dollars paid for it as well, you still can utilize these services.

143         I would say the most challenging part was. 22:09 Yes. (inaudible). It's just making  
144 sure, um, I had a budget for it. So, it's a very timely process of trying to process paperwork  
145 through the school. Because we like only had one person and if you didn't get your order like  
146 almost two months in advance, you couldn't get your stuff that you needed. So, I was kind of  
147 like borrowing stuff from everybody like, Hey, can I use this? Um, so not having what I felt like  
148 was the adequate supplies that I needed to produce the program. Just hearing the kids talk about  
149 it and their excitement. Um, I mean, I didn't care for the goat, but they just thought the goat was  
150 so cool. You know, but it was just the simple fact that I'm going to tell my MAMA I got a goat, I  
151 seen a goat today. I'm like, it's a goat, you know? I'm thinking like it's nothing, but for them it  
152 was, we don't see these where I'm from. Like the fact that they'll probably never step foot on a  
153 farm again, but they were just so happy to be on campus eating at a campus cafeteria, see college

154 students and seeing, you know, staff members like, oh my gosh, like I can come here. So, they  
155 were just excited. I mean they'll tell you too, it's like this has like been the best trip ever. Like I  
156 look forward to it and the parents look forward to it because they knew I was coming during the  
157 summertime. Like that's the first thing they ask, um, when even when I was walking in the door,  
158 it's like they're going to have a ball today because I know you're coming. That's not even talking  
159 about all week. So, I guess that was more so the rewarding part that even the kids, even I thought  
160 they wasn't paying attention, but they were paying attention about us taking a college tour.

161 So, reflecting on being the program coordinator. So, I left like literally I left soon as we  
162 got off the bus. So, I was moving back to North Carolina and the program coordinator, I was like  
163 look like I thank y'all for having me, I'm not going to see y'all next summer, but it's been a  
164 blessing for the past two summers I worked with you. It sounds like, you know, kids be good and  
165 I had to just like jump off the bus and finish packing my stuff to move back to North Carolina  
166 and um, I actually have received calls, from Kentucky still trying to work with me and try to get  
167 them in contact with somebody at Kentucky State because they don't want to lose their  
168 partnership because that's what they value the most. So, I get calls all the time. They'd be like,  
169 you're just so awesome to work with and we miss you here. Like the kids, they're going to miss  
170 you. Some of the kids remembered me like when I go to their school and like, hey, how you  
171 doing? And like, you remember, you took us to Kentucky state. You know, I'm like, yeah, I  
172 remember that. So, that's how they remember me. So, I was like, well I guess you know, it's  
173 working.

174 I had partnered with the church, the church that was in an area, um, I had two coworkers  
175 that would help out when we would do stuff like that. They didn't have to because they were um,  
176 HFNPA, which is Hispanic Foods and Nutrition Program Assistance. So that wasn't their job, but  
177 sometimes they did partner with me to help chaperone or to do a nutrition class if I needed it.  
178 Um, so yeah. I think it was more so during that time with my program leader, I sold it to her. I  
179 was like, look, these kids are probably never going to eat in a cafeteria. These kids have never  
180 been to a farm. Um, so I think it was just selling it to my program leader, so she was just like, oh  
181 well you write it up and let me know and I'll work it out. So, it was kind of one of those things,  
182 all in wording, how to write it up, but it was very impactful for them. With the university as long  
183 as it was something, um, there anyway as long as there's something impacting the community

184 then they were for it. They had already gave us area codes that we needed to designate our time  
185 to. So that fitted into the area code that I was designating my time to.

186         The purpose of the project was um, we just did nutrition and wellness and I felt like they  
187 can't understand nutrition. Uh, we can't talk about food if we don't know where food come from.  
188 So, it was more career exploration wise, like you know, we're on a farm but what happens on the  
189 farm or do you know how many jobs are between a farm and the factories, to your home? So, it  
190 was more so teaching them the backstory. I wanted to teach them and expose them to agriculture,  
191 point blank period. And that it's so many different revenues in agriculture that you can go in. It's  
192 not just about working in a field all day while it's hot and you bothered. Its, you know, you can  
193 be Ag business or Ag Economics like you can trade food on the stock market or something. Like,  
194 I wanted them to see that if not anything, you can be an entrepreneur. Like why not start your  
195 own greenhouse? Why not start your own farm? Why not purchase your own land, and grow  
196 your own stuff to live and you employ people and at that time you ain't got to do nothing but  
197 paperwork? So, I wanted to expose them to more careers and understanding where their food  
198 comes from.

199         I guess youth empowerment to me is with my current role now, is talking and, helping the  
200 students go through the different dynamics that their experiences. It's a very serious and you  
201 know, trying to encourage them to have a voice, trying to encourage them that if something's not  
202 right you stand up for it no matter, you know, whether right or wrong, Um, asking them how  
203 they feel. Um just trying to be as much as a servant to them as I am supposed to be a leader for  
204 them. Like I can't ask you to do something for me if I'm not doing it. So, if I'm not on time, how  
205 can I speak to you to be on time? So, it's just um trying to display those same characteristics that  
206 I would like for them to have with me. Um, so I think that's the biggest thing that we have right  
207 now is trying to show them that, you know, one day you gonna lead, one day you going to be my  
208 child's teacher or one day you are going to have to take care of me? You can't have no nasty  
209 attitude like this, like, you can't take care of me. Like what do you want to be again? Like you  
210 want to be a doctor, but you can't listen to your teachers, like what's going on? So, I tried to help  
211 them realize like, yo, what I need to do, I need to change it. So, I think that's what youth  
212 empowerment to me is just showing them that it's better ways to handle situations that you need  
213 to speak up for stuff when you see it's not right. But you know, also when you're speaking up,

214 you need to be professional when you're speaking about, you don't, you know, don't go crazy but  
215 you know, sound professional when you're speaking up about it.

216 I think my role in it's just, I tried to, I really don't understand my role in it. I mean I just  
217 try to mimic, or I try to just be a servant with them. So, I, I just try to do it with them, um, that's  
218 more my role. I'm kind of a more one on one with a person too. I like, get to know the kid first,  
219 so I know what are their triggers, because kids these days, have triggers. So, I try to understand  
220 their triggers, try to understand their weaknesses and I try to understand their strengths. So, I  
221 know in what dynamic I can use them, for me. So, my role is just trying to figure them out  
222 individually, so that I can use them in a bigger capacity. That's how I see it. So, I have to be  
223 more open. Um trying to understand them, their background, what are their experience at home  
224 and then try to figure out how I can use them to help me to make a bigger impact.

225 So, in the little bit of time I been in Winston [Salem}, I think, um, as far as where I am  
226 now with one of my groups, I think it had a... I didn't think it had a big impact, but obviously  
227 they did. They were familiar with extension, but they had been turned away from working with  
228 extension is so many words. And so, when I came in, um, we pretty much hit the ground  
229 running. I started with them and we had 15 active students working, and this school year just  
230 started and we're at 45. So now we're trying to figure out how to divide the kids up and you  
231 know, which, how many more volunteers we need to work with the kids. Um, and I think it's  
232 because they see somebody of color, that's willing to help them. Which is really weird because,  
233 well it's not weird, but it is weird. And I think because the organization I'm working with, they  
234 want to work with a person of color. And so, I think as long as you're coming in the door with,  
235 resources to help them not hinder them, I think they'll, they're all for it, they're, they're all for  
236 helping and supporting you. Like when I go to school, all the kids know me, but I have no idea  
237 who all the kids are. Like, it's just, you know, it's one of those things like if you not here like  
238 you, you're not in the in-crowd. That's how they make it seem. So, I think it's more of that  
239 impact. And then the kids that have graduated and I first worked with, they're still talking to the  
240 underclassmen about joining this program. So, I think it's just about building relationships with  
241 them. It has been more of an impact than anything. They have a question they can ask me, um,  
242 and come talk to me about anything. So, I think it's more just having that one on one relationship  
243 that's made that impact that, I mean they're more protective of their group and of me that, you  
244 know, than anything.

245 I think in this day and time it's very important and um, I feel like because the kids are so  
246 lost, like I feel right now youth are loss. It's not like when I was growing up, we had somebody  
247 to look up to, or coming through the door as a mentor. Um, now youth if they do get a mentor,  
248 they have to apply for a program where they have, you know, it has to be some type of special  
249 requirement. So, I think that because I don't have those stipulations that you don't just have to  
250 apply. Like anybody can be a part of it, but I think because I try to make myself present and  
251 known in their school, I'm try to make myself, you know, if you have some coming up, let me  
252 know so I can try to be there. I think to them that shows them consistency because some of these  
253 kids don't have consistency. Um, some of these kids don't have support. You would be surprised  
254 how many parents don't come up to the school or how many kids are considered homeless  
255 because they're not even staying with their parents or can't be with their parents because the  
256 parents put them out. So, I think that relationship is just showing them that somebody cares. So,  
257 they can also say I, you know, I want to be in this level position where I could do the same thing  
258 if I came back and did it.

259 We haven't reached a full outcome. But uh, we haven't reached the full result, I should  
260 say. Like, it's going. I think now the kids are more receptive about participating and helping  
261 because they know that I'm not going to allow anything to happen. And then I think by me and  
262 their administrator having a relationship that, you know, they have her trust and which she in  
263 return has my trust. So, she knows, they know that their, she's not going to send them with just  
264 anybody if she didn't trust them. So, um, I think for that, I think that's how she's getting our  
265 impact is growing. Like we're growing and we know we're growing with like we're going down  
266 to the elementary school and so I think, and she refers them over here, like she tells him, don't  
267 talk to nobody else but me and I will take you. That's her whole dynamic that will talk to nobody  
268 else, but Ms. Mo and she'll take care of me, and so I think that's our biggest impact that we're  
269 having. But as far as the city, we're trying to get with the city, it's just hard. That's just one  
270 school, but there's so many schools and it's so many stipulations. So that's the only problem  
271 about impact. I can't see the impact because it's so many stipulations surrounding getting in  
272 schools, um, it's, it's the nature of the beast. Like if you're trying to get in schools, if they're a  
273 title one school, they won't let you in. Or if they will. They give you 30 minutes. That's not  
274 enough time to do anything. That's enough time to walk in and say hey, how you doing, and walk

275 out. So that is trying to just build relationships with the school next. public schooling away. So,  
276 we were working, it's growing.

277 I have experienced setbacks, based off a racial standpoint, um, and it's kind of hindered  
278 my work because what has happened so far is, it's been a whole lot of, how can I say, would they  
279 like to use the term is play the game. You gotta play the game. Um, and I feel like that if you're  
280 doing your work and you're really passionate about your work, you shouldn't have to play no  
281 game. Like I'm human just like you are. And because of the historical context, even if you want  
282 to go back to the case when you had people of a different color in some type of leadership role,  
283 um, they [white people] like controlling everything. And so, uh, sometimes it's hard. Sometimes  
284 they tell you they don't understand why you're doing the work you're doing and why you're  
285 working with a certain group you're working with and try to dictate how you should work with  
286 that group. So, um, it's kind of, yeah, I would say is definitely has some type of a hindrance to  
287 my fruition.

288 It is definitely harder. Um, because some of those in leadership, it's one thing when you  
289 have to have a civil rights discriminatory clause on your paperwork as long as you did or put  
290 forth all reasonable efforts, that's all that matters. Um, but it's one thing when you really just slap  
291 it on a piece of paper and just hand it to somebody like here, I just passed it to a black person and  
292 they just threw it in the trash. Whereas where you're really trying to recruit for it. Um, so in their  
293 mind they figured they've done everything they needed to do. Where in my mind I'm like, that's  
294 not good enough because you know, you didn't even try to explain to them what extension was  
295 you, you didn't have a conversation with them, you didn't make them feel welcome when they  
296 walked through the doors. So that's not all your reasonable efforts, so I don't know how to  
297 explain it anymore, but that's how I look at it. And some of them have been raised in this  
298 program, so in their mind it's their program. And they don't let outsiders in. So that's how they  
299 act with it. Like this is our program, we don't let outsiders in. Um, they just said I just have to  
300 give them a piece of paper. All you have to do is say hey, how you doing? And that's all my  
301 reasonable efforts. I don't have to work with you. I've actually heard that in a training. If they  
302 didn't feel comfortable with working with certain racial groups, then they can tell their  
303 supervisor. They don't have to work with them and that's it. They'll go from there.  
304 The racial balance is non-existent in this field, it's off, and they don't try. They don't have to.  
305 Well they just hand you a piece of paper, but as far as getting in the door and working with you

306 individually? They don't have to do it. I see myself living and working in a community where it's  
307 diverse, but through our diversity, we're understanding of each other and respectful of each other.  
308 Because it's one thing that we're already in diverse, well, I think we're on diverse land. But it's  
309 another thing when you're inclusive to that diversity and respecting of other individuals. And um,  
310 you're just cared for a person because they are a person not because the color of their skin, their  
311 religious beliefs, their sexuality, whatever else made that person because they are genuinely like  
312 a great person. Um, so that's the kind of community I see myself living and working in, in my  
313 mind. Just doesn't work that way yet. How might my work influence the security? I think with  
314 my work um, it's really hard here, but I would hope that if I'm exposing them to community  
315 gardens, um, that they'll take the initiative like, well we need a community garden at our school  
316 so we can, you know, teach a lesson to see how, you know, we can go from farm to table. So, I  
317 would hope that through their access to, with 4H anyway, that they understand the importance of  
318 food security. Because, I mean, I, to be honest, I really haven't heard, start hearing of food  
319 deserts until recently when I was in Kentucky. It was like, oh, we got a food desert. I'm like,  
320 what is the food desert? It's a restaurant right there, what are you talking about? But it was more  
321 so having access to like a grocery store, having access to healthy foods, even though it is a  
322 grocery store in this area, it's still kind of further away from the students. It's not walking  
323 distance or if it is a grocery store, are they going to have the right product produce or is it going  
324 to be rotten. Or is it gonna be spoiled because of the demographics they serve.

325 So, I think by showing them that they can understand that they have, they can be the  
326 change agent and I guess advocating for what food security should look like in your community  
327 because we do give them access to government officials. So, if you go meet your representative  
328 or your county commissioner or your senator, how can you advocate what you need for your area  
329 code or your zip code, like what do you need? Um, so I think that's how we're influencing them  
330 to be a better speaker about what they need and advocating for. Um, I think that just wraps up all  
331 the food security and empowerment and sustainability because they have to be able to advocate.  
332 They have to know what's in their community, what they will allow and don't allow. Um, so how  
333 can you advocate for it? How can you be a change agent if you're not trying to change and be of  
334 the change you need to see.

335 I would say my title gives me some type of leadership position. Um, because I'm so fairly  
336 new, um, I feel like I'm still working and still networking and still growing so, I don't see myself

337 as a major leader in the community, but I know that once that development process is done it'll  
338 probably result into a leadership, a bigger leadership position in the community. Um, but I guess  
339 my, my position is a little bit different too because I live in two different counties, so it's kind of  
340 hard when I don't live in the same county that I serve. I just work here. So that's why I feel like  
341 I'm not as much of a leader in my community because I'm not embedded in my community, not  
342 this community anyway, like I'm embedded in trying to make it better. Um, but you know, I'm  
343 just here from 8-5, Monday through Friday, but I lived elsewhere. Where I would have probably  
344 had a bigger impact if I was to do the same job in the community, I live in. I'll be deemed more  
345 of a leader. I think that's, that's the difference. So, to me, I don't consider myself as a leader, but  
346 to others, they might think it's a leader because of the position. Did I answer it? I was just. That's  
347 how I see it because I'm not here.



## Appendix I: Shae's Narrative

1           My name is Shea, I am a female, a proud female, um, a black female. I'm African  
2 American and I am 24 years of age, 24 and a half almost. It's about time for me to start saying  
3 that, yes. I am the family consumer science agent for North Carolina Cooperative Extension  
4 serving Forsyth County and I've been affiliated with it a good month, but I'm not unfamiliar with  
5 cooperative extension. This is actually a promotion for me. The Pigford v. Glickman case is  
6 enlightening and it also just kind of proves to me or shows me that this is basically just  
7 discrimination on another level that I may be unfamiliar with. I'm familiar with agriculture, but  
8 as far as the breakdown of how we're represented in agriculture, all things farming, whatever you  
9 think agriculture entails, how we're represented. It's like we're represented on paper, but when  
10 you really look at the big picture, we're not represented enough, or we're not highlighted enough,  
11 where we're faced with so many obstacles compared to other partners or organizations.

12           I see the case impacting my work because it makes me want to be able to reach out to that  
13 community anyway. One of the core missions for Cooperative Extension and most importantly  
14 Mission Possible at A&T is to help the underserved, limited resource communities and farmers  
15 and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to empower themselves, as  
16 well as empower others in their community. And then I feel like I will be better fulfilling that  
17 mission by working with these individuals who expressed this, you know, this discrimination  
18 towards them in the field that they love, you know, you love farming, but you're unable to do so  
19 because of the obstacles that you face, all because of your skin color and your ethnicity.

20           Food deserts are real. And when I started in cooperative extension as an intern, even as a  
21 volunteer, I started learning more about agriculture and the whole dynamic of cooperative  
22 extension and noticing like for example A&T, it's in the hood? East market is the east side of  
23 Greensboro, it's usually the low limited resource communities. And then when you think about  
24 it, we've only had access to one grocery store, not counting the Walmart that's up the road on the  
25 highway. Then you think about when you go to the west side towards, pass UNCG, Guilford  
26 College Road and all of those areas. You have a Harris Teeter, a Food Lion, a neighborhood  
27 Walmart and Harris Teeter all within five, five miles of each other and they're delivering. So you  
28 think about the shortage of access to quality food markets, you know, not, not knocking Food  
29 Lion, but why can't we have more of those options or nicer, safer food options for us and as far

30 as the agriculture and food, not having the opportunities to learn more about food so we can  
31 grow it ourselves, making sure that we have the training for it also.

32 In my past position I was, you know, the [FNF] program assistant, so I was hands on  
33 teaching individuals about food, how to eat smart, how to move more and how to form a healthy  
34 balance of food and exercise. And now with my new position as FCS agent, I feel like I can play  
35 a better role with that. Talking about finances, how to manage your money to buy your food,  
36 how to help you take hold of food waste. So how you want met, so how you won't waste food  
37 and then just talk about other resources like for example, farming, your land, you gotta have  
38 somewhere to stay. We can talk about maintenance, housing maintenance, energy conservation  
39 and things like that. As far as the farm and most of all finance, setting up emergency funds for  
40 disasters, on the farm and things like that. So, I feel like I can help within my FCS position,  
41 Family Consumer Science, it's a mouthful every time.

42 My motivation is just to help people. Like ever since I was little people always ask what  
43 you want to do when you grow up and I will always say I just want to help people. I just want to  
44 help people the best way I can and whatever platform that may be. And I feel like my platform  
45 right now is cooperative extension because I'm able to interact with different audiences that I  
46 never thought I, kind of existed, let alone come across. I was familiar with 4H, but I was  
47 unfamiliar of the significance of FCS (family consumer science and how it plays into cooperate  
48 extension. Then I learn more about agriculture, tobacco and things like that. Soil and water, how  
49 they all coexist to meet the needs of all north Carolinians, let alone all Americans and learning  
50 that cooperative extension is in all 50 states and is represented by two land grants, nine times out  
51 of ten a HBCU [Historically Black College or University] and a PWI [Predominately White  
52 Institution] and learning the dynamics between those universities itself and how they try to  
53 partner to meet the needs of everybody.

54 Sometimes I feel like it is a different dynamic between the Land Grants whether if it's  
55 PWI's or HBCU's. I feel like it's more inclusion on HBCU side, versus just meeting diversity  
56 status quos probably with PWI's. If that makes sense. The reason why I became involved with  
57 Cooperate Extension because it was my internship. And how it started to be my internship, I  
58 remember sitting in class at A&T one semester and my teacher, she brought cooperate extension,  
59 somebody from cooperate extension and a few people in from cooperate extension because you  
60 know it was Coltrane Hall on campus. She brought them in and talk about what they do add

61 extension because a lot of people knew the building, but people didn't know what was going on  
62 in the building and I was just interested and wanting to know more about it so myself and other  
63 friends volunteered with 4H. We worked with the children because my Bachelor of Sciences,  
64 Child Development, family studies, concentration in child and family relations. So, you know,  
65 we were working with youth, talking to them about physical fitness, healthy eating and then that  
66 transitioned to me getting an internship, but instead of sticking with 4H, I wanted to go to Family  
67 Consumer Science because that was my department in undergrad. So, I wanted to learn more  
68 about Family Consumer Sciences. Then that transitioned to me working my internship and then  
69 finding a job, [FNF] Program Assistant. While I did that for about a year and a half and then  
70 now, I just transitioned to a FCS agent. That's pretty much my whole.

71 Well, with 4H I actually remember being in 4H when I was growing up. I want to say  
72 maybe like second or third grade. I remember the 4H agent in Montgomery County coming  
73 around cooking us eggs, you know cooking us eggs. We had the little quail eggs and things like  
74 that. The embryology and then in high school my senior year I got involved with youth  
75 leadership, so they basically took seniors, juniors, some sophomores and between the two county  
76 high schools West Montgomery, East Montgomery, I remember one weekend they put us all  
77 together to, you know, develop leadership skills, team skills, public speaking. We got to meet the  
78 senators and went to Raleigh. He met county commissioners and things like that. It was cool.

79 I don't think any certain experiences led me to this work. Or maybe I can't pinpoint one as  
80 of right now, but I would say just wanting to always be what kind of included because just think  
81 about it. Nine Times out of 10 when you see a lot of pamphlets for summer programming or just  
82 different clubs you wouldn't see me or anybody else that looked similar to me on these  
83 pamphlets and that was one thing I wanted to do. Like for example, growing up I wanted to be a  
84 part of girl scouts and you know, my mom and I went to a meeting with one of the local troops  
85 one night and then the next few days you know, she came back and told me. She was like, do  
86 you want to join for real? She was like, yeah, I want to join, but then she was like, I don't think  
87 you should join that particular troop. And then I asked her. I was like why? Because they don't  
88 have enough girls that look like you in the troop and how they're acting towards us. While we  
89 were just sharing an interest meeting and so that then in there it makes me think there's not  
90 enough of us in these programs and it's not, I don't want to do it if there's not another me in there  
91 because I'm thinking it's not really for me. You're saying it's for me and me being there just

92 makes it like, okay, we have somebody included, but I don't feel really included. If that makes  
93 sense. You can say you for diversity all day, every day, but if you're surroundings don't really  
94 state that for you. Then it's like you just trying to do this so you won't be evaluated by civil  
95 rights. And that's real.

96 Other experiences of just growing up in a kind of a racial hometown. Like nothing racist  
97 out there surprises me. Like we had a whole KKK rally in front of our courthouse in 2013 in  
98 Montgomery County, NC. So that alone just kind of... I always knew what was going on, but  
99 that event right there just kind of put it in my mind if they can allow this to happen, what else can  
100 you allow to happen and things like that? So, it didn't really put like a, put me in a more mature  
101 mind frame because I was older now, and thinking. This is really who y'all are. And then to see  
102 with the whole political climate, Facebook people that I went to school with and consider  
103 friends, they're showing me who they are through this whole chaos, through the whole climate.  
104 So, I'm like I'm learning who you are all because of what's going on in the world and it's showing  
105 me that you probably, I probably wasn't your friend back in the day or just always that token  
106 black girl because I feel like I was just at token black girl growing up.

107 The demographic of youth that I'm involved with... My targeted area is limited  
108 resources. So, nine times out of 10, most of the limited resources, more Hispanic, African  
109 American and the whole different graphic of the county that I work in is predominantly white,  
110 but they do have an increasing number of minorities with that. So, I try to target the minorities  
111 but also including the majority as well. So, depending on, I try to hit the schools and areas that  
112 nobody is really working with wanting to bring them to the table as well as visit those who are at  
113 the table. I would say working in my [FNF] position, you know, getting started and one of my  
114 first classes was a kindergarten class and predominately those children were African American  
115 as well as Hispanic. So, I feel like that was a big, that was one of my first major programs. Just  
116 that whole, my whole first year of programming, working at a school, an elementary school and  
117 how I was able to impact those children with just six classes and how they were able to  
118 remember me whenever I would come back to work with other classes or even when I came back  
119 the next year and working with the same kindergarten, they would see me in the hall and  
120 recognize me. So being able to come in and implement programs and having them absorbing,  
121 actually wanting to learn it and remember me because I feel like if they're able to remember me  
122 then I feel like I made an impact on their life in some way, shape or form.

123           The program was expanded to the food and nutrition education program. I was the  
124 program assistant for that. So, [FNF] it basically talks about strategies for everybody to eat  
125 smarter, eat more of the five food groups as well as move more and incorporate that physical  
126 activity with eating smart. So, I will bring, I taught individuals from youth, you know, in the  
127 school system, all the way up to high school as well as adults, adult curriculum, a senior citizen  
128 component with SNAP Ed. as well as a component with pregnant women are pregnant teens. So,  
129 depending on the age of the audience as well as the skill set, I would cater, tailor the curriculum  
130 to meet their needs. The program that I did teach with SNAP Ed. was typically for the senior  
131 citizens, older adults, and I did talk with some of the components of the curriculum was talking  
132 about farmer's markets and how they could utilize their benefits at the farmer's market and I  
133 would pinpoint and give them information on the local farmers market, whether if it's in town or  
134 the big one off the sandy ridge and how they go about using their benefits for them and pointing  
135 them to the resources. My role was the [FNF] program assistant and the purpose was, you know I  
136 had to do my job, so I had to implement those programs. I had numbers to meet so I had to reach  
137 at least 500 youth and about 120 something adults between regular adult, senior citizens, well the  
138 SNAP Ed. numbers really didn't count towards my [FNF] numbers. So, between adults and trade  
139 women, I had to see about 120 people, like 65 each, then 500 youth, all within like a year span. It  
140 was my first job out of college, and it was my internship, so I already knew what I was doing. It  
141 was my internship with cooperative extension. I was still a student and interning when I applied  
142 for my previous job as a [FNF] program assistant. Like I graduated in December. I didn't get a  
143 job until February, so it was like a pre-planning stepping stool to where I am now.

144           I feel like I got a better foot in the door with Cooperative Extension, like it led me to be,  
145 to have enough experience and gain enough knowledge to be promoted to the position that I am  
146 now. A position that has more responsibility and more goal sets to it. So, the most challenging  
147 part was getting started because, and kind of reaching the Hispanic community because I can't  
148 speak Spanish, so, except for a few phrases, but if it goes to the whole conversation, I'm like you  
149 lost me, I need a translator. But reaching mostly the Hispanic community and just really getting  
150 started because I had to kind of introduce myself, and form all these partnerships by myself and  
151 figure out how I was going to implement these programs. Sometimes try to figure out how I can  
152 be two places at the same time. How to utilize volunteers. Just basically how to get started and  
153 how to connect with groups that may not be able to connect with me. I had to learn my audience.

154 Know that some days I can dress up, but to a point where it's not too too dressed up because I  
155 don't want to offend anybody because sometimes I have come across people who they didn't  
156 directly tell me, but you could tell by the vibe that they may be offended by what you have on  
157 because they feel like you're too. You're just to you, you're not supposed to be here dressed like  
158 that. Or it's making them feel some type of way, that they're not dressed looking like me. So I  
159 kind of sensor a little bit, dressy things like that and just knowing how to really connect with my  
160 coworkers as well as um, my audience and most of all, at one point I still am, but you know, I'm  
161 the youngest person in my office so working with me being 24 and I'm working with people  
162 who've already been there, they're 20 plus years. So, learning how to be a millennial in a world  
163 full of aging people.

164         The most rewarding part of doing the project seeing people's responses on graduation day  
165 because whether it was an adult class or SNAP Ed. class or a youth class, they were all excited.  
166 Come graduation, they were all sad for me to go. They wanted me to come back. Like even when  
167 I sent out my transition letters confirming that I've taken another position, but I'll still be an  
168 extension. Some of them were mad, not mad, but you know, a little sad that I was leaving. But  
169 they understood, you know, they, we were, we were happy for each other. Saying that you got  
170 promoted. So, we understand you just moving up. The process was really training I had to make  
171 sure I knew the curriculums I was teaching; I knew how to properly implement them. And then  
172 another component was networking with my colleagues because my coworkers, they were there  
173 before me, so they probably know the county more than I do.

174         It wasn't that long of a training for me because being that it was my internship, I already  
175 knew what was going on. I just had to learn more about the paperwork and all the desk, the  
176 office stuff. So, did all of that and then reconnecting with colleagues in my office and going out  
177 with them to classes, introducing myself to the people in their classes, getting contact  
178 information, doing health fairs. Just on the news. I've been in the news, things like that. Just  
179 really networking and calling people. Like now I feel like I'm starting back over because now the  
180 person who was in my position, she retires. So, she did her 30 plus years and she went out. So  
181 I'm a new person in the position so they have to get used to me all over again in a new position.  
182 And then with this new position I'm learning about some areas that I didn't really work on in my  
183 past position. So, it's like I'm learning and researching things on my own as well. While trying to

184 connect and research these other partnerships or reestablishing partnerships. Like I've been  
185 calling people and sending emails all day and I just want people to get back with me.

186 I partnered with the school system, the local school system. Being able to come in and  
187 really connect with the youth because of the school system was really a big component with  
188 youth. They're in one setting, set schedules, It was very easy for me to infiltrate youth settings  
189 because they're going to be there, versus adults. They can pick and choose when they're going to  
190 come, if they want to do it or just not even show up at all. But YMCA's, schools, whether it's  
191 elementary, middle or high school, recreation centers, summer camps, community centers, and  
192 then of course other organizations within cooperative extension, coworkers teaming up with  
193 coworkers, connecting with their audiences and my audiences together because we all offer  
194 different programs, but all the programs kind of link together in some shape or form.

195 Like for example, agriculture, you have an agriculture agent, but the agriculture agent  
196 may be centered around more livestock. They may deal with animals more. Or you may have  
197 some who look at tobacco fields and things, field crops. Then you have community gardens. You  
198 have community garden coordinator who thinks, talks about all the community gardens within  
199 the county. People who want to start gardening. Then of course you have 4H and the different  
200 agents pertaining to that. Then you have my area, family consumer science. You have an agent  
201 dealing solely with food and nutrition. Then me dealing with home and the family and then you  
202 also have another person the [FNF] program assistant is dealing with food and nutrition as well.  
203 So, you got to kind of know what everybody does. Then you have people talking about flowers,  
204 plants, lawns. So, it's a lot. I had county support being that I am a county employee as well as the  
205 state employee with A&T [NCA&TSU], so I had support from cooperative extension as a whole  
206 as well as county support. And then you know, maybe a grant here or there, but mostly for my  
207 first year it was just county support, well we had grants too. We had some Walmart grants as far  
208 as food for programs and stuff like that.

209 As far as the grants that we received during this program, they were grants that our  
210 supervisors had put in and applied for and it trickled down to all us, but now one of my  
211 coworkers and I we're working for a grant and we just wait and see if we got it or not. But the  
212 grant was to utilize the funds to empower youth in the community, so just basically equipping  
213 with the skills, knowledge, abilities they need to succeed because that particular area, if they  
214 don't have a lot of programs, they're going to fall into the circumstances of their environment,

215 whether it's poverty, lacking financial literacy, homelessness, domestic violence. So, we're  
216 counteracting that with a program that, if we get the grant, that can help kind of take control back  
217 of the neighborhood and give students something that they can look forward to. To better  
218 perhaps help them prepare for the future whether it's college prep, career etiquette skills,  
219 manners, because you'd be surprised how some of these teenagers talk to people and things like  
220 that. And most of all, financial literacy.

221         With the whole, with [FNF], with my basically like all of my focus areas, the whole  
222 purpose of them all, because I have four program areas, the whole purpose of them was to  
223 basically empower the individuals with the knowledge they need on food and nutrition to better  
224 enhance their quality of life. Because you know, depending, no matter whether if I was asking  
225 youth or adults, whenever I would asked, do you know somebody with diabetes, kids, children,  
226 everybody raised their hands, you know, somehow heart disease, high blood pressure,  
227 cholesterol, all those things, somebody in one shape or form, was raising their hands if not the  
228 whole hand stayed up the whole time. So those were the, that was the whole purpose of those  
229 programs to kind of educate them to kind of help their health and things like that. And then with  
230 family consumer science, these programs are still empowering individuals but just with different  
231 skillsets like financial literacy, how to take control of your own money, how to get out of debt,  
232 housing in energy conservation so you know how to maintain the home and maintenance. How  
233 to save on your light bill, how to save on your power bill, how to save water and then when  
234 human development and aging, parenting skills, grandparents, aging grandparents and things like  
235 that.

236         A great example of youth empowerment is all of the school shootings that's been going  
237 on, most importantly it's kind of sat down that I don't even know what was the last one, but the  
238 one in Florida, the Parkland shooting and how all those teenagers were pissed off to a point  
239 where there's like, when is this going to stop? We have to do something to a point where they  
240 formed a whole walk out and so youth empowerment like that, I want to be able to help youth  
241 find their voice, find their voice and find out who they are and what they can do and let them  
242 know that you're our future, you're our future. Like you had these people now in these positions.  
243 Even myself, I'm getting older so it's like. And people before me, my mentors are getting older,  
244 so now I have to take on the baton of who am I going to mentor, who's looking up to me. I may  
245 not know it sometime, but I have people looking up to me. People who I thought didn't even



246 wasn't even checking for me like that, but they're looking up to me. They're watching my moves,  
247 so just to be able to empower and power them from experiences that I went through to better  
248 prepare them. Like basically what our parents were trying to do when we were growing up. Nine  
249 times out of 10, we didn't want to agree with what our parents were telling us, but they were just  
250 telling us what they learned and passing it on. Now that I'm older, I'm like, I should have listened  
251 back then, like two years ago. When you were trying to tell me this. I should have listened, but I  
252 just basically want to empower them with the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to just  
253 succeed and let them know that they can do and be anything that they want them to be. But also  
254 instill that quality of respect. Respect, because I feel like nowadays with generation Z, respect is  
255 something that is kind of lacking and just and then it goes into the cultures where you got to  
256 know how to talk to a group of black students.

257         You got know how to talk to a group of white students and so forth. Minorities in  
258 general. You gotta know how to communicate to these groups because they can deceive, they  
259 can see you before you see them. They can see if you want to be here before you figure out if  
260 you want to be here. Because I had a child, it was a couple of weeks ago and she would just like,  
261 do you want to be here Ms. Shae, you look tired, you know, you having a good day? So here I  
262 am thinking I'm putting on a good front. But then I have this child that's probably like in second  
263 grade, third grade telling me otherwise. And she's right. So, I'm just like, children see your vibes,  
264 they see your moods and children can tell when you like them or when you don't like them.

265         Just in the impact with even adults and hearing them say that they're willing to make a  
266 change. Like in the [FNF] position, I will teach the health and physical activity and hearing them  
267 come back. I was like, I tried a different food at lunch or hearing the teacher. They're eating more  
268 vegetables now. Or they're drinking all their milk because they want to be strong. Or they're  
269 talking to each other? Talking about you need to drink when you need to try something. Eat your  
270 fruit or something like that because it makes you healthy. Because Ms. Shae said it makes you  
271 healthy. Or now in my new position, just because I also talk about household pests, insects. So,  
272 whenever I give people information on that and seeing or hearing how grateful they are for the  
273 information or when I identified insects for them, or just basically help them in whatever shape  
274 or form they may need. So, it feels pretty good. I think I feel I made an impact on them.

275         With my last position the intended outcome was for me to reach, once again the 500  
276 youth and 120 adults, pregnant women. Being that it was my first year with that, I probably got

277 ended up before I transition to FCS. I probably ended up with maybe 450 youth and probably  
278 like 31 adults all together and that just made me realize that it's easier said than done. Like, when  
279 you think about, you have a whole year to get those numbers and think about you only being  
280 yourself and you have four program areas and you try to primp those four program areas the best  
281 way you can and make sure you retain people. You realize, like I said before, it's easier to grasp  
282 youth than it is adults. Sometimes the adults, they don't show up. When you do all this planning  
283 for your classes, nobody shows up, nobody. They come, they don't come back and so you look at  
284 ways to retain them and what you could do better, so just basically one thing I really learned was  
285 I need the volunteers. If anything, I learned that I need to learn some volunteer management and  
286 how to recruit volunteers, and things like that. I can say that situations I do feel like there is a  
287 hinderance as far as not understanding where we come from, when we speak of our culture as far  
288 as connecting with these audiences or where we come from, but then you think about the  
289 inclusion. Like for example, I was saying that they say everyone is included, but when you look  
290 at the statistics who was involved, you don't really see that inclusion and then you may feel like  
291 sometimes when you try to bring that inclusion in, there may be a resistance to it because of the  
292 population. It's like they want you to work with the population, but then they don't want you to.  
293 If that makes sense.

294         Just seeing that we're not really, we're included but were not included and our efforts and  
295 our structure between Land-Grants of how we can get that inclusion as far as the mission and  
296 focus on what we're doing and how to empower those individuals. It does think about some times  
297 the dynamic of past experiences for people who was in who were there longer than me and what  
298 they're telling me and then of course what I'm doing my own research on for my proposal and  
299 what I'm finding out that this isn't something new, but it's new to me as far as me coming into the  
300 position or when I'm on my, just my work in general. Because sometimes I'm the type of person  
301 is, you know, I've come to work, I just really do my job. I barely talk unless I need to, eat my  
302 lunch, I go home. So, I interact, but it's to a point where it's like I don't interact because you  
303 know, I'm just like, I'm really here for work. I don't really like the in-between, the gossip or none  
304 of that. But sometimes when you, hate to say indulge in the gossip, or just be more aware of  
305 what's going on in your surroundings, not be so....okay, I'm at work only work or just listen to  
306 look around at what's in your office you do see some things and you do learn some things within

307 the organization or just employees period. Whether if it's my department, other departments, you  
308 realize that it's the same thing. Just different breakdowns of it.

309 Oh, like in my internship we had to do like this big project. Like we had to create  
310 something and leave it at our internship sites and I just decided to kind of revamp the lobby of  
311 the family FCS department at my, at the Cooperative Extension in the next county. And I did  
312 that, but my idea was a big mural of Family Consumer Science and people who work there in  
313 that department and you know, I can't draw I can do is just give you the idea and hope you can  
314 implement it. And so, I had this lady, she's beautiful, she's a beautiful artist, but she was racist.  
315 She was racist. And to a point where she told me that her animals were racist just like she was  
316 going to bring her dog into the office one day, but the dog didn't like black people. So, she would  
317 have had a fit. The conversation was over email and I'm glad it was over email because I feel like  
318 the Lord knows my facial expressions and my tone when I hear stupid stuff like that. So, I'm glad  
319 it was just over email, but I want to say back then I didn't even acknowledge it.

320 I want to say I didn't even respond to her because I didn't know what to say and I was  
321 always told, if you don't know what to say or if you don't have nothing to say nice, you can just  
322 go on ahead and just keep it, keep your mouth closed and go about your business. But I did  
323 disclose it with my professor, you know, my, you know, my internship, my adviser, things like  
324 that. And she still to this day, it's been two years since I been out there. But she still uses my  
325 story as, in the classroom because, you know, she invites me back to speak to the graduates and  
326 for the internship and she's still telling them, you know, about my story. And even then, I feel  
327 like then it kind of opened my eyes more about the world because my father was a military man.  
328 He always told me that Shae, Shae, Shae. This world is crazy. People crazy. People, they don't  
329 care. You got to pay attention to detail. See people before they see you. And just realize that  
330 people really out here feeling like this. I want to say that was one of the first times as an adult  
331 that I experienced something like that over something so small as my skin color. I was like, how  
332 you gonna tell me a dog doesn't like black people when I'm around dogs all the time. I had a dog.  
333 I guarantee you if that dog were to see me, he would like me. So, so how did that situation like  
334 genuinely make me feel? It made me not want to mess with her. Not want to be associated with  
335 her. Like it was to a point where I was honestly, I'm sorry, it's just some work stuff, but honestly  
336 not even want to associate with her because I'm like you in my face trying to be buddy buddy. I  
337 just, I was just to a point where I just want you to do my project and get out of my face.

338 She was the one painting that. No, she was a master gardener, so she was like a volunteer.  
339 So, she was doing all of that and I'm just like, I was just to a point where I just want her to be  
340 done so I can do my project and graduate and go about my business. She was interested. She did  
341 it, the project it was done. It's just that in the process of me meeting with her and wanting to  
342 meet, hey, how you doing? This is my vision, this is my goal, this is what I want you to do. How  
343 do you implement it and stuff like that? My thing is I don't like a lot of unnecessary chit chat  
344 about what we're not talking about. So that just threw me for a loop. I was like, here I am trying  
345 to meet and you're talking about a dog, like, I don't care. Like, you handle that before you get to  
346 me. I would say it's okay, but when I told my professor that, she was like, I'm sorry you had to go  
347 through that. And I was like, it's okay. She was like, it's not okay. It's not okay. But it's okay  
348 now, but it's not okay.

349 As far as where I see myself living, I see myself living and working and most of all a safe  
350 community, um, as well as an inclusive community because being one thing that's a problem for  
351 most of our participants is they don't have access to our county office because a bus line runs  
352 down our road, like one's on the main street but it doesn't turn on our road. So, it was like people  
353 can get off the bus, but they still have to walk maybe two miles to our office, or they just simply  
354 lack the transportation means. So, I want to be able to work in a community that has full access  
355 to us, at their own disposal whether if it's coming in and wanting to talk to somebody, wanting to  
356 come in for classes and not have to worry about a transportation barrier and things like that. Um,  
357 my hope for I would like for my work to influence food, it's food security, empowerment of  
358 black youth and sustainability is with my new position now as uh, the FCS agent. I basically  
359 want to empower individuals to be as knowledgeable as possible on their finances. Learned the  
360 importance of saving. How to save money when you're buying food. The finance component of  
361 eating healthy. People think eating healthy is expensive. It can be, but it also can't, it's not that  
362 expensive depending on where you go, what you're looking for and how often you utilize it.  
363 Then talking about the empowerment of black youth, empowering them through the skills of  
364 human development with the with the parents, because we do have young parents. We do have  
365 young parents and we also have etiquette, teaching them how to conduct a whole etiquette dinner  
366 as far as mannerisms, life skills, and then also teaming up with other organizations like 4H in the  
367 office to implement those skills.

368 Sustainability of the community basically is empowering individuals to take charge and  
369 building their community leadership skills. We have community development pieces to empower  
370 individuals to take charge near community. Be those watchful citizens concerned citizens to take  
371 when they see something wrong in their community. Whether if it's a school in their community  
372 that needs something new and renovation, just it's whatever is damaging their community. I want  
373 to empower them with the voices and resources they need to make a change because I can give  
374 you the information all you want and teach it to you, but it's up to you about what you going to  
375 do with it because my job is to teach and implement. It's your job whether or not you're gonna  
376 absorb it and take it and do something about it.

377 I would classify myself as a 50 percent. Don't want to downplay myself. I just trying to  
378 be realistic of where I am within my position, my new position. I'm all about re-, in the business  
379 of reestablishing myself now with a new brand. I'm no longer [Shae King: Ethnic Program  
380 Assistant, I'm Shae King: Family Consumer Science Agent]. So now I have to be a leader in the  
381 community all over again, just with the different program and focus. So, to a certain extent I  
382 would say that I am a leader of some sort. Because I do have people that I can connect with or  
383 individuals willing, trying to meet with me or trying to basically who are calling me for answers  
384 and resources to problems that sometimes I have no idea how to fix or what they're talking about.  
385 Like I had a person that called me about bed mites and I'm just like, what the hell are bed mites?  
386 So, I'm on my computer looking, looking up solutions to try and help them and that's really all  
387 I'm really focused on. Just reestablishing myself, getting my face out there once again and  
388 implementing these programs the best way I can and get more of us into programming.

389  
390  
391  
392  
393  
394  
395  
396  
397  
398  
399  
400  
401  
402  
403

## Appendix J: Mike's Narrative

1 I am Michael Ruff. I'm 50 years old and a black male. Right now, I work as the executive  
2 director of Man-Up-Mission Incorporated. We've been here in Greensboro for about three years  
3 now. Well, um, I guess, the Pigford v Glickman case is knowledgeable knowledge. Whole lot of  
4 new knowledge, um, to know that um, you know, we was um, cut short of a lot of things as black  
5 farmers. We didn't have the knowledge and didn't have the support, was denied. It was made  
6 hard for us to be productive as black farmers and you know, it was good that someone filed a  
7 claim and sued. As a person working in agriculture, black farmer... some now, uh, and these  
8 days now... the knowledge of, um, that you need to have before you pursue or as you're  
9 working, your rights, what's out there available to support you, you know, the market. It's just  
10 the knowledge. Is this what's so important now? And we can learn so much from this case, how  
11 to represent ourselves and how to move and operate in today's time, world. It's very important.  
12 Um, because without knowledge, a lot of us are discouraged. um, we stop instead of pursuing,  
13 but um, when knowledge is, is key, it gives us the support that we need, um, to, uh, continue on.  
14 To be productive as farmers or whatever we start in the area of agriculture, you know, our rights,  
15 our rights as farmers. You know?

16 I think the African American community, we need to re-learn, um, for example, when  
17 they say [go back to the table]. Um, we have the knowledge, we have the skills in the area of  
18 um... knowledge about the food that we're eating, our health benefits, um, what's inside the food,  
19 how to grow our own, um, what's healthy, what's not. Um, you know, it's life to us, you know,  
20 we can't produce, we won't be productive if we don't. So it's very, if we don't have the  
21 knowledge, you know, and if we don't go back to our roots. Raising our own, you know, what's  
22 in the food is what we put in the animal, um, you know, the vegetables that are true, things of  
23 that, I think it's all about knowledge and it's good. It helps us financially, you know, what we're  
24 buying, what's on the market, where our savings come in, you know, and then just like obesity,  
25 the health benefits of just plain and simply raising your own food, eating your own product, you  
26 know, eating healthy, it's life. I was raised up basically on a farm and we had, um, wholesome  
27 lifestyles the nature gave to us. We gave back to nature. It was a bond, you know, animals to  
28 farming and we was healthier. Healthier in so many ways, we were more, we're more productive.  
29 We had more, even by raising the reason that your products and stuff you had that, that you

30 raised, that others to share. The community was wholesome. You know, we had a wholesome  
31 community, uh, we shared. Um, older people would can together, and we raised a product. We  
32 were canning. We would share it. There was plenty, you know. Um, so yeah... Your question  
33 was again?

34 I am motivated to do this work because I see that that's a missing component. It was  
35 nurturing to us working together. We work together and so It's a missing component now, um,  
36 and, and it need to be brought back. We need to be reeducated on what a wholesome lifestyle  
37 work. The gardening aspect raised. It was therapeutic and in so many ways it was about  
38 togetherness. We worked the fields and we work to raise a product together. Um, if it was, um,  
39 processing of animals. We did that together and we shared what we had, and it was healthy. We  
40 knew what the product was, we knew what we was putting into the product. And so now we, we  
41 don't even know what's in the food that we're eating. And um, you know, it's just, it's an  
42 awareness that needs to be made, you know, heart attacks and strokes, all the health issues that  
43 we're facing. But we missed that because nature to a certain extent takes care of us when we, you  
44 know, have the knowledge. So, I want to bring that, you know, make that aware to our children,  
45 to our youth. Um, I grew up with older parents and grandparents. We worked together in the  
46 garden they taught us and they, how the raise and how to produce and how to eat healthy. And  
47 our children deserve that too. We just living in the system and where we just accept whatever is  
48 put before us. Before we read the ingredients, where it come from and you know, the  
49 disadvantages of eating it. And we have to break certain cycles, you know, if, if healthier food is  
50 coming from the farmer which is healthier, it's healthier. And then we have to really understand  
51 that and start, um, ways of educating us, you know, how to go back to that.

52 What I was doing before, I was raised up on a farm and we came up in the ministry and  
53 the church there mostly everyone was related and um, you know, so like I was saying earlier, I  
54 had a wholesome background in agriculture, everything from hunting to fishing, um, you know,  
55 growing your own gardens, processing your own meats and um, and had a great appreciation for  
56 nature. The skills that was taught in doing that, you know, because hey, you have to have a skill,  
57 you know, and someone that is given and taught and some of that just comes from having a  
58 connection with nature. And um, I saw a lot of what was being lost. Um, for instance, processing  
59 our own food garden aspect of raising our own fresh veggies. The, those things a bit lost without  
60 grandmothers, grandmothers and grandfathers gone...lost. So, we become an, uh, a community

61 of people that don't know how to take care of ourselves basically. But seeing the youth suffer  
62 through it. So with obesity and um, knowing that, you know, they're not eating healthy and  
63 knowing that, what's putting, they're putting in side of them and knowing that the cycle can be  
64 changed, can be changed, you know, maybe not overnight, but little by little and um, and that  
65 encouraged me to step out and say, okay, let's, let's do some gardening projects.

66 We need to bring some stuff back wherever, where we live in the city or any country  
67 where, let's bring some of this, you know, you can raise a plant anywhere. You can raise your  
68 tomato plant, you can, you know, there's so many things that we can do. Urban, when we're  
69 living in the urban areas or even the city, you know. Um, then further knowing that so many of  
70 our children and our race have never experienced country living or living outside of the city to  
71 have an appreciation for animals and for plants and to have the knowledge of how nature actually  
72 takes care of us and to have that appreciation for, you know, they was like, you know, they were  
73 born, born in the community, in the projects or wherever. Don't see me. I just looked at that point  
74 and they, you know, as a child, I ran barefooted in the ground and the sand, and I had a  
75 connection with nature, with the animals, with the birds, but you know, and, and they haven't,  
76 they haven't. And sometimes the first time they see a farm is at school in a book and it's sad  
77 because sometimes they're only 30 minutes away, but it's, and so we operate in that area where  
78 that aspect, not knowing the resources that are available to us, healthy living, healthy eyes, you  
79 know, lifestyles, healthy eating and just go straight to the same pattern of buying stuff that's bad  
80 and eating stuff that's bad. And then our work schedules and lifestyles, you know, just make it  
81 even worse because we need something quick, something fast. But um, yeah.

82 From a child, um, and everywhere I lived and moved, in my backyard, I've had a garden.  
83 I created one in some form or another because I didn't want to lose that connection. Um, when  
84 my wife who was bringing up our children and stuff, and during a pregnancy I wanted to make  
85 sure that they had those Greens and collards and turnips and things that they needed the kale, that  
86 protein, yeah. But, um, yeah, and also the quality of food is something that drives me. Because,  
87 when you know a product, whether it be a plant or animal just by the taste, of one that has been  
88 raised organically, you know, versus those that have been somewhat manipulated in the process  
89 of growing them. Um, you know, the difference in the taste. And some folks have never tasted a  
90 true product of egg process versus a, you know, it may be even a grain fed beef. total grain fed,  
91 no steroids or chicken that had it. And look at how much chicken we eat in every aspect of



92 chicken, chicken, chicken, chicken, chicken, chicken, and we should know that all of it is not  
93 healthy. That it wasn't processed in a healthy way. And the taste is tremendously different from  
94 what is, you know, organically raised versus what is, you know, raised for quick process. To  
95 taste the product itself, the fat, you know. So, when we, we, we can start reintroducing, you  
96 know, certain products just with the taste alone will be beneficial because we will know and can  
97 start establishing, oh this is healthy and it's not bad. You ever heard some people say, Oh man, I  
98 can't eat no chicken that came off the ground. I can't eat no chicken egg. No you can't because  
99 you never taste one. You know, everything you get is out the store is processed. You have never  
100 tasted real or see the difference in the color or the health benefits. Like I was saying. So, to, to  
101 some present, you know, and to others like myself reintroduced some of the healthy foods just  
102 with the taste alone, you know, it's this, it's beneficial to me because it's good. You know, when  
103 it's not altered.

104 I pastored at a church in Spartanburg, South Carolina, thinking about a 15, 15 years ago,  
105 somewhat like that. Had a young guy that died of a massive heart attack one afternoon after  
106 church, 17 years old, getting ready to go to, um, graduate... I think, yeah, um getting ready to  
107 graduate. But anyway, there was an experience that I went through and I started looking at  
108 obesity, you know my mother was over 300 pounds and I saw the suffering and stuff like that  
109 that obesity caused. Unhealthy eating, you know, um learning how we can break down the fats  
110 and help ourselves. So, to be able to give knowledge back and to help and support, you know,  
111 um, yeah, I saw those type of things. That's what lead me, the high blood pressure. Strong, runs  
112 strong in our family. Sugar diabetes, I had a brother that died maybe 23 years old. Um, from  
113 diabetes, a sister that has diabetes now, go three times a week. Um, so, um, yeah, I wanted to be  
114 an advocate for healthy eating. You know, but um, it takes experiences like that to cause you to  
115 want to give back, watch people suffer through and they could have just ate a little healthier, you  
116 know, knew what they was doing to their bodies and understand how your body's worked with  
117 certain food. What was good for you, what was not, you know, you're not really relying on  
118 everything that the doctor told you, you know, um becoming. I used to see my grandfather and  
119 grandmother sometimes they would have a bag full of pills and they would have to start out the  
120 morning with taking so many pills and then it was too aware, a form of addiction because they  
121 became dependent on those pills and while it was helping them one way, it was hurting them in  
122 another way, but they missed a lot of points of the healthy diet, you know. And then they

123 stopped. We stopped the farming, the large, you know, especially on a large scale. We stopped  
124 farming and being on the farmers' stock, smaller scale. We stopped raising our own meats and  
125 stuff like that. And so, were a lot more unhealthy and it just suppressed. And, and, um, you  
126 know, hurt. With all the, health issues that we have today and, and, and right now some of us are  
127 just finding out that it's all about the food. What we're putting into these bodies is all about and  
128 how important, you know, really important it is, you know.

129 I am involved with a mixture of students, with what I'm doing now. Predominantly  
130 African American, white students, Asian students, Mexican. Um, and I think the Asian students  
131 have more interest in the farming aspect and uh, so yeah, yeah, but it's different and it makes you  
132 wonder what happened to the black and the white as well because, farmers was farmers, you  
133 know, um, and uh, we have the history and to know how to raise our own, grow our own, process  
134 our own and, but it seem less important to those races, the black and whites, than they are others,  
135 you know, kids learn early. I think the kids eat a lot healthier, you know, less fast food. Um, I  
136 worked with the Lancaster Fatherhood Project. Oh yeah, it was in Lancaster, South Carolina.  
137 Okay. And uh, it was working with fathers that, um, it was part of the um, what was that assisted  
138 the charity foundation sponsored part of the Fatherhood Initiative, National Fatherhood  
139 Initiative. And we developed a program of that that was called, but the program consisted of um,  
140 working with fathers that um, had children, unemployment, I mean unemployment, but um, um,  
141 welfare, child support issues and so they had children and youths and um, I got to work with  
142 them very closely and I did learn from that point the importance of the whole family, the father,  
143 the child as well as the mother and how it took coming together for the parents to come together  
144 to take care of the child. Fathers were bringing their children out to the location and working  
145 with them in the garden. And we was able to address a lot of issues too with counseling sessions  
146 there with the fathers. Yeah. And it was just good to see the working unit, fathering a child  
147 working together, learning together. And then we would have fellowship meals afterwards with  
148 the family would sit down together trying to create an environment of how, um, I guess it used to  
149 be when we sat at the table to, to eat actually the family know and importance, importance of  
150 that.

151 My role was um the executive director of the program, um, and my role was to work  
152 directly with the fathers, the children, the youth, and to create programs within, surrounding by  
153 the garden curriculum. Just for that, the point of togetherness from the garden to the table and

154 work with the families, you know, um, to do that, to produce the crop to eat at the table to have  
155 that family. It was all a part of healthy lifestyles. And you know, that was what I kept focusing  
156 on and trying to create success stories which, which did happen. The garden worked as a place of  
157 meditation, um, and therapeutic approach. The father would have to participate with the children.  
158 One knew more than their father, either their child was trying to teach the parent or parents or  
159 they brought about a great togetherness and it was great to see that and watch that. Healthy meal  
160 at the end. We would have prayer at the table and they will give a chance to discuss that day. Just  
161 the family amongst. And it did something that we don't, you know, wrote about something that  
162 we were missing. It gave them something to talk about. The driving component, well to be  
163 honest, was my love for people and love for nature. And bringing those two together because I  
164 love nature and I was raised in the country and every city I go into or move I saw a little country  
165 in there and the wholesomeness that the family and this, um, and I just don't want to see that, that  
166 die completely out, you know, um, nature taking care of us. We're taking care of, you know,  
167 taking care of nature, taking care of ourselves. And um, it worked for me and it has always  
168 worked, you know, um, like I said, I have a garden anywhere I go, but there's a connection and I  
169 think um. Then the appreciation too for what we have as food, that we have to eat or was put in  
170 place for us, you know, and, and um, you know, we take it for granted so much, you know, we  
171 can run out quick and get something but may not be what we need.

172         And so, we got another generation, we lost a generation I feel. To fast food, to fast  
173 lifestyles and missing nurturing components that, that we had as a family. And just food brought  
174 about, you know, really enjoying the food growing up as a child. We didn't even want to come  
175 inside, because we always had fun. But we had food in the summer you had a pear tree, an apple  
176 tree. Somebody had an apple tree. A plum, you could pick up a plum, you could pick a  
177 blackberry. You was eating healthy and didn't even realize it. They didn't want to go inside you  
178 didn't eat nothing from inside, you know, you had, you, you appreciate for nature, you know, you  
179 love nature. You had the gardens there to feed you and then you had the fruits, you had the fruits  
180 all around you. And now we don't plant fruit trees. Didn't even have to wash it. That's right. We  
181 don't even plant that's not in, you know, the plant fruit trees are, you know, what you want to eat.  
182 You can plant it, you can grow it. But coming up, you know, we would go pick blackberries just  
183 to get a blackberry pie made, you know, um, there was a pear tree in somebody's yard and it  
184 was, it was sharing. So, you have so many pears you could share and plums and grapes and all

185 these great things. And the preserves that we made, you know, you can make your own jelly, you  
186 own jams. And so it's, it's a wealth of knowledge and a wealth, a wealth of health out there that  
187 we need to be, you know, trying to educate our people towards especially and even as a race of  
188 people even as well. Because you know, what's in our cupboards is what counts. Everybody goes  
189 out and get a, go out to a fast food restaurant for a quick snack, you know, um, the chicken  
190 places and, but it's what's in your cupboard, what do you eat at home. What do you buy, what do  
191 you purchase every day? What's in that, you know, and it's a matter of life and death and to a  
192 certain extent.

193         The most challenging part of the program, I think participation, um from our people  
194 because of the lack of knowledge, you know, food is not a great concern. What we're eating, you  
195 know, the fast lifestyle, um, quick, fast, but that's done without knowledge. And so, when you  
196 talk about healthy food and raising your food, everything from the garden aspect of getting your  
197 hands dirty or you know, the animals and things of that nature. But um, the awareness, no, we  
198 need to bring back the awareness of um, you know, what we're, what we're actually eating, you  
199 know. Um, getting the knowledge out there, getting people interested and getting people  
200 involved in it. What worked best was trying to relate to them, on their level. Bring a product.  
201 Something whether we made in the culinary department and bring it out there where the youth  
202 can be involved and using the children to show the pleasure of it, the enjoyment of it. That's what  
203 brings the parents into it. You know, and um, um, the therapeutic aspect of gardening. Um  
204 fishing because we do fishing club, things like that to the wholesomeness, you know, it nurtures,  
205 it is a form of nurturing each other and uh, yeah, that, that works, that works. But on the flip side,  
206 you know, sports and other things is so high, you know, on demand and out front that the garden  
207 aspect, you know, has been left behind. And so we're trying to create things that will bring our  
208 youth, make our youth and our children involved early, early on, knowing that the garden is great  
209 food, you know, the benefits of a, you know, just teaching that, making it enjoyable is what we're  
210 focusing on now. But yeah, participation, volunteering, things like that you have, you have to  
211 work in those areas to bring out people to support.

212         Um, I have several moments that have been rewarding. Just to see how I've had folk join  
213 the program, join the gardening and just take the aspect of eating healthy and caused them to lose  
214 a lot of weight. And we've seen that happen, you know, when they went from just from the  
215 garden aspect of eating healthy eating healthy food. I've seen relationships, family relationships,

216 sometimes even restored because of the togetherness. They come into the class and they're  
217 working together and sitting at the table, the table aspect, you know, sharing, sharing their lives  
218 with each other. Um, so, um, yeah it was things like that. I have success stories, some guys that  
219 have, um taken the garden aspect and worked. Turned it into, um, what delivery, delivering fresh  
220 vegetables and things like that. As far as partners, I had some churches that partnered in with us,  
221 that gave us some support. Um, mainly our church, that we attend, that was pretty much, the  
222 church gave us support with the children. They gave us some financial support, um, an  
223 opportunity to come and do workshops and the kids participating. The youth as well as the  
224 adults. We gained support through community outreach, school system was there needing,  
225 needing services as a Communities in Schools and SAS program after school program gave us a  
226 great deal of support. From putting together curriculum and stuff that was suitable, you know,  
227 find the right youth for the program and things like that. So, we did get a lot of support from  
228 SAS, and the school system you know, to, to do this site locations and all of that.  
229 The purpose behind it all was and is to educate, educate our youth on healthy eating, having a  
230 healthy lifestyle.

231 Youth empowerment is giving them knowledge and the tools given the youth knowledge  
232 and tools on how to live and be productive in society. How to live healthy, how to be aware of  
233 your surroundings, what we're eating. Lifestyle plays a role, you know, you know, but um giving  
234 them the tools that they need, give them the knowledge that they need, that they can be  
235 productive. And that's what the program was about to me and my role in that was learning. I had  
236 to learn how to present what we had to offer, how to give that knowledge, how to relate to them  
237 and give it to them on their, their level. Yeah. So that was my role. And um, it's been a blessing,  
238 it's worth it, you know. In the area of obesity, we have so many children that uh, not eating  
239 healthy, um, but we have seen how, um, by what we was teaching through the food and what to  
240 eat and what not to eat, how to eat and how to prepare stuff. We have seen young men, you  
241 know, roam down, fall down and have the energy to start playing football or basketball and  
242 things of that nature. So, um, yeah, uh, we have seen obesity be defeated, um, health issues be  
243 made better. A lot of our young children have Asthma. A lot of that it has to do with what they're  
244 eating, you know, and what they're not eating. And so just by being able to teach and implement  
245 healthy eating, you know, in certain areas, you know, it has made an impact, did make an impact  
246 and um still here.

247 I would like to have seen more and more success stories. 00:05:36 I would have liked to  
248 seen more, but I did because of the things that I did see, um, through the gardening process itself,  
249 the activities that brought families together, um, changed the attitudes, um, brought calmness,  
250 took away a lot of anger just because they were hands on and they was working with people they  
251 shared and showed them kindness and you know, we even have a session on the garden, respect  
252 for the garden, kindness in the garden and things of that nature. And, and it worked. It worked.  
253 We've seen individuals and especially youth, uh, I think, um, for the school, for instance, you  
254 have sixth graders this year, that next year going to be eighth graders and you see them improve,  
255 you see them change, you know, you see them mature when they work with you one year and  
256 they come back the next year, you know, you see a different person that brought it. I would have  
257 liked to have seen more, but I did see a lot of success stories and successful things happen. My  
258 intention, hey if I could change and help everybody, every child, um, because um, we see a lot of  
259 hurting children. Hurting because they're too large, because they don't fit in, you know, or too  
260 small. I've seen some young girls and guys that just didn't fit in because there was so small, and  
261 they needed an outlet and the garden brought that, the garden aspect the food and eating healthy  
262 and then we got to encourage them too, small wasn't a bad thing. Large you can control and  
263 bring down your weight just by eating healthy.

264 I have seen some racial, I guess things that, um, has hindered in a way that opportunities,  
265 you would wish for more opportunities to do more, but um, you can get some negative response  
266 from folk and businesses and you know, because they don't always take you serious about you  
267 being serious about your health for one thing, you know, and um, opportunities sometimes can  
268 be limited. It can be turned away a little bit of indirectness, but you, you knew it was, you know,  
269 so what happens is sometimes it deters you from striving to, you know, go out and get donations  
270 or get a grant or work towards different things in that area. Um, because sometimes of the  
271 response you get. What helped me to continue to pursue this work was my attitude towards  
272 people knowing that there's good and bad and, how to network, find the good uh, and networking  
273 with, um, folk where you can get the support from. Like um A&T [NCA&TSU], the North  
274 Carolina Cooperative for Agriculture. We partnered with them and it's a mixture of people, you  
275 know, there's a balance there. You got black and white working for the same purpose, you know,  
276 the same arena and that makes it easy because you've got that network of support. So, to be able

277 to partner in and get into places like that has been a plus and that's what we're doing now. We're  
278 learning to do, you know, more of that.

279 Let me tell you what I would like to see, um, I would like to see a community that was  
280 educated, um, on healthy lifestyles, um, on the food that we're eating, where it comes from, um,  
281 what it actually does to us and for us and um, the importance of being able to somewhat say feed  
282 yourself. You know to where we can't go back to the um, you know, 50 years ago, 20 years ago,  
283 but when a community did partner in, to process food to share what they raised together. Um, did  
284 you learn, you learn by your community, your surroundings? I lived in a somewhat prejudice  
285 town, but white people and black people, the older ladies in the community, they came together  
286 to can. They came together to preserve their crops that they had raised out in the field. So, come  
287 from this person's garden. Somebody had this over here and someone had a lot of this over here  
288 and they brought that together. So, um, I would like to see a community where we come  
289 together, community gardens, we are planning community gardens now, but with my program  
290 just for that reason to bring about that unity in, in the, in the community and um healthy and  
291 wholesome lifestyle. Nobody should be hungry. Why be hungry when you can eat healthy, you  
292 know?

293 We come from a generation of learning how to take care of each other and take care of  
294 ourselves. Um, we had um, a potato. Certain things was taught coming up and you had in your  
295 kitchen, you know, that you could always prepare, have a meal if you had, um, a potato, um,  
296 some flour I think and eggs. Something like that was, it was just scenarios of little things like that  
297 because you could make a potato um, wedge. You can make French fries, you can make potato  
298 chips, you could stew your tomatoes, make stewed potatoes, but you wouldn't be hungry. You  
299 wouldn't, you wouldn't be hungry. We was taught to sustain and take care of ourselves. And um,  
300 I think youth now, um, and, and the garden and raising the food, the agriculture aspect is where  
301 we can be empowered because we can raise our own food, we can eat knowing what we're eating  
302 and eat for health reasons, you know, and we're going to be more strong minded. We're going to  
303 be more empowered because, I don't even have to spend the money. I can go out here and make  
304 my own salad or my own sandwich, you know, and this is what I'm doing for myself. I'm taking  
305 care of myself that I can sustain myself, I can help myself. Um, and I think if you take the food  
306 factor out, you know, where we're not hungry, we're not worried, we're not concerned, you  
307 know, we don't even have to have um, what we're eating now. You know, you really don't have

308 to have a burger every night with fries and stuff, from McDonald's. You can prepare and cook  
309 your own. It's going to empower you, you know and um, so the youth will be empowered that  
310 way and as we further educate them on what agriculture is more than just the food, but it's the  
311 clothing that we wear, you know, uh, if the dyes that goes from, from the vegetables to our  
312 clothing they'll make. Maybe tomorrow, young people be inspired to do a clothing line, you  
313 know to experiment in, you know, agriculture even more to from the design aspect of it, you  
314 know, from the many opportunities that it has and the things that they provide. we'd be more  
315 knowledgeable, more knowledgeable of that we'll be empowered. Learn how to grow our own  
316 produce our own sell our own, sell within ourselves. You know, within our own communities.  
317 You don't have to go out when it's already, when it's already there, you know, you're going to  
318 empower yourself that way. Learn the market, learn what pricing is all about. You know, why  
319 buy the sweet potatoes, when you can grow sweet potatoes yourself or grow them to sell them  
320 yourself, you know, learn what's edible. Learn from other, um, nationalities and things like that.  
321 Um, there's so much we can do. Learn it. There is prosperity in it and we can be empowered that  
322 way.

323 I think I share a lot of experiences. I share a lot of hope, I share from a standpoint of  
324 when I'm working with youth and children, uh from experienced from a child. We learned how  
325 to work. We had work ethic, strong work ethics. We had to work with the animals. You know,  
326 you had a chore, you had something to do on the farm, you had to slop the hogs, you had to do  
327 some of everything. And uh, the work ethic was in place. And so, I tried to encourage, when I  
328 see young people being slow full or conformed to the world when they are different and I know  
329 that, um, sometimes you can see the skills and talents and old people, and you can share in. Um,  
330 and so I guess there's, if it's an area of sharing knowledge and given back knowledge and um, if  
331 that's a way of leading maybe, but to say that I'm just this very important person. No, I don't look  
332 at myself as that, you know, I'm far from that, but I do have a desire to further educate our race,  
333 our young people and sharing it with other cultures of people. Um, healthy lifestyle, healthy  
334 living, positive living. Um living within and amongst each other. I was brought up where people  
335 shared and had love for each other. Although we was distant, we was the same, you know, as far  
336 as being people, you know. And um, yeah, but I don't take no stand on being no no. I've been in  
337 the ministry for about 30 years. Think since 86'. And um, you know, that brings about roles of  
338 leadership itself, acting out, being an activist for people and sharing and caring. But the garden



339 hose, the agriculture aspect, this holds so much for my life because, um, the garden was there for  
340 me. It was an area, a place of meditation, place of calmness to plant something to watch it grow,  
341 to produce it, you know, I was like, okay, this is what I made, what I created. And it brought joy  
342 and peace and you know, and I've seen children that have a lot of problems and how the garden  
343 would work as therapeutic for them, you know, come on and go out with Mr. Ruff today because  
344 you're having a bad day. I can get in the garden and just by them putting their hands on  
345 something, digging in the garden, that brought a calmness for them and they were able to go  
346 back and, you know, for they participate. Um, and I feel that way towards the youth and  
347 everybody learn different, act different and need other outlets. And um, agriculture, gardening,  
348 fishing, nature, nature's there. But we miss, especially our race, we miss it so much. You know,  
349 we was hunters. We used to hunt, we used to fish, they provide, you know, we was the farmers,  
350 great farmers and we still are, but we have lost a generation. And we need to regain it and the  
351 only way we're going to regain that is by being the outlet, you know, going, talking, putting  
352 hands on, telling, teaching health benefits, healthy lifestyle, you know. But yeah, that'll be really,  
353 that's, that's the only reason why. I'm able to share the knowledge, you know, that I have with  
354 others. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate your time, you know, and all this.

355  
356  
357  
358  
359  
360  
361  
362  
363  
364  
365  
366  
367  
368  
369  
370  
371  
372  
373  
374  
375  
376

## Appendix K: LeShari's Narrative

1           My name is LeShari Clemons, I'm female, black, and 32. I am a Youth Development  
2 Coordinator for Communities in Schools and I've been doing this for six years. What comes to  
3 mind when I think about the Pigford v Glickman case is, separate but equal just, Brown Versus  
4 Board of Education. It's all over again, but it just involves farmers now that school, what stuck  
5 out to me was that, the lack of knowledge that was made available. It's not just that they didn't  
6 have the resources that they needed, but also, they didn't have the knowledge that they needed to  
7 get the resources or to even battle the original agreement. Um, they didn't even receive  
8 informational deadlines. The fact that it was such a large number of cases, um, the fact that after  
9 it was reviewed again and known as the Pigford 2 that, it was still a certain level of disparities  
10 and claims that were actually... reviewed and followed wrong. It's almost like the government  
11 knew exactly what was, what was being done and even when they went back to correct it from  
12 this document, from this summary, even when they went back to correct what they did wrong,  
13 they only took in half of the cases and they didn't even give people the proper representation or  
14 information needed to even complete the paperwork and do what they need to do so they could  
15 get what they needed for their farms.

16           So, my reflections on the Pigford and Glickman case is that it shows the level of  
17 unnecessary ignorance in the black community. There is no reason why we should not have the  
18 information that's needed for us to be a successful community and people. And that's what this  
19 shows to me that we do not have access to the knowledge or it's not easily accessible for us. The  
20 Pigford v Glickman case most definitely impacts my students and their families. I most definitely  
21 see it impacting my family's, my students because I can already see it even in the cafeteria, how  
22 there are some schools that have salad bars, snack bars, and our students only have that one  
23 lunch line because they are free and reduced lunch and they're coming to me throughout the day  
24 because they're hungry and they don't even know how far up the line this goes. I just saw the  
25 cafeteria. Now I'm seeing that there's a, how far this actually extends and the lack of knowledge  
26 that we actually have in our community about what is going on. It's almost like it's just the food  
27 insecurity is like a seed and so many other things are coming off of that. So educating one  
28 another on the food insecurity also says, okay, well in order to battle or overcome food  
29 insecurity, we also have to have all of these other elements in place like understanding one what

30 policy is, um, who makes it, alters it and enforces it. And that's something completely separate  
31 from agriculture, but it directly affects agriculture. Um, so that's why I stated before that having  
32 the programs where students are introduced to policy, to debate, to law, to writing, to reading, to  
33 learning how to research and what that looks like. That's how that bridges, brings them to this  
34 point because once they understand that they are in this drought, now they have to figure out  
35 what they need to do to get out of it. And policy is a part of that. And educating them on what it  
36 is, what it looks like, and how to navigate it is how we're going to be able to pull our community  
37 together and pull us out of this food insecurity. Our students, they don't pay for lunches. So, what  
38 does that mean? So, um, I think that because they don't pay, they just don't offer the same.  
39 Would it be they have free and reduced lunch the whole school? The entire school, so none of  
40 the students pay for their lunch. Okay. Um, I don't know why it's so hard for me to speak on this  
41 when I'm on camera, but when I'm off camera it works. Um,

42         So, the school, actually Guilford County School system pays for a title one schools to  
43 have free lunch. That is something that comes out the Guilford County Schools budget. Title one  
44 is a name that's, that's been given to schools that have free lunch and high populations of students  
45 from low-income areas. If they don't, if you don't know that there's a disparity, then you will not  
46 try to adjust it. Knowledge is power. And this sounds like even the people who knew still didn't  
47 have the resources that they needed to follow through on making the adjustment happen for  
48 them. That's the problem. Even when you reach out for help, you're still not given everything you  
49 need to help yourself. That's a problem that seems consistent with not only just agriculture but  
50 with education as well.

51         As an educator, I think kids think that the first thing I'm going to tell them what was  
52 always going to come out of my mouth is going to be, you know, stay in school. Education is  
53 important. It is, but what are the main things I really do tell my students is to make sure that you  
54 learn to research and ask questions and gain knowledge for yourself so that you understand who  
55 you are and your position in this world, in this country, in your community, in your family,  
56 amongst your peers, what that looks like, so that you can move forward in a way that helps you  
57 and also helps your surrounding community and this case is an example that directly connects to  
58 what I do here because in this case, like I stated earlier, even when given the knowledge, they're  
59 still links that are missing here. There are still resources that aren't being made available so that  
60 they can really move forward in their project here illegally and I see that in the case of my

61 students with their education here, with the food insecurity here. Is that they don't always know  
62 that they are receiving the same treatment because they're not necessarily going out there trying  
63 to figure out what it is, what their space looks like. They're just settling for the environment that  
64 someone has placed them in. And that's how I'm, my program is directly affected by that. I'm just  
65 constantly trying to push them outside of what they see right in front of them.

66 I see it every day as my students come to my office all the time. Saying that they're  
67 hungry, they need food. Um, the fact that I see what they eat for lunch and that even though it's  
68 supposed to be something that's healthy and good for them, it doesn't necessarily always look  
69 that way. It's also not something that they necessarily want to eat. Um, and I see it in the food  
70 that they choose to eat, like they love to eat Ooodle n' Noodles, and we all love Oodles n'  
71 Noodles, but they're not very healthy and knowledge goes a long way. I believe if they knew, if  
72 they had more knowledge about these types of foods and they knew how to grow them, and they  
73 were more available to them, that's what they would actually eat.

74 I believe that African Americans in this community, that they value nutrition. I have  
75 come to believe that they value nutrition. They understand that food is important. We must eat.  
76 My belief is that they still lack the knowledge to really go out and get everything that they need.  
77 They, um, may take advantage of the government assistance that allows them to have food in that  
78 sort of thing, but they may not be pushing the envelope and going beyond that to actually  
79 wanting to have their own fresh food at home. So, but it is my belief that also, if they're given  
80 this knowledge, if this is made not only public, but if they are taken through this and they're  
81 made aware of exactly what is going on. I do believe that community will stand up. And want  
82 what is rightfully theirs? I don't know if that's the best way of what I want to say.

83 So, I'm trying to bridge the gap so that they can receive the knowledge that they need. So,  
84 they can learn how to get the resources that they need for themselves. I plan to do it through the  
85 program that I run here. I believe that agriculture is more than just food and I believe that it can  
86 start with that knowledge, but there's also other programs that grow from that as well. So, for me  
87 it's about giving them as many resources as possible for them to gain this knowledge.

88 What motivates me to do this work is my life and my family. I believe in working smart,  
89 not hard. And I believe that right now in the African American community, we're working hard  
90 and we're not working smart and we're receiving less because of it. Um, so before I started with  
91 communities in schools, I worked for a gallery space and because I'm an artist, I went to school

92 for art. I love art and I was their Education Director, so I pooled together components for youth  
93 in the community and it was nice to offer these free art classes for under resourced youth. But at  
94 the same time if they're coming to the art class and they're hungry and you're offering them paint.  
95 That's nice, but you're hungry. So, I was trying to find ways to pull in resources to the gallery  
96 space for these students. But in that I realized that if I took another position in the community  
97 that I could actually do more for them than what I could do within that artistic space. And that's  
98 what attracted me to this job, was the opportunity to directly connected with them and the  
99 resources that they needed and to create that bridge for them. So, the experiences in my life that  
100 led me to this work with African American youth was the fact that, I'm adopted. I'm the first of  
101 nine. I'm the only one of us that was adopted. So, I grew up with a completely different life and I  
102 realize that I was receiving so much more than my siblings were receiving and what I was  
103 receiving wasn't really costing that much money. It was just, I happened to be in the position  
104 with parents that knew what was going on. They knew who they were, what space they were in  
105 and who they were impacted the people around them, the impact of themselves and how it  
106 impacted me. And so, they were able to. Because of this knowledge, they were able to make  
107 decisions for me as a child that placed me within these different opportunities. My biological  
108 mother did not have that knowledge, so she was not able to do that for my other eight siblings.  
109 Knowledge is power and so with that I realized that if the students here just at the parents had  
110 that knowledge and have that connection to those resources, they will be able to have the same  
111 experiences and the same advantages. Advantages that I had as a youth growing up.

112 I would describe the demographic of my students as amazing. I think my kids are the  
113 absolute best, um, as far as like where they live, that sort of thing. Um, they are a little under  
114 resourced, but they have parents who will go above and beyond for them. So sometimes they  
115 shoot for the stars and land on the moon, but they always shoot for the stars. One of the first  
116 major programs, um, I had this go big or go home kind of thing. So, I'm always like, wanted my  
117 programs to be a really big deal because that's how you grab people and you are able to put as  
118 much knowledge in them as possible. Um, but one of the first major programs I guess I would  
119 have to say... would be the summer camp that I did the first time I was actually ever offered the  
120 opportunity to really be a leader. That was right after I graduated. I became the youth director  
121 and put this summer camp together for ages five to 16. And it composed of a two weeks of three  
122 weeks of art classes and then also the high school, the ages 14 to 16, worked on a mural piece

123 and then we had a culminating exhibition at the end, um, in the past we just did an exhibition  
124 where you held the pieces up on the wall and parents would just walk by and look at the pieces.  
125 And because I'm an installation artist, I'm all about being immersed in a space and experiential  
126 learning. So, I decided to have the students create kind of like a walking installation piece for the  
127 exhibit versus just hanging up stick figures on the wall. And in this I had the students, kind of  
128 focus on historical facts and just educating the public in what that would look like. Um, and then  
129 we had a mural piece that was also exhibited in September. Um, that was the first major project  
130 that I did with black youth.

131 I was directing the project. I just basically organized. I hired the teachers, trained the  
132 teachers, and came up with the application, registered the students for the program, did the  
133 budget for it. Um, organized a facility. I mean we painted the classroom for the students, so  
134 they'd have a great fun working environment. Um, and my purpose for doing it was because I  
135 always had a vision too. I would always see that the gallery that was next to us that was  
136 predominantly white, where the program costs the students \$400 - \$800 a week, that their  
137 exhibitions were always an event. They would rent out the entire atrium level of the exhibition  
138 space. And it was just, it was an event. It was a celebration of these children who worked hard  
139 the entire summer over these projects, and I looked at that space. And I said, why are these, why  
140 did these children have this amazing exhibition? And this huge event happened. And then when  
141 our kids, African American kids show their work, it's just, you know, stuck up on the wall with a  
142 push pin and the parents and walking by. That is unacceptable. Our children, all children deserve  
143 to be celebrated in the same way. And so, my purpose was to say, I celebrate you. You're  
144 amazing. Look at what you've created.

145 So um, the driving component that led me to be a part of the program. I was already in  
146 school for art school. I went to school, UNCG. Um, and even there I noticed now they do have  
147 more black students in the art program. But when I went there, all seven of us, we knew each  
148 other. We were all different year into, you know, different years into the art program. But we, we  
149 all knew each other. And I realized that there was a difference in the type of artwork that was  
150 being put out by white students versus the type of art that was being put out by black students. I  
151 noticed that there were more art jobs being presented to white students than there were being  
152 presented to black students. I noticed that black students sometimes didn't even know what was  
153 going on. I have friends that were in the art department at A&T [NC A&T SU], that had no idea

154 about exhibitions and things that were going on that the students at UNCG that we were made  
155 privy to that information. So my driving, the driving component that led me to really want to be a  
156 part of the gallery space and really want to be in a leadership position there, was ultimately so  
157 that I can bring in these black artists that were coming from A & T, and give them opportunity to  
158 teach in this space and also give the students a leg up on if you're interested in going to the art  
159 since you already clearly love it because you're choosing to spend your summer doing art, that  
160 these are the types of obstacles that you may have to overcome, but then also how to overcome  
161 them and how to come out as a strong artists as a result of it.

162         The most challenging part of this project is that it was something different. It was new, it  
163 was a change and change is never easy, but it was supported and that's what made the change  
164 that much easier. But it was something different and the idea to do it wasn't something that I  
165 would be able to like present on paper to give people that assurance that it was going to work out  
166 the way I planned. It was all on faith. It wasn't until it was my third year doing the summer camp  
167 and that's when I brought in the agricultural component because I realized that yes, we were now  
168 providing more food for them and, but they weren't receiving necessarily the nutrition and I  
169 wanted them to receive information and I wanted them to be able to receive the food. So that's  
170 when the third year of the summer camp I brought in an agriculture component. It had them learn  
171 about plants and planting in the classroom and what that looks like and how agriculture is also  
172 connected to the arts as well because agriculture isn't just food, it's everything it's textile, it's the  
173 shoes, sometimes it can be gas in your car, so it's it all comes full circle. So, letting them  
174 understand where the materials are coming from for them to use for them to create art. And the  
175 fuel that they need for their bodies. Seeing how not only the children connected with the program  
176 and how excited they were, but how excited they were to speak intelligently on it and how  
177 excited they were to share the information with their parents, because that's what it's all about.  
178 Not just about receiving the knowledge and retaining that knowledge, but also sharing the  
179 knowledge. That's the biggest push of all. Get it, share it.

180         So, I had someone who was assisting me on it and helping me out, helping me pull the  
181 project together and I had the executive board at the gallery space and they of course had to  
182 approve and support the project they had to sign off on the budget. Um, and then the teachers  
183 were my partners, um, as a leader you have to not see the people that are working for you as your  
184 staff, but as your partners. They're in the trenches with you, they're fighting the fight with you.

185 So, my teachers were very, very huge partners in this deal because I had the vision, but then they  
186 were also the ones that were in the classrooms with the students pushing that vision and bringing  
187 that vision to light. I had human sport, human capital that was the board members, did gallery  
188 managers, the teachers. Um, and then the financial support, we had from grantors, um, the North  
189 Carolina Arts Council. Arts Greensboro, Guilford County. They were our main supporters for  
190 our youth program.

191 The purpose of my work is to educate and expose. So, to make sure that the children not  
192 only were exposed to knowledge about the arts, exposed to knowledge about the disparities,  
193 exposed to knowledge about agriculture, um, but then also to educate them on how to keep the  
194 cycle going and all, how to spread the word. Youth empowerment is not only giving young  
195 adults the support to be themselves, but it's also educating them on how they can be themselves,  
196 2.0. Giving them that space and giving them the resources and showing them how they can get  
197 additional resources as well. I wanted to jump in with Communities In Schools because here I'm  
198 allowed to build a program that's catered to the youth at this specific site. And we have seven  
199 title one sites as of right now for the Greensboro CIS [Communities In Schools] affiliate, where  
200 they each have their own youth development coordinator that develops these unique programs  
201 for the students. So, with youth empowerment, my students are able to come to me and say, Ms.  
202 Clemons, this is what we want to see here. This is what we need. I'm interested in being a  
203 graphic designer. I don't know what that looks like with what I'm doing now, how old I am, what  
204 my grades are. You know, what I. How this looks for my future, what resources do I need? I just  
205 know that I think I might want to exist in this space. What does that look like? And my job is to  
206 go out and find a professional, bring him in and say these are the group of students that I have  
207 that are interested in doing what you do, coach them. And so, it goes back to the definition that I  
208 gave you for what youth empowerment looks like. Not only do I give them the space to be  
209 themselves, but then I also provide them with the resource to be themselves 2.0.

210 I've noticed that students who, they know what they want, they know how important it is  
211 that they don't know what they want to figure out what that is. They gain confidence. Some of  
212 them, that's the positive side. The negative side is all of them have been like, I don't know if  
213 education is for me, I don't know if college is for me. And so, they're looking at other avenues as  
214 well, so that can be negative or positive, depending on what their success is on that in the  
215 avenue. But I most definitely noticed a change in the desire. Who they want to be and how



216 they're going to become that. They're asking questions and taking risks. My intended outcome  
217 was pretty much the same as the reality of the situation. I learned a long time ago before I got  
218 into the school system that, you have to be a little vague when it comes to what your desired  
219 outcome is because people are people. People are very different, um, we learn and retain  
220 information at different paces. And then also the result of that retention looks... looks different  
221 too. It kind of comes out the same or better because I don't put a lot of constraints on  
222 expectations. And outcomes, because I know that people are, people are, people are vastly  
223 different and so the way that they receive the information and then what they do with that  
224 information that's been received is going to be different across the board. So, what my usual,  
225 because you do, when you work with grants, you do have to state that this is the desired  
226 outcome. So, my usual desired outcome is that this information will be retained and that it will  
227 be explored and used in some way, shape before. And this is the information that will be  
228 received from that. Um, so from that, the students have always gotten the information that was  
229 there and often times they've gotten more than the information was there and say, Hey, what  
230 about this? What about that? So oftentimes because I am so vague with my expectations, they  
231 always exceed them. And I want that flexibility to be there.

232         When you don't have flexibility, it puts a certain level of constraints on there, you don't  
233 have to live within a box. You can, you can adjust as the program grows, as the program  
234 changes, if you had that flexibility in the outcome, you can adjust yourself to the people that you  
235 want to impact because really it's about them and sometimes that can be lost a lot of times and  
236 nonprofit work, especially when your funding is solely based off of if you're receiving the  
237 outcomes of the numbers that you're supposed to have. It can be very hard because when you  
238 live within those constraints, it can't grow because when you say, this is what we're trying to do,  
239 but this is. We can't go about this way to do it because we're learning this about the demographic  
240 of the people that we're reaching out to and so when you have that flexibility in the expectations,  
241 you're able to change your program and do what needs to be done for the people because really  
242 that's what it's about. It's not about the grand tours that want to feel special because they're  
243 helping under resourced people. That's not what it's about. It's not about you patting yourself on  
244 the back because you gave money to a school that doesn't have a certain kind of funding. No, it's  
245 about, are you reaching these people? Are you giving them what, what they need?

246 In this environment here, I haven't experienced any setbacks from a racial standpoint. I'm  
247 in a predominantly black environment that understands that every single person in this building,  
248 we all understand that what we're here for, we're here to enhance the education and living  
249 experience of Black youth and Hispanic youth. That's what we're here for. Every person that  
250 comes into this building every single day, that's what we show up for. So, because of that, no, if  
251 anything it has influenced it, but it has influenced it in a positive way. It hasn't hindered it.  
252 Everyone who brings aid or partners with Hairston Middle School, they know, they know what  
253 the demographic is, they know what we're here for. Um, so I haven't had that problem at all. And  
254 we've partnered with others, Guilford County Schools. We've partner with the city of  
255 Greensboro, to do the Christmas parade, so we've, we've partnered with other people and they  
256 know. Now on the other environment, that's another story. Um, so in that environment, it was  
257 predominantly white, most of the gallery space. So, we were in a city building, it's just a  
258 collection of galleries in a city building. So, for that we were ourselves and a native American  
259 gallery space for the only spaces of color. And so, in that space sometimes we ran into some red  
260 tape that I believe was placed there because of our race.

261 I'm living in working in the community that I see myself living and working in. I live on  
262 the south side at Greensboro and I work at Hairston Middle School. That's where I am. I'm 32.  
263 This is it. I'm living in it and how might my work influence development of food security? So  
264 that's what I'm, that's the project that I'm working on now. I'm working on a project, I'm  
265 partnering with Mr. Michael Ruff to expand our garden area so that it now becomes a  
266 community garden. Then not only that, SAS and Communities in Schools actually provide some  
267 resources for now. It's something that we've done with the entire school and the entire  
268 community eventually with the hopes of having food that we can supply during lunchtime and  
269 during the school day for students to have, but also the families to be able to come out, learn  
270 about gardening, have their own garden plot and be able to have their own fresh food at home.  
271 Um, development of empowerment of black youth. Um, I do this every day. I don't know why  
272 it's so hard to talk about. Oh Man, when I'm asking for funding, it just flows right out. Something  
273 about money changes the conversation. Right? Um, so my work influences the empowerment of  
274 black youth. I did go through that in a previous question. Um, just giving them the space, letting  
275 them come to me and tell me what exactly what they want and then me going out and finding it  
276 and just having the support that I have here is amazing. Like I said, people who come here, they

277 show up. For example, I had a lot of students this year that said they want a gaming program, so  
278 I had a person come to me and ask me and she was like, oh, I have a stem program that I'd like to  
279 bring in. And I also have this other program that I'd like to bring in. I said, well, my kids would  
280 like to have gaming. What does that look like under your umbrella? And she had no problem in  
281 making a complete 180. How, like what I was saying, like if you don't have those expectation  
282 restraints on there, you can say, okay, I'm gonna change this around, so now it's going to be stem  
283 and gaming. So now the children not only will receive this information about stem, but they also  
284 get to do something that they actually really, really want to do. And that's what I'm here for.

285 Do I see myself as a leader? Absolutely not. Just kidding. Um, I don't, um, I believe, I  
286 don't know, I like the word leader. I always tell the students, you know, be a leader, lead. Um,  
287 but sometimes I also like the idea of we are always, we at some point should all be leaders, so it  
288 would be great if we were instead of having to establish this title for people and they are always  
289 the ones that are like over the people and, but it be more like instead of being a leader, being an  
290 active participant in your community, which means that at some point you will be a leader on  
291 some project. You will be a leader. Everyone gets a chance to carry that title and that level of  
292 responsibility. But they always don't have to carry that title and that level of responsibility.  
293 Because in order to be a good leader, you also have to be a really good follower because you  
294 have to know what's going on and you have to care about more than just yourself, so I really just  
295 would prefer to say I am an active participant in my community and sometimes that means that I  
296 step up into a leadership role, but also that means that sometimes I'm just following someone else  
297 that's stepped up into a leadership role.

298  
299  
300  
301  
302  
303  
304  
305  
306  
307  
308  
309  
310  
311  
312

## Appendix L: Amina's Narrative

1           My name's Amina Cliette I'm female, I identify as female. I'm African American. My  
2 ethnicity, African American. Uh I do have, identify as African American, but I do have Native  
3 American grandparents, um, but I identify as African American. And I am 32. Um well I'm  
4 currently a grad student. So, I'm a grad student. I'm an Agriculture Education grad student at  
5 A&T. Um I've been in the program for, um since 2016, so that's basically what I've been doing.  
6 Um, I think when we talk about... It's a part of African American hist.... like it's not surprising  
7 to me. It's a part of our culture. To look at, that the case only looked at 1984, 83 to 1997 um, you  
8 know that's only a fraction of what African Americans, especially African American farmers  
9 have endured since we were released from slavery in um in the 1860s you know, so um we've...  
10 That's just a part of our history, I think as people who grow things, and farmers and just our  
11 background like that's just, it's not surprising. It's, it's a little upsetting um but if you get upset  
12 over everything then you'll just be in rage and can't do anything else so it's, I think its fuel, its  
13 fuel. It's just understanding the history and understanding what that means as far as how can you  
14 use this as fuel in my own work. So, I look at it as fuel, yea. What upsets me about it, is that one,  
15 as a tax paying citizen, African Americans have always been tax paying citizens. That's the right  
16 of every American is to pay their taxes, but when it comes to um, filtering that tax, those taxes  
17 back out to the people who pay them, we usually don't get that in our communities. And then for  
18 this to be government institution and to see that there are a lot of disparities that um, can, not  
19 upsetting, I'll say frustrating um especially when you know we tell people 'if you do the right  
20 thing' you know 'good things will happen to you. You will be able to achieve the American  
21 dream if you put hard work in and a lot of these farmers put a lot of hard work into their farms  
22 and they didn't get the support when it came to their government.

23           Um, so really the only thing, that I've done in agriculture is really my capstone, well is  
24 my work within my capstone project um, as a master's student. Um so, um, and then I you know  
25 I had my own garden and then my mom's family is down east. My great grandmother was a  
26 sharecropper, um, and I had a couple of actually my parent, my um family on my Mom's side  
27 most of them were sharecroppers or did some type of um agriculture work. Um and were able to  
28 do that on their own land um my grandfather was the first uh. My great grandfather was the first  
29 person in his town, Freemont, NC to own a car um through growing his own food, and have his

30 own big screen like, color t.v.. He was one of the first people to have a color t.v. Um so he was  
31 able to um they were able to grow their own food and um and really maintain a good lifestyle  
32 through agriculture. So that's really, I'm from Durham (NC), so I don't have a lot of... I didn't  
33 grow up growing food, But I um when we would go down east I would see a lot of people  
34 growing their own food, so um besides my family experiences, I decided in growing my own  
35 garden at my own house I was like, I knew that I wanted to pursue this, um especially from the  
36 aspects when we're talking about food insecurity and things like that. What are ways in which  
37 um, we can teach people how to be self-empowered, how to empower their own selves. Um, and  
38 so growing their own food is a part of that and so that's how I kind of got into, interested in  
39 getting my master's in agriculture. And then I'm kind of getting into my capstone project and  
40 what that will look like.

41 I think in life, whatever you do, it can either make you angry or you can use that anger,  
42 process it and figure out ways in which, um, instead of just being angry about it, really look at it  
43 break it down and figure out ways in which um, how can you make that, how can you break this  
44 down piece by piece and figure out what went right, what went wrong. And then sometimes, like  
45 in this case, um black farmers were doing the same thing as white farmers they just weren't  
46 getting the loans and things that um, their loans were being defaulted on, um much more sooner.  
47 So it's like even if you do everything right, um things can still go wrong for you. So what are  
48 ways that you break that down and figure out, ok, how can I use this in my work, how can I um,  
49 figure out ok, if I know that I have to do everything by the book, that's just a given that you have  
50 to do everything by the book. And then even when you do everything by the book, and  
51 something goes wrong how can you use this history and say well, we don't want, I don't want to  
52 be another, call people out on it. I don't want to be another Pigford case, um and so you figure  
53 out, how do you call people out on that and a lot of times people don't want to be called out on  
54 being bias or things like that. So, then that can, um, that can then work in your favor. You know,  
55 that case, that historical case and evidence can work in your favor and how you work into your  
56 group. Or how do you figure out, how can you insulate yourself so that you're not necessarily  
57 working outside of the community but you're working within the community. Um, and the  
58 community usually protects itself. So, you just, you break down things that at first, make you  
59 angry and figure out how can I piece this together, um and learn from it, and use it in my every  
60 day?

61           You know something that my father always said is um, you do what... you do what's  
62 right, you do what's best. And um, and the other thing that I think he talks about that I always,  
63 you know you... you can only focus on what you can focus on. Like focus on what you can  
64 focus on. So, for me it's what can I do um and not look at what other people can do. So when we  
65 talk about food insecurity, when we talk about food deserts, what can I do to help this if I'm an  
66 agriculture student, how can I use my experiences. How can I use my experiences outside of  
67 agriculture, but just my political experiences or my experiences working with youth? What can I  
68 do to figure out this issue, or to uh, to work within it to solve it? So um, it's looking at not, how  
69 can other people help me but what can I do first to help my community and then once I'm doing  
70 the work. You know because agriculture is hard its... you're hot, you know (inaudible) it's a  
71 sunny day, you're outside, you're hot, you're sweaty. Like no one wants to do that, you know  
72 what I'm saying? Why would you want to do that when you don't have to? Like, we had to grow  
73 our own food, but why should I grow my own food when I can into the grocery store and buy it?  
74 In the air conditioner. You know what I'm saying, so it's like You have to be the example. So,  
75 I'm out here and its hot, and I'm sweating, and the mosquitoes are biting me, but I'm doing this  
76 work. I'm an example and then other people will see what I'm doing and they'll wanna help too.

77           So, it's not just me having this you know, bright idea and say 'hey come and garden, and  
78 I'm standing around talking to people. But if I'm gardening with you and I'm picking weeds, on  
79 my knees, picking weeds with you, then you have a different respect for me and you have a  
80 different respect for where your food comes from um you know that it's not um as easy as just  
81 going and picking up a tomato, um in the grocery store. So my beliefs around agriculture and  
82 around food deserts is about... doing it, doing that work, um I'm trying to think of a word to  
83 kind of piece it together but just um, if you see that I'm doing it and its important to me then it  
84 will be important to other people. So, it comes from importance of self and figuring out what my  
85 intentions are on it. Um, and just shining a light to it and being an example for that. So um, my  
86 beliefs and values are, it starts from self. Like if you believe in something if you believe that  
87 food deserts and food insecurity, it's a problem, then what are you doing to fix it? I'm teaching  
88 kids how to grow food; I'm teaching kids the importance of advocacy. I'm teaching the kids the  
89 importance of eating and learning how to eat fresh vegetables and what that looks like. It's much  
90 harder than just going to the microwave and opening up you know, some Mac N' Cheese or  
91 going to the convenience store and opening up a bag of chips. Its learning where that bag of

92 chips came from its learning where those potatoes come from, where that, the mac n cheese came  
93 from. Like, um and being able to see that so leading by example is my beliefs and values as it  
94 pertains to food insecurity and food deserts.

95         When you talk about health disparities, um when we talk about higher tax and blood  
96 pressure and all those other things um it all stems from food. When we talk about even that, like  
97 what are people putting in our food. Our food is coming from China, China was putting  
98 melamine in the milk, to thin it down. That was happening in China, but they were thinning  
99 down milk and putting melamine in it. Melamine is that plastic you know like um the plastic  
100 plates that you get from like Target or something and they're like white on the background um in  
101 like the nice color design, that's melamine. And they were putting that in, in milk and people  
102 where giving this to their children. Um and it was all in the sake of money. Um, I think a couple  
103 months ago regulations loosened up where chicken will be grown in the United States it will go  
104 over to China. It will be cooked in China and then brought back to the United States to be sold.

105         Why is your food going from, especially when you talk about environment, why is going  
106 from one country to another, back to another country? When we talk about food it should be  
107 local. You should know where your food is coming from. So, I think it's important as African  
108 Americans for us to take control of where our food comes from. Like that's the one thing we  
109 don't think about but, if we don't have food, we don't have nutrition then. Right. That's the  
110 difference between life and death. Um, you know, I think they were talking about it, you know,  
111 you talk about obesity, um, and a lot of kids in America are obesity are obese, but their  
112 malnutrition, how can you be, what are you eating that is causing you to gain weight? But in fact,  
113 you, you lack nutrition. So, I think it's really important for, um, for me as an individual to say,  
114 well, we need to know where our food is coming from. It needs to be local or at least you need to  
115 know at least go to a farm and understand where your food is coming from. I grew up, um, my  
116 mom is a pathologist, so she was really into um, into health. Um, you know, she, she, I, I, I tell  
117 my, I tell, you know, when people like what are your mom? Where's your mom did say she  
118 diagnosis diseases, so every day she sees diseases where these diseases come from. A lot of it  
119 comes from health and what we eat. So, we ate a lot of organic foods. We went to, every Sunday  
120 we would go to the farm, we would travel like 30 minutes out and get our milk and get our um,  
121 homemade ice cream, um, organic ice cream, get a we would buy a cow. I mean there's times  
122 when we bought our own cow and had it slaughtered and all of those things. So, I, I could see

123 I'm, you know, met the farmer and I, I knew where my food is coming from. A lot of people  
124 don't have that experience. Butter, you know, I know where, where, uh, I know where to get  
125 fresh butter from. A lot of people don't know that, they just see a package. Um, and so  
126 understanding like where does your food come from? Growing, or at least knowing how to grow  
127 your own food and what it looks like in its natural state. I think it, it will help you change the  
128 way you eat or at least make you think about it, if you know what I'm saying. Like if this, why is  
129 this, this tomato coming from Chile or my onions coming from Chile when I can go to my back  
130 yard and make my own food. And then when we talk about, um, just the environment as a whole,  
131 um, what's gonna happen when we went out a fuel, you know what I'm saying? We can no  
132 longer get our chilies from. I'm just saying what is the natural disaster comes and we can't get the  
133 food that we need. We need to learn how to, how to at least know how to make our own food or  
134 at least have an idea of where to start, you know, you know that those kinds of things. I'm sorry,  
135 I went out on a tangent.

136 A lot of things motivate me. I think what led me to teaching, um, what led me to  
137 teaching was my brother. My brother took his life and I knew that from that you don't, you don't  
138 need to read a letter or anything to understand that he was unhappy in his life. Um, and looking  
139 back he went to A&T, um, and um, he led me that because if he went to A&T, I went to A&T,  
140 um, and looking back at pictures, you could kind of see the light kind of go out of his eyes. And  
141 so, I'm a, I'm a processor. I like to process things and figure out like, um, you ask questions and  
142 figure out how can I use this in my own life as a guiding light. You use something very dark.  
143 You break it down and figure out how can I use this as a guiding light to fuel me to keep going  
144 or what I took from that was he wasn't happy with his life. So, then I had to ask my own self,  
145 like, what, what makes you happy and are you doing what makes you happy? And um, I was  
146 still, you know, campaigns at the time and I thought, you know, I really, I do like campaigning,  
147 but why do I like camping? I like it because it helps people understand their power in the  
148 political system, but there are certain things that I was just like, how can I use this? Is this what I  
149 really want to do? And I was like, I really like working with youth that gives me that. They bring  
150 me light; it can be, it can be very joyous. It's not an easy task, but if we can work with young  
151 people to inspire them to do whatever they want to do or become whatever they want to become,  
152 that's what I want to do. So, then I started, I got a job, um, uh, during the time that my brother



153 passed away, I was working as a teacher's assistant for, um, specifically for students with autism.  
154 Um, I was a youth facilitator. That was my title.

155 I was in middle school and so for the first time and they were, a lot of these students were  
156 in contained self-contained classrooms, um, in, in elementary school. And so this is their first  
157 time being in a classroom with other students, with the regular population of students. Um, and  
158 so I would, my job was to help them in that transition process and help them think about when  
159 they're in a classroom, hey, do you have your books? Hey, do you have your pencil? Hey, are  
160 you paying attention? You know, just helping them and helping the teacher and the other  
161 students in the classrooms. So, a lot of the students were boys actually all boys. I was working  
162 specifically with... there were sixth graders. I had three sixth grade boys and then I had um, uh,  
163 an eighth grade, an eighth grader. Um, and they were all really different ethnicities. Um, there  
164 was native American, African American. um Caucasian. And then there was um, a uh, Indian  
165 ethnicity. Um, his parents were from India. Um, and so they were, they were all different in  
166 different levels of the spectrum. So, you had, um, one who he liked to clean a lot and he would,  
167 if there was a pencil by your foot, he will pick it up and he didn't understand like space and  
168 things like that.

169 So that gave me an understanding of there are a lot of kids out here and a lot of people  
170 out here who are forgotten, you know, like when we, when we design parks and things like that,  
171 are we designing parks for kids with disabilities? Not necessarily. When we think about it just  
172 made me think about how are we including students. At first, I was against it. I was like, not  
173 against it, but I was just like, it's a great idea to, have inclusion. But the way that you go about it,  
174 you just kind of throw these kids into the pot in the frying pan and you're not one, um really  
175 educating teachers on how to do that. Um, you just, you know, hiring a facilitator. But the  
176 teachers still doesn't know how do I, how do I teach with students with autism and not only teach  
177 but social, like how do I socially, um, make the, make them connect with other students. And  
178 then the students, they don't know anything about a student. They just think that they're weird,  
179 you know. So, then they become, they become targets in the classroom, so you have to, I think,  
180 talk about, um, inclusion with, with the students as well in that student level and then on the like  
181 with counselors and things like that. You're not training the counselors on how to connect with  
182 students who with, with autism, you didn't give them any special training on how to do that  
183 either. So, you have a kid with autism saying I want to kill myself and jump off a roof when they

184 really don't want to jump off a roof, but, but, or they say I'm going to kill you. Really, they just,  
185 they don't like you, you know what I'm saying? So, the things that they're saying is on the, you  
186 know, extreme. And so, like kids don't know necessarily. He said he gone kill me. Like you  
187 really think he's going to kill, you know what I'm saying?

188           So, it's, it's, you have to, if you do things like that, you have to make sure that everyone is  
189 aware of what's going on. Um, and then I don't know. But anyway, so you have to just make sure  
190 that people are aware that they get proper training to make that happen. But that just gave me an  
191 idea of working with that. I was like, okay, I liked teaching, let me just go ahead and get my  
192 lateral entry teaching. And I started teaching history. Um, and then um, after teaching history I  
193 was like, okay, um, I'm working with students who have gone through 12 years of school. They  
194 don't know how to read. They don't have any special skills and when they graduate, I don't know  
195 what they're going to do. I was in a special that the high school is teaching at was a high school  
196 that will help students, um, who had eight credits left get their high school diploma. So, this was  
197 a special population. So you have the kids in high school who they move around a lot or the kids  
198 who have a learning disability or the kids who had behavior disabilities, they were kicked out of  
199 school, but they have 8 credits to graduate instead of just letting them like, just drop out. They,  
200 what you would do is they would come in and you would help them get those eight credits. So, I  
201 taught American history, one American history two and civics. There was a student who, um, she  
202 ran away from home and became a stripper, you know, you had a student who, not my student,  
203 but this student, she was a previous student, um, who died of a heroin overdose. And what  
204 happened was really, but the connection for that was the where I, the middle school where I  
205 taught at, her, the girl who died sister's, grandmother, not related to the one who died of an  
206 overdose. Worked at the school. And so, I, I, um, I knew about her mother. Her mother was a, an  
207 addict and that's why the grandmother had, her paternal grandmother had custody of her and with  
208 the case of the, um, the girl who died of a drug overdose, her maternal grandmother had custody  
209 of her. Um, and so it was just, it was, you know, you're dealing with real life issues and so you  
210 have to pick, I think for me is you have to pick something that um, that you can help with. And  
211 so, I was just like, I liked teaching, I want to teach something that's a little bit, I'm a little bit  
212 more passionate about. So, from my brother dying, me trying to figure out what am I passionate  
213 about, what can I do, um, that will be beneficial to the world around me. And so, I'm with  
214 agriculture. That's a lot of things. That's, that's everything that I've been working with are my, all

215 of my professional experiences. It's politics, it's youth development. It's um, it's inclusion, it's a,  
216 you, one of the things with agriculture is one of is, is it number one employer in the world  
217 agriculture? or number two? But it's, it's a lot of jobs here. So, um, and so if we can teach, we  
218 can train students on when they get out of school, hey, why don't you do something in  
219 agriculture? Or what about welding or things like that there, you know, especially with the kid,  
220 the population that I was dealing with at the high school level. Um, they were, they didn't know  
221 what they wanted to do. Um, there, you know, okay. They probably weren't going to go to  
222 college. What about a four year, a two-year degree. They weren't, they didn't know anything, you  
223 know, they didn't know, um, the next steps or even how to, to, to get that or to achieve that. And  
224 really, they didn't have the, they didn't have reading skills and math skills to kind of get that. So,  
225 you know, how to, how can you start, what can you do? So, I don't know, but yeah, so they got  
226 me to apply to Grad school and here I am now.

227 So, in 2014 there was a study done by, um, it was a report that was published that ranked  
228 Greensboro High Point area number one in first, worst food insecurity, um, in the nation in the  
229 metropolitan areas. Um, and it was like I had heard for a very long time that North Carolina  
230 Greensboro had food insecurity, food deserts match, just like, that just didn't make any sense to  
231 me. So I was like, that didn't make any sense to me, but it eat because we have, it's like a city,  
232 like Greensboro as a city, High Point's like a city, like, you know, and it doesn't make sense for  
233 even rural areas that were historically agriculture based to have to be food insecure. That doesn't  
234 make any sense, you know what I'm saying? So, but anyways, that was, that was, I looked at that  
235 article, um, and it really put a tizzy in Greensboro. It really threw people for a loop that we were  
236 number one, no one wants to be embarrassed. That was embarrassing how are number one? Um,  
237 and so you add all the city council and the other folks saying how are we number one? So, it, it,  
238 it made people kind of go into action in 2016. I think the report came out, then we were number  
239 nine. Um, but that's still like, I think it's still seventeen percent or so. It was still, it was still high  
240 number. We just had, they had less lessened it a couple of points. But what is food insecurity? I  
241 was interested in what does that, what does that mean? Um, and so that's kind of what led me to,  
242 um, not wanting to major in agriculture but led me to have what I wanted to focus on when I,  
243 um, when I got accepted. So, even in my acceptance letter, I talked about that, that study that  
244 happened. And so that came, became my focus for my capstone project.

245 First, I was gonna look at how can we work with families and teach them how to both  
246 food. So, then there was a study that came out by the Department of Agriculture and the city of  
247 Greensboro is a partnership that came out of the, um, the, uh, the number one ranking. So, they  
248 said, well, how are we number one until they did a part of a study with, uh, the Department of  
249 Agriculture. I forget the title is something like I can get the title is escaping me, but um, what  
250 they did was they highlighted seventeen food deserts in Greensboro. Of course, high point had  
251 their own issue, but just focusing on Greensboro. Greensboro had seventeen food deserts and,  
252 and so I started looking at that, okay, we have seventeen food deserts, where are these food  
253 deserts? And of course, you would assume that they were mostly in East Greensboro and that  
254 will be correct. They are mostly in East Greensboro. What, what, but how are there seventeen  
255 like what makes up these seventeen food deserts? Um, until I started looking at the maps and the,  
256 the maps look similar to me. These neighborhoods carved out look very similar to me and I was  
257 like, where's this coming from? Well my political experience in my political backgrounds of  
258 doing campaigns, you look at precincts and so the precincts and these, these precincts and these  
259 food deserts are the same. So, the communities are, are voting precincts. That's how they can.  
260 That makes sense.

261 On a national level, you look at the voting precincts and then you can say, okay, this is  
262 where food deserts are. Um, so those. So, I was like, oh, this looks, this is the exact same. This  
263 is, um, precinct 10 or G10 or G11. Um actually not necessarily those areas, but in east  
264 Greensboro where there aren't, where there, where they weren't a food desert is because there  
265 was a Food Lion around. So, most Food Lions are in food desert communities. Um, and so it  
266 just, I'm probably going out on a tangent, but, um, but I looked at, I'm mostly talking about my  
267 journey as trying to figure out what and why I chose my capstone project. Um, and so looking at  
268 this study, you know, I looked at where are the most connected food deserts or these, these  
269 precincts, um, and they were in east Greensboro. And then because the way that they had the  
270 map, there was no like, oh, this is you. There were no streets on it. It was like a, uh, it was like a  
271 really vague line. But because I knew the precincts, I knew where I knew where these areas  
272 were. Um, and so it was Dudley high school. Dudley high schools district is in seven of the 17  
273 food deserts in Greensboro and it's the most connected, form, if that makes sense, like the most  
274 connect, connected together, um, areas. They're more clusters. Um, and so I would, I looked at  
275 Dudley St. map, which of course is broken down into precincts and they work very similar. Um,

276 and so it was, it's kind of like the stretch and so there's some food deserts on one side and then  
277 some food deserts on the, on the other side. But anyways, it was seven, it was seven of the  
278 seventeen food deserts. And so, it was like, okay, well what can I do? Um, what, what else? Like  
279 how can, what can I, what can I do?

280           What happened was I actually ran into, very randomly, um, there was a teacher that I  
281 worked at, at my, at the high school, um, and so she worked during the day, she worked at  
282 Dudley and then she would come to the school at nighttime because the school was from 2:00p  
283 to 8:00p, so she would come from 5-8 and teach. She taught English and so I would hang out  
284 with her and she introduced me to some of the folks at Dudley, just I'm just hanging out and just  
285 going out places. And so, one of the people that I was hanging out with was Mr. Washington.  
286 And so. I saw him randomly at a Walmart and I walked up to him and I was like, Hey, I'm a grad  
287 student, you know, I'm, I'm Ms. [East's] friend. And I was wondering like, do you guys have an  
288 agriculture education department at Dudley? And he's like, no, but, um, we have a garden. So, I  
289 was like, okay, you have a garden? He was like, yeah, we, um, we have a garden and most of the  
290 science teachers are, uh, help with the garden until I was like, oh, okay. So, he was like, there's a  
291 student at A&T who's, um, she's a master's student too, and she's been doing some work in our  
292 garden, why don't you come and meet with her? And so, um, we're going to have a meeting  
293 about the garden and so I came to that meeting. Um, we met, uh, her name was [Alisa] and she,  
294 she graduated in 2016 December. Um, and this was like 2017, um, spring 2017 and we decided  
295 that we were going to revitalize the garden over the summer and then in the fall I would do my  
296 project.

297           So, um, so understanding, I already understood the food desert food insecurity. It was  
298 like, okay, what's the physical part, how do we put this to together? And so, you can't have a... I  
299 was gonna design a garden club, so you can have a garden club without a garden. Um, so, um, in  
300 the summer I use some of my, um, my resources, uh, in the community, um, for some of my  
301 networks I talked to on the city council people and so we were able to get, um, mulch from the  
302 city. And then I talked to someone who owned a nursery. Um, Hill Valley, I think it's Hill Valley  
303 Nursery. I'm so bad, but anyways, they gave us two hundred plants, um, and it was, it was like  
304 after their season, so it was kind of, they're kind of old. Um, they still worked. Um, so they  
305 weren't, as pretty, uh, as their newer plants. So, they gave us like 200 of those and it was like  
306 tomatoes and watermelon, eggplant and really all you need in a garden is plants, water, sunlight.

307 Um, and so we, we got our plants and we started a camp in 2017, so students came, and they  
308 were able to get service-learning hours, um, they came from 9 to 12 on Tuesdays and Thursdays  
309 for the nine weeks of summer. Um, so from like June to August, um, students were able to come,  
310 and they were able to get, like we were able to grow food and the food that we grew, we actually  
311 donated to Shiloh Baptist church. Shiloh Baptist church had it on Tuesdays. They were on  
312 Eugene Street, right across. It's like right next. It's like a block away from the um, uh, urban  
313 ministries. It's that really big church and they were getting vegetables.

314 They were getting vegetables and so on Tuesdays and they gave out a vegetable produce  
315 to folks and it was kind of slightly going on the bad side, but I kind of started, I would go and get  
316 vegetables as well and they started out with maybe like twenty folks. Then it would come to like  
317 sixty folks and by the time you will be there in fifteen minutes and then the food will be out.  
318 We'll be all gone. Um, and so we, we donated our produce there. Um, and so students, so some  
319 folks got like fresh squash and things like that from us. So, it wasn't just like some stuff was  
320 going bad, but they got the fresh squash and fresh vegetables from the garden. Um, and then, but  
321 I teamed up with them. We needed cardboard because we were laying down the mulch. There  
322 was someone who would bring the cardboard from the boxes of vegetables that they had and  
323 dropped them off at the, um, at Dudley for us too in the summer. So it was, it was kind of, we  
324 have like a partnership. Um, but yeah, so we started the, the garden, the, um, the garden club,  
325 Summer Club at, at, um, at Dudley and then that kind of ballooned into and moved into, um, my  
326 capstone project which was creating The Oasis Garden Club, um, that went along with the  
327 garden and so we taught kids how to grow food. We had community leaders come in, so people  
328 teaching people about how to advocate for themselves. I had, um, Nancy Hoffman come in, a  
329 city councilwoman. And um, are you familiar with a Wesley? Wesley Morris is, are you familiar  
330 with the Beloved Community Center? So, he works there, and he does a lot of, um, a lot of work  
331 on social justice. Um, and so, uh, I had him come in and talk to the students just about advocacy  
332 because when you live in a food desert, what does that mean, um, when, when you, when  
333 Greensboro is ranked is ranked number one for worst food insecurity, what does that mean? How  
334 can I empower myself instead of people coming into my community? How can I start from  
335 within to, to raise a voice about the, about those issues?

336 So, my dad is a college professor and um, he's done a lot of community work. Um, I  
337 think out of all like his five children, I'm probably the one that followed that kind of, you know,

338 community work that he's done and kind of followed his footsteps in that way. I just remember  
339 being young and um, you know, having my brothers and being kind of, um, my dad taking us to  
340 different programs that he was doing different grants that he had written, different programs, um,  
341 and just, just sitting in the corner and watching him do his thing. So, um, he had a manhood  
342 program when I was growing up, so he worked with a lot of the males. I'm listening to a lot of  
343 males in the Muslim community. Um, they had like a, a Man-Up program until I remember  
344 seeing that, but just people just kind of coming up to me and being like, Oh, your dad, I used, I  
345 knew your dad, you know that kind of thing. And so, um, also when my dad was getting his  
346 masters, he did um, a program, a Wilmington, I think it was called like the Afro- something  
347 project. It's like in the seventies, everything had like Afro in it. But, um, my uncle died a couple  
348 years ago and there was this guy like playing the drums at the, at the funeral is playing these  
349 drums. And I remember, um, my dad like, saw him, he was playing the drums at the wake and  
350 my dad saw him and he gave him like, you know, one of those daps. And um, it was, but it was  
351 like, it was really smooth, like, you know, the guy went back to playing the drums.

352         The next day when we were at the burial site, the guy was playing the drums. And so, at  
353 the end, um, you know, went up to him. I was like, hey, you know, my dad's George Cliette. And  
354 he was like, aw man, you know, I remember your dad, your dad. I was in his Afro Program, um,  
355 that he started in the seventies. And so, he was like, you know, he, he, he really was a guiding  
356 light to where I am today. Um, so I think my dad was the biggest factor in kind of my work and  
357 he kind of always taught me that like, I think as, as African Americans, so like, it doesn't matter  
358 what your profession is or you know, if you get a doctorate or M.D. or a lawyer or how big you  
359 get, you still have to kind of come back into your community, look back and figure out like, how  
360 can I help, how can I help someone else get to where I am? So, having this, um, how can I help  
361 other people rise as I arrived? Um, I think that's important too. Um, so I was taught that at a very  
362 early age. Like, what is your, okay, yeah, you want to do this, but how can, how you're going to  
363 get back. I'm also think being Muslim, um, one of the five pillars of Islam as charity. So, the  
364 charity can be money. Of course, we always think, oh, charity is money, but charity is a smile.  
365 Um, and charity is time. So, if I don't have money, what can I give? I can give my time. When I  
366 was kind of formulating my project, how can I give back, how can I get blessings and giving  
367 back, I can give my time. So how can I use, utilize my time to help my community. I think that's  
368 something that's always been in the back of my mind too.

369 So, um, most of the students at Dudley are African American, um, but then it's still a range of  
370 students within that, um, within that. So, I work with having my background with working with  
371 students with disabilities, working with autism students I've worked with and also the, the  
372 assistant principal that I, that I um, work with, the administrator that I work with. She's over the  
373 science department in the EC Department. So, one of the first things that she was like, okay,  
374 you're going to do this program, um, you're going to have to have OCS students work with you  
375 as well. So, OCS students are, um, an occupational course. So, Anyways, students have to have a  
376 certain amount of hours trained in, uh, in some type of work skill at the school and then they  
377 have to have other hours in the community. I'm like in a job. And so a lot of these students have,  
378 they had some type of learning disability or they really are kind of, they're kind of, they're on the  
379 spectrum, um, maybe they have autism or they have some type of disability where it will kind of  
380 impair their livelihood and kind of things like that. So, you try to try to get them job skills and so  
381 they have to have a certain amount of job skills. I don't think they'll graduate with a diploma, but  
382 they'll graduate with a certificate, that kind of thing. Um, so a lot of them.

383 So, they would come, they were one of the main students in even the summer program.  
384 And then, um, the uh, club, they came every, every day. I think they may miss out on all the  
385 sessions I have made miss like one or two for like doctors' appointments or something like that.  
386 Um, so you had those students, you have students that are in the Dudley academy. So there in  
387 like AP [Academic Placement] classes, honors classes and they're trying to get those service-  
388 learning hours. You can get like 250 hours. You get a certificate. Um, I think if you get like 150,  
389 you know, you get another type of certificate. So, these students are trying to make sure that they  
390 have those service certain hours. Um, and so then I have another population of just, these  
391 students didn't necessarily, these are the life skill students or the adaptive learning students. So,  
392 these students have to veer physical, mental and emotional disabilities. Um, so they're in a self-  
393 contained classroom all day until I worked with the teacher that I worked with also with the club  
394 sponsor Ms. Andrews. And so, uh, I worked with her classroom, not with the club, but I just  
395 would like, go. They, they were kind of like the garden keepers especially because they didn't  
396 have their, their curriculum is built, built on life skills. Like how to, how to wash your face, how  
397 to cook without turning on the stove, those kinds of life skills. So, um, how to prepare food  
398 without turning on the stove or something like that. Uh, so they would come to the garden and  
399 they really are the garden keepers at Dudley. So pull the weeds, they'll plant the flowers, they



400 can get away with a lot of what people don't understand that I think people are very critical  
401 teachers, but they don't understand there's a, um, there's a required amount of uh, standards that  
402 teachers have to teach and they, they, they can't necessarily go too much off their course of what  
403 they're teaching. Um, so there, so like if you get a science class, they can come to the garden  
404 maybe a week out of that whole course. But the life skills students can, can come every week  
405 because they can build that into, they can build the garden into their, their, uh, their, their  
406 curriculum. And so that's, that's important.

407         So, I worked with them not at the club but just on it, just trying to maintain the garden on  
408 a regular basis. Um, even now like I got Collard Greens and things like that, they'll plant then  
409 um, or they'll pull the weeds, so they'll put mulch down. Um, that kind of thing. So they are the  
410 garden keepers and the maintainers of the garden and then so really working with, with entire  
411 population at Dudley and I work with them differently so I have people who come to the garden  
412 and then we have garden club activities where they're like volunteered things on the weekends.  
413 So, I get those, those students that don't necessarily want to come to the garden for the club  
414 because they have other extracurricular activities, but they'll come for one event where they'll  
415 come like twice a month or something like that. Like we did. Um, for MLK (Martin Luther King  
416 Jr.) Day service-learning project we may garden bombs, which are seed bombs which are seeds  
417 with clay and dirt. And so, we had over 60 students make those. Whereas most students want to  
418 average club day. I may have like six or seven students that come, um, and then we have, the  
419 other students that, the life skills, the adaptive learning students, it's about 10 or so of those. So  
420 I've worked with, I've learned how to work with different populations based on what they need  
421 and the time and they can get. So, um, so yeah.

422         One of first major programs I worked was actually, I was a camp counselor. Um, so this  
423 was, I was a sophomore in college, 2006. It was right after Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane  
424 Katrina happened in 2005. So, I wanted to go down to, the, for spring break A&T would, um, I  
425 think for almost like five years they would go down to New Orleans and help with cleanup or  
426 um, that area, and help with clean up. And so, I like was like, oh, I'm going to do that. And so,  
427 you know, you could do it for spring break. And so, I asked my dad, and my dad was like, no. He  
428 was like, you're not going down in New Orleans, um, you're not going to go clean up, it's so  
429 many, it's so many bacteria and things. And he was just worried about all the bacteria. And he  
430 was like, no, you can't do that, and so I was like, aw man. Like I really wanted to you know,

431 help. I think I've always been like really connected with how I can help my community. And so,  
432 um, I was watching Oprah and Oprah highlighted this camp in upstate New York that was taking  
433 student taking, homeless children in New York City. I'm into summer camp in upstate New York  
434 and they were like living in these tents and it was like really magical and as like, oh man, I really  
435 want to do that. Um, so I applied to that camp and then I applied to a similar camp. Um, and so  
436 like they would take kids on hikes and nature walks and like, uh, we actually did, we walked  
437 three miles up into the mountain and we slept like on a rock it was really cool. But I'm like, we  
438 went up to, it was like Bear Mountain New York and I was just like, this is really, you know.... I  
439 thought I was really doing some really amazing, you know, work. And then we got the student,  
440 the campers to come and they were, they were New York City kids. Um, and a lot of them had,  
441 um, a lot of them were like on medication, like Ritalin or just other things. And so, it's a great  
442 concept I think to take students in, to take, not students but camp, to take kids for camp for two  
443 weeks at a time to experience nature. That's a beautiful thing. But again, you know, I had a  
444 student who had, he was on like Ritalin or something. He's on Ritalin. He was on some type of  
445 medication, but his mom didn't get, bring him enough medication for the two weeks. Um, and so  
446 that was, that was an interesting experience because as just an intern, it was interesting  
447 experience.

448         What I learned from that is you have to be very intentional even though you have a great  
449 intention, um, and your, your heart is in the right place. And it sounds really nice. Oh, we're  
450 going to take, um, homeless youth in New York City and for two weeks they're going to come to  
451 nature and they're going to experience nature walks and lakes and just be with nature. Like that's  
452 going to be awesome. But they, but you're taking students, you're taking a population who, who  
453 are dealing with a lot of issues, um, and they've experienced a lot of different things being  
454 homeless. So, you, you have to be thoughtful about that. Do you have the right training or people  
455 really equipped? Are The counselors equipped? Um, do you have social workers? Do you have  
456 folks that can deal with some of the psychological issues that they, that, that they bring with  
457 them to camp? And so that made me really think about like, if you might have a good intention  
458 when doing community work, but what does that mean? What, what these kids (long pause) what  
459 does that mean? You know what I'm saying? Like whatever you do, even though you have good  
460 intentions, could it be harmful? Could it, could it have, could it bring things that you weren't  
461 expecting? Like what, what, what are some that you could expect? Um dealing with that. And so

462 I think in my work now it made me think about like, even though you have a good idea, what are  
463 some of the issues that that could bring? Or what are some of the things that you could run into  
464 with dealing with youth, um, in certain populations. Um, and, and are you prepared to deal with  
465 that? Um, and if you're not prepared to deal with that then are you really being helpful? Um, and  
466 so I think in, at Dudley it was like, you know, when I, I still bring that experience with me.  
467 It's like, you know, are you being helpful in what, in what ways, what are the kids getting out of  
468 this that is helpful for them? And so, I always try to think about, what are the participants getting  
469 out of this and am I prepared to, to deal with any of the issues that, that this might bring. Um,  
470 and so, so yeah, it was a great experience. I think it was a great idea. Um, you know, we, we, you  
471 know, we swam in the lake and uh, we went on mountains and went up hiking in mountains and  
472 slept on... slept in nature and all those beautiful things. Um, but then it had other, you were  
473 dealing with other things, like if a kid didn't bring their glasses for two weeks, you know, so  
474 they, they can't see anything. Or you know, a kid takes, we only have, we don't have any tubs, so,  
475 but a kid takes bags, they don't take showers, but yet they um, use the restroom on themselves,  
476 but then they don't tell you are you prepared to deal with that kind of thing? Um, they were um,  
477 so there was a camp for six and seven years olds, Six, seven and eight. But there were like some  
478 six-year olds that got like, were in there, like parents were like, oh, you don't, don't, don't. Well  
479 take little Timmy with his little sister, take them both. So like Timmy turned out to be like five or  
480 six years old so, like it was either six to eight I think, or seven to eight. But then like a younger  
481 sibling was with them too. So I want to say was seven to eight and there was a six year old or  
482 that it was, it was, I think it was seven to eight and a six year old was like, they were a couple of  
483 six year olds and we were like, wait, you know, um, and so you had, had you, you had some, you  
484 had some other issues along with that. So, you just have to be in, in when you're creating  
485 programs with good intentions, like, okay, this is good, but what are some, what are some things  
486 that I didn't anticipate and prepare for those kinds of things. So that helped me in, in what I'm  
487 doing now.

488           So, my role was um, program facilitator for my capstone project. And the purpose, I  
489 think, I think it was a lot of things kind of going on, but I read this, there was a Facebook  
490 message that was like, how can students go through 12 years at school and not know how to  
491 grow their own food, not know how to write a, not know how to write out a check or invest in  
492 the stock market or all these other things. And so, as I mentioned before, like being a teacher,

493 you have to get through certain standards within your curriculum and you can't really go outside  
494 of that. Like its really, stringent, if you, if you go outside of that, um, you could be in some, you  
495 could be in some issues, especially if your students don't do very well. Um, so you've kind of had  
496 to sit to the curriculum at hand. Um, you can bring in some, you can bring in some real world  
497 experiences, but they have to... you're on a timeline of what you need to get through so he can  
498 bring in those real world experiences. But it's only going to be for a short amount of time. So it  
499 was looking at that, it was looking at other experience that I had and say, okay, well, well I can  
500 do this capstone project and I can help, I can help teachers. Um, I can... not help teachers but be  
501 a bridge and kind of a reference to what they're learning in the classrooms, but, and people can  
502 learn in a pragmatic way of like real hands on um, this is a tomato, this is how you pick a tomato.  
503 This is how you put it in the ground, this is the water, you know, this is how you water it. Like  
504 all these things and just teaching kids in almost a passive way too, where their food is coming  
505 from and all this thing. So that's kind of where I think it was like, okay, you are right, kids can go  
506 through 12 years of school, and not know how to grow their own food. Well I can, I can fix that  
507 through my capstone project so I can design my capstone project to help with this issue even if  
508 it's just 12 kids or 60 kids or however many.

509 I think just really understanding like what was going to be my place in the world, um,  
510 you know, I think with, with my brother's death, it was like, what is your legacy going to be?  
511 Um, you know, talking to my dad if you know someone comes up, oh yeah, I know your dad or  
512 something like that. So, it's like, what is, what is your legacy, what do you want your legacy to  
513 be? Um, and so I want to do, want to continue this work and leave a legacy that helped people  
514 get to where they want to be in life. So even though I'm teaching agriculture, um, even um, I'm  
515 teaching kids how to grow their own food. Um, I still in the conversations with them... Well,  
516 you know, what college do you want to go to? What do you want to think about? Oh, I wanna be  
517 a doctor. Okay. What kind of doctor? What other specialties do you know, as a physician, do you  
518 know any other specialties? Most people say pediatricians well, do you know about pathology?  
519 Do you know about radiology? So it's understanding... it's also studying up on different career  
520 opportunities and saying, you know what, why I have a friend that I ran into, a student, um, he's,  
521 he's a student at Dudley, but he's taking class saying A&T and I was at the gym and I saw him  
522 and I was like, oh, you know, how are classes going, and that kind of thing. And he was talking  
523 about, you know, he wants to do robotics. Um, I don't know. I don't know any robotic engineers,

524 but I do know programmers. So, Austin Blackman is a software engineer. I was like, you should  
525 talk to my friend Austin, you know, or just giving them references on who they should talk to  
526 and different things like that. And if, and if I don't know anyone, then I can come back. Even  
527 though we're, we're like in the garden planting, I don't know. Eggplants, you know, it's like, oh,  
528 well we're putting down mulch. Oh, well, you know, talking to them about, well, I know  
529 someone who does this or you know, when you're in college, you should think about this or we  
530 should talk to your professors or just giving them little, um, our conversations are built on what  
531 they want to do. Um, and, and giving them suggestions on when they get to those places, when  
532 they get to college, what do they need to do? Because there is a, there was a map to success and  
533 people can go outside of that map and still be successful, but at least if you do certain, certain  
534 things, you will be, that's guaranteed success. Um, I did those things, my siblings did those  
535 things. Um, I have a sibling who didn't do those things. And so, through his experiences I can  
536 say, okay, well, don't do that. You know, there's a, there's a map to success in a lot of kids that  
537 being first generation college students don't know any of that. So, I try to, um, and a lot of  
538 students at Dudley, not all students, but a lot of them will be first generation or second  
539 generation college students or even if they're, they might not or their parents might have gone to  
540 college but not in the traditional way. So, if, if I know how, I know this traditional way, just  
541 giving people pointers on how to be successful in those, in a traditional learning environment  
542 where they need to do.

543 I think... you know, sometimes it's, it's sometimes I rush, like not rushing into things, but  
544 I just am like, oh, let me, you know if someone says there's an issue. One of the. I always try to  
545 ask for feedback on things because I realized like, and honest feedback so I can kind of say,  
546 okay, yeah, that's true and I can kind of make adjustments to how I do things. And so, um, as I  
547 asked one of the teachers like, you know, so what do you think? And he gave me honest  
548 feedback. Sometimes, you know, if I say there's that pile over there and that you'll just start  
549 jumping in and trying to figure out the pile, but sometimes you have to step back and really be  
550 strategic about what you're doing. And so I think too is you're working with a program with not a  
551 lot of money, so you do have to be a little bit more strategic about the issue, understanding the  
552 issues and then before you act, okay, what can I do so that I have limited time, limited money,  
553 limited volunteer manpower, so how can I do that to be impactful in what I'm doing? Um, and so  
554 I think it's a lot of understanding that there will be trialing areas, especially in the beginning of,

555 of this career that I'm starting, it's going to be a lot of trial and error. And then once I understand  
556 like, okay, this happened, she can do this or you can do that, you can do this. If you have a lot of  
557 money, you can do that. If you don't, um, or a lot of time you can do this or you can do that. So  
558 understanding those things. Um, I think the most important thing is whatever the challenge is,  
559 making sure that you learn from those challenges. So picking out processing those gem are really  
560 important for me. Um, did I answer your question? Okay. So just understanding those gems and  
561 um, and learning from it because then that that becomes your, your map of success, you know,  
562 mapping, just having those mental notes and just just continuing to have this mental notes of  
563 things that went right and things that went wrong and how can you do it better.

564         So I think working with OCS students and seeing them blossom from the summer of  
565 2017 to the spring of 2018 was most rewarding and then being able to really express to me things  
566 that they wanted to do or didn't want to do more, and being able to feel comfortable enough with  
567 me to speak out or speak up to me about those things. So watching them blossom and there was  
568 one student who, um, he would speak but not, you know, he, he would say a couple words, he's  
569 very quiet, um, and uh, you know, from when I first started working with him till the spring he's  
570 much more, he speaks up a lot more to me and is able to give me feedback. Um, and, and when I,  
571 and one thing that I try to do is when they make, especially with the OCS students is when they  
572 make mistakes, not getting... like trying to help them understand the process of like, why you  
573 made that mistake, but in a loving way. Like, this is why this is, you know, you got to be careful  
574 about this because this could happen or that could happen. And then seeing them like take, take  
575 those, um, take that information and, when they do things like, okay... Seeing them not make  
576 those mistakes or seeing them get better at that, um, is I think rewarding are seeing and speaker  
577 is rewarding. Seeing my students outside of the garden and doing well. Um, that is, that makes  
578 me happy too and a lot of students, like even the, the, the um, undergraduate students that I work  
579 with and just them taking my advice and taken in and doing and doing well with that advice.  
580 Like just seeing people prosper is um and do well. It's, it's magic and gold for me.

581         So, um, before, you know, before you can do any work in a, in a school, you have to kind  
582 of figure out who's going to help you. Um, they were the teacher, Mr. Washington who I met at  
583 Walmart, uh, he, Mr. Washington was, he would kind of help me build out what my program  
584 was going to be. Introduced me to people in the school that could help me. Um, he actually had a  
585 meeting. Um, I worked with, um, Alyssa, so we worked together with the summer program and

586 then she decided that, she graduated in 2016, December 2016 from A&T and so she was kind of  
587 unemployed or just kind of working. She's working at a restaurant, but it wasn't really what she  
588 wanted to do, so she worked with me during the summer, but she was like, you know, I plan on  
589 getting an extra job to kind of help out with what I'm doing so I can't help you with the um, I  
590 can't help you with the garden club. But she had actually applied for a grant from whole foods  
591 and so, um, it was like \$2,000. Um, so, uh, so we were able for the garden club to work with that,  
592 um, and a lot of the materials that we get from the garden are from that grant. And so, I've  
593 worked with her and then there were two teachers, the art teacher and um the life skill teacher,  
594 Ms. Andrews who would sell, like we also sold our vegetables at Grove Street, farmer's market  
595 on Thursdays during the summer. So, they sold our vegetables. Um, and so I would give them  
596 the vegetables and they would sell it. So, there is, there are lots of different components. There's  
597 of course, everything that I do I have to get approval from the vice principal, Ms. Wingate. So,  
598 there's a team of folks that, um, that I've worked with.

599         Yeah. So, um, whole foods, we have a whole foods grant of \$2,000. Um, there's a lot of  
600 folks we worked with. Um, Mr. Charles, his um, his father actually went to A&T, uh, they had  
601 like 10 acres of a land in Greensboro and they grew their own food, so he grew up growing his  
602 own everything. And so, he works. He's a volunteer at Trinity A.M.E. Church on Florida Street,  
603 they have a beautiful garden. You can just stop by, um, it's across the street from us, right on  
604 Florida. So, if you go, if you go straight down Benbow and then you make that right turn at the  
605 light, you go up. The next intersection is like Dudley and then the church is like right there. Um,  
606 and then across the street is like a little house. And then behind that houses like a field. And um,  
607 Mr. Charles has a beautiful garden and so he helped, he was also a Dudley Alumni, um, so he  
608 helped us get some, like, seedling plants and things like that that he actually grew in the garden  
609 and then we just transferred to the beds at Dudley. Um, Dudley alumni helped. Um, there are,  
610 there's a guy who owns a tree company and he laid the mulch, he brings the dumpster and dump  
611 the Mulch, puts it on the platform. So, when we're doing mulch, we can use that. Um, the city  
612 was giving us free mulch, but we had to get up, we had to get the transportation for it. So, this  
613 guy just, he brings it and just dumped it. So, we didn't have to think about that. Um, there are  
614 folks that, a city council member, so anything that I need from the city, I usually go to Nancy  
615 Hoffman, um, and I talked to her and she's able to, to, to, uh, get me someone from that

616 department that can help me out. So, when I was trying to understand food insecurity and food,  
617 disability food... Lord have mercy, food deserts in Greensboro.

618 I talked to [Phil Fleischmann]. He actually gave me the report I was talking about from  
619 the US Department, um, US Department of Agriculture. [Phil Fleischmann]. He's, he's over. He's  
620 in the park and recs [recreation] department, so the park and recs. freshman I forget. I have to,  
621 I'm so bad with names and I apologize. I have to look on my, uh, had to look at my emails. I  
622 think it's fine. Yeah. Okay. So, um, he is over parks and rec as it pertains to the, um, they have a  
623 food, uh, uh, hunger. I'm sorry, I get a little, hold on, let me get, take a second. So, the city  
624 assigned the park, the parks and rec department over the, um, the food insecurity food desert  
625 issue in, in Greensboro. So, when that study came out in 2014, they did an initial, they drew up  
626 an initial committee and so they meet on a regular basis. They probably meet once a month with  
627 other organizations in Greensboro and in the triad area that are working on food security. Um,  
628 and a lot of these organizations like Backpack Beginnings, um Second Harvest, Urban  
629 Ministries, churches in Greensboro. So, um, whenever I need information or, or things like that, I  
630 can go to Nancy and she can hook me, she can kind of give me information on or uh, introduced  
631 me to people in the city that are, that are, uh, that can help me with what I need. So, when I  
632 needed mulch, she introduced me to the, uh, the, uh, garbage and waste management folks. And  
633 so, they were able to give me the mulch that we needed. Um, when I was trying to study a little  
634 bit more about, um, what Greensboro was doing for food insecurity, she introduced me to Phil  
635 [Fleischmann], um, and so I went to, I went to one of their meetings at, um, one of their meetings  
636 at the Department of Parks and rec and I, that's where I met the students. One of the professors, I  
637 forget her name, I'm so bad at names. Anyway, she had a class there and really, they were the,  
638 her students were the only black faces in the room talking about food insecurity, food deserts in  
639 East Greensboro. So, um, so yeah, so that, and that's a totally different story, but uh, but yeah, so  
640 that's how I was able to connect with the students and they were able to get credit for her class to  
641 work in the garden, at Dudley. Um, so yeah, I work with a lot of different folks. Um, I try to  
642 figure out like what in my network, um, the things that I need, how can people help me? I have a  
643 friend who would find me plants or donate hoses and things like that.

644 I think the overall purpose is to show folks, um, so after, show people in our community  
645 that one we can grow our own food and two um, if you have a, I think the, the, the bigger part of  
646 that is showing professionals that you can utilize your own skills and mentor, uh, kids in our



647 community don't complain about, don't complain and say, oh, students don't know how to do  
648 such and such or these kids out here and wild or they don't, what are you doing, you know, if  
649 there's a child that wants to be a lawyer, um, you know, our kids know how to argue and debate  
650 people down. Why don't you go and do a debate club, if you're a lawyer and, and get some other  
651 lawyers and maybe, maybe it's not a, uh, a 13 week program or, but maybe it's a, um, it's a one  
652 week, maybe it's a crash course in debating or maybe it's a, it's a crash course or just a  
653 informational session on how to be a lawyer or things that you do as a lawyer or, you know, just  
654 utilized your professional experiences. Um kind of like what um, Du Bois was talking about with  
655 the talented 10th, like what are ways in which you can use your experiences and, and uh, and  
656 help youth, especially with if you're in master's program or doctoral program, how can you use  
657 that project that you need to get done to, to help in youth development.

658 I think youth empowerment is exposure. I think exposure is really a big thing. And so  
659 growing, I was exposed as a youth to photography and um interviewing, um, and for me, like I, I  
660 struggle with, reading, I didn't learn how to read until I was in the ninth grade. I have, have a  
661 learning disability, so I was a part of this program. It's called Youth Document Durham and they  
662 put us, they put cameras in our hands, we learned how to develop film from the dark room. So  
663 we developed our film and then we developed our, our um, photos. Um, and then we would  
664 interview people. Um, and that just gave me so much empowerment. Um, I learned that I could  
665 do things, especially not, um, being someone with a learning disability and struggling with  
666 things, you have a self-esteem. Like, I don't know if I can really do that. You are kind of like, ah,  
667 well if that involves a lot of reading, but speaking out and like, you know, I would shy away  
668 from it. Um, but this program gave me, um, it gave me a lot of uh, self-esteem, um, and by  
669 showing me that I could do things and so, and it just exposing me to journalism and so Um, I'm  
670 doing something totally different from that, but I think exposing, exposing youth to different  
671 projects and different things and showing them, having them try it from a pragmatic exposure,  
672 having them do things with their hands and accomplish little things. Putting a seed in the ground  
673 and watching it grow out. I did that. Um, you know, that's, that's a beautiful thing. And so, um  
674 watching things grow, watching things do things. I think just, I think it's for youth and youth  
675 development from my perspective, it's just exposing youth to something and then empowering  
676 them the way they empowered is by, by doing it and seeing some type of, um, accomplishment  
677 or um seeing that seeing that seed grow is, is a powerful thing.

678 I don't know, it's, I don't, think I have impacted African American youth. Um, I think it's  
679 too soon to say I've only been with this project is only a year old or so. Um, I think it will be  
680 interesting to see talk to someone 10 years from now and have them say, oh, that helped me do  
681 this or just having a conversation. Um, helped me do that. So, I look forward to having those  
682 conversations and hearing that feedback. I do think one of the things that I do too is, um, you  
683 know, I'm at Dudley all the time and so I walk with, you know see certain students that don't  
684 even come to the garden, but they see me. And so, um, I have conversations with them. Um like,  
685 uh, there was uh, you know what, there was a kid who didn't really come to the garden. Actually  
686 he did come to the garden, once came to the guidelines, he helped me plant some vegetables and  
687 what happened was the teacher didn't really, it was like the last 30 minutes of class and I needed  
688 some help doing something. And so, my teacher was like, you can take him (laughter). And so,  
689 he would come to, he came to the garden once and then I would see him in the hallways and so  
690 we would have conversations and he was, um, a twelfth grader, but he had about, he had  
691 probably eight credits to graduate. So, your ninth-grade year you usually have, alright maybe he  
692 had 12 credits like he needed 12 credits.

693 So, he was taking all these extended, like afterschool, um uh, like he would come before  
694 school and take a class and then he was stayed three hours after school and take two other  
695 credits. And he had to, he had like, he would take it on the computer, but he had like four classes  
696 that he needed to do. It was crazy. It was absolutely nuts. But he would come to some of the  
697 program, like, especially when we started cooking. Um, and so, one of the first things we made  
698 were green tacos. He was like, what is this, I'm not eating green tacos? It was like roasted  
699 Broccoli and um, roasted broccoli, roasted string beans with guacamole. Um, salsa verde, which  
700 is the green salsa and then some white cheese. And so, he was like, uh, but he did try it. And so,  
701 like one of the things that he would do is he would um, at least try to come and see what we were  
702 doing. Um, and so, uh, we made pizzas. We made herb pizzas out of tortilla shells with cheese  
703 and herbs. And so, he was like, oh, this is the bomb. He was like, so what, what, what, what,  
704 what, uh, what is this? And I was like, it's rosemary. And he's like, Rosemary, that came from the  
705 garden, right? I was like, yeah. So, I do think that one of the things that we do too is I would go  
706 and help him with his classes. So, like after the club I was there and went on Thursdays I would  
707 go and help him with some of, um, helping him get through some of the classes that he was  
708 doing on the computer. So, I do think that it changed his idea of, of a what food came from just

709 in a little aspect of what food came from and he was interested in what we were doing in the  
710 garden. So, I do think that that did have some impact.

711 I do think that I got the results I was looking for. I think I, I did even a little bit more, like  
712 I'm still shocked, you know, I do, I do this in, in um, in campaigning, they tell you about this big  
713 ask and in the big ask, you ask whatever you want. So, like you're like, I need you to do. I  
714 remember being on the phone one night, one day I was making political call and we had to have,  
715 we had to have certain events at people's houses and things like that or just have people come?  
716 And I remember being on the phone and being like, Hey, can I, can I set up a tent in your yard?  
717 And we have people that you don't know, come to your house and pick up, um, door packets and  
718 then go to the neighborhood. And The lady was like, yes. I was just asking for the most crazy  
719 thing. And like, the lady was like, yes, I had everyone in the room. Like, Amina, did you just get  
720 someone to like, put a tent in their yard and have like an event? And you just met them? And I  
721 was like, yeah, so I'm still like enamored with that big ask. So, when I ask people for their time  
722 and people say yes, that's amazing to me, like I'm still at the enamored by that. Um, and so I've  
723 asked a lot of big things of people, um, because you don't have a lot of money, you don't have a  
724 lot of resources. So just me saying, hey, can I start a garden program and someone be like, yes,  
725 hey, will you, you know, donate your time, you know, for students at an A&T. Hey, will you  
726 come and donate your skills and your time? And they're like, yes. And they're still with me even  
727 after the semester that they got the credit for it. So, they're just with me now. And they're like,  
728 they're still here, that's a... and they say yes, like that's a big thing to me. So, I don't, I don't take  
729 that for granted. Um, and so I'm amazed at how big this has become and that the fact that it's still  
730 going. So, I don't know, like when after I graduate, like I, I'm still trying to figure out like how  
731 can I maintain this? Um, and so in the student, the school is still open to it. So. So yeah,

732 I think that as I stated earlier, I think with the learning from certain situations that  
733 happened in our history as African Americans, I tend, this project was really, although the, um, I  
734 do go to people outside of our community asking for things. This is a historically black high  
735 school, um, and it's a program within a historically black high school. And so, there is a  
736 protection in that installation. Um, especially like, you know, Dudley Alumni and Dudley, um,  
737 the history of Dudley. You had, I think they were going to tear down Dudley High School, right?  
738 In 2001, uh, maybe a little bit before that. So, they wanted to tear down Dudley High School, and  
739 they were going to build a new high school and Dudley alumni were not having it. You are not

740 gon' tear down Dudley. So, people understanding, it's not like my, my dad went to Williston  
741 High School in um in Wilmington, North Carolina. Right. And I don't know if you, have ever  
742 heard of the Wilmington 10, they kind of started, I believe I could be wrong, but um Ben Chavis,  
743 you heard of Ben Chavis? Uh, I think he's been Muhammad now. But um, he actually went to  
744 jail. Some of the Wilmington 10 went to jail, but um, they would, they, they, they were trying to  
745 close down the black high school, which they did close down the black high school in  
746 Wilmington. In Wilmington, but it was kind of like the Hillside Durham and the Dudley of  
747 Greensboro. It was like that. Um, and so they were able to close. Oh, we're going to desegregate.  
748 Okay. Well our kids aren't going there. We just gonna close down that school. They're not able  
749 now a days you can't get away with closing down a Williston [Black School], you know, you  
750 can't close down a Dudley, now. Um, or you can't keep, you can't get away with certain things,  
751 other that you have to have a severe reason to close down certain things and African American  
752 community because it's just going to cause some issues. Now you can do some things to limit  
753 maybe the, the finances that those schools get and um, that kind of thing, but you can't just go in  
754 and just blatantly like shut it down. That's not going to happen. Um, and so if you understand  
755 that, if you raise enough noise, no one wants to be.

756         Someone was saying something like, in our community, people, certain groups have to  
757 understand that some people were acting racist and they did certain things to people in the  
758 community that were racist and then other people benefited from that. So, like when we talk  
759 about, um, the, how A&T was funded, it was funded through the Morrell grant, right? Of 18, of  
760 1891, we were funded by the Morrell grant. And then State [NCSTATE] was funded through the  
761 first Morrell grant. Um, but actually what was really interesting is that all those HBCUs that  
762 were founded, got the same amount of money that the first Morrell grant got, they got the same  
763 amount, it was equal in the money that they got, and the resources that they got. And then there  
764 were other grants after that to help fund these schools. But what happened was the federal  
765 government, because they didn't want to deal with certain segregated states, they're like, oh, we'll  
766 give the money to state legislators and, and they'll make sure that schools get where they need it.  
767 But what happened was you have A&T, you have, you have North Carolina A&T and then you  
768 have [NC] State University and you look at their extension programs. They're very different. The  
769 money that was given by the state legislator gave that taxpayer money to those schools, but they  
770 gave them in very different ways, or they didn't give the money that was supposedly, that was

771 intended to A&T, went to [NC] State. So, you have those kinds of things. So, the thing is, is that  
772 you can't do that now and not be called out. So if you kind of, I guess if you insulate yourself  
773 within the community and you're doing work within, within the community and you don't have  
774 to go outside of the community, you can avoid some of those things and if it does come to you  
775 and you're insulated and the people in your community see that what you're doing is good, then  
776 you won't get you. If something happens, people will call it out for what it is. So, does that  
777 make... I took you on this long route. But um, but yeah, so that's how I choose that I... with this  
778 project in particular, I chose to kind of be insular. And so, it shines outside of that. Then it, then  
779 it does. But if something happens, then it's there, there are some protections. But that means that  
780 you have to, you have to do everything right, that you can't do something crazy.

781 I think one of the things is when we talk about gentrification in our communities, right?  
782 And we talk about other people coming in our communities and making it wonderful and making  
783 it a place to stay. And then were pushed out. So, what is the opposite of gentrification? Right?  
784 What, what does that mean? What is the opposite of gentrification? So, um, I think it's us taking  
785 care of our communities, understanding that red line issues, historical issues, like red line that  
786 exists, understanding the, the other issues of that, but stay in our community and making our  
787 committee nice. So, what happened with desegregation is that the, with, with segregation in our  
788 communities, the black lawyers, dentists, they all stayed in the same community as, you know,  
789 custodians and everyone stayed in that same community. So, you got to see lawyers, you got to  
790 see doctors, you got to see dentists, you, they were your neighbors, you could have conversations  
791 with them. But then with, um, with desegregation, you know, if you were doing well, you moved  
792 someplace else, so now you don't, you don't see that anymore. You don't see those doctors and  
793 lawyers and things like that. So, for me, I've stayed within. I live within my community. I live,  
794 you know, I fix up, you know, my, my aunt bought a house, um, and it stayed in the family and I  
795 live in that house and we painted it and we've landscaped it and just made it look beautiful within  
796 the, within our neighborhood, you know, it's three blocks down the road.

797 And so, with that, it's making your neighborhood look nice. Is being the example of, you  
798 know, if we're, if we don't like gentrification, then what's the opposite of that? Making our  
799 neighborhoods look nice. Um making it a place where we want to live. Um making it an example  
800 that we don't have to live a certain way. Just because we live in the hood doesn't mean that it has  
801 to be torn down and redefining what that means. So just, um, so I think it's important that if you

802 do this work, you need to live within the neighborhoods that you're doing this work. And um,  
803 and then being an example like, you know, what does your house look like? You know what I'm  
804 saying? Being making sure that it looks, that is helping to boost up the tax revenue, boost up the  
805 tax revenue, and it's going to boost up the amount of money that our schools are getting. So just  
806 understanding that we're not isolated islands. Um, and so if, if you live in these neighborhoods, if  
807 you live in a certain neighborhood, then you want it to be as affluent as living on the other side  
808 of town. Um, and just rethinking those kinds of things. So, um, what I would like to do in my  
809 work is we talk about you know, what are the causes of food deserts and food insecurity. A lot of  
810 that is, is economic based. Um, it's, it's tax based. Um, and so grocery stores don't want to move  
811 in neighborhoods where they're not going to make money. I mean, so of course you're going to  
812 have food deserts. If people in those communities aren't making money, but why aren't they  
813 making money?

814 Well, when we talk to, um, and not just when we talked to, um, high school students in  
815 low income areas, are we talking to them about being plumbers and electricians and welders and  
816 nurses assistance and are we talking to them about that or are they just graduating and getting a  
817 job at McDonald's and then they have children and then that job at McDonald's money isn't  
818 really making it anymore. Um, so and understanding that times have changed too. So um,  
819 companies aren't giving out as much money, you're not going to get 40 hours a week at  
820 McDonald's because they don't want to have to pay you insurance. So, you're going to get just  
821 20, 29 hours a week. Um, the Obama care came in and said, okay, well I'm going to give you 30.  
822 You have to get people insurance at 30 hours a week. That kind of hindered some folks that  
823 couldn't get at least 38 hours a week at 32 hours a week. Now they're making 32 hours a week,  
824 you have to give people insurance now they're only making 20 hours a week or 29 hours a week.  
825 So now they have to get another job because people are getting two, um, minimum wage jobs  
826 and trying to piece it together to, to just afford a place to live and the cost of living has gone up  
827 but not people's paychecks. So we have to think about, we think about what, how we are  
828 introducing, um, how we're introducing college four year degrees and two year degrees to  
829 students so that, that's the work that I want to continue to work on this and also showing people  
830 how to, how to grow their own food. But also like, what do you want to do

831 Um in Islam... It teaches you; you have to be careful about calling yourself a leader. Um,  
832 what is a leader? Yeah. Especially like is a leader, someone that leads from the front or as a

833 leader, someone that leads from the, the behind. Are you pushing people to be their best and are  
834 you being the example that you're pushing people to be? So, I don't, I don't necessarily want to  
835 call. I wouldn't call myself a leader in that. And, um, I would say that I want to be an example of  
836 the things that I practice and so the things that I like have said, oh, well we should, why are we  
837 moving outside of our own neighborhoods, we should build up our own neighborhoods, we  
838 should build up our own houses, that kind of thing. That's, I'm living that example. So anything  
839 that, you know, you can call me on, well Amina you said this and you're not doing that. But I try  
840 to whatever I say that I believe in, I try to live it and I try to talk to other people about that as  
841 well. Um, so I just try to be, I think...I don't... no, I'm not going to say that I'm a leader, but I'm  
842 going to say that I'm, I'm trying to live as an example of a way in which we can live our lives,  
843 um, and be, and be different than what we're, the narrative that is pushed on TV. Oh, you got to  
844 have a billion dollars to make it in life. Well, can't you live off of \$40,000 a year? How can you  
845 live off for \$40,000 a year? Well, instead of a two bedroom, instead of a five, they had room  
846 mansion out in the middle of nowhere fix up a three-bedroom house with two bathrooms in, in  
847 our community, you know, take that money and build and live below your means. And what is,  
848 you know, if you live below your means and you don't mean to have this big thing, you know,  
849 um, I went to this conference and they were like, um, if you owned your own land, you could  
850 live off of \$30,000 a year or \$20,000 a year. Like what does that mean to you to live off of those  
851 things? So, if I, if I am a leader, I want to lead by example. Um, and if I am a leader, I want other  
852 people to shine. And so that's what. What I'm, that's what I'm trying to push towards. And that's a  
853 journey that I think will, that only time will tell what that will be, you know, 30 years from now.  
854 But I do think about what my legacy will be. I think that's important and I think about, um, um,  
855 pleasing Allah first of all. So, a lot of things that I do, um, the time that I give, those are, those  
856 are important to me.

857  
858  
859  
860  
861  
862  
863  
864  
865  
866

## Appendix M: Larry Barron

1           My Name is Larry Barron, I am African American, well actually I'm African and I'm 28.  
2 I am actually an entrepreneur. I'm an entrepreneur, but I am also a Barista. But my main source  
3 of, I guess you'd say income will be poetry. Between poetry, workshops with the youth, adults'  
4 poetry events, speaking engagements, hosting. Uh, I'm an author as well, actor, a lot bro. I wear a  
5 lot of different hats. I honestly, I didn't know about the Pigford v. Glickman case prior to reading  
6 it, but in looking over it, I'm not going to say you don't expect someone to be cheated or shorted  
7 or the resources be lesser than for a specific "race". But in today's society and the world that we  
8 live in, it's sad to say, but it wasn't a surprise to look at some of the numbers in knowing that  
9 some of the black farmers couldn't get approval for the loans that other farmers could or looking  
10 at the numbers at the end of the year and what these farmers are bringing in. I think I saw one  
11 where the average black farmer was like a 28,000. Then the average white farmer was 70-ish.  
12 Like to me that's a \$50,000 difference, who's going to really be able to maintain their land and  
13 get more. You know what I'm saying, like you see why certain ones that thrive and in certain  
14 ones are falling to the wayside and see what we as a community don't really know how to  
15 cultivate and grow our food. Like it's not taught is not a resource that is readily available for us.  
16 So, it's crazy, that case is crazy, like at all, it makes you want to educate more people and inform  
17 more people on exactly what's going on. Because it said back in 2007, Bro, that's 11 years ago.  
18 It's not like we're talking about the fifties or sixties and people are getting away with cheating.  
19 No, this is in the two thousand range. They're getting away with cheating people out of money  
20 and resources and its mind blowing. Sorry to ramble.

21           I will honestly say I am a firm believer of speaking and believing certain things, so I  
22 won't speak that this is going to be my case. I won't speak that I'm going to be cheated and  
23 shorted and not given the same value as some of the other people who are doing the work that  
24 I'm doing. I believe that I'm going to have the access to the grants. I believe that people are  
25 gonna be willing to lend a helping hand and help to educate me so I can help to educate others.  
26 You know what I'm saying. This kind of lets me know what to look for in a sense. You can't go  
27 in with a blind eye. You could never go in unprepared. Proper preparation prevents poor  
28 performance live by five P's. So, for me it's just thoroughly being educated and thoroughly being  
29 aware on some of the issues that we may face as a community and as a culture.



30 I mean, let's just be honest. I feel that we aren't educated enough, uh, but I also felt like a  
31 lot of a lot of us aren't seeking the knowledge that's necessary to thrive because I educate a lot of  
32 youth and even a lot of adults on the whole side of the vegan eating, being vegetarian even  
33 though I'm not, I still eat chicken every now and again, but for the most part, uh, I'm on a plant  
34 based diet. That's what I live off of. But to educate some of these people, they're like, man, why  
35 would I go spend \$10 on a Vegan meal where I can go get a four for four? And it's like, this is  
36 the mentality, we have to change the way our people think. If we want to see the actions change.  
37 Um, talking about breaking generational curses like as a little boy. I remember going to the  
38 McDonald's and the Burger Kings and but ask me how many times my mom, I mean she was a  
39 single mother, she did her best, but I also ask me how many times she took me to a farm to show  
40 me how to milk a cow or to help me learn how to grow my own produce. Like that's one thing  
41 that we don't have and it's like if something happened and there was no more fast food, how  
42 much of the world will die because they don't know how to survive? How much of the black  
43 community would die off because they don't know how to cultivate and grow their own food?  
44 Honestly, like those are the types of things that I think about. If they shut everything off and it's  
45 like, now you have to fend for yourself. How many people really know how to go hunt for the  
46 meat eaters? Who's gonna go out and hunt their own food? You know what I'm saying? How  
47 many people really know how to go out here? The correct soil? How deep to dig? What seed's  
48 gonna work where, how much water, how often you need to water, what season this has to be in?  
49 And I'm guesstimating just off of me. I would say at least one out of every three can't tell you the  
50 answer to any of those questions. As adults, we can't answer it. What's that saying for the next  
51 generation and the generation after them? So, I feel like is important for us to embrace change  
52 and understand that it's not about fast food.

53 We wonder why we have all these diseases that have plagued in the black community and  
54 only the black community. It's the foods that we've eaten since forever, since slave days, like the  
55 pig's feet and all of that. Those were. That's because we had to eat that. We didn't have another  
56 option to go and eat a nice juicy burger or a steak. Naw, you get these pigs slops and now it's in  
57 our, it's something that we... Chitlins, I've never had a chitlin a day in my life, never will. The  
58 thought of a chitlin... God bro. So that, like we take pride in that being something that we eat.  
59 You take pride in eating something that you know is going to kill you. So is the word nigger,  
60 really that bad if you really are as ignorant as they say you are? Just a question. You know what

61 I'm saying? I just, I look at everything from a standpoint of everything is a action reaction or  
62 causing and reaction. So, it's like how do, how did we get here, how do we get away from here  
63 and how do we make sure we never come back here?

64 It's gonna sound cliché but, the youth motivates me. Because I know like with us, in our  
65 age bracket, we're kind of getting a hold of this thing. We're kind of understanding what's going  
66 on. But if you were to talk to, like to talk to our parents, 50 to 75 percent of them are closed  
67 minded and they don't want to hear what we have to say. Well I'mma eat my bacon. I'mma eat  
68 my sausage on Sunday morning, I'mma eat 37 biscuits. And, you know what I'm saying? And  
69 this is really a situation where it's like you're okay with killing yourself, like you're okay with  
70 knowing that you eating this, you putting this in your body is gonna kill you, you're cool with  
71 that. It's discouraging. You know what I'm saying? It's discouraging to know that people can  
72 know what's right, what's wrong, and they still blatantly choose what's wrong. That's almost like  
73 a parent and a child. And then I tell you not to do that. You did, but I wanted to do this. So, I'm  
74 still gonna do this. That's where our community is when it comes to vegan eating and fast food  
75 and it's like in seeing it, don't get me wrong. There's an awakening. We should pick our feet up.  
76 There's an awakening. People are coming to. People are realizing what exactly is going on, how  
77 the benefits of eating right and living long. Do you want to eat terribly and die by 30 or do you  
78 want to eat healthy and live to be in a, in your eighties? If you look like our grandparents, they  
79 live for x amount of years. Like my granddad was like 80 when he died, at least 83. So to think  
80 about that, the average life expectancy of a black male here is what like 50, 60 years old and  
81 that's discouraging bro. Like we're dying earlier and earlier. If you believe in the Bible and the  
82 things in the Bible, they lived to be hundreds of years old. What changed to where? If we're in  
83 their lineage, they lived hundreds of years old and we can't even hit seventy. We can't even hit  
84 three quarters of a hundred years. You see what I'm saying? Like what's different? What  
85 changed?

86 Honestly, the number one thing that attracted me to the thought of opening a grocery  
87 store or a fast food vegan restaurant, is MY city, which is Winston Salem, North Carolina and is  
88 a food desert for the black community. Don't get me wrong, you got the Whole Foods and Trader  
89 Joe's and all of these various restaurants. Not restaurants but grocery stores that you can go in.  
90 But, let's be honest. They're not for us [African American Communities], for me it's a situation  
91 where we don't know how to grow our own food and cultivate and do what we need to do to

92 provide for us. So, I wanted to provide a space to where at the grocery store, all of our produce is  
93 grown on the site, but we also allow people to come out on Saturday and Sunday mornings and  
94 take workshops and learn how to grow. One of the visions for the grocery store. With all of my  
95 employees, we will go to their house and we will help them to start their own garden at home, so  
96 they know how to maintain garden is not just doing the work. You go home, you know how to  
97 maintain the thought is if we have the produce available outside, then you as a consumer can go  
98 outside and pick it yourself for x amount of dollars or you can come into the store and get it for a  
99 little bit less than regular price in town. But it's making it to where it's available. It's available for  
100 a price to where it's not gonna, I'm not going to have to choose between groceries and daycare  
101 for the week.

102 As far as experiences that led me to this type of work, I would say the, the short not really  
103 dry is I don't have anyone coming around to tell me about it [agriculture]. Um, I'm a firm  
104 believer that you have to be the change that you desire to see. And in this case, I want to see a  
105 change in my community. So I am that change... the short version. The demographic of youth  
106 that I'm involved with is, not necessarily always impoverished, but I'm going to choose to go to  
107 the places that need help versus the places that are already fixed. Um, because a lot of that, a lot  
108 of, I hate drawing a line between black and white. But there are a lot of Caucasian kids who  
109 know about growing, who grew up on farms. You know how many of my homeboys I went to  
110 school with... Yea man I grew up, my grandfather got a farm, my dad got a farm and it's like  
111 damn, like. My granddaddy didn't have no farm. My granddaddy had a house that didn't get  
112 passed down because it was old by the time he passed, you know what I'm saying? Like they're  
113 passing out farms. It's a difference it's like, its the difference in being set up for success and  
114 failure. I guess you could say my first major project, would of course be word society youth,  
115 which is a youth poetry program that empowers youth to give them a voice and a discussion  
116 about different things that they want to see a change in. So you hear them talk about, well I  
117 watch my, my, my, my grandma have a stroke and she lost her leg and she had diabetes and I  
118 know I got stage whatever diabetes, like bro, do you know how it feels to see a 14 year old girl  
119 with stage whatever diabetes, like best in your, that's in your genetics. Like that's disturbing  
120 dawg. It's not like she's overweigh. She has diabetes at a young age and now she's watching  
121 sugars then it leads you to, to talk to them and really try to help them understand how important  
122 it is to know what you're eating, what you're consuming, what you're taking in all of these

123 different sugars. Sugars feeds cancer, sugar feeds cancer. It's in everything that we have.  
124 Everything we eat, everything we drink, we've got so. We get our kids accustomed to eating  
125 things, drinking things that are filled with sugar. So, when you offer them water... Aw Dad I  
126 don't want water, it don't taste good. What tastes good is ultimately killing you. How do you  
127 create a new balance? How do you show your children something else? How do you tell them,  
128 no, you can't drink soda, but then they see you drinking soda? How do you not be a hypocrite?  
129 It's like I can go and talk to youth time and time again about this, about that, but it's like, until  
130 they see me doing it, I can talk until I'm blue in the face. They're not going to understand, they're  
131 not going to comprehend, but when they see you actually taking the action and making  
132 something happen, that's when it's like, oh well Mr. LB not just talking to Mr. LB really about  
133 what he be telling us about. You know what I'm saying? That's when it goes to a different level.

134 I myself, I'm a poet, I'm a performance poet spoken word artists. I wanted to be able to  
135 spread knowledge that through my community using arts and as like a, you know, like somebody  
136 asks you how you're doing today. You say, oh man, I ain't going to play and don't nobody want  
137 to listen. That's a lie bro. If you put it in a poem, people people will pay to listen to your  
138 problems, I figured out a key. You can't, we can't share that part and then you don't have a bunch  
139 of poets now you understand. But naw like, it was just ultimately, I wanted to see a change. Um,  
140 and I feel like a lot of our youth are led by the music and what these different rappers are talking  
141 about. And you don't hear no rappers talking about going out and growing a farm. You said they  
142 talking about sit and lean and getting high and all the chicks you can get and popping bottles.  
143 Like are you popping bottles of water, or vitamins. Nah, you popping bottles of alcohol and  
144 champagne and it's just, we, we've allowed the rappers to lead our community. When in doubt,  
145 the wordsmith, the poets were supposed to lead. We're supposed to be the voice of the  
146 community, but when the voice goes silent, you can't hear the cries anymore.

147 Poetry has always kind of been my therapy since I was a teenager and it's the best way to  
148 relay a message to people, whether you're black, white, green, Simpson, SMURF, Hispanic,  
149 German, Chinese, Japanese, use it, it doesn't matter where you're from. You can come into a  
150 room and relate to some positive words and positive energy. Um, so it's not just roses are red and  
151 blue. It's, I liked it. I tell people, I like to punch people in the stomach. I want you to feel like you  
152 need to make a change when you leave from watching my show. It's not just an, oh, he made me  
153 feel so great. It's like, oh no, what am I doing in my community? Like, how am I, how am I

154 honestly trying to make a change? That's what I want you thinking about. You know what I'm  
155 saying? Like don't sugar coat it if you keep sugar coating it, it'll never get changed. Right? So  
156 yeah, we got to talk about it. It's going to sound crazy. The most challenging part I would say  
157 was accepting that everyone wasn't going to accept my work. I just want to help the community.  
158 I can't see why they don't bring their kids out. I just want to help the community. It's a free event.  
159 I don't see why they're not bringing their kids out. Their kids can eat free and get a free  
160 workshop. I don't see why they're not bringing their kids out. You can lead a horse to water, but  
161 you can't make him drink. So, for me it's like we do all of this to help our community. But does  
162 our community really want help? It's a question I have to ask myself on a daily basis bro. Do  
163 they really want you to help? You can offer it 100 times over, but if they don't want your help,  
164 they're not going to want your help no matter what you say. No matter how pretty you make it  
165 look, no matter how you make it sound, no matter how many other people from other races  
166 follow you and listen to your word as this a doctrine. If your people don't want to hear you,  
167 they're not gonna listen. So, reality, It's a sad reality, but reality.

168         The most rewarding part of doing this work is changing a life. I worked with children  
169 from the age of three all the way through college. So, you see a three-year-old getting in front of  
170 a room and get comfortable speaking and expressing themselves. It's a different ballgame. You  
171 when you get to the middle schools and you start to educate them on eating and eating right and  
172 understanding what you're putting in your body, what you intake is ultimately affecting you in  
173 ways that you can't comprehend and you start to hear that come out in their writing and their  
174 work. I tell people if you want to really get to know a child, give him a pen and a pad and tell  
175 them to write their feelings down. They won't lie to that paper. They'll lie to your face though.

176         Like people, people love to see someone who's given back. So, the different recognitions.  
177 I've been in every newspaper and uh, in Winston Salem at this point. Um, the different news  
178 channels and just the awareness, that's the reward. Like children knowing that there's something  
179 more out here that understanding that you don't have to just go off of what you've always eaten.  
180 Because I had a diet that I didn't even know I had, but as I got older and eat the Zucchini's,  
181 squashes, the sweet potatoes, the dehydrated fruits that I didn't have that I aint gone say I didn't  
182 have access, but that wasn't in my mother's diet as a child, so I didn't have a choice on what I  
183 wanted to eat. It's, did you pay for this food? It's like damn, like how many of us still really do  
184 that to our children? And if you were to go and tell your mother that aite mom, I don't want to eat

185 meat no more. I'm a vegan or I'm a vegetarian. You think she's going to really have the extra  
186 money to accommodate your new diet that you want to have and maintain. So that's another way.  
187 That's another thing that we gotta look at. Like you want to eat right, but it's not readily  
188 accessible for everybody. It's not like. You want to eat right, but your bank account don't say eat  
189 right. Bro, if I got \$10 in my account, I'm gonna. Order this pizza versus going get some fruits  
190 and veggies, fruits and veggies from the grocery store because I can make that 10 stretch a little  
191 bit better with it. That's the mentality. Like how do we alter that? How do we show something  
192 more by doing this, by putting these types of videos or having these types of discussions?  
193 Bringing the necessary people in these places and have a panel discussion so people know what's  
194 going on and know how they need to maneuver it only makes sense. I do not have any partners in  
195 Word Society Youth. I work with different organizations as far as like the grocery store that I'm  
196 gonna be opening, I've talked with the [Black Farmer's Co-op], [Tommy Priest] is very good  
197 friend and partner of mine, [Michael Banner]. He does a whole lot on the side of being in the  
198 black community and helping us to learn how to grow and cultivate our own food. So those are  
199 two major names that I've partnered with.

200 Uh, the community. Sounds cliché but a lot of the community, both black and white have  
201 jumped behind. Honestly bro, I'm a talker. So, I talk to people. I tell people what I have going on  
202 and what my visions are. If they can understand that if they can relate, if they can assist in any  
203 way, they assisted. It's like, that's why it's like a lot of, a lot of, um, I guess you can say a lot of  
204 people in the black community will say, yeah, my community won't support my community this,  
205 my community. I didn't have that. My community jumped behind, my community supports LB.  
206 You know what I'm saying, all the way down to have people to offer, alright well I'll provide all  
207 your students will notebooks. My organization will provide all your students with notebooks so  
208 they can write and keep a journal and write the poetry, write what they wanted. So, it's, I don't, I  
209 don't have that color barrier. And that's why I'm a firm believer bro. You get what you get what,  
210 you get what you put out, you get back what you put out. You know what I'm saying? I put out  
211 positive energy at all points. So I'm all for us, but I'm all for everybody because I believe in one  
212 love because at the end of the day Bro, like, like I tell anybody, like some of my closest, closest  
213 friends of another race and a lot of times my biggest support comes from another race when I do  
214 it for my own. So, it's like, that's, that's something that I'm constantly trying to get people to  
215 understand is like, you got to get rid of that color barrier. Like I'm all for black, but we can say

216 black power 100 times. But let a white person say white power, how you gone feel? Its gonna  
217 enrage you right? Gonna be upset. How, how can they say white power? Well why can we say  
218 black and expect them not to feel any type of way? It's a double standard. We got so tired of  
219 being the oppressed. We become the oppressor in a sense because I know a lot of us who literally  
220 won't ask for assistance from someone of another race. But if they can help you, why wouldn't  
221 you take the assistance? It's not like you're selling your soul. You know what I'm saying like, I'm  
222 not accepting assistance from Yada Yada Yada. And it's like, Yo, like what type of mentality is  
223 that to where you would rather be stuck here than to get a helping hand and elevate your  
224 business. So now you can help the people around you who look like you. We don't think that  
225 would be a benefit?

226         The project that we're ultimately discussing will be the grocery store and the fast food  
227 vegan restaurant. I wanted to with *You Grow, We Grow*, which is the name of the grocery store. I  
228 want it to ultimately put something in the community that will help us to learn what we need to  
229 know about growing and being successful in the farming industry. Uh, I don't have all the keys. I  
230 know, I don't. But any successful business person will know if you don't have the answers, you  
231 hire somebody who does. So, for me it's educating myself and making sure to educate the people  
232 around me. Um, in this project because it's ultimately, opening a grocery store in a fast food  
233 restaurant, fast food vegan restaurant, which isn't out here in Winston Salem. I haven't seen it in  
234 North Carolina, um, but I'm sure it'll pop up somewhere soon, but that's the ultimate idea, to help  
235 the community learn to grow and cultivate their own food, have workshops available for people  
236 to come out for kids to come out and learn and just ultimately to, to kind of up the economy in  
237 different neighborhoods. I want to start with one small store on one side of town and then put  
238 another store on the opposite side of town and another neighborhood because um, the downtown  
239 area doesn't need... Um I wouldn't consider it to be a food desert. Uh, the west side of town, I  
240 wouldn't consider is a food desert, but you go to the east side, you go to the north side, you go to  
241 the south side, you got Food Lions and Walmart's. Why are they always in every black  
242 community? But where our Trader Joe's, our Publix? I'm just saying like, I just asked these types  
243 of questions and you wonder, you know, that everything is intentional, but what? What were the  
244 intentions behind making sure that anybody who's WIC [Woman, Infant and Child] approved has  
245 to shop at Food Lion or a Walmart and you gotta go to Walmart because they give you more  
246 options for WIC and you know your kid's going to be screaming for this, this, that. So now

247 you're pushing them all to one store, one chain of stores. Now it's like, well, let's contaminate the  
248 milk in Walmart. They won't notice it. Let's contaminated this. They won't notice it. Let's  
249 contaminate... now you wondering like, damn my foot done fell off, because you been eating  
250 everything you wanted and desire to eat from Walmart or Food Lion, you know what I'm saying,  
251 not to down these chains and nothing like that, but it's just, well, I don't know. If you really sit  
252 and think about all of this stuff, you will drive yourself crazy. You will.

253 Youth empowerment to me is showing them something different. I'm showing them that  
254 there's more helping them understand that they have a voice, that they have choices to make, they  
255 have decisions, um, and ultimately empowering them to understand that just because mommy  
256 and daddy did it doesn't mean that you have to just because mommy and daddy ate this and ate  
257 terribly and they had this stroke that you don't have to. It's showing that you are your own  
258 individual. You have to know your worth. If you know that you're... If you have a mentality that  
259 you come from slavery, you will have a slave mentality. Do you have a mentality of I come from  
260 God's, you're going to treat your template as such? So, it's about the mentality. You changed the  
261 way people think. Now I said that at the beginning. you changed the way someone thinks the  
262 actions will follow. We just think so low of ourselves.

263 People have placed me in the position of a leader, I guess you could say, children follow  
264 what I say. Youths, teens follow what I say, adults follow what I say. So, it's me being mindful  
265 of everything that I'm putting out, and that I'm speaking when it comes to the subjects and topics  
266 because I don't want to lead someone off of a cliff if I'm going to be a leader. Um, so yeah, I've  
267 been elevated to the role of leadership in my community because I cared to be the change that I  
268 desire. I mean, I've opened up quite a few young men's minds to understand that yeah, we're  
269 supposed to go out and hunt and provide, but it's also like we have to be the ones to go out and  
270 educate ourselves on everything that we want to know. If you want to be great at something, you  
271 have to be educated on it. You can't just say, yeah, I'm going to go and now you go. It seems like  
272 now a lot of these young boys don't appreciate the value or the worth of something. So, it's  
273 teaching them to appreciate the value in something else, but also teach them to appreciate the  
274 value in self. That's what it ultimately comes down to. If you don't care about yourself, you're not  
275 going to give a flying flip about anything else out there in the world, see what I'm saying, it's  
276 really helping them to learn about self, learn to love self and identify who you really are because  
277 if you don't know who you are, you're just out here searching. You're constantly searching.



278 Nothing's ever going to get accomplished. You're never going to. You're always gonna feel like  
279 you're less than.

280 I'm not going to say, of course like I expected things to go well with the program, but it  
281 did. You empower these children with the voice. You helped them to understand that if you want  
282 to see a change or you want to help somebody to understand your message, you put it in a poem  
283 or you put it in a way that they can't deny it and now they're speaking up. Now they're asking  
284 questions. There's not just, I'm going to accept what you tell me and that's it. Now, well, why?  
285 Why is it that this cost x amount of dollars at this store, but if you go to this store, it's x amount  
286 of dollars, so know what I'm saying, like it's you create a sense of awareness. You create a sense  
287 of awareness to where now they're looking for. They're not just accepting they're looking, they're  
288 seeking, they're asking, they're questioning, they're... this beautiful man. I get excited to talk  
289 about kids. If you could just see where we've come from. A lot of the time with a lot of these  
290 new youth, you can kind of see where we're doing because they're so bright, they're there. They  
291 want to know. They want to be better, they want to do better. They want to show each other  
292 better. Its inspiring.

293 I myself haven't had any racial or micro aggressive experiences. I've seen. I've watched.  
294 But for me, I can't say like, yeah, I've been treated this way and this... I haven't. Alot of times  
295 the race that treats me bad is my own and that's the reality of it. So, it's like you get any situations  
296 to where everything is kind of racially driven and there's like uh... Do you remember a few years  
297 back when Lil Wayne came out and he's like, yeah, I don't experience all that racial. I don't  
298 experience it bro. Like, even when it comes down to dealing with police, I'm dreading and  
299 tattered from my neck to my ankles, but the energy and the aura that I give off, I don't deal with  
300 negativity from city officials. Like it's crazy. It's crazy. So, when it comes to these racial  
301 questions it's like, Eh, you would think that I was the one who dealt with it the most. Nah.

302 The type of community I see myself living is and is a unified community. I want to see  
303 togetherness, and that's from all aspects. Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, east Indian, every other  
304 race kind of takes care of their own. We can't say that about, about the Black community. So you  
305 just desire to see that, [or worth influenced] uh, if they're not educated about it, how will they  
306 know what I'm saying? So by me educating and helping someone to come to understand our  
307 value and our worth in the foods and what we're putting in our bodies, that's going to ultimately a  
308 grant us the food justice that we desire because they can't look for the wrong doing if they don't,

309 if they don't know what they're looking for. And as far as empowering black youth and  
310 sustaining the communities, I feel like if you train a child up to be what you want them to be  
311 when you leave. So, with me working with these children and these youth, it's like I'm  
312 ultimately helping to mold them into the individuals that they will be when they're no longer  
313 with me in these courses. So, you put the work in, you show them what it looks like, don't just  
314 talk to them. Again, I'll tell you something I said early in the conversation. I feel like I've been  
315 placed in a leadership position and that's simply off of me desiring a change. I asked for this, in a  
316 way. I just got tired of sitting back and blaming somebody else. We talk about, um, Christianity  
317 as a way the white man, holds the black man back. Nah Bro. What it does is it ultimately, never  
318 mind, I'm not going to go down that rabbit hole, I'm not gonna go down that rabbit hole. Um, in  
319 being in a leadership position, I feel like I have to show and prove I have to be what I tell others  
320 that I expect of them. I can't tell you that my expectations for you is up here and I'll fall down  
321 here every time. Or you see me outside of the setting of being in a classroom or being in a poetry  
322 workshop and it's like, oh, Mr. LB doing this. Mr. LB got this in his mouth. Mr. LB drinking  
323 soda after soda, I don't never see him with water. Like, how can I preach to you about putting the  
324 correct things in your body if I'm not doing the same?

325         So, it's again, cliché, practicing what you preach and just showing man, showing what it's  
326 all about, showing the difference. And if someone can see you like me, bro, few years ago, eating  
327 unhealthily, eating bad, I gained 60 pounds, I got up to like 240. I'm now eating healthy, working  
328 out, doing my thing. I'm back down to like 175, 180 and it's literally off of a diet. I wasn't going  
329 to the gym two, three times a day. Nah, Bro. Uh, I walk when I'm walking to a destination. It's  
330 not like I go lift weights and Nah. So being the change that you desire, that's the biggest thing for  
331 a leader. So, yeah, I do see myself as a leader. Yeah. It was like, man, I set out to make a change  
332 and I turned into that change. So, it's like, I see myself as a leader because I'm not afraid to go  
333 against the norm... Everybody go left, I'mma go right and help you to understand why I went  
334 right. And why I was right to go, right. I'm not just gonna tell you to do it, I'm going to show you  
335 how and explain why I did it. So, yea, I am a leader.

336  
337  
338  
339  
340  
341

## Appendix N: Shawyn's Narrative

1 I am Sean Newton; I am black and 50 years old. I'm currently the Agriculture Education  
2 Advisor at South East Guilford High School. I've been here for the past 25 years, teaching  
3 agriculture education courses as in agriscience, horticulture 1 and 2, and also animal science 1  
4 and 2, large and small animal. I'm also currently filling the role as athletic director here at  
5 Southeast. This is my fifth year as athletic director, so I'm doing dual roles currently. Being that  
6 I'm from Robeson County, we had a small population of Black farmers back then that I know  
7 had put in for the settlement. Um, a lot of people were done wrong. Uh, I know some of the  
8 farmers back home, I had an opportunity to talk to a couple guys that were put in for the, a  
9 settlement that got the information late. So, they were told that because they did not meet the  
10 deadline, they cannot be part of the settlement, it was a tobacco farmer, Mr. John Sanford.

11 You know, most of the things we try to tell our students, uh, students in classes,  
12 everything comes from agriculture, but we all have to buy into that cultural concept is not just  
13 say, you know, the minority or majority, you know, we all have to be in this thing together cause  
14 right now you got 1.2% of the population feeds the other 98.2... 98.8 percent of the population.  
15 So, we all have to buy into it. Black farmers, white farmers, Indian farmers, Native American,  
16 Chinese and Asians, we all have to buy into the concept of feeding one another because the one  
17 thing that's not coming back as a natural resource is land. I mean, being from Robeson County,  
18 uh, it's the largest county in North Carolina. Uh, I was brought up on a tobacco farm. Mr. John  
19 Sanford had a tobacco farm. My grandparents had farms and things like that. So, the first farmers  
20 I came in contact with were Black farmers. I mean the reason I am who I am today, I used to  
21 hold onto my grandmother's apron as she was planting peas in her garden and wanting to know  
22 what the piece were and how, what happened when they germinate it. And I got all that  
23 information from my grandparents, you know. Then I explored going into this field, working  
24 with other black farmers back home and stuff like that. Then when it came time to go on to get a  
25 secondary education, one of the things that came up was agriculture education and I thought  
26 about my background.

27 I mean, you think about traditions over time, each tradition is supposed to be passed  
28 down to the next generation and I think if we eliminate the, the achievements of the Black farmer  
29 that's eliminating a whole, you know, a lot of information that could have been passed on. I

30 mean, we got so many black farmers that you don't even know about the great things for the  
31 American economy, but because it was such a small segment, only the Caucasian, uh, farmers  
32 were the ones who actually got stuff, you know, produced and put out there where the small  
33 farmer mostly your minorities didn't have that opportunity before them because the money,  
34 money aspect, you know. I remember Mr. Sanford, he had the uh, some of the oldest equipment.  
35 But then again, the farmer down the road who had 200, 300 acres has some of the best  
36 equipment. So, you know, looking at the economy and things like that, the Caucasian, the  
37 farmers had opportunity to go to the market and sell all the products. Where Mr. Sanford, he  
38 might've sold his in the local market to the neighborhoods, things like that. So, we knew there  
39 was a difference in the money and it became, you know, him trying to make sure the community  
40 was taken care of where the other majority farmers were mass producers who were taking care  
41 of, you know, other markets. But I mean, even with Mr. Sanford, only having a few acres. He  
42 still tried to do the things to pass on the tradition to the local kids in the community.

43         Honestly, what motivates me is what I learned from my grandparents; they had a passion  
44 for it. You know, they didn't believe in. You didn't have to go to a supermarket. They raised pigs,  
45 they raise cows, they did the uh, gardens, and they produce enough crops to not only take care of  
46 their immediate family but other people in the community. So, coming up through the years I  
47 looked at the things that they did and it's like, man, I gave me a passion to push this information  
48 out to other people, you know, and I tell kids who come in my class today, everybody who  
49 comes in here is not going to be a farmer. We got that. That's no doubt. We've got scientists  
50 come on, we got vets in our that come out of our program. But you have to make your mark in  
51 society and agriculture can be the way that you make your mark.

52         Before I took on this role, I was in the military prior to going to college. I went to A&T  
53 [NCA&TSU] to get my undergraduate and master's degree in agriculture education, and I was a  
54 soldier. I remember being stationed over in Korea at the time and talk to one of my platoon  
55 leaders. Uh, Mr. Donald, Lieutenant Williams, Donald Williams. And uh, he said, man, I see  
56 something in you, you're not like the typical little field soldier because I was 11th Bravo infantry  
57 guy. He said, you got to give, you need to pass that on to other people, you don't need to be stuck  
58 in this army thing. So, I listened to him and uh, he helped me apply to college and stuff like that  
59 and he was a black lieutenant, so he tried to look out for me as a young Black soldier in the, uh,  
60 in the army. And uh, we looked over some stuff and I told them about A&T. Some of my uncles

61 and cousins had gone there. So, I wanted to go to A&T and he said, well, how about a major? I  
62 was like, a major? He said, tell me something that you enjoy doing all the time. I was like, I was  
63 like, I don't know, didn't have a clue. But then I started thinking about the FFA, things that I did  
64 in high school with FFA, going on the field trips, getting stuff ready for homecoming, raising  
65 crops in the, uh, in the greenhouse. I was like, man, you know, I liked being part of the FFA.  
66 He's like, Hey, look and see if A&T offers it, I looked on their website to see if A&T offered  
67 agriculture education and boom, from there, I mean I just got accepted A&T and I've been rolling  
68 ever since.

69 Mr. Atlas Louis, uh, and uh, my connection with Mr. Lewis, he was an A&T Grad, you  
70 know, so that's where I really got to know about the A&T program. Uh, he, he took me under his  
71 wing. Yeah, he knew my grandparents and stuff like that. At one point in time he was my  
72 grandparents next door neighbor and then he moved, uh, probably probably up to about 20 miles  
73 away, but they still stayed in contact. Um, I remember I went into his office one day and said,  
74 hey Mr. Lewis, you know, I'm looking to try to make me some money, you know, or I can, you  
75 know, get a job. And he took me in and that time they had a, I want to say it was an [osset]. Can't  
76 think of the name of the program, but he hired me to clean up the ag shop after school every day  
77 and you know, I made \$50 a month but it was \$50 doing something I enjoyed, you know, I like  
78 doing, you know, would work. So not only was I cleaning but afterwards he would, if he had  
79 time, he would help me on some of the [CD] contest that we have public speaking, you know,  
80 stuff like that. So, it was a job that I was looking for and the connections. But I mean a lot of  
81 that, Mr. Lewis took me under his wing and showed me how to do it.

82 Mr. Lewis and the things that he taught us in the, in the AG class led me to this type of work.  
83 Um, when I got, I think it was probably my junior year, he bought us up to A&T for a program  
84 called IFAL [Institute for Future Agricultural Leaders]. I mean, I didn't have any clue what  
85 staying on a college campus, anything like that was about. Then Mr. Lewis said, hey, go up there  
86 for a week, see how things are and I guarantee you it'll be an eye opener for you. So, I mean, I  
87 took him as is, got up here and I think at the time the dean or the person in charge was AP Bell.  
88 Dr. Bell was the, uh, department chair of the Agriculture Education program and you know, we,  
89 we formed a connection at that point in time. So, when I did leave the military and got to A&T,  
90 Dr, Bell was still there and welcomed me in with open arms and uh, it's just like I got that  
91 connection with him through the IFAL program.

92 Now the only thing about Southeast youth, the demographics out here is about 67%  
93 Caucasian, 21% African American. And we have a small Hispanic and Asian population that's  
94 about 35%. So that's pretty much. Now, when I first got to see the demographics were, I want to  
95 say 93% [Caucasians] and 7% for minorities, but over the last 25 years we've had some, uh, uh,  
96 housing developments to open up out here, Trinity Lakes where, you know, some Black families  
97 moved into the community. So, it helped with our diversity out here at Southeast.

98 I want to say my junior, my junior year at A&T, I was, had done a couple of co-ops with,  
99 the Cooperative Extension Service in Bennettsville and I also did one in Lumberton. Uh, went  
100 back home, uh, working with the Cooperative Extension service, doing agricultural related  
101 projects. I was approached by [Ms. Azail Reeves] who was in charge of that, what's called now  
102 the research apprenticeship program, A&T had, uh, got a lot of minority students who would  
103 come from across the nation and spend, I think at that time was six to eight weeks on the campus  
104 of North Carolina A&T, uh, learning about agriculture. Uh, she contacted me, and I became a  
105 counselor and I became the lead counselor in that program for probably 16 or 17 years. I stayed  
106 with her as long as she was involved with it. I was going to be involved with it even after she  
107 retired. I stayed on to help probably another two or three years. But, uh, the research  
108 apprenticeship program, we brought kids in from across the, the nation. Introduce them to the, uh,  
109 what was, what it meant to be at Atlanta, great institute, you know, what minority farmers, what  
110 minority scientists, what minority engineers could do for you and to give these kids a foundation,  
111 you know, that it was a recruiting tool, fancy to try to bring in the best and the brightest so we  
112 got a chance to latch on or those kids for those six to eight weeks and then, you know, over the  
113 next year to two years, we send them emails, stay in contact with them, trying to get them to  
114 matriculate into A&T and get into the AgEd [Agriculture Education] and to the, uh, Ag  
115 engineering program.

116 I mean the program, it gave me a, my role is to lead counselor. Uh, it gave me an  
117 opportunity to give back what I looked at, the things that I had learned at A&T, the things I had  
118 in my background to give back to these, these youth who also had an interest in agriculture. Um,  
119 I mean some of these kids that I had in contact back then. I'm still in contact with today, you  
120 know, and, and I haven't been a part of the program in probably seven or eight years now, but I  
121 still, you know, I got a couple of kids that came in A&T that are ag teachers now. So, we keep in

122 contact a couple people with the farm bureau keeping contact with them, especially when we go  
123 to the state fair. We always run into them at the booths and stuff like that.

124         The driving component for me was after the first year, I felt like it was something that,  
125 you know, it kept me involved with what was going on at A&T and it kept me being involved  
126 with what was going on in society with our youth because, you know, I was always taught that,  
127 you know, you can't always set a bad example. Somebody has got to set the good example and I  
128 always looked at myself as somebody who was straightforward. I don't know if it was the  
129 military background, but I didn't mind being out in front of kids because I knew I was going to  
130 show them a good example of what a young black male should be, you know, um, I wasn't into  
131 the drugs and all that kind of stuff. I wasn't out partying and stuff like that. Not that people can't  
132 be good examples, but, you know, my military background didn't allow me to do that. And I  
133 thought by being involved with these youth, you know, that's something that I could give to  
134 them.

135         The challenging thing was you would get youth from, like if we get them from the  
136 Chicago Institute, the high school up there, uh, we get kids in from New York, we'd get kids in  
137 from LA and then we'd have, most of our kids will come from schools in North Carolina and you  
138 had a mix of kids who had an ag background and some kids who had no knowledge of... what ag  
139 was truly. They saw our flier and put in for it, you know, and got accepted to the program. So it's  
140 trying to get everybody on the same playing field, you know, pairing the kids up with those who  
141 had a big background to those who didn't know a whole lot, you know, making sure they could  
142 pass on that information because a kid in North Carolina has been born and raised on a farm is  
143 going to know more than a kid who was in Chicago that's in a city high school that only take,  
144 you know, took a chemistry class. So just to get that information where it was balanced with the  
145 kids was a little challenging at times. And, but I mean, it worked out for the best because yeah,  
146 you might've been born and raised on a farm, but what are those city kids doing to produce those  
147 crops? They're doing microbiology experiments in the lab that are doing, you know, producing  
148 tissue cultures which are producing those plants where you been, you know, tobacco farmer all  
149 your life now he's showing you something that he had learned that can help you down the road as  
150 a tobacco farmer.

151         The most rewarding part was that I look at it as an opportunity to network because, you  
152 know, not only do I stay in contact with some of those kids, they stayed in contact with each

153 other and uh, one of our goals for the program is, you know, to comeback to A&T, but not only  
154 if you come back to A&T, you know, take that next level in getting your master's, take that next  
155 step and getting your PhD program. I mean your PhD. Trying to make sure that we were pushing  
156 those kids for higher education. So, I mean, in seeing that I had a couple of young ladies that  
157 were in the program that finished vet school, you know, one young lady called me and wanted  
158 me to do the white coat ceremonies where she came in and uh, I had to present her with her vet  
159 jacket, which was a white coat that, so they call it a white coat ceremony. And just that day was  
160 one of my proudest moments because I looked around at NC state and it was three black people  
161 in the room, in a room of 100 and by one of my students, you know, being a part of that, I was  
162 like, man, did you know that small seed can now sprout and we can push other people because I  
163 think shortly after that A&T got an agreement with NC State to start sending more of our kids to  
164 the, uh, veterinary school at NC State.

165 I'm usually Ms. Reeves would try to contact and have at least three or four different  
166 counselors, you know, uh, helping the entire project. And most of us had to be AgEd, either ag  
167 teachers, food science, it had to be something in the CTE realm of study, you know, Career and  
168 Technical Education because in the end we're trying to get these kids to latch onto careers and  
169 push them into, you know, the university of study, you know, most of that was covered in either  
170 Webb Hall or Carver Hall on the campus of A&T. Um, on campus, um, we had, because of the  
171 role of the program, I mean, we'd have to go in, you'd have kids were assigned to work with, uh,  
172 folks with PhD's for six weeks. They had to go in and pretty much shadow what they did and  
173 come up with an experiment at the end as a product of what they learned from that, uh, that  
174 professor at the time. So not only were the kids get an opportunity to network, I got an  
175 opportunity to network. So, I mean, the Dr Willis is one of the names that always comes up, you  
176 know, I see him today and he always talks about some of the things that we covered during the  
177 summer times with these kids. So, I mean, just little things like that, you know, the support of the  
178 university. Uh, we took field trips sponsored by farm bureau. We go to Raleigh, we go to  
179 Charlotte, we go, we even went to Charleston [S.C.] one year, uh, to the craft festival out there  
180 because, you know, even though it's seafood, that's still an agricultural commodity. So, we got to  
181 tap into things like that. And everywhere we went, you know, you pass on your business card, it's  
182 about that networking.



183           The purpose primarily was to get groups of kids into A&T and use it as a marketing tool  
184 to, uh, let them explore the Ag Ed. Not only ag, but the Ag, the Ag department as a whole to try  
185 to get them to matriculate back to A&T, major in something and then go on to the next level to  
186 get their PhD, up to their PhDs. So, it's a recruiting tool by the Ag department, which I thought,  
187 you know, even it's still going strong today. I went to the ceremony back in July and they had a, I  
188 think it was 23 participants still. And that's been about the role we try to have between 16 to 30  
189 participants every summer in it. It's still going today. Yeah.

190           Youth empowerment to me is, you know, put a youth out front, you know, empowering  
191 them with the opportunity to be future leaders. Uh, that's one of the big things we, we cover in  
192 our FFA program here at southeast is you are the future, but the future starts now, uh, we're  
193 going to set you up for success, a personal growth, scholarship opportunities. We're going to  
194 promote both the program at NC State, Mount Olive and A&T, trying to make sure I know there  
195 is an opportunity out other than just high school. Yeah. It may be something that you enjoy now,  
196 but hey, get a degree in it, see where it can take you. I mean, I've been here 25 years and I  
197 probably, had hundreds of kids who went on to major in agricultural industry, maybe not went in  
198 and got a degree in it, but are currently working in it. I mean, we have a kid right now that, uh,  
199 started his own landscape business and he talked to me last year. Now he's already making  
200 double what I'm making as a teacher. So, success stories like that, you know, empowering our  
201 kids that hey, you may not be the smartest, you may not be the brightest, but if you grab onto this  
202 thing called Ag, it could take you different places and it's not about what you learned, it could be  
203 about the networking part. I mean network, meet people and go out there and start your own and  
204 it can work wonders for you.

205           We have a program in FFA and agriscience and all our classes that we pushed is SAE,  
206 Supervised Agriculture Experience programs. And the first one is entrepreneurship. Starting your  
207 own business. Taking that risk. Uh, we tell kids it's okay, you know, don't start off saying, okay,  
208 I'm gonna go out here and started a landscape business and I need to have a truck. I need, have  
209 three lawn mowers, I need to have a skid steer and I need to have all that. Start off cutting a  
210 couple of yards and grow from there. Save your money. You know, but you know, work a year,  
211 buy a piece of equipment, see how that goes expand your, your business the next year because  
212 every year we tell them to first you start off 30 dollars, then the next year is 60 dollars, then the  
213 next year, 90 dollars. Then if you want to go and put in for like your American degree, you put in

214 180 dollars and go up to 360, and then I, over that time, you're expanding your business,  
215 expanding your acknowledged. Again, you're networking, you put in your information. Putting  
216 that sign out. Hey, who cut your yard? Hey, this is Tyler True Lawn-Care. Or somebody else  
217 see's and is like, oh, I want you to come in. I drop a card, come on and start cutting. I mean we  
218 just try to tell our kids, don't, don't sell yourself short. Anything is possible if you are a hard  
219 worker and it doesn't have to be the smartest person. Is this wanting to be somebody that can go  
220 out there and do a good quality job?

221 To impact the kids, what I've tried to do is, again, try to try to be a good example for our  
222 black youth, our African American youth and letting them know that, hey, you know, I'm, I'm a  
223 teacher in my 25th year. I'll do it because I love what I do. Um, you know, I didn't have to go out  
224 here and, and, uh, become a lawyer. I didn't have to come out here to be become a doctor. You  
225 know, a lot of people feel that, you know, in black society to be successful, you've got to be a  
226 rock star. You've got to be an athlete, or you got to be a lawyer, you've got to be a doctor. I tell  
227 kids, I've been a teacher for 25 years. I wake up every morning, I come to work happy. I'm not  
228 stressed out when I leave because I didn't go into something about the big money. I wanted to do  
229 something that I knew I could make a career of and enjoy doing every single day. So  
230 empowering black youth, you know, that's something I look forward to doing. Um, you know, is  
231 it a, a strain sometime, yeah, because you got to sell it, you know, our black youth said, man, I  
232 have no ag. Why, why I can't go into it. There's nothing I can I can get out of. And I'm like, man,  
233 it opens the door for so much stuff that you all just have no idea about. Just give it a chance, just  
234 give it a try. And some of them get it. Like I said, I had a young lady go on to become a vet. She  
235 bought into the program her first year, but we have some people who go on, you know, it may  
236 take them a couple of years, they may have to hit that bump in the road to understand, hey, well  
237 shoot, let me fall back on what I learned in Coach Newton's class and try to use that to move  
238 forward.

239 My intended outcome is to empower every single student that walks in my classroom, but  
240 I found out through the trials and tribulations, if you're successful, you can connect with one  
241 child in that class, you should be happy because there's plenty of times that you could give it a  
242 100%, 110% and you won't sell it to a kid. They're not going to buy into it. But if you get an  
243 opportunity, you get that one kid who buys in and you see that person germinate through the  
244 process. I mean that makes you go back and try a little bit harder the next time. Because I mean,

245 again, Ag is, it's hard to sell on black youth because they don't see the benefits and the jobs that  
246 come from agriculture. They always see about, you know, the LeBron's, the Jordan's, you know,  
247 the, Le'Veon Bells of the world, you know, making the big money through athletics and thinking  
248 that Ag is just a doormat. The last thing I possibly want to do, but as we get the word, out, we get  
249 them to get it to the IFAL programs, get them to the RAP program [Research Apprenticeship  
250 Program] at A&T, it'll open their eyes to, hey, hey, there's an opportunity for you, in the world  
251 of agriculture, we have a little window down in the classroom. I think, uh, there is no culture  
252 without agriculture. Everything in Ag, everything in the world comes through agriculture. So, we  
253 try to sell it that way.

254 By the population not being as diverse, you know, you know, I was asked a long time ago  
255 could I teach at a predominantly minority high school? And I said, you know, I could, I could  
256 sell this anywhere, the things that I do because I got a passion for it. Um, I was asked to go start  
257 a program somewhere at another high school and see how that will go. But once I looked into it,  
258 those kids didn't have, have the drive, they didn't have the desire to have anything ag related.  
259 They, they called themselves inner city. So, coming in there to them and bringing an ag  
260 background was something that they didn't grasp onto. So I had to weigh between, you know, do  
261 I want to go there or do I want to stay where I currently feel like I can know even though the  
262 population is not as diverse as I want it, the kids I can impact here, will listen to me, they want to  
263 be a part of it and some of them have it in their background. So, I felt at that time instead of  
264 going to a more, uh, African American diverse school, stay here and teach the ones who actually  
265 wanted to be a part of it and push them to do the best they could be. So, I mean, there, there has  
266 been some roadblocks because, you know, of a class of 20. I may have three or four African  
267 Americans and out of that probably one or two actually wants to be in the class. The other two  
268 might have been just put in there, but I mean I, even though that might have been put in there,  
269 I'm still gonna push them to get to that next level.

270 As far as sustaining their communities, we've got to learn that, you know, we, we had a,  
271 we took a field trip down to one of our local elementary schools and we set up a cow that has a  
272 milking machine on it where the kids can actually come in. When you start talking to the youth  
273 of today, they feel like milk comes from a supermarket. They don't know what a cow is. I mean,  
274 so we gotta make sure that ag is still being shown as you know, it comes from the farm, it came  
275 from the farm before it went to the supermarket. But a lot of our black youth don't really want to

276 be a part of that, but when we have to do is take the one or two who really wants to be a part of it  
277 and put them out front. You know, a few years ago the National FFA president was a black male.  
278 And you're talking about an organization that has 32,000 members. He bought into it as a  
279 freshman, pushed it as a sophomore and junior, got cell in a position that when he went on to  
280 college, boom, he was out front and did an excellent job with it. I mean, it's just like that we got  
281 to take the small examples are the ones and twos who will make it and say, hey to the next group,  
282 hey, you can do this. It's proven that you can do it. If you put forth the effort, you just got to put  
283 forth the effort.

284 I listened to people all the time and they say, you know, they call me and you know, I'll  
285 take it for what it is, they call me Mr. Southeast. They know that, you know, when the doors  
286 open in the morning, I'm going to be there. When the lights at the athletic events need to be cut  
287 off in the afternoons after the event, I'm going to be the one cutting the light off. Everybody  
288 knows I'm dependable. I'm going to be here. And that's, that's how I try to market myself. If I tell  
289 you I'm going to do something, I'm gonna, try to do it to my best, the best of my ability. Is my  
290 slate full, yea it's full, but I'm always got an opportunity to market myself to do something for  
291 you because kids are always watching. If they can say, well dag, Coach Newton, you're taking  
292 shortcuts. Maybe I can take short cuts in life too. I don't want to ever be known as somebody  
293 who took shortcuts. That's, that's not who I am. So, I always want to be a positive influence in  
294 somebody's life and set a good example for them.

295  
296  
297  
298  
299  
300  
301  
302  
303  
304  
305  
306  
307  
308  
309  
310  
311  
312

## Appendix O: Kamal's Narrative

1           Hi. Um, my name is Kamal Bell. I'm a black male. Um, my race is, I'll say for, for video  
2 purposes. I'll say African American. I identify as African and um age, I am 27.  
3 My job right now, I'm a school teacher in Durham, North Carolina in Durham public schools.  
4 I've been teaching in Durham public schools for, for this is my fourth year. Um, I teach  
5 agriculture to sixth, seventh and eighth graders and I'm also a part time farmer at Sankofa Farms  
6 in Cedar Grove, North Carolina. My reflection the Pigford and Glickman case. One, I think  
7 historically, um, black farmers and black people going into agriculture, owed some form of  
8 reparations, uh, just by reading the case and being familiar with it, and then meeting farmers who  
9 are affected by it. We're owed some form of reparations. Two, we need to start lobbying more  
10 for these reparations. Three, we need to talk to individuals who are owed money from the case  
11 and see where... if the money has ever come through, where the payments are, and four we need  
12 to look at the money that should be set aside to raise a new generation of black farmers. So many  
13 black farmers have had been pushed out of the business.

14           The Pigford v. Glickman case directly relates to my work because one thing that we do  
15 with our farm, we try to get young black men into farming that's going to expand over to young  
16 black women when we have the resources to do that, but my work is, is part producing food.  
17 While also raising the next generation of farmers. Farming right now doesn't do that. It doesn't  
18 do a great job of incorporating youth. Uh, and we have a double task of a heavier load, as far as  
19 raising produce, getting our apiaries setup, getting into livestock and also educating six young  
20 men to do the exact same. The beliefs that I hold around agriculture and how they relate to the  
21 community, I think agriculture is the founding or the building block for any community or  
22 civilization. So, the more or less that aren't alive of agriculture, the hardest, the hardest is it is  
23 going to be for us to build something substantial and sustainable that we can call our own.  
24 Without agriculture, I don't care how big you are in technology, this whole economics push that  
25 we have, we don't have food, we don't have land. You can kiss all the other stuff goodbye and we  
26 can go ahead and look for other groups of people who are doing that and pay them to manipulate  
27 us. That's all I have to say really about that, from that aspect. A lot of us don't believe and see the  
28 value of farming. We'll send our kids to other routes we're pushing them further and further  
29 away from the farm.

30           What motivates me is, I had to come to realization when I was, when I was growing up  
31 that hello? What motivates me to do the work is at an early age, I had to come to my senses and  
32 realized that African people in America are a nation within a nation and the foundation of  
33 building a nation is land. If you don't have land, can't do anything else. And I just got tired of  
34 having to go to other groups of people for our basic needs, so instead of me saying, okay, what  
35 can, what will instead of me saying this is how things should be, I had to take responsibility upon  
36 myself to try to change it. We have to lead by example. Before I started this journey, I was in  
37 college and right after college I went right into teaching. What motivated, what solely motivated  
38 me. Like my, my big push was finding out that we were going to have Khalil when I was 23 and  
39 I thought about, how can I be a great example of a man if I'm always running to another man to  
40 get things for my family and until I figured out that a man can stay on his own and produced for  
41 his family. I was going to other people for everything. But now we have a sense of ownership  
42 and he's here at the farm all the time my youngest son is at the farm, [Hakeem] all the time and  
43 they're starting to develop ownership at an early age. So, they don't have to make this jump when  
44 they get 20, 23. They can make it at 10 or 11.

45           If I don't solely instill the values of ownership, leadership, discipline, love for our people  
46 and my kids, I failed as a man. I think a lot of us have lost that in our journey and that's why  
47 we're in the situation we're in today. Well partly, because when we look at, we look at the  
48 Pigford and Glickman case, we'll see other entities that are other influencers that pushes that  
49 agriculture. But I think solely part of it is our, our decision not to go into agriculture. There are  
50 quite a bit experiences that led me to our African American youth. One, when I was in high  
51 school, we had a, um, a black figurehead that was supposed to lead and, and help the young  
52 black men. He didn't do it. He actually was very, very discouraging and, in efforts to encourage  
53 us to go in and do for sale. He actually told me and my brother one time that we're going to be  
54 runaround boys for the white man, a black man did this and at a, at a traditionally white school.  
55 And when I heard that, that just gave me fuel to prove him wrong. What really helped us get  
56 through that is the fact that we have a strong... well, what helped me get through that is that fact  
57 that we have a strong foundation with our parents so that they were able to help us, like point out  
58 that this brothers mentality had been lost, he's going on the wrong route. So, I was able to really  
59 cope with it. But then I thought about when I started teaching and being around young black  
60 men, how I would be if I was like that toward them. So that's, that's one experience. Another

61 experience. It's just me seeing that um, food deserts are everywhere. And in Greensboro, is an  
62 east Greensboro and a west Greensboro. In east Greensboro is where most of the black people  
63 live and we had terrible food outlet. But on West Greensboro, you have all these, all this  
64 abundance of healthy food options. That's where most of the white people live and just being in  
65 that dynamic and even being harassed when you're on that side of town shows that this issue is a  
66 whole lot bigger. Then just food access. It's something systematic going on that does truly reflect  
67 and food access. But there's a larger issue going on here.

68         The demographic of youth that we are working with are all descendants of African  
69 groups or indigenous groups of people. So we actually had a really cool surprise, one of our  
70 students is Lumbee and so he's Lumbee and Black, but as the group are indigenous groups of  
71 people, all the kids come from indigenous and we look at and we recognize that African people  
72 were on this land before, uh, Europeans as well. The first project that we started was with the  
73 Academy of course [Sankofa Farms Agricultural Academy]. And the first project that we had  
74 with the students was really clearing the fields. So, before we got to the farm, it was a wooded  
75 area. We had a botched land clearing job and then the students were responsible for helping clear  
76 the land. And so, we can eventually get to our producing space. My role and purpose was that I  
77 realized when I was teaching that my role and purpose in teaching young black men, I really  
78 accepted that duty when in my first year teaching and I saw what I could offer students. I  
79 accepted my role in working with African American, youth. When I saw that the school system,  
80 didn't provide our children with certain services that were basic in function and instead of me  
81 going back and forth with the institution in us calling them racists and go up their chain of  
82 command. I decided that we have space so let's facilitate learning on our own space where we  
83 don't have to answer to anybody. And that really is, is what really helped me accept my role is  
84 just seeing that the school, wasn't going to do what the kids really need. Everything they need.

85         A driving component would be having a young son and also just knowing that it's my  
86 duty to help my people. The driving component was having a young son. While I also realize  
87 that it's my duty to help my people and facilitate learning that's actually going to push our culture  
88 and our, in our nation, within a nation forward. The most challenging part of this program was,  
89 was finding the funding. Um, at first no one wanted to help fund the program. But the Farm  
90 Bureau did a really good job at providing funding. RAFI has done a great job. RAFI is Rural  
91 Advancement Foundation International. They helped a lot, a whole lot. The Orange County

92 Rural and Economic Development Service downtown and downtown Hillsboro has really,  
93 they've been, they've been great in helping us and um, NC State [University] has been very big  
94 with the development of our program as well. So, all of these groups have, had, have helped, but  
95 getting them to help initially was troubling. But, um, we found our way.

96 People have asked me what's been rewarding about it. I don't find it rewarding. I just  
97 know it's something I have to do so I guess it'd be similar to what people can relate to, like their  
98 job and most jobs aren't rewarding, but you just know that that's what you're supposed to be  
99 doing. Um, I don't look at it as like, it makes me feel good, it's not like that. It's just my duty. So,  
100 I think, um, if I looked at it as a reward, I would lose sight on like our true goals and I don't  
101 really want to call them goals. But like things that are pushing us forward, so I just know this is  
102 what I have to do.

103 I do have a business partner. His name is Marcus Miller. He does like all the, accounting  
104 work and tracks the spending for the business. He's been really helpful because in the first year I  
105 didn't have him, but ever since he's been on board, we've been more strategic about purchases  
106 and getting things done on the farm. But as far as um, other entities, we have had groups like  
107 RAFI, North Carolina Farm Bureau, NC State... (inaudible). [NC State University] They  
108 actually provide a space for us to troubleshoot issues on the farm using technology and Orange  
109 County Economic and Rural Development has helped so much. We found support when we did  
110 our Kickstarter that was like the first big, like booming, overwhelming flow of support that we've  
111 got. And what happened was that when we put out on Facebook and other social networks, so  
112 many people saw it and then people started calling and offering help to the farm and sort of like  
113 spring boarded us to getting the program in a place where we could impact more youth. The  
114 purpose of the project is like multidimensional. One aspect is it teach the, uh, young men  
115 leadership, other aspects teaching discipline accountability in other aspects of teaching them how  
116 to be self-sufficient and other aspects also show them systematically, how race plays into what  
117 they'll be doing as they get older. The other aspect is getting food to our communities. So, there  
118 are a lot of aspects to the program.

119 Youth empowerment to me would be youth feeling like they can take control and actually  
120 taking control of their destiny. So I think without that component, and if you're not doing that  
121 with youth, you're um, I feel like you're not really doing anything with them if you're not  
122 empowering them to take control of their destiny, get them to, to look at themselves, gender and



123 identity and have them solve cultural issues and problems. I think we're not doing that. We're not  
124 pushing our, our people forward or pushing the kids forward. I think it's too early to tell if there  
125 has been a huge impact with the students in the program. I've seen little things like their behavior  
126 is picking up, but it's not just be-, once the family buys into what they're doing. So, what we're  
127 doing plus the family really helps, but I think we'll be able to measure impact in a couple more  
128 years. I see things changing with them internally, but I think there um... I think in about two  
129 more years, we'll really see. If we can get them in college on scholarships and on agricultural  
130 tracts or get them in fields that that help support agriculture in some form or fashion. I would  
131 really like that, but most importantly I want them to look at themselves as being change agents in  
132 their community.

133 Our intended outcome relates to the ending result. I think it's hard to say. It's hard to say  
134 what our ending result will be because I have things, I liked them to do. I push our people  
135 forward, but other things come out of what we intend for them to do. So, I think if I think the  
136 kids will determine that, I think they'll determine at the end what, what this program means. We  
137 come in contact with racism in the farm, anything we do. We're in this stage. We're in the stage  
138 of equity right now where as traditionally groups who didn't help black people will help now for  
139 whatever reason. But on the back end of it, I've met plenty of groups that just won't help. Um,  
140 and I'm not just saying racism is only perpetuated by Europeans. I've seen it in other groups as  
141 well, but as far as the decision making in agriculture, it's mostly Europeans. We were actually  
142 denied the farm at the beginning of the process of trying to get started with this program and  
143 produce food. We were denied by the USDA for no reason. Um, we appealed it and of course we  
144 got the farm, but it was, that was my first encounter. But just interacting with other groups or  
145 other entities in agriculture, I see it, there are certain setbacks and learning lessons and it just  
146 makes me, just gives me a drive to, for us to be more self-sufficient so we don't have to go to  
147 these other bodies anymore to get help and get resources.

148 The community that I see us developing, are helping to, uh, create would be one where  
149 we have an identity of who we are, first and then we're able to leverage resources and do things  
150 for ourselves. Of course, that's going to take us having partnerships and in relationships with  
151 other groups, but really one where we're not so dependent on another group as if that group will  
152 share resources with us if it depends on their survival. We can't expect anybody to do that. I can't  
153 expect another group of people to save my kids if their kids need to be saved to. So, if we could

154 ever get to that point, I could see us having a great, a great community to be built. I don't  
155 consider myself as a leader. I think um, if somebody wants to be led and they join on and they  
156 say, Oh, Mr. Bill or Kamal's a leader that's based up to them. Well I'm just a man who's just  
157 trying to change, change the direction of where our people are going. That's it. And I think, um, I  
158 think once we get into our leader and best structure, I think things change. So, I just look at it as  
159 I'm just a small part of a bigger, a bigger change that's coming.  
160

## Appendix P: Shannon's Narrative

1 I'm Shannon, a female African American. I'm, 35 years of age. So currently I am a youth  
2 development specialist for the 4H program. I have been affiliated with this position for almost a  
3 month and will be a month at the end of this month. And prior to this I have done some youth  
4 development work, um, within limited resource communities as an extension professional. So  
5 just thinking about this case [Pigford v Glickman] and, you know, you hear different or I've  
6 heard different things regarding the tobacco settlement and um, to me it's still what still stands  
7 out about this case when I look at the statistics and I see the numbers and how this has affected  
8 the African American community and I just feel like even still, you know, the percentages are  
9 more reflective and more responsive of the white farmer or white farmer rural communities. Of  
10 course, you know, you see the injustice and you see the unfairness that has been done, but, you  
11 know, I think it's more unsettling for me that this has gone on for so long and for it to come to  
12 the light when it did and then you just continue to see the statistics of how you are African  
13 Americans farmers were retreated and how this has kind of affected, you know, landownership  
14 farming, um, within these communities. So it also makes me, or I often wonder, you know, how  
15 this affects farming today for African American farmers, you know, they're not really, um,  
16 pushed or, or not really, um, I guess pushed for lack of better terms to farm and going into this  
17 industry. So that kind of makes me wonder as a result of this, how does that affect, you know,  
18 land ownership and farming for African American farmers today because even now the numbers  
19 are uneven. You don't have a lot of African American farmers. The small farmer typically tends  
20 to still reflect the Caucasian community or the white community. So even still, how is this  
21 affecting those that are choosing to farm? Even now um as either a hobby or as a livelihood.  
22 How have these statistics, how have these numbers, how has this case affected their choice and  
23 decisions to farm?  
24 So, looking at this case, I've done a lot of work or some work within more of our urban  
25 communities. And so even with a lot of the urban youth that I've worked with who represent, you  
26 know, limited resource youth or at-risk youth, they haven't heard a lot about farming. And so,  
27 when you try to talk about, you know, farming and agriculture, land ownership, land use,  
28 sometimes it's foreign to them. Um, so what's one of the things that, while this may not greatly  
29 impact them, you know, to a certain degree, of course, no, this is where their food comes from.

30 Farming is where they, you know, they, they get things to keep them going such as food. But  
31 while this may not impact them directly, it's definitely something that, you know, it's important  
32 to make them aware that hey, your, you know, your food, your livelihood, it just doesn't come  
33 from a store. Let me go buy this jacket or let me go buy this apple. It has to come from  
34 somewhere. So, while they're not, you know, affected by, you know, lack of land or you know,  
35 this part of it to a certain degree, it affects them because that's how, you know, this is how we  
36 survive, you know, this is a necessity of how we survive. So, this case, again may not be directly  
37 affected, but you know, it does impact them because they need to understand one where the food  
38 comes from and how agriculture is directly related to urban communities and urban populations.  
39 You know, a lot of the urban communities that I've worked with, um currently and prior to this,  
40 you know, they're living in food deserts and that's a big problem, you know, when you have  
41 these urban communities and you have these food deserts, you know, how can we continue to  
42 move forward. But, you know, like I said again, you know, this needs to be discussed in those  
43 communities and how this affects all of that. So again, you know, um, we don't talk about or  
44 haven't talked about it, you know, as a direct piece, but it does affect everybody.  
45 Potentially there is space for partnerships and collaboration to really bring this forth into a lot of  
46 the urban communities. You know, that's gonna take a lot of collaboration with, you know, some  
47 of the Ag folks, you know, the experts that are in these agricultural roles, um, sustainable ag, a  
48 lot of those, those ag programs to really push that effort within our limited resource audiences.  
49 So, it's something that can be done. It's something that they can be made more aware of, you  
50 know, than they are now. So yes, there is room for, you know, collaborations and some  
51 partnerships, you know, not only internally but also externally within the communities to make  
52 them more aware of what this is, why this exist and how we can do things, you know, to better  
53 highlight, um, farming small farms to better highlight, you know, why it's important for people  
54 that look like me, to be more involved, you know, with farming and really understanding there is  
55 something else to communities to community development, to youth development. Then, you  
56 know, just urban trends, this is something that's not going away. Agriculture is not going away,  
57 so we have to work for, work with others and move forward to bring light around surrounding  
58 these initiatives to, you know, make them aware that this is something that they need to pay  
59 attention to 'em as they build and move forward with their own future.

60 Um, I guess I can start by saying I grew up on a farm. I have an ag background, not just,  
61 you know, with school, but my family, you know, I grew up around this. So, you know, I  
62 understand the importance of, of agriculture, food, access of food and knowing where your food  
63 comes from. So, you know, just starting there, I get that part. Um, but the values and beliefs that,  
64 you know, I hold in regard to the African American communities, um, this is something that I  
65 don't want to say African Americans are not aware, not fully aware of, you know, they, they  
66 know to some degree. Um, what, what agriculture may be, they know to some degree the basics  
67 of what it is the value of, I'm going to say really, um, for the younger generation, from a youth  
68 perspective, the value that our youth need to have, they need to value this as survival. Um, when  
69 I think about, you know, our African American communities, I immediately think about, you  
70 know, even though I'm from a rural community, I think about the urban communities, which is  
71 where I've spent a lot of time doing some youth development programming and youth  
72 development work. And so, the value that I would, or the standards that I would hold to them  
73 would be, you know, as I mentioned earlier, you all need to wrap your head around this. You all  
74 need to become more familiar than what you are because in again, all of the trends that's not  
75 going to keep you alive and well, you know, you need to think of it from a perspective such as  
76 survival and not just, oh, it's farming. Oh, it's a chicken or a cow. It's much, much more than that.  
77 Um, so just the value that they need to have, not so much the value and beliefs that they currently  
78 have from the youth perspective of just what I've seen, but just looking at it as a value of this is  
79 something that I need to pay more attention to and not just sweep it under the rug. Like what's  
80 agriculture, it doesn't matter. It does matter. And so just trying to get them to value it at a level or  
81 a standard that I see that, you know, no, you can't put things on people, you can't make them do  
82 things. But if I can increase their value of their and their perceptions of what they have, you  
83 know, regarding food access, regarding food, you know, I think that's a big step because right  
84 now you know, a lot of the perspective is my food comes out of a store or potato chips, that's not  
85 food. And so, until you can get beyond that, I think that's when I can kind of turn that value on  
86 them and say, Hey, let me look at this from a different perspective.

87 So, one of the outreach components of extension agent work, you're going to connect  
88 with these schools. You're going, that's where your audience is going to come from your schools,  
89 whether that's elementary, middle or high, your community centers, wherever you this portal of  
90 youth, that's where you need to connect. And so within the school systems there's something

91 called, um, which I think this is the national term for like school enrichment where agents are  
92 able to go into schools with particular curriculum, whether that's ad based or, or whatever, but  
93 they're able to use this curriculum it into the schools and teach, you know, use that as a teaching  
94 tool for in school lessons and whatnot. So yeah, that's one of the, the bigger components of  
95 teaching these kids and interacting with a lot of the kids is through the schools. Um, you reach so  
96 many more schools by doing that. I remember several years ago, um, there was a couple of  
97 schools that I've had interaction with, and these were some of our title one schools, and we were  
98 able to go in and build like, raised bed gardens. A lot of these students had never, number one  
99 had any kind of dealings with gardening, but number two, to see their food grown and to be able  
100 to walk out of that classroom, go to their raised bed and just pull lettuce out of the garden. That  
101 was the biggest thing for them. That was a milestone for them because they'd never seen it much  
102 less been able to get, you know, or have access to fresh lettuce or a radish or something like that.  
103 So, you know, those are the things that, you know, when you see those programs in the school  
104 and when you see the kids really benefiting and then making the connection, you know, those are  
105 the things that kind of speak to why it's important to continue to push, you know, agriculture and  
106 you know, really talk about food and food access because a lot of the students that, you know,  
107 make up this urban population, you know, they don't know what it is, they've never had it before  
108 and when you can have a student go home and tell their parents, I ate a salad today, you know,  
109 even at home, they may not have access or may not eat those things. So, not only is the child  
110 being educated, but they're taking it home and you have the adults and the parents in the  
111 household being educated not only on I ate a salad, but look what this can do for, me health wise.  
112 So those are some things that, you know, by being in the schools, they're able to do that. They're  
113 able to take part in that and have access. Um, and just, you know, interact with that setting.

114         The outcomes motivate me. So, you know, of course working with the audience, you  
115 know, motivates me because when I can work with youth that are not exposed, that's when I can  
116 say, oh, I'm going to go in and you know, you really, when they gravitate to the information, you  
117 know, it's working, something is working, the wheels are spinning, they're making connections,  
118 you know, to real life situations. So that motivates me to do this, to see the outcomes, to see that,  
119 what I brought in, whether that's a raised bed gardening, garden, whether that's, um, how to  
120 construct the garden, a little hydroponic, whatever, you know, that that motivates me when I can  
121 introduce them to something new that they've never seen, never heard of or don't have access to,

122 but then see the wheels turning and have them actually trying new things, tasting healthy foods  
123 and going home and talking about, you know, oh, I went to pick a radish today. Well, I went to  
124 get lettuce today. Those are the parts that you know, motivates me and when they make the  
125 connection that my food doesn't just come from Walmart or Pizza Hut. Um, another scenario,  
126 once upon a time I had a pizza garden at one of my older offices and it was just a little  
127 cinderblock circle and we marked off, you know, one section was basil, tomatoes, you know,  
128 different pieces that make up a pizza. And one of the questions I remember asking one of the  
129 students was, you know, where does your pizza come from? And of course, the answers I got  
130 Papa John's, Pizza Hut, Little Caesars. So, when I actually began to walk them through, you  
131 know, this is where, this is the foundation of where, what, you know, what you're eating comes  
132 from. And to see the Aha moments to see them like, oh, you know, it grows from here, you  
133 know, to even have them want to taste the tomato plant. Those are the pieces that motivates me  
134 to see them make the connections, um, and want to take those things back. So that's where my  
135 motivation comes from. You know, they want to learn, they want to be engaged and to be able to  
136 offer that. That's my motivation.

137 I grew up in the 4H program in a very rural area and you know, I enjoy the program, but I  
138 never thought I would be working with a, with a youth development program. Um, when I  
139 finished my undergrad degree I was just going to go and work in a lab somewhere and I was  
140 going to be content and little did I know I would end up in a position I'm doing something that  
141 acid I would never do and falling in love with it. Um, that's how I ended up working, you know,  
142 within the youth development field. Um, before I started this journey of course know, as I  
143 mentioned, I was a 4H'er, did all things 4H, um, got my degree in agriculture, you know, grew  
144 up on a farm. That was another thing I said I'm not going to school for agriculture. I've been  
145 around it all my life. I want to get away from it. Low and behold three degrees later and they're  
146 all in agriculture. So, it was always the stories that led me away from agriculture. Like I'm not  
147 going to do this. They also let me back to agriculture full circle. So you know, that's how, that's  
148 kind of how I ended up in youth development work, you know, I don't want to say it was an  
149 attraction, it was just one of those things that happened and I, it, it was meant for me to do this  
150 work, you know, it just, it happened and I haven't looked back since, and you know, just being  
151 able to interact with my community and interact with, you know, the 4H'ers and the kids that just  
152 drew me to want to do it even more so. Now it was never one of those things where I'm going to

153 do this for so long and then I'm going to leave. That was not the case for me. You know, I  
154 continued to stay in the field and I enjoy it, you know, I enjoy being able to not only at one point  
155 in time be hands on with the, with the kids, be hands on with the youth, but also I've enjoyed  
156 being in a role where I can kind of help contribute to the curriculum that's being implemented in  
157 the schools within the community centers and really, you know, guide the structure of that  
158 curriculum that's being implemented. So, you know, it's like you, you get the best of both  
159 worlds. You've had the experience where you're hands on, but it's also nice to have the  
160 experience that I can contribute to this, to what you're teaching, you know, and how can I bring  
161 in things that were, once, you know, no light has been shed on them. How can I make sure that  
162 those things are now being talked about and discussed within these youth settings?  
163 Just thinking, thinking about... So, being, you know, an extension professional and being really  
164 hands on with, with the youth of the communities that I've worked in. So, I always thought that I  
165 was going to be content doing that like until I ever retired or whatever, you know, that was my,  
166 my niche, that's what I wanted to do. I'm just really focusing on providing them with these  
167 opportunities. But then it was like, you know, you start thinking about the future and you where  
168 you may end up. And I was like, well, you know, how can I be impactful and resourceful in  
169 another way and another light. And so you think about, you know, it's like if I can get, if I can go  
170 in and still make an impact just by being there with them, you know, how can I impact more  
171 youth, you know, that's just not clustered than one county? How can I take what I'm doing to  
172 design something to develop something where I can impact more youth and still have that same  
173 feeling of, oh my gosh, I love what I do? And so that was the, I guess maybe one of the Aha  
174 moments at that kind of speaks to what you're, you're asking me. But that was my moment. Like  
175 this has to go beyond just my cluster of, of youth that I'm working with. You know, more people  
176 need to know about this. More people need to know about agriculture, more people of color need  
177 to know about agriculture. They need to know about food access and need to know about food  
178 and not just food in general, other youth development entities, you know, more people need to  
179 know about that. So how can I use myself, my skill set, you know, the resources that I've kind of  
180 gone and how can I use that to contribute in a different capacity. So that was kind of a, I think  
181 that kind of sort of answered that, but that was kind of a turning point or Aha moment. Like, you  
182 know, so much more can be done, you know, the work is never done so it's like, I can do more,  
183 you know, just in a different light. So that kind of, that kind of shed some light on, you know,



184 like furthering education and continuing to work in extension, you know, those were the  
185 moments, you know, just to want to do more.

186         So, you know, growing up I have always been from a very rural town, um, I think the,  
187 the, the shedding light or the moment for me that made me want to work with African American  
188 youth. So with extension, of course, you know, the organization serves everyone, you know,  
189 we're, we're definitely a service to all individuals, but I was in a particular role or in a particular  
190 position where my audience was primarily, um, like the limited resource families and you know,  
191 when you work with, with these audiences or you know, when I got to work with this group of  
192 folks and you understand that everything that the rural communities are talking about and such as  
193 this, you know, agriculture or whatever and they don't even know or are unaware of it. I think  
194 that was kind of my experience that made me want to work with this audience. It wasn't like, Oh,  
195 well I've tried it, now let me go back, you know, I want to. It wasn't necessarily bad. It was just,  
196 you know, I have to expose these youth to so many things and not necessarily catch them up, but  
197 catch them up with, with ag, you know, what's going on in the field of AG. So that was my  
198 moment where it's like, okay, this is where you know, your wheels are spinning and you're like,  
199 okay, you know, you think of the, this is where, this is where I need to be, these are the, this is  
200 the audience that I need to spend some time with to really engage and talk with and, and teach,  
201 you know, a lot of these skills that a lot of the, you know, our traditional folks who are familiar  
202 with, you know, rural ag, you know, this is where I can spend some time to really talk about this,  
203 you know, and it's not going to be like, oh, I already know that. I already know that. But you  
204 really, it's different when you are working with, you know, a new, new audiences, new folks that  
205 don't really understand. So, it's, it's richer to them and they really understand it. And when they  
206 grasp it as like, oh, okay, you know, something's happening. And also, just the approach that you  
207 can take. You know, even though in a lot of our urban settings, you know, they don't have space  
208 for four farms or pastors or whatever, so you know, the case may be, but when you are able to,  
209 you know, offer them opportunities to, to bring the farm to you or I can bring this to you so you  
210 can experience it and know it just makes it 10 times more valuable, you know, when you have  
211 someone that has never experienced or been exposed to it, it just makes it that much more  
212 valuable.

213         So, I'm primarily limited resource families. Of course, you know, again, with extension  
214 we serve with all folks, but you know, um, I've had a lot of hands on interactions with a lot of

215 our limited resource and urban youth. Primarily African American, some Hispanic. For me. One  
216 of the first major programs or projects? Um, I would say for me that was my first. I've some of  
217 my first word, just trying to think of the timeline here. Some of the beginning work that I've done  
218 with extension was with some of our black communities or our black youth African American  
219 youth. Again, I did a lot of work with like the title one schools which are primarily Black or  
220 African American youth. A lot of our boys' and girls' clubs, which are again, you know, within  
221 like our can't think of the term that they use for the community. Uh, it's a specific term. But um,  
222 like a lot of the boys' and girls' clubs, we're situated in primarily African American  
223 communities.

224         Maybe underrepresented is a better term for it or one that I can remember, some of our  
225 underrepresented communities. And so that was, you know, being in this role of youth  
226 development or in this work, I shouldn't say this role, but being in this work with youth  
227 development, you know, just working in those communities and in, you know, a lot of the title  
228 one schools who service a lot of our African American or Black youth. And so again, I would  
229 say one of the major programs was like talking about the raised beds. Of course, you know,  
230 we've done other things but that was one of the bigger projects where, you know, we went into  
231 these schools, actually built the raised beds and had the students and the teachers out there, you  
232 know, helping us plant and harvest. So that was one of the biggest, um, I would say projects that  
233 we had or that I've worked with within this community and know one of the components of the  
234 project was, they were able to incorporate tastings within the school. So for instance, one of the  
235 crops that they planted was sweet potatoes and so they were actually able to go and harvest sweet  
236 potatoes and we had um, we worked with local chefs to prepare them like, you know, sweet  
237 potato sticks or ice cream or things of that nature. So, they were able to prepare them for the  
238 students to have a tasting. And so, they literally saw the project from construction of the beds,  
239 planting, harvesting, and then actually tasting it. So literally from farm to table they were a part  
240 of that full experience. So that was one of my, I guess bigger projects or first projects, major  
241 programs that I work with. I'm a bit, I did some work with, um, within our black communities.  
242 And so, you know, they were able to rate the foods. And of course, again, you hear the students  
243 say, oh I've never had this before. So, for them to actually see it as a seed to now I'm eating it,  
244 it's pretty cool, pretty amazing to be able to provide that opportunity or that experience for them.

245 So, my role for this program, um. pretty much helping to design it implement it. So  
246 really, you know, we have this idea, and this is what you want to do, you know, really going  
247 around with our team to meet with the schools. Um meeting with the principals, out there  
248 building the beds, um planting. So, really from the ground up, you know, I had a hand in it from,  
249 you know, the idea, to helping the team generate and develop the content for the idea meeting  
250 with the folks and meeting with our schools. Um putting the beds in and you know, actually  
251 helping to harvest and you know, be there on that day when they were able to taste so really from  
252 the ground up, you know, I had a hand in putting that program together.

253 Well, you know, at the time kind of like I mentioned earlier, you know, a lot of our, a lot  
254 of our black youth are African American youth. They weren't exposed to this and it's like how  
255 can we take this knowledge and funnel it through the school system to get it through our youth  
256 and it's like let's put some raised beds in. So, you know, we have to understand that, you know,  
257 they can't go home to a, 100 Acre farm or a 20 Acre Garden and you know, in their yard they  
258 can't go home to that. They don't have that at home. You know, they don't have space for it. So  
259 how can I give them the same experience or expose them to a snippet of that experience by doing  
260 something with their schools. You know, how can we get the teachers on board the principal on  
261 board to be able to provide an experience like that. And so that was kind of the, the, the driving  
262 component or the purpose. I'm sorry, to really get that going, you know, how can we take this to  
263 them because you know, they, they don't have it. So how can we expose this to them?

264 We were able to receive some grant funding for this, you know, schools don't have  
265 enough funding to really generate to stuff like this. So, accessing funds through the school. Yes,  
266 because they're not available so you have to go to outside sources like grants or you know,  
267 donors or whatever, which are very scarce to get donors or donations, but primarily grants to  
268 really write in projects like that. And you know, the grant has to be enough to cover the cost of  
269 material, the cost of seeds and the costs of, you know, just to be able to, to maintain and sustain  
270 the actual, you know, garden at the school. So, you know, just finding grant money. Um, that's  
271 kind of, what sustained, that's because we knew the schools didn't have any funds for it.

272 I would say the most challenging in addition to finding funding, the most challenging part  
273 was um, you know, when you bring something new to the teachers and to the principal. And the  
274 first question is how does this relate to my standards, to the educational standards that the state  
275 says we have to do this and then you get the questions. So, you want me to take time out of my

276 regular classroom instruction to do what and how much time is that going to take? So that was a  
277 challenging part to sell it, but to also say, hey, you know, this is not just gardening. How about  
278 you use the garden to teach a math lesson? How about you use the garden to teach a reading  
279 lesson? You know, you can do so many more things with this garden that aligned with the  
280 standards that are teachable moments for your students. It's not just about, oh, go look out the  
281 window and see how much your lettuce has grown today. It's more than just, you know, looking  
282 at the window to see what's happening. I'm, which that can be a part of it, observation or  
283 scientific observation or whatnot. But you know, this is when you can get creative with your  
284 teaching, you know, how can I incorporate this with my math lessons, you know, let's count  
285 these seeds before we plant them, you know, how can we use those things to really drive the  
286 lessons that you're teaching in the school that's still align with the standards. So, getting them to  
287 understand that component, um, was a challenge. But when they saw it and when they saw that,  
288 oh, I can use this for other entities, it's not just let's go outside and play and look at the garden. I  
289 can incorporate this into my daily activity.

290         Then it became, you know, a little bit better once they were able to wrap their head  
291 around, this is more than just a garden, you know. So, I would say that was a challenging part.  
292 Um, that was, was like so much better and so much more rewarding when they got it, when they,  
293 like the light bulb went off for them for what was the most rewarding part of doing this project or  
294 program? I would say I'm seeing the students react to it. You know, I, I mentioned a couple of  
295 questions back and I talked about, you know, they don't have this at home, so seeing them be a  
296 part of it, but seeing them be a part of it from start to finish. And so, it's not just me coming to  
297 their classroom one day to talk about gardening and then I come or agriculture and then I come  
298 back the next day, oh here's a bowl of lettuce, we're going to try salad. But to be able to talk with  
299 them and see them through start to finish process of planting and now harvesting that was  
300 rewarding and fun to hear them say this tastes good or to hear them say, Oh, I'm going to go  
301 home and tell my mom about this. So, to me that was rewarding, um, because they were actually  
302 able to see it and really understand the application of food grows out of the ground, out of the  
303 soil. It's just not going and picking up a bag of apples or whatever from the grocery store. So just  
304 that processing piece.

305         So, this was an extension project and you know, we partnered, I would say with the  
306 schools, as they were the location of where these, these pieces happened. I'm trying to remember

307 the grant because I would call them partners because they funded it. I cannot remember what the  
308 organization's name was, that funded it. But um, we worked with, you know, what the extension  
309 piece, you know, like horticulture and some of our ag agents and youth development agents to  
310 really work together to pull it off because it's not just youth development, you know, we needed  
311 the expertise of our ag folks or our horticulture folks to really help us build up the program and  
312 understand, you know, what do we need to plant, how do we need to take care of it. So, a team of  
313 extension, other extension professionals, um, and also, you know, the schools. Yes, that's where  
314 we, we built everything and then of course the grant because they funded us to be able to do this.

315 So yeah, so in addition to, you know, the grant and the, and the school, one of the, and  
316 this could be, this could be seen as support and also like a success or outcome because um one of  
317 the schools we've implemented this. There was a community center in the same, same  
318 community where a lot of the kids from the school went afterschool to do homework or you  
319 know, wait until their parents or a parent got home and one of the things, um one of the ladies at  
320 the center, she would always talk to the kids, you know, what did you do at school today, you  
321 know, how's your day? And one of them in particular spoke about the garden and as a result of  
322 that conversation, that once community center community center that kind of, you know,  
323 supported the initiative of introducing this component to their students. She called and she said,  
324 you know, how can we get in on this, you know, what can we do? And so out of that  
325 conversation they were able to generate funds from a outside grant to buy a vegetable cart that  
326 they had painted and all that stuff. And so, the same students that went to the school came to the  
327 community center and they grew their own little garden in the back of the community center and  
328 the vegetables that they harvested this, this took place in the summer.

329 When school got out, the vegetables that they harvested, they would take the little cart  
330 and twice a week they would have like a few vegetables, but the community was able to come  
331 and purchase those vegetables. So, you know, the support from that, I'm going to say it's support  
332 because, you know, she, the person wanted to know, what are you guys doing, you know, tell me  
333 about this. And so that kind of led to a bigger outreach component just by her, you know, being  
334 aware of what was going on at the school to further help the community. So, you know, in  
335 addition to all of the funding and the money and, you know, the school and whatnot that, that I  
336 don't know that southern support. I don't know, it's not, that's not term to use, but the support  
337 from, you know, other community folks that care about what's going on and wanting to know

338 about what's going on, led to a bigger outreach initiative, um, is what I'm trying to say. So, um,  
339 we had support from, you know, just again, like I mentioned, not just extension but you know,  
340 other initiatives such as fun money or schools, but that, you know, that support turned into  
341 something greater.

342 So, the purpose was to expose youth or our African American youth and within these  
343 Title one schools to fresh vegetables to fresh food and to allow them to understand where their  
344 food comes from. So, you know, not only do we want to make this available for them, but we  
345 want them to understand that, you know, where it comes from, you know, this is all a part of the  
346 ag cycle, you know, your food has to come from somewhere. So, we really wanted them to wrap  
347 their head around this is where, you know, my fresh food comes from, you know, you, you  
348 make, you can't grow like a cow or whatever out of the soil. But in conjunction to seeing the, we  
349 were able to talk about, you know, your, your hamburger or different things. We were able to put  
350 light shed light onto all of those components of food, so really to teach them this is where it  
351 comes from, you know, and to really have them have access to fresh foods and fruits because  
352 you know, otherwise they may not have that, you know, when they go home. So that was one of  
353 our bigger purposes to really focus on and it turned into, you know, it turned into like a health  
354 component because you know, they're able to go home. They went home and talked about, oh  
355 my gosh, I ate this today and this is healthy, you know, maybe we should try this at home. So, I  
356 just kind of from this purpose, it just turned into other positive, you know, things that they were  
357 able to do and talk about.

358 Youth empowerment to me, I would say that, that is empowering youth to empowering youth to  
359 really have an understanding and build their own perspective of what's going on around them.  
360 Not just from an ag perspective, but just in general, you know, we're empowering youth to lead  
361 it. We're empowering youth to strive for excellence, go out and be a better me, you know, we are  
362 providing them with the necessary tools to go out and do these things. And so, to me that's what  
363 youth empowerment is. I am able to provide you with the necessary tools and resources to be a  
364 better me to, you know, go out and teach the next person about agriculture to go out and teach  
365 the next person about um, leading and leadership and you know, to go out and teach the next  
366 person just how to thrive, you know, to me that's youth empowerment. Just really, um, pushing  
367 them and teaching them and having them understand that, you know, I can do this and now I can  
368 go out and teach the next person. So really just providing them with tools and resources to, to

369 step up and to go in their communities and to empower others, you know, reach one, teach one,  
370 reach one. No, that's empowerment. That's youth empowerment to me. Um, my role in doing so  
371 again, I would say being that leader, that role model, that mentor, that volunteer, you know, that  
372 extension professional that's providing you with these tools that's providing you with, you know,  
373 these nuggets of information that's providing you with conversation and discussion around these  
374 issues so that you can in turn go out and empower others. So I'm just a vessel of resource, of  
375 resources and I am teaching you to go out and, you know, empower others, you know, try to  
376 follow the same or not even the same pattern, make your own pattern, but go out and teach  
377 others, empower others, you know, provide them with the same nuggets of information that I  
378 have shared with you. So, to me that's youth empowerment.

379 I would hope that it has had a positive impact on youth empowerment, on youth  
380 development. I'm sorry, I'm having stepped away from the role for a few years and then come  
381 back into the youth development role. Um, I still think about, or I still see, you know, the  
382 initiatives of gardening and agriculture continuing to be provided. For instance, I had a  
383 conversation last week with a former colleague that I knew several years ago who happens to  
384 still be in the organization and, you know, a curriculum. She shared a curriculum with me and I  
385 was like, oh my gosh, you know, years ago this was just an idea and just a little plot of land or  
386 you know, that we provided discussion around with our youth and now to see things like  
387 curriculum being generated. Um, to me that's, that's when you see your, your work, you see the  
388 impact being made. Um, and uh, you know, I don't want to take claim to that work, but just being  
389 a part of the ideas that helped generate this work when you go, when you leave and then you  
390 come back and you know, the 4H'ers that you used to work with or the youth that you used to  
391 work with, you know, you run into them and they'll, you know, they'll number one, remember  
392 who you are.

393 But number two, they'll talk about, you know, the skills or the things that, you know, you  
394 did with them, they may not remember all of it, but they're still able to say, I remember when  
395 you taught us this and I'm doing this now. So those are the moments that, you know, when you  
396 can leave and come back and they're still able to talk to you about and still remember, that's  
397 when you, you kind of feel like you've made an impact. Um, so to really just to see growth in the  
398 youth development program, you know, not necessarily saying that I made that impact, but  
399 overall that's an impact and things are continuing to happen and change, and you know, people

400 are still working. So to me, you know, that little piece of, of reassurance that, hm, you know, I  
401 made the right decision, you know, when you can still talk to folks that you used to work with or  
402 youth that you use to work with and they're still inspired and they're still excited and they want to  
403 continue to work towards some of these same perspectives that you taught them. Whether that's,  
404 you know, growing basil in a little bag or just really, you know, understanding the foundations of  
405 ag and you know, food. So those are the things, those are the greatest impacts when you, you  
406 know, years down the road, they're still talking about it.

407         My intended outcome and the reality. So, I can go back to the conversation that I just  
408 shared with the food cart. Never in a million years would I think that something such as a school  
409 garden, you know, this place in the back of a school would shed, would inspire someone else in  
410 their community to do something, to inspire them to recognize the need for not only youth to  
411 understanding where their food comes from, but for the adults as well. So, things like that. When  
412 a small project that you're just thinking, oh, this is just gonna be a school garden, we're going to,  
413 you know, teach them this, this and this. But who would ever thought that, you know, in reality  
414 an entire community would be affected, and the entire community would eventually have access  
415 to produce that they may not otherwise have had access to? So, you know, the small things like  
416 that, um, or in that instance kind of... you don't expect those things you just expect, or I just  
417 expected general outcomes. They tried new things, they liked it, you know, that's what I  
418 expected. Never in a million years would I have expected something like that to impact an entire  
419 community, not at all. Or the construction of additional, you know, raised beds at other schools,  
420 you know, to really talk about, you know, the whole concept of food and agriculture. So just that  
421 little project at the time expanded to something greater.

422         Like within this work that I've done, I have not been targeted, but in my communities, of  
423 course, you know, I am dealing with our black communities, our black youth, our black parents  
424 and so, um, sometimes colleagues may be a little... afraid to go out with you in these  
425 communities to do work. And I have had an instance where, you know, I was preparing for,  
426 preparing for a program to go out and do my communities and I was going to bring one of my  
427 colleagues with me and, you know, one of the questions was, well, what will they think of me?  
428 How will they react to me? And so, I have run into instances where, you know, sometimes  
429 people are just not as comfortable going into the communities. So, a racial standpoint from that  
430 perspective. You know, I've experienced something I've experienced that, you know, it's not



431 always, you know, I know I knew the kids, I've worked with the kids. **00:51:29** I've built trust in  
432 that community, so, they knew me. But this individual was like, I don't know, how will they  
433 respond to me? Um, how will they. It was more out of fear, I believe, on the individual's part.  
434 Um, and so one of the things that, you know, within our, within our limited resource or our  
435 African American communities, you cannot just go in and expect to make an impact or make a  
436 big change. You know, even for me in the beginning I was coming in as a stranger. They didn't  
437 know me, you know, all they knew was here's this lady coming in. She said she's doing  
438 programming. What kind of programming are you doing? Why are you here? You know, when  
439 we are invading territory, when we are invading their space, it's like, who are you spying on?  
440 Who are you looking for? You know, you have never been around here before, what do you  
441 want?

442           So, in that instance I had to build their trust. I looked just like them, but I still had to build  
443 that trust and let them know I'm only here to, you know, implement this program to do this for  
444 your school or to do this for your community. Well, not necessarily schools, but to do this for  
445 your community. I am here to provide you with a, b, and c. I'm not here to take you away. I'm  
446 not here to do any of that. And so once I was able to establish that trust, you know, they were  
447 more welcoming of me being in their community, but you know, having, you know, colleagues  
448 that showed fear upfront, you know, that's not always a positive thing when you're going into a  
449 new neighborhood and you're already going in afraid. So, I've experienced things of that nature,  
450 um, associated with race, so to speak, community.

451           So, I'll start with the living and working in. So, you know, I have lived in both rural areas  
452 as well as urban cities. At one time I thought I wanted to, you know, be the person that lived in  
453 the city, you know, the downtown fast paced life, know that whole lifestyle. But over time I  
454 found myself drawn more to the outskirts of the city. You know, I found myself drawn to  
455 wanting to have land, to have a small garden, wanting to have space to do things and to grow  
456 food and to have the opportunity that if I wanted to garden I can versus just setting up a pot on  
457 my balcony and trying to grow a tomato plant. So, you know, that has come with, with age and,  
458 you know, being exposed to both settings that I now find myself wanting to live in more of a, um  
459 out skirted/rural area to have access to be able to, you know, grow and plant and grow my own  
460 food space, county space and working. Um, I do prefer working in more of our urban settings  
461 because I can reach more of our limited resource and you that way, you know, a lot of our, our,

462 our black youth aren't in accentuated in rural areas. And so these are the spaces that the majority  
463 of them are, are, are living in. And so that's where I see myself working, you know, living in  
464 more, living in less urban, working in more urban. Um, how might my work influenced the  
465 development of, you know, food security and empowerment, you know, and you know, the  
466 sustainability of their communities, education, just really educating them with, with this line of  
467 work, we're able to offer them so many resources to, to teach them how to do things, to expose  
468 them to new things. And so, I just really feel educating them will essentially heighten that  
469 influence and really, you know, have a greater influence and a greater impact on, you know, their  
470 perspectives or food security or, you know, just even empowerment. So, I think that's the greatest  
471 influence of that, you know, this line of work and me doing this can have just, you know,  
472 providing the resources and educating them on new things.

473 I do consider myself to be a leader. You know, I'm going to take my profe`, my working hat off,  
474 um, where I feel like I'm a leader at work because I'm able to, you know, work with our  
475 communities, but outside of work just as an individual, just as me, um, I do still feel that I am  
476 able to lead because I'm, even if I'm not working with our, you know, black youth, I'm still able  
477 to impact and lead folks that may attend my church that may get attend, you know, local 4H  
478 clubs that are in the area. You know, even though I'm not leading in a professional setting, I can  
479 still, you know, I still feel that I am making an impact. I'm making an impact, you know, by the  
480 choices I make, you know, even down to, you know, if I'm around, you know, a group of youth  
481 at a restaurant or just in general, you know, what kind of food choices am I making? **00:57:28**  
482 Am I displaying positive choices or healthy habits for these youth that are around me? So, you  
483 know, I have to be mindful of how, how I am projecting myself, you know, outside of work, you  
484 know, you know, you're always in the spotlight and some so to speak or whatnot, but you know,  
485 people are constantly observing you, they're constantly watching you, and so you have to portray  
486 that leader image even when you don't feel like you're in a capacity to leave, you still have to  
487 portray that image and you still have to be mindful of the choices and decisions that you are  
488 making because people are always watching, so to speak. You're always in a position where you  
489 can make a difference, whether that's at work or at home. And so just being mindful of that and  
490 knowing, you know, you always have that, that image or that perspective, you know, you're,  
491 you're always out there and so again, you're leading whether you're at work or you're not at work  
492 because somebody is always going to be observing you.

## Appendix Q: Sister Moor Bey's Narrative

1 I am Sister Moor Bey, I am a female. Race? I don't really know what that means because  
2 a race is like something you compete in. When you say race, what kind of answers are you  
3 looking for? Race is, a funny one because I don't know. Race is I think they usually define white,  
4 black. And those really aren't races. You can't define a race by a color, it doesn't make sense. It's  
5 not logical. And even by English standards it's not lawful. So, I don't have a particular place. I'm  
6 Moorish American though. I'm infinite, so I don't have a particular... I'm as aged as anybody  
7 wants to, wants me or feel that I am. I am timeless. So, I don't have a job title. I don't have a job,  
8 just over broke. So, I don't do jobs. My title, my title is [Bey], but because we're dealing with... I  
9 understand that this is about agriculture. My position... I can't say specifically, but I'm like an  
10 advisor, counselor, an innovator, a teacher and a mother. So, I have a lot of titles. Teacher,  
11 mother, I am a business woman. I'm a Moor. I am a healer. I'm a spiritual being first, a divine  
12 being. But um, I guess as many of us, I have many titles. So, to some up what I understood about  
13 the Pigford v Glickman case there, there was a settlement given, a class action lawsuit because of  
14 some agricultural issues. And the distribution of the funds was not fair, not equal, not equitable  
15 of comparison of quote unquote blacks to whites.

16 So, they're trying to access land. And then there was forms and things that they have to  
17 fill out applications and then they filled out. So, it seems like a great many of them filled out the  
18 required forms, I guess in the same manner as their quote unquote white counterparts. So, um,  
19 then they should receive the same amount or the same access. And I guess according to what the  
20 summary says, they didn't receive the same access, it didn't receive the same amount of funds.  
21 They received a great difference in the amount of monies. Um, so it was again, you know, just  
22 racially motivated, inequitable. It just sucks that, you know, at many turns, melanated people are  
23 treated differently and unfairly than their white counterparts. It doesn't make sense. It is what it  
24 is. But, um, you know, on bigger levels it just shows people's intention to not be fair, unjust and  
25 destroy mother earth. Because if you wonder if there's people that want to take care of mother  
26 earth and this money available for them, give them all the money they need and let them take  
27 care of mother earth, they want to do it. And by their own nature and divinity, they're caretakers,  
28 Brown people, melanated people, Moorish people, black people, they're all, they're caretakers of  
29 mother earth. They have been since the beginning of time, so you know, and there's monies

30 available. So, it just, everything has to turn into a racial war, well not everything. Let me not  
31 claim that, but you know, it's sad that things always have to turn in... there I am claiming it again.  
32 See that's what happens because we claim it, it becomes so, that that racial inequity, it just  
33 doesn't make sense and people are just free to do as they want to. But it seems like sometimes  
34 they, they make choices that aren't to the real benefit of the people or mother earth and in the  
35 name of mother earth. Because agriculture is about planting and taking care of mother earth and  
36 the plants. So in the name of that, you're going to use some, some inequitable standards and  
37 feelings of hatred or resentment to guide your... to guide your actions about nature and  
38 agriculture. It's unfortunate. So, all we can do is put light on those individuals that they come  
39 around, because mother earth needs help desperately. And anybody who wants to take care of  
40 mother earth should be greatly rewarded and um, you know, should be applauded for that. And  
41 given whatever assistance is available.

42         This case impacts my work probably because this would discourage me even though I  
43 don't let anything really discouraged me because that's a false thing in itself, discouragement, but  
44 it might actually encourage me, because there's, there's funds out there for, um, melanated people  
45 to do agricultural activities. So, it's something I'd like to look into. So if anything, it put a seed  
46 of thought actually, to say, you know, I can go and look into agricultural opportunities, or how  
47 then I can help create agricultural opportunities or find out how to get access to monies allocated  
48 for agricultural opportunities because we are caretakers of mother earth and there are, there's  
49 monies out there and we need to access to those resources so that we can do our job properly. In  
50 a better standard. So, we really should do that, and the crazy thing had been the first place. The  
51 land is not theirs to give share, distribute nothing. So, those who at USDA, a government office  
52 who are making these decisions, they don't even have the right to do that, so they're really  
53 operating under the color of law because they don't have the right to distribute land. It's not land.  
54 This is our forefathers land. This is the land of the Moors. So, for them to be doing that to our  
55 ancestors, because Blacks are Moors and unaware, unconscious Moors, you know, and still our  
56 ancestors, they may not know, but they are. They want to place them off in Africa and say that  
57 that's why they don't have any right to land here, but that's not the truth. And this Native  
58 American theory, that's not the truth. That's another cover up. So, the Moors have been here, so  
59 these quote unquote black farmers, they have a right to this land. This is our land. Europeans  
60 came here from their land in Europe where their forefathers were and coming in and claiming

61 land here and then not giving it to people that have been here and even before the Moors were  
62 here our ancients, like were ancient from the beginning of time. Brown people have been here, so  
63 why not give them finances to help develop Earth they know what they're doing. It's in the DNA.  
64 They're not foreign to the land. They are the land. You look at the color of the skin of Brown  
65 people and color of Mother Earth, it's the same thing. So, they're caretakers of the land. So,  
66 money should be given to them.

67         So, it'll encouraged me to think that I need to investigate more of how to get access to  
68 land that's, that's mine. Ours. My children, their children's, my forefathers. If we get access to  
69 this land, that's ours. So, it's encouraging me to do that. So, at least it's going to go on the list.  
70 Even though it kind of was on the list, but you know, it gave me another perspective still. Right.  
71 That's the problem with African American communities. That's why they don't have any rights,  
72 first of all. And that's why they're not giving them the land because you're claiming you're  
73 African American. African Americans don't have any rights here, and if you're African your  
74 rights are in Africa, you know, so that's the first thing. So, it's a complicated thing because we as  
75 Moors come together and claim our nationality and claim back our land, there's nothing that can  
76 be done because this land is ours. Noble Drew Ali filed for the 1099 so, that's dripping off to a  
77 whole other thing. But this land is ours. So, when we start claiming African American, which is a  
78 slave name, how's a slave going to say they have the right to the land, they're the slave, the  
79 master has the right to the land. The master in the sight of people today is white people. So, you  
80 know, they're still wearing that, that, that role, that cloak, that white cloak. So, you know, if the  
81 slave was going to beg the master for land or trying to claim it as his own, that's kind of crazy.  
82 That's why they're not getting it. So, which means that, that, that, that Moors should be able to  
83 get it, and we are, I had to look into it, you know, it's a lot of information to even be processing  
84 just knowing our rights, but you have the right to this land for sure. African Americans, That's  
85 not a real term. And so, if one studies their Moorish history, they'll find that because Brown  
86 people, um, because even the word black, I don't even really like using that because no, people  
87 aren't black. You know, I mean I've met people that are blue black, people from South Sudan,  
88 but that, that term in itself doesn't make sense. You know, you're brown. I'm Brown, I'm not  
89 black. You know, the chair there is black, so it doesn't make sense. And then to identify  
90 somebody as that, and the term African American, there's some information, there's some  
91 paperwork that shows classifications of people and African Americans are not considered an

92 original people of the land. That's a whole other story. But, the depths that I know, the  
93 terminology of the, uh, the meaning and definition lead lawful definition, not even legal, lawful  
94 definition, African-American is what's making them not get any benefits because they're  
95 classifying themselves as slaves and things that don't exist.

96 We're indigenous. Yeah. We're definitely indigenous to this land. We weren't brought in,  
97 brought in from where? I'm not saying that no slaves ever came here from another part of the  
98 world, but on this side, the [West Gate at Maxim], we weren't brought here from Africa. That's a  
99 lot of hogwash. Have you ever seen artifacts of a slave ship and actual slave ships? Just  
100 pictures... They ever had one in the Smithsonian or any of them? Do you ever hear of them  
101 having an actual slave ship? You know, that would have been big news, right? I never seen that  
102 either, but they found pieces of all kinds of ships, right? The Titanic, the Noah's Ark, they found  
103 a piece of Noah's Ark, they said but no slave ships. The truth in fact, is that people, Moor's,  
104 when the Europeans came here and did what they did and the founding fathers chopped down the  
105 cherry tree, which is the Moorish flag, and they killed all the brown that were here. Took Brown  
106 people from the north and brought them to the south... Kidnapped them. If you see the quote  
107 unquote flag of Morocco, it's the banner of Morocco. It's red background with the five pointed  
108 green star in the middle and the star, which is representing the seed in the middle of that apple.  
109 And so, um, that's the cherry tree that George Washington proverbially cut down.

110 Agriculture motivates me. I love Mother Earth; I love the Earth. I love fresh vegetables. I  
111 don't like, don't like um, poisonous sprays, I don't like ingesting chemicals that are harmful. I  
112 think it's a blessing from the creator, the creators just always just, putting blessings. The fruits  
113 and vegetables are some of them and so, we're supposed to be caretakers of the land and eat  
114 naturally. It's the way life is supposed to be. That's the way it was. So, why wouldn't I, you know  
115 what I mean. I have every reason to want to do this type of work and so does everybody else.  
116 Why wouldn't, people want to do it? Because people don't want to spend the time but, its time  
117 consuming a little bit but, I love it. I love nature. This is who I am. I'm a teacher, I'm all those  
118 things. I'm a caretaker, I'm here, I'm here to help, guide, teach, learn, experience. So that's just  
119 my natural way of being. And I'm attracted to it because that's what life is supposed to be.  
120 Caretaker and bringing forth abundance from the Earth. So, it's just natural. I've always been on  
121 a journey, always liked nature. From a child, I've always liked nature, and at home we had fruit

122 trees, all kinds. I've always been in the midst of nature, climbing trees, from a child until now.  
123 Caretaking, mow the lawn when I was younger, take care of the garden now. It's always been.

124         Nothing in particular led me to teach children about agriculture, because as a child, I  
125 learned about agriculture. My Mother had a garden, so I did that and when she grew up, my  
126 Grandparents had a farm, had land and gardens and that's how they lived. So, it's natural for us,  
127 and um, but what... you know, as I speak to other people, it's good to see that people have  
128 similar desires and we do... I've helped a sister friend of mine, she has a 501(c)(3) organization  
129 [knew, Healing Springs Pharmacy] that's dedicated to agriculture to. And so, we've joined on  
130 some projects. So, I guess that that experience helped maybe motivate me to do things for  
131 children other than my own. It's just the way it is. The youth that I have worked with were my  
132 children as children. So, from babies, from the... one and two, I've always had some type of  
133 garden. They used to help me in the garden where we used to live. Maybe they were, they were  
134 all close in age, so, from between two and seven and now my teenagers, my boys they're  
135 homeschooled, and they, one of their classes is permaculture. So, they get out there and they help  
136 people too. They actually go and build gardens for others, uh, help build gardens for others in the  
137 community. And so, through homeschooling them they've been given service projects. Here, at  
138 the house they've helped me dig a garden. Helped me use the land. Use land, use the side of the  
139 house, use everywhere, use anywhere that has enough light, that's not going to disrupt the main  
140 area in the backyard.

141         We figured a location, I figured some, my children found some areas and we just, we dug  
142 it up, we tilled the land, planted seeds and watched things grow from there. They helped plant  
143 trees in the backyard. Um, we have cherry trees, apple trees, peach trees. Uh, they, they all do a  
144 lot in terms of agriculture at the house. Yeah, they do great work. We have a, they helped convert  
145 an old bathtub that we had taken out, we fixed. And they planted, uh, one of them planted  
146 potatoes and you know, he has a little corn patch somewhere and another potato patch. So, they  
147 have their own little projects that they do and then I'm helping others do other service projects.  
148 My son was just given some other plants, so we have some cabbages and some kale, so uh, but  
149 here is for sure, number one, and they cut the lawn and helped weed. So, they're really like  
150 caretaker of the land here, they do a lot of work here. And then they, they help other people to do  
151 service projects. They get paid, they do jobs, different ways. They have several people that  
152 they've done work with. They're good. They know what they're doing, agriculture wise. They

153 help to water the grass, they just, they do it all for agriculture. They are working on some  
154 carpentry now. They're hands on. And practical things, they're really good at. They. Yeah. We've  
155 done some work on the house and they've been right there, every step of the way. My husband is  
156 the designer, the builder, architect and the builder and they've...they're right there. One of my  
157 sons, this one here (points to son in kitchen) he also loves electronics and spaces that have to be  
158 squeezed into. He goes right in those small spaces and helps with electrical or plumbing stuff.  
159 So, they're really, really, up on that. Very much so.

160           It's important for young people to learn how to garden and take care of Mother Earth, too,  
161 to appreciate Mother Earth. It's very important because that's the younger generation and so if  
162 there aren't, if they're not any of them like beacons of light to say, ay, we can do it this way, it's  
163 going to be real trouble, you know. And passing the torch, that's just the way how we live and it's  
164 important that that's how they live, and they enjoy it and it's necessary, it's necessary. That's how  
165 we are. We're nature beings, so you know, in addition to, in addition to knowing traditional book  
166 studies, it's important to know how to do natural studies. You know, so many people now seem  
167 to find themselves alienated from mother earth and they can't garden, and they don't eat  
168 vegetables or the dirt or you know, so unable to deal with it. It's incredible to me. And so now  
169 I've been meeting people that are coming around and asking about doing things like that.  
170 Literally asking how do I grow? You know, how do I grow something, or you know, how do I  
171 grow a plant, is it this way or that way. And I've given away a lot of plants. We've given away  
172 the children have given away many plants to people too, because we have an abundance. Yea  
173 they've, now that you ask me that, they help do a lot of stuff. Wow. Even surprising stuff, they  
174 just help people and people will tell me about it and thank them, things like that. That's how I  
175 met a few people because they were helping them. You know your boys helped me and they're  
176 so great.

177           We're doing the garden because I just want fresh vegetables and fruits that, you know,  
178 that's just what I want. That's how I want to live, and It doesn't make sense to, buying food like  
179 that, and when you have garden, that you can use and it's fresher, it tastes so good and it's so  
180 healthy. You see it right there. When I'm cooking, I just go and pick stuff out the garden and I  
181 come inside, and people have been here and comment like, I just love the way you just go  
182 outside and pick a couple tomatoes and throwing them in the pot or put them in the salad. You  
183 know, that's living, that's living. Not going and buying a burger, you know? That's not living. It's



184 free, it's fresh and it tastes good. It's healthy. I love it, love it. I love the plants in abundance.  
185 That's, that's real wealth, you know? People have dollars and cents. You can't eat that. So what  
186 wealth is that really? You can go buy something to eat, you can't eat that, you can't use that for  
187 anything. I mean you could buy and spend on things like that, but that's real wealth. You can go  
188 out onto your land and pick something, that's wealth. Its green, that's good, that's life, that's  
189 wealth, health is wealth. You know, eating greens and having all these greens around you eating  
190 greens and consuming greens. That's health, and health is wealth. You know, um, eating fake  
191 stuff, non-agricultural, cardboard foods, frozen dinners, that's not health, that's not real, that's not  
192 agriculture. I don't know what that is. You know, that's extreme matrix living. You know, you're  
193 living in your little computer-generated world and eating fake stuff because someone told you  
194 that it tastes good. Like the matrix when he ate the steak, and someone told you that it tastes  
195 good. That's not. You don't even know if that's really true.

196         The challenging part is keeping up with the garden because it grows fast and um, and  
197 keeping that momentum, keep weeding it all the time, making sure everything's growing. You  
198 got to go in the back and check and look keeping up with the gardening. That's the hardest part  
199 because you have to keep checking on the garden. If you just leave it, things will start to seed  
200 earlier things waste. But even if they do it for the beauty of it and you can still give things away  
201 or keeping up with the gardens is, is you know. And even getting it started could be tricky too  
202 because you know, sometimes you have an intention. I had intentions for more garden spaces  
203 and I didn't get to it, you know, intentions. So, to get it actually done it and the physical part is a  
204 whole other thing. So, beginning and maintaining. The most rewarding part of doing this is  
205 eating the fresh fruits and vegetables and sharing them with others and cooking with them and  
206 just seeing them, they're just so beautiful. Just knowing that, uh, you know, through me using  
207 and working with Mother Nature, just bringing forth such greatness. It's just an honor just to, it's  
208 an honor that, that the creator would choose you to, to do that because not everyone's chosen to  
209 do that. That's why they don't, not everyone has that inner instinct. So, it's a, it's a great honor for  
210 Mother Nature to think that, I could handle that and then to, to handle it. That's a great honor. My  
211 husband, he's like, you know, designer and landscaper and planter and gardener, everything. And  
212 then the children, My children help... same thing. Gardeners, designers, and they do a lot of  
213 digging and they get right in there. They get right in there. Um myself, the creator, of course, the

214 inspiration, the mighty I Am presence to say, I am each individual vegetable that says, I am  
215 squash, I am tomatoes.

216         So, we've got to thank the mighty I Am presence for giving all of those beans, the choice  
217 to do that. And uh, partners outside of here, a brother I came, Dr Frank Wilson, partner, anybody  
218 the children work with, I partnered with, you know, it's through, uh, me knowing or meeting with  
219 them and the children knowing and meeting with them, that they become partners with  
220 agricultural things and assist a friend of mine, Healing Springs Pharmacy, partnered with them  
221 and they had a couple of workshops. They were good to check them out. A sister has an  
222 organization and they deal with, teaching permaculture, and natural based living in an eco-  
223 village and stuff like that. And we partnered with them and did a couple of workshops and the  
224 boys did a service project and helped, uh, help, uh, Healing Springs Pharmacy to do some  
225 landscaping and did some work over, at their place. They're being set up for entrepreneurship,  
226 most definitely. I'm sure they're going to have a couple of jobs in their lifetime, but they're going  
227 to be really entrepreneurial. They're going to guide themselves. It's not gonna be anybody on top  
228 of them all the time. I don't see that. You never know how it ends up. But they're very creative  
229 and independent thinking, and they're very masterful at things at a young age, so I can only  
230 anticipate that it'll get greater. You never know their final word or thoughts or actions, but at  
231 least they know and if they needed to, they could do it. If they had to, and they needed to, for  
232 sure. I know for sure without a doubt. If they were just left here a piece of land, they would find  
233 a way to build a teepee. They would do the whole thing, the whole Shebang. They would do a  
234 whole house with running water and electricity. The two of them, 14 and 16. And be like, you  
235 got to be kidding me, but they would do that and to build a garden out back. For sure. They're  
236 that skillful.

237         Seeds have been donated to us or given to us. Um, my husband's sister had seeds. She's,  
238 you know. Yeah. People who have given us seeds. Healing Springs Pharmacy, they donated  
239 some seeds. They also have a seed bank. And a lot of our stuff, we have a lot of plants,  
240 particularly the tomato plants that are, we call them volunteer plants. They come back every  
241 year, I'm looking at a whole patch of tomatoes growing right now. Couldn't believe it. Whole  
242 Patch, maybe over 50, maybe 30, 50 plants or right outside there, the tomatoes because the seeds  
243 would drop. So, we have a lot of volunteer plants and we keep seeds and we have, we keep the  
244 seeds and things we've grown and so if I need to get anything I want, I just buy seeds.

245 Volunteer plants are plants that you don't plant yourself, you don't go and dig and plant.  
246 Like, seeds will drop from a plant with the plants growing in the seeds. The seed will fall, and it  
247 will grow next year, the same year. They just volunteer and grow. You don't, you're not  
248 involved, like just the fact that there were seeds there, you know, their plant will grow. So, it's a  
249 volunteer plant. You didn't intentionally plant it.

250 The purpose of this project was because that's how I want to live. I want to live a natural  
251 life so; the project is always living a better life. And you know, it's not a project, it's life... life.  
252 We're projecting into life, but it's not a project it's a journey and the journey is always going to  
253 have natural fruits and vegetables for me, I'm vegan, I don't eat meat. So, for me, it'll always  
254 compare, like, even though they, they eat, they don't normally eat vegetables like myself, their  
255 journey's always to have a lot of plants and vegetables because we eat it here, they like it, they  
256 like to grow it. That's just part of our life. It's our lifestyle, our culture, our heritage. So, there is  
257 always going to be plants around. It's important that I instill the same sense of life and culture to  
258 my sons and daughter. It's important that they, that they feel themselves, caretakers of Mother  
259 Earth, and that they not abuse Mother Earth. Even if they don't want to do it to the extent that I  
260 would. It's important that they respect Mother Earth and don't harm and litter. That's important.  
261 Respect Mother Earth. From her we... without Mother Earth, we wouldn't even be here, so you  
262 better respect Mother Earth. It's very important to me that they respect the Earth. If you don't  
263 want to be gardeners and do all of that, that I do, that's fine, but you're going to respect Earth.  
264 Don't, you know, don't, don't litter and treat her bad and you know pollute her with chemicals,  
265 you know, or do things that aren't right. It would be nice if they like to garden, even if they have  
266 their own house and they garden, even if they don't garden a lot. You have a plant. It's important  
267 to have planets, have life around you. It's important to eat vegetables, it's important. Eat Salads,  
268 you know, eat live food, eat spinach. It's important that they do stuff like that to whatever extent,  
269 but yeah, it's important that they be something. That they respect plants and that's definitely  
270 important to me. That's... then who are you? If you're not a lover of Mother Earth, then you  
271 don't love Mother Earth. Are you with her or not? If you're not, that's not cool.

272 To me, youth empowerment is teaching the youth to be empowered themselves. It's  
273 teaching them how to truly live and be able to function. Not just to pass tests, but to be useful, to  
274 be able to do stuff, to be able to hang a picture. We have to empower the youth, so that they can  
275 live good lives and help others and so that they'll always be light. If you empower the youth and

276 they hold a high frequency and they hold a lot of light and show respect for Mother Earth, then  
277 they're going to pass that on because people that they know and people that are involved with are  
278 going to do the same. They're going to be moving in circles with people that are interested in  
279 that. So, they're like minds, but the youth have to be empowered to do things because a lot of  
280 youth today, they can't do much of anything. Their parents even complain, but younger women a  
281 lot of times can't cook. It's not only important for women to cook, young men can cook.  
282 Macaroni and cheese is not a dinner, you know, that's a snack if you only got a dollar. So, it's, it's  
283 important to empower the youth to be able to do things on their own. Um, because that's real life.  
284 Those are life skills, you know, of course it's life skills that you have to be able to read and write.  
285 Teach them to be innovators and teach them to do better, teach them to want to do better, teach  
286 them that there are things beyond the normal things you see, and experience and your friends see  
287 and experience that are important and real. Teach them how to protect themselves. Teach them  
288 how to be able to survive, if they had to live off the grid, teach them how to build a fire, teach  
289 them how to catch water. How do you know where water is? How do you know what plants are,  
290 what plants could heal something? What plant could heal your foot. What plant could heal your  
291 eye. If you were out in the woods, do you know what plants you could eat? Teach them survival  
292 skills, life skills, those are important. That's wealth. You know, people think it's all about money.  
293 You know, most kids they got this, they got money, but you couldn't, they couldn't survive for  
294 two days out there. Teach them things that aren't in the box. Teach them to think outside of the  
295 box. Um, teach them to want to be more and to do more. Teach them that they are more, that  
296 they are Moors. Teach them that they're not US citizens, idiots and clowns every frigging day.  
297 Teach them all that stuff was not okay. Teach them, teach them. One thing I've taught my  
298 children, it's about orgonite. I'm really glad I talked to them about this. These protect people from  
299 EMF's electromagnetic frequencies. We could use these in the garden too. Because I have them  
300 in my garden, I have them all around the area.

301         So, I'm using orgonite to help grow gardens and there's projects. It's a project that was in  
302 Africa I had seen that inspired me, the project of a couple, that built orgonites, made orgonites  
303 and was putting them in water in parts of Africa to clean it up in certain villages. The orgonite  
304 was helping clean up the water, so, and using them around your land, you know. We have a good  
305 vibration going on here. There's orgonites all around, you've seen them coming up the stairs and  
306 people will notice them in random locations, and I say, leave that there. The little pieces that

307 aren't so great, put them in the garden because if these things help rejuvenate the earth and help  
308 put energy and increase the vibration of mother earth, the organites and help protect from EMFs,  
309 So the EMF's affecting plants too, teach them to know that. If you put your plant besides your  
310 phone, it's going to die? I don't know if you knew that or if people do that. And people will do  
311 that, you know, so, teach them to be innovators, teach them to want to create things that will help  
312 Mother Earth, it's important. We need people that are concerned about Mother Earth, so when  
313 they get all their life skills and your school book education that they could do something to  
314 contribute to Mother Earth even if it's not something that even if they're not a direct farmer, but  
315 anything that they want to do. My other son likes political science, he's not necessarily a hands-  
316 on gardening type of person, but he has strong moral values. He wants, and he likes politics. If he  
317 gets into politics, I'm sure he's one of the people that would stand up for the environment. You  
318 know what I mean? So, you know, in whatever way it comes out, but teach them to respect Earth  
319 you know. Teach them to be innovators and teach them to stand up for Mother Earth, don't let  
320 people destroy it.

321 I think that what I have taught them has made them want more and it's made them more  
322 peaceful because they like nature. People who like nature I think tend to be more peaceful. I  
323 think people who take off their shoes and walk on Mother Earth are going to have a more  
324 peaceful vibration because you lose your connection with Mother Earth wearing rubber all the  
325 time, so you become ungrounded and then you become alien to Mother Earth because you know,  
326 you don't touch her. So, teach them to be more grounded, teach them to be more respectful and  
327 love. Love nature, the animals, not just do plants, that's part of nature and the culture too respect  
328 animals and... I forgot the question. Right, and they respect Earth, they like it. They, um, they're  
329 not afraid of it because some people are even afraid of their backyard. Like, oh mosquitos, you  
330 know what I mean? Teach them little plants that can help them. In fact, they're going to respect  
331 Earth. They're gonna eat fruits and vegetables and not going to be, even if when I'm not around,  
332 they probably would eat that dog-on McDonald's maybe, I don't know, McDevil's. They uh,  
333 they may get a salad, you know, they'll go out to dinner and have salad, they like salad. More,  
334 healthier mindset, more natural based mindset, respect and love for Mother Earth. They do want  
335 to see Mother Earth, they like the beach. That's part of Mother Earth. They like to go there.  
336 They're like that, they would travel and go see other beaches. They're not closed minded, they're  
337 not just brought up in one area and never been anywhere. That's part of it too, because it's so

338 vast. They know they've seen rivers and they've been in rivers and lakes and oceans and forests.  
339 They've been, you know, all the different types of mother earth settings. So that's important too.  
340 So, it has an impact, a lasting impact because they are not afraid of that and not afraid to go  
341 somewhere and climb a tree. My sons will climb a 40ft tree in a minute, you know, you turn  
342 around and wondering where he is, and he'll be hiding, laughing up from the tree. So, make them  
343 more happy and joyful and just nature people and just good beings, you know, just respectful to  
344 Mother Earth.

345         There are some things they surpass, because their skills, I mean truly you'd be amazed,  
346 the things that they can do, in addition to agricultural stuff. The younger one will fix your car,  
347 change the oil, change the brakes and all that, so. They do a little bit of that, they don't, eeh, a  
348 little bit of that. They do a lot of hands-on stuff. The books part is a little more challenging part.  
349 They really like to be touching up there. But I've got to get to that. But when they do, they pick  
350 up. There smart, they pick up, they do, they get it and then they can draw from experiences on  
351 other things that they're learning. So, learning it in the book is one thing, but learning it and  
352 knowing it and seeing it is a whole other thing. That's important to have like real hands on skills.  
353 So, if you really know something and you have both aspects. You know when you read it and  
354 experience it. And the other one, I forgot, he has a turtle, he watched, he saw a baby turtle hatch,  
355 he got the baby turtle egg, the mother laid the egg and he, I don't know. He found a turtle  
356 crossing the parking lot or whatever. And brought it home. Now he has a pet box turtle I kept the  
357 box turtle; it had eggs and they get to see the whole process and had a nest and helped little  
358 animals. So, all those things are, are practical. You mean by looking at, what's the process of a  
359 turtle egg cracking or you know, birthing. And you could look at a little video that we've seen it.  
360 It's a whole other ball game, you know. They can go, oh, I bought corn, I made corn or  
361 whatever, I made a salad, lettuce, tomatoes and the scallions and potato salad. Practical  
362 experiences. A whole other ball game.

363         As far as racial experiences, I don't think anything hinders my fruition. But I know that  
364 because I'm not giving anybody that power over me. But I know that had my forefathers land not  
365 been stolen, the economy would be even more developed (inaudible). And had more forefathers'  
366 true legacy, the Moorish Empire been known I would be benefiting more right now. It took me a  
367 long time to find out about that. That this here actually is, Mecca is Chicago, Illinois. Egypt, all  
368 those places that they speak of, this is Morocco, Al Moroc. This is actually the land of our

369 forefathers, not in Africa, see had I known that, or had the truth to hear, still holding it as  
370 common knowledge, yea would have been, I would have benefited more because I would have  
371 known I was a Moor all along, so I would have grown up in the principles of love, truth, peace,  
372 freedom and justice. That would've been my motto from day one. Even though somehow, they  
373 subconsciously word the motto, love, truth, peace, freedom, and justice it you know, knowing  
374 those things gives you another perspective. Knowing that that's what we're supposed to follow,  
375 rather than just following it. So, you know things, those things may have hindered growth of  
376 Moors. Me directly, I'm certain that it affected me in certain ways because had I known the truth,  
377 and the truth been heard, I'd be in a different position. I wouldn't be who I am right now. So, I'm  
378 still grateful, um but hindering me, it's not going to hinder me. Only if I choose to let it, only if I  
379 choose to let it upset me and remind myself because once you keep repeating it, that something is  
380 hindering you, it will hinder you. So, I don't claim anything because I'm infinite, infinite  
381 possibilities, so things may hinder the average person and hinder black people or African  
382 Americans because their status, those things will hinder them. Because they're fighting an uphill  
383 battle if you're trying to battle lawful with legal and imaginary stuff. You're not black or African  
384 American, you're trying to battle a whole system with the two lowest words. You know, so, that  
385 will hinder, but it's not going to hinder me because my eyes are opened to that.

386       Agriculture wise, things will hinder you. Monsanto is doing all kinds of wickedness to  
387 put all these blocks, you know, I guess it hinders people in general. You know, Monsanto is  
388 hindering people from growing things naturally or being afraid. I'm not afraid of anything.  
389 Monsanto is poisoning the soy tofu for the vegans, you know what I mean? They're poisoning  
390 our own products so that is hindering people from living a healthy and wealthy life me. They're  
391 not hindering me though because even if I don't have the best food, organic, which is why I try to  
392 grow mine, they can't hinder me, because my food and my protection and my liberty comes from  
393 elsewhere. People are on a higher level than food, we don't even need to eat. We used to be  
394 breatharians, live off of breath, you know, all this stuff is new stuff. But um nothing's going to  
395 hinder me, I am not claiming anything is going to hinder me at all. Nothing's hinders me. Only  
396 what I choose to let hinder me, and I don't choose to let any thought, or any human creation  
397 hinder anything about my divinity. When it comes to the community I live in, first that has to be  
398 defined. That's another thing, we got to define what we're talking about. Otherwise we could be  
399 talking about two different things, right? So, the community, a physical community, I guess here

400 in Greensboro, the community around. That's the commune, physical community, is that my  
401 community, I don't even know, because on what level are you talking about. You're talking about  
402 community in terms of what the matrix said. That this is a community because we all live here,  
403 but, living here in the physical place does not necessarily make you a community. A mental  
404 community or spiritual community that's a whole other thing. So, as a Moor. the Moorish  
405 community, um, how that. So, if we're going to deal with that, you know, as a Moorish  
406 community.

407 Um, our work helps to help the Moorish community volunteer work and we give fruits  
408 and vegetables to the Sheik and Sheika. Prior to transitioning, come and get fruits and vegetables  
409 regularly. Um, we donate food. We cook, and we give away food. Um, you know, there's other  
410 members, people in the community that, that we know that come around and we, you know, we,  
411 we provide meals, we cook meals, but we provide them with free meals and, you know,  
412 somebody comes and wants or needs anything from us here. People come and they reason.  
413 Moors, other Moors, people in the Moorish community come here and reason. This is like a  
414 place where, this is a temple, you know, people come and reason and learn uh, we've always  
415 given. Always provide knowledge about agriculture, about healing, modality, healing plants.  
416 Um, so we impacted that way. We are like a constant in the Moorish community. We've been  
417 here, and again we have gardens and we show others how to garden and they're free to come and  
418 get vegetables when we have an abundance and they're in season.

419 Over the summer we gave away a lot of tomatoes. Sold some at the market, donated  
420 some, gave tomato plants away at, at the local co-op, a Deep Roots Market, I gave away many  
421 tomato plants. Starting at Mother's Day, we were giving away plants. You know, little baby  
422 plants that we're growing, because we had a lot of volunteer plants, so we put them in little pots  
423 and we've given them away at farmer's markets and stuff that I go and visit, um, and that's  
424 outside of the Moorish community and that's on the largest scale to other community. So that  
425 other community, we're also involved too. There're people that aren't Moors, that still come and  
426 benefit from our services or just our, our, our presence, our knowledge and our things that are  
427 come out of the, from Mother Nature in our, in our care. That physical community benefits, you  
428 know, were good neighbors and children. Help mow the lawns of a couple of the people on the  
429 street. So, they, they benefit the community in that way they mow people's lawns that's a benefit  
430 in our, right on our street in our local community that way. So, they do that, they do a lot of little



431 volunteer stuff and they still get paid. So that way I was thinking of something else that they do,  
432 but um, we impact the community in a positive way. We have no negative impact on our  
433 community. We have good energy with the Postmen, they would have said it. They smile, you  
434 know, like seeing you guys because they, you know, friendly, the boys have good manners. One  
435 of the neighbors commented that they helped their son, you know, that not really aware of that,  
436 you know, kids just off of whatever Lala Land and said that the boys helped sharpen him up. So,  
437 we benefit the community and impact the community it's always, always a positive thing,  
438 spreading more light and good things.

439 I consider myself to be a leader in the community because I have a lot of valuable  
440 wisdom, experience, knowledge, council, advice, suggestion, and I'm open to listening. People  
441 come to get counseling and advice and for healing, and different healing modalities. The brother  
442 that introduced you, he, I was zapping because he was ill and I have a parasite zapper which is  
443 another natural healing modality that I do, it eliminates parasites in the body. And it helped him,  
444 and I advised him on healing things to use. Um, things that I've learned on my journey. And so,  
445 you know, I guess a leader first and foremost, formally in the Moorish Science Temple, I'm an  
446 advisor, um in the Moorish Science Temple and then informally in the community, yea, there are  
447 other sisters that I've known, that I've helped them and inspired them by their own words, will  
448 explain to you that I've inspired them in their own life and given them counsel. I'm a family  
449 person, family woman, so, I always encouraged people to work out whatever differences they  
450 have, So I've been like a marriage counselor, likewise my husband. I'll council people on getting  
451 along better with your mate and to always encourage people to work it out and forgive, and being  
452 more compassionate Even if you are compassionate, be more. Family is important, family is like  
453 agriculture too, it's all a part of it, you know. It's all a family, it's all connected with nature. And  
454 so, we are, we're the branches of the big tree. So, you can never cut yourself off from that. And  
455 even in our own microcosms our own family, you know, we can't cut us off.

456 So, I'm always advising people to be, to be one with your family unit, but also come one  
457 to, become one with the family of life, the family of nations, the Moorish family. Always  
458 encouraging people to do that. Um, or advising them about it and I'm, you know, not forcing  
459 anybody. People that want to learn about their Moorish history, I kind of like give them the path  
460 back, lead them the path back to the Moorish Science Temple where they can claim their  
461 nationality and that's, that's a big role in the community and my husband does that, he speaks

462 very well about that. So, he's a leader in the community and you know again, advising and  
463 counseling people on marriage life and eating better. I've taught how to cook vegan dinners. I  
464 teach people how to cook. I bake, I sell food, so yeah, I'm a leader in the community. I show  
465 people how to do things, I'm an innovator. Teach people about orgonite things that'll help save  
466 your life from EMFs, things that'll save your life from cancers and all kinds of thoughts outside  
467 of the box. Things that you're not going to see on t.v. or hear on the news program. Yea, so we're  
468 leaders. I'm a leader, my husband's a leader, my children are leaders. We're all leaders, that's  
469 probably why we bump heads sometimes. We're all leaders. Everybody wants to lead  
470 themselves. But I'm definitely a leader in the community, because I've been there, I've done a lot  
471 of things and I've had a lot of experience.

472         So, while you lead by example and live through your experiences, I teach people, so, yea  
473 I'm a leader in the community. I don't need to be recognized or care for that. I'm like a best kept  
474 secret. I got a lot of tricks and magic and so if you find me, it's like finding a leprechaun. I'll  
475 give you whatever knowledge, I don't even charge or go through all of that, but whatever  
476 counselor, what, whatever you may need, but I don't consider myself to be a public leader. I  
477 don't want any kind of public roles like that, because then you know sometimes you lose your  
478 genuineness, or people want you to conform with their ideas of what you should be doing. And,  
479 I'm gonna do what I'm doing, what I need to do, what the creator needs me to do. Which is  
480 spread love, spread positive words, spread messages from our ascended masters, other than  
481 divine great cosmic beings. The words of Saint Germain, Arcturus and other great beings Serapis  
482 Bey and other masters that have come before with their knowledge and even just spark lights in  
483 people and not necessarily leading people, but spark in that light that they know I can do this  
484 different. I can be healthy. I can read something. I could say an affirmation and help the youth  
485 too have affirmation pulls. That's a whole other line to think that people have posted that in  
486 design with vegetables that health facts and black history and affirmations for children. Teaching  
487 them that, to love themselves, always want to teach some people, always trying to teach them the  
488 right things.

489         I might not always do the right things and say all the right things, but when I'm in a  
490 conscious state, I can always tell you to, you know, guide you to do the right thing. You've never  
491 going to have me tell you to do something wrong or stupid, I'm not about that. So, I try to lead  
492 people towards the light or not try, I lead people towards the light and they're just living their life

493 and do what comes naturally, so I guess maybe leading comes naturally, but I'm never too much  
494 of a leader that I can't follow good instruction. You know, a leader has to be able to follow  
495 instruction, be part of the team. You're not just leading the team by yourself, for your ego.  
496 You're leading because you, you're leading because your desire is to help you know. So, I'm not  
497 leading, I'm the boss and this is mine. I'm not about that. It's about the community or the unit  
498 that's involved, the group, the goal, the intention, the nation. It's about that building the nation, so  
499 help open people's eyes so that we can build a stronger nation. It's not about leading my own  
500 personal project, I'm not leading people on my personal project, I'm helping lead them so that  
501 they could find their own projects that find their ancestors, their nation and their purpose. Find  
502 their best self, and lead people towards that. Not lead people to what I want them to do. Lead you  
503 to find that the answers that you seek are within you.

504           Anything that you want, the answers are within you, and I always lead people back to  
505 yourself. This may have happened for you. What do I do? Why did you create the lesson?  
506 Because you created the lesson. You created a scenario so you to learn, so I'm going to lead you  
507 back to you. I'm going to lead you to there, outside God or divinity or anything, you know. I'm  
508 not going to lead you to praise anybody in particular. Well except Noble Drew Ali's, it's not  
509 about praising him. It's about being aware of him and what he did and the Moorish Science  
510 Temple, that will lead you back to you and all that leads back to you knowing your Moorish  
511 birthright. That leads back to you. Why am I here? Why am I learning about my Moorish  
512 birthright, because I am a Moor. Why am I involved in agriculture? Because I am agriculture, I  
513 am a caretaker of Mother Nature. Why did I get into this situation? Because I created the lesson.  
514 Why did you create the lesson? Because you wanted to learn something. So, I'm always leading  
515 people back to their true divine self, that's, that's why I am a leader. Lead you in my own  
516 personal way. I might try to lead my children to do things that I want them to do, but they're not  
517 really going for that, because they're leaders in their own right. They don't like to listen too,  
518 they're leaders because they don't like, but a good leader knows how to follow so they may not  
519 be good leaders because they don't like to follow sometimes, but they do, they're good. Um, so  
520 yeah, lead people back to the answer because it's within you. All the answers are within you.  
521 That's... I'm a good leader.

522  
523  
524

## Appendix R: Focus Group Transcription

1 Robert: **00:00:19** Um, I would like to address how much of pleasure it is to have gotten to know  
2 you all and I appreciate your presence here today. Thank you all for taking time to work with me  
3 in becoming a part of something bigger than us all. In this collective reflection focus group, we  
4 will be discussing some pieces of, of your narratives with each other and that will give you all  
5 time to share your responses amongst each other. It is my hope to bring together a group of  
6 individuals who can perhaps influence partnerships amongst African American leaders in North  
7 Carolina. Hopefully this process has and will benefit you as much as it has myself. Please take  
8 some time to explore the gallery of quotes I have pulled from your narratives. It is my intention  
9 that these things will spark thought and encourage dialogue to aid and inspire us all in the work  
10 that we do. And to have a deeper conversation to reflect on the work together. **00:02:27** After  
11 everyone has gone. Okay. So, everybody's gone around the gallery and read the quotes. So, we'll  
12 get into that. Um, now we're going and then we watched the video and now we're going to go  
13 down to the third section where it says drawing upon both the gallery walk and the video. Uh,  
14 number one, what resonated with you the most in the gallery walk? So, I'll leave that open to if  
15 you want to respond, you can. You did not have to. Um, but I'm going to leave that open and  
16 then we just go from there.

17

18 AC: **00:03:00** I think the many voices that everyone had their own opinions about different  
19 things, and it was something different than what I was bringing. Something that I had said in my  
20 interview was that everyone had... um, was coming from a different base and had a different  
21 point of view, but we were all kind of at the same table or on the same page about what we were  
22 doing.

23 MR: **00:03:34** During the video I think you brought out a point I think that we are rated, you  
24 know health wise in North Carolina, I was real interested to know

25

26 AC: **00:03:44** Oh, yeah. Um, that's uh, with trying to think of the, it's a Gallup poll about food  
27 insecurity and what they do is they call, um, about 10,000 people that live in a city or in the  
28 region. Um, and they asked them a list of questions and so one of the questions that they ask  
29 them as far as insecurity is concerned, insecurity is rated on the scale of, on this question, based  
30 on this question of in the last year or 18 months, did you know where your food was coming  
31 from? Um, and if someone says no to that question, then, um, they are rated as food insecure.  
32 Um, and so, uh, with that, that Gallup poll that was given in 2014, they rated, um, High Point/  
33 Greensboro area as number one for food insecurity. Um, the thing about that poll about the  
34 Gallup poll is they don't, they notice the city, but they don't know exactly where. **00:04:47** But  
35 you have things like... food deserts that are physical. You know, what a, where there is a food  
36 desert, because it's one mile or two miles within a community, um, a grocery store within a 2-  
37 hour radius or more than that. You know that that's a, uh, a physical component to that. You can  
38 also look at like, uh, uh, schools and free lunches and if students receive like 100% free lunch,  
39 there's more than likely food insecurity in their area. Yeah.

40 Robert: I also remember you were talking about the voting zones as well, being a connection to  
41 that.

42 AC: **00:05:30** Yeah, so in Greensboro, I won't say Guilford County, but in Greensboro there's  
43 17 food deserts. And so, you're like, well, what are these food deserts? How are you coming up  
44 with these food deserts, what are these communities and what they're based on are voting  
45 precincts. Um, so the Department of Agriculture does an assessment and since voter precincts are  
46 already small communities, then they said, okay, this, this community is a food desert. So, there's  
47 17 food deserts within Greensboro and most of them are in east Greensboro.

48 MR: **00:06:08** Well we got the food lions.

49 AC: **00:06:09** Yeah. When you, what, you know, where you have the food lions is where that  
50 pocket is, you can, you can see, um, you know, like English street, there's a pocket where there's  
51 no food desert there. And then, um, and then the other food line by Alamance Church Road, but  
52 in between that area it's like, Dudley [High School], um, area. And then, um, the other food lion  
53 is by Coliseum, so in between those three areas, it's a huge, um, it's about like four or five or six  
54 deserts, um, within Greensboro. It's really interesting.

55  
56 KB: **00:06:53** I thought it was real interesting in the video where, well, there were a couple  
57 comments that caught my attention. But the last comment about just starting an agriculture  
58 program with African American students... I'm, from Durham [N.C.], but I went to college here  
59 and moved back to Durham [N.C.], so I would only work with black children, with agriculture  
60 and I never seen that problem. I've never in all my kids in the program, in the Farming Academy,  
61 all from Durham and all from the inner city. I've never, seen a kid be like, "Yo, Mr. Bell, this is  
62 whack, I don't want to talk about this." So, I think it's based on the person and I think we have to  
63 get rid of the stigma that Black people aren't interested in agriculture. The kids aren't exposed to  
64 it. When they are, they can see the possibilities. I literally see every single day, whether it was  
65 with my classes or is with the students in the program. **00:07:44** Or whether it's with my own  
66 kids. So, it's, it's, I've never seen that. So, I guess everything's based on your lived experience.  
67 But something else, uh another one of the speakers said was about just our dynamic and support  
68 and the oppression of each other. I had a really interesting experience last week. Well, it was  
69 Sunday, so yea last week we go to um Bayer Crop Sciences Forum. They have a forum every  
70 year, national forum. I was the only black farmer there. And what I think we get caught up  
71 sometimes is that we don't really know how these companies or how larger organizations  
72 interact. They're not sitting in a room talking about oppressive Black people, they're talking  
73 about making money. So, we can have all these notions about like, oh well this, if we do this, this  
74 keeps A, B, and C from happening. They don't, nobody cares about that. Like so, we have to  
75 really be practical and see that we're dealing with trying to get back power from larger  
76 institutions and be self-determined enough to develop our own. **00:08:53** If we don't do that,  
77 we're going to be sitting here a hundred years from now, talking about, "Well there was a  
78 resurgence of black farmers," because there has been an increase, like a 12% increase, from like  
79 45,000 to 46,000 something like that. But we're going to be having the same conversation a  
80 hundred years from now about what happened to the resurgence of black farmers and why don't

81 they have land, we got to start being very practical and honest about what we're facing and the  
82 system by design, certain organizations are very, very racist, but with it being the age of media,  
83 people don't want to be associated with that history. So, they're going to be willing to try to mend  
84 those, mend that, that uh, what is it? Uh, I guess try and mend that relationship with the groups  
85 that they've done, that they've harmed. So, I think we be smart about that and we leverage  
86 resources so we can do our own thing.

87  
88 **MPB: 00:09:52** It was told to me, that we don't know how to adjust. We don't know how to  
89 adjust to different environments, so we automatically get on the defense about what's going on.  
90 And you know, it's mine it's mine... It's some kind of like, you see what they get when they have  
91 that knowledge. So, you can basically change what you need to change to kind of adjust to what  
92 they need. Um, I think for me, a gallery walk, someone made the comment about trying to offer  
93 programming and being new to community and try to offer programming and it's kind of like  
94 with an organization or if you're offering, whoever you're offering to, feeling like you're coming  
95 in and trying to take something from them. Like, even though you're offering something and it's  
96 no cost to them. But, "What do you want, what are you trying to get from me" or is the  
97 organization of her organization basis if I partner with you, now I'm kind of different cause I'm  
98 not hands on but we do offer programming, but "If I partner with you, what does this mean for  
99 the county or the city because they're not going to give me money, because we're both  
100 competing for something. **00:11:05** Yeah. Uh, so it's kind of like uh, "I can't work with you  
101 because if you come in and find out what we were doing, you kick us out of our compensation to  
102 get our money for next year." Um, so I thought that was very interesting. But I mean facts,  
103 because they will tell you that. Um, yeah, like we, we worked with the same people so you can't  
104 come in the office. [inaudible].

105  
106 **MR: 00:11:32** I think we do need more education and knowledge on how to collaborate. How to  
107 write our own programs and make them work together. You know, that's how I feel about that.

108  
109 **AC: 00:11:48** What you guys were saying, something you said was, it's interesting, right? So  
110 like in when I, okay, when I'm working with the candidate and we're trying to get folks involved  
111 in the political process, we look at who votes and who doesn't vote, right? So, if you vote, I don't  
112 have to spend extra money to get you to go vote on election day. But if I go into a community in  
113 East Greensboro and they don't, it's not a turnout. They don't turn out to vote on municipal  
114 elections. I'm not going to spend as much time and resources in that community. Right? But it's  
115 like why are people in the community not involved in the political process? And we know that  
116 just important. And we know that back in the day there was racism involved in voting and you,  
117 your job was taken away from you or your house was taken away from you. Things happened,  
118 and so that kind of stopped people from wanting to be involved in the political process because  
119 of historical aspects, right? **00:12:50** And then we say, well, people don't, when I vote for them,  
120 they don't do anything in my community. That's because you're not a consistent voter. And it's  
121 the same thing when we're looking at agriculture. Like for a long time we've been out of that,  
122 that space or a lot of people working in the fields and it has a negative connotation. So therefore,  
123 like we've been taken out of that space. And so, you have people who have, you know, their

124 families have had these farms and they're consistently in these roles. So, when organizations are  
125 looking to partner with folks, they're going to partner with people who've been consistent in  
126 agriculture and um and being consistent in just in this field of work. And so, when you're trying  
127 to like get people who have a negative connotation or a negative thought about agriculture and to  
128 get them involved, like they're not going to be consistent, consistent partners, you know what I'm  
129 saying? And so, you're right, like people aren't in rooms saying, well, we're not going to look at  
130 these people, but if you're, if, if, if they haven't been involved or at the table, why haven't they  
131 been involved at the table? And there's a historical racial usually, um, history behind that. And so  
132 we have to, we have to kind of break, understand that and kind of break that down as well, as  
133 we're trying to like awaken people to come to the table.

134 KB: **00:14:15** I think the best thing we can do is we, it's a, it's a money thing. So, if they don't  
135 see money and them putting a team together to get people to look at the racial background and  
136 the outcomes that presently exists, they're not going to do it. So, we can, we can lobby with them  
137 as much as we want to, but you're not going to do it. I think that the best thing with them is to  
138 find some ones who can get in the space to get resource that we trust to help other black people  
139 get to the point where that relationship is mended, because they do, they do like, it's like going  
140 and doing something with a university where you know it's a PWI [Predominately White  
141 Institution] and they don't have black people in their program. They could have one black  
142 person, and they put them in their brochure to look, make like they're inclusive and diverse.  
143 [Inaudible]... we know you all gone do that so we can have somebody that we build up and  
144 support, "Alright, you be that Black person that does it," because isn't going to never be like a  
145 hundred of us going to be in the room. Not in their room and we say alright and you get A, B,  
146 and C. You're responsible for doing A, B, and C with it and helping build up other Black  
147 organizations because other than that it's, it's not going to happen, I don't see it happening.  
148

149 AC: **00:15:33** Well I, I get what you're saying, but I feel like what I feel like behind what you're  
150 saying is like nowadays people aren't at the table, but we got to think about why people aren't at  
151 the table historically and that, we were shut out. You know what I'm saying? But it's just like we  
152 were, we were shut out of that narrative and now that's why we don't have people at the table.  
153 And so for you to say, oh, they, they're not interested in the table and coming to the table and  
154 that's not, that's not true. You know what I'm saying? There are some historical reasons why we  
155 weren't at the table and that there were like people stealing land and killing people over pigs.

156 KB: **00:16:22** They're aware of that. They know that.

157 AC: **00:16:23** So you just... but my thing is like, you can't use the narrative. Oh, they're just not  
158 interested.

159  
160 Robert: **00:16:29** I can meet you all in the middle with it. So like I understand where both of y'all  
161 are coming from, but at the same time you're thinking about progression and you're thinking  
162 about what has been holding hindering us...

163  
164 AC: **00:16:41** and why people aren't at the table currently.

165  
166 Robert: **00:16:44** True, but the, but the real issue is what are we doing for ourselves with the  
167 resources that we have to make that happen for ourselves. We cannot look to other people to do  
168 that for us.

169 GROUP: I totally agree

170 Robert: **00:16:59** Now it's different getting help if it's offered.

171 GROUP: Right, right.

172 Robert: **00:17:03** If you're already like, like, like for instance, take LB's example. He's creating  
173 the space for African Americans to show up, but other people show up,

174 GROUP: Right.

175 Robert: So he does what he does with what he's given and he still goes back to his community.  
176 So, at the end of the day, he's still doing his due diligence. You know what I'm saying? Like in a  
177 sense. We all are going to have our different mentalities about the things that we experience and  
178 what gets us to the point of doing this type of work. But the real question is why aren't we  
179 collaborating more? Why aren't we coming together as people who already have what we need  
180 to make things, make things happen?

181

182 AC: **00:17:47** I do think I, well I think one of the things is in the last, I think in the last five  
183 years, like growing your own food, it's become more popular. So, people are coming into it and  
184 developing like their own self. And then it's like okay, I'm doing like, all right, I got this, I'm  
185 doing this. Like let me see who else now what is out here doing the same thing that I'm doing it.  
186 (brief pause) So I think it's the beginning of that for some folks. Like they're trying to get  
187 established,

188 KB: I don't, are you going to fix them?

189

190 MR: **00:18:34** (inaudible) I believe in self-help, uh, I'm hearing you and I'm standing in between  
191 and I think that we should spend more time educating people the resources that we actually do  
192 have. I know people in the country, uh, families that have 200 acres of land, and what are they  
193 doing with it?... Nothing, merely nothing. We have resources. There's still a lot of local farmers  
194 in the area, um, especially in the rural areas. I think there should be point of networking between  
195 the rural area and the city, you know, so we can put that together since a lot of the farming is  
196 taken out of the city. But you know, we're right around the corner from any farm, 10 miles away,  
197 or 15 miles away, something like that. There's land there to do that. But I do believe that we  
198 should, I know that we should collaborate more. We should take the time to engage in what we  
199 are doing, as a race of people. And the only way it's going to be done, the changes are going to  
200 be made and we will see positive results is that we educate.

201

202 LC: **00:19:50** And you made a very good point, in the very first question that you, that you  
203 answered. Some of the questions when it got down to it, I forgot the question after the first



204 person responded to it, but um the first thing you said, I'm out there setting examples, others will  
205 meet me out there and I thought that was really important. I think that's really a part of the  
206 education because I met with one of the teachers at school. The garden that you guys saw the  
207 video, that was Mr. Ruff's garden, he built at Hairston [Middle School]. And so, there's also  
208 other beds on the other side of the building. Mr. Ralph Agriculture program at Harris and this  
209 one on the 19th clubs and one of the teachers, um, wrote a grant and so we received this money  
210 for master gardeners. And I told him, I said, I have this great idea for all these beds that we're  
211 going to do, but I didn't really involve the families in the process. **00:20:42** And so, or even just  
212 like thinking about what it was going to look like. A lot of times I do that, I get excited. I'm like,  
213 oh, I'm going to give everything to the babies, the Black babies are going to have everything.  
214 And then I forget to involve them in the planning process. And when you said that, um, I just, I  
215 was like gotta get out of there because, and that's what the master gardener said. They said you  
216 start a little, you get the involved, they see you out there and then it can grow into this huge  
217 project, this community garden that you want it to be, but you have to start being out there with  
218 them first. So, I thought that it was really cool that you said that, and you said something too,  
219 you said, um, shouldn't have to play no games, I am a human too. And I, I love that. **00:21:22**  
220 Um, yeah, like we're all just out here trying to make it like we shouldn't have to play a game if  
221 we're passionate and we just help each other to, to make things work. And you made a comment  
222 earlier about the gentleman who said that he preferred to work in his environment, and I felt the  
223 same way you felt. I was like low-key judging this man as well. Because like I wouldn't want to  
224 work and you know, we went to Grimsley and I wouldn't want to work in any other environment  
225 than at Hairston [Middle School] and I love it. Sometimes when I say Hairston, people are like,  
226 Whoa. And I'm like, don't do that. My kids are awesome.

227 MR: Right.

228 LC: **00:21:56** And I, you know, sometimes they might not be interested in it, but you meet them  
229 where they are and then you get them interested in it. So, some students may come to Agriculture  
230 and be like, I don't want to be outside Mr. Ruff and Mr. Starts cooking with them; and then he's  
231 like, hey, you like the food? Yeah, well it comes from someplace. Now let's talk about that. Um,  
232 so they do get, interested in it. So,

233 AC: It's about exposure. I think that's the biggest thing.

234  
235 Robert: **00:22:19** I had an um... I've always been stuck with this, this idea of like when we were  
236 talking about, you know, getting help from other, other groups or even being in that space or of  
237 stepping outside of just being around only black people. Take what you can and like you said,  
238 take what you can, learn it and bring it back. You know, it's like I went to, when I went up to  
239 Virginia Tech, I started getting affiliate or different community gardens. And one of the craziest,  
240 coolest things that I had seen was how they work the community garden. They only charge \$10 a  
241 year. And then you got people, they, they make it so that nobody's allowed to actually sell that  
242 stuff. Like on the premises, you can take it home and you know, if you ended up selling to  
243 somebody that's, that's on you. But like it wasn't for the purpose of selling. **00:23:07** People were  
244 actually coming there and I mean you got people from India, you got people from Africa, all

245 these people that don't have foods that are indigenous to their areas. They're finding out about  
246 these community gardens. They get on the waiting list, pay \$10 a year and you've got that whole  
247 time period you can be growing food. And they give you a whole plot, like a little nice little, you  
248 know, like a little area like probably about the ta-, the size of these tables. \$10 you know, you  
249 start off small, that's not only generating money for the land, the function of the land, but you  
250 know, you can grow from that. You know, you get your mulch, you got all this excess food that  
251 other people are taken care of on their own. It's their responsibility to maintain that little small  
252 portion of the land and so, I mean, people are making a living off of this kind of thing. You know  
253 what I mean? I don't see why we're not doing these kinds of things. Like there are people that are  
254 interested. People don't know what to do with it though. And you know, or what about spaces we  
255 can claim eminent domain, you know? That's actually something that we can do.

256 MR: Rural churches.

257 Robert: Yeah. Rural Churches they love that kind of stuff

258 MR: And they're all around rural churches.

259 Robert: Especially if it's gonna bring them some money.

260 MR: Yeah.

261 MR: Rural Churches... You'd be surprised, the land, **00:24:24** The acreage there, the resources  
262 that's inside the churches

263 Robert: **00:24:29** Or even for educators, it gives you a space. To at least try like, okay, you can  
264 say, okay, let's, let's just try it like this. Instead of actually going out here and doing any work,  
265 let's just throw some seeds out and see what happens.

266 MR: Yeah... Yeah.

267  
268 AC: **00:24:43** And I, I like, the thing is, even schools like Harrison, you have all that space that  
269 you're spending and landscaping and all the other stuff that you could put, I mean really you only  
270 need about \$200 once you have like your physical structure. You know what I'm saying, to like,  
271 you don't need a lot of money with the maintenance. If you already have your beds and  
272 everything. All you need is seeds and water and sunlight and you can really like make some  
273 things like

274

275 MR: **00:25:15** That's the neat thing about agriculture. It's a part of everything, you know, your  
276 wood, your resources are just laying around, your dirt, your mulch...

277 Robert: Even your plastics.

278 MR: Your plastics. Everything's around. There are some companies in construction building  
279 something, moving dirt. They will give you sometimes the topsoil and stuff, there are a lot of  
280 resources out there in agriculture.

281

282 MPB: **00:25:45** I was shocked by what he said but I wasn't shocked by what he said. Because, I

283 grew up in a county school. So, there is a difference, you have your city schools and county  
284 schools. So, I definitely was not shocked by what he said because I went to the county school  
285 that was in that area and my cousin went to that school and um, he's right. Most of their families  
286 are farmers in that area in the area he's talking about, if you go all the way down. Actually it's  
287 past once you get past Alamance Church Road.

288 Robert: Pleasant Garden

289 MPB: It's that area down there, that's all they know. Uh, where in my case on the other side of  
290 town, that's all I know. Like you go down that road it's the agriculture district, voluntary  
291 agriculture district. And so, um, I used to tell people, yeah, I went to a county school, all we had  
292 was bull rides for fun, and they looked at me like I was crazy. I was like, well we did. We was in  
293 the county that's what we did. Um, but I wasn't shocked by his perspective of it though. I think  
294 he felt, how can I say it, he's the token, you get what I'm saying? Like you come in, change some  
295 stuff, do a little thing, you can do one thing in there, you're the token. If you went to somewhere  
296 else, where you've got to put in work, he wasn't going to do it. Which is shocking to me,  
297 because I'm like, you're a Vet[eran], it shouldn't be nothing for you to whip these kids into  
298 shape. Like you're an Army Vet, like you should have the advantage.

299 Robert: Well see. He also is from a county **00:27:07** rural farming area. Right. And he was  
300 familiar with being around all black communities that were doing that too. So, I mean I thought  
301 that was interesting too. But um, I felt like it was important too that that message be there  
302 because these are legitimate issues that we are facing right now. Like, mental blocks.

303  
304 AC: **00:27:25** I understand what he is saying, like I had kids be like, alright, we slaves today and  
305 I'm like, no. Like we have to change the narrative.

306 Robert: I believe it.

307 MPB: That's what I'm saying. Kids do not understand. (group laughter)

308 KB: When they say that, I get them.

309  
310 MPB: **00:27:38** Most of the kids do not understand, like they do not understand that concept. So,  
311 I mean, I get what you are saying. I think that is funny because I'm in Winston. I grew, I work, I  
312 live here [Greensboro], but I work in Winston; and I have yet to have, one kid, tell me they were  
313 slave. They had said, we didn't know nothing about this. Where did this come from? Because,  
314 where I'm at nobody went to them and took something agriculture based to them. So, I mean  
315 we've done an Ag. tour. I didn't think the kids would like it here? They were like, oh I had so  
316 much fun, can I go next year. I'm like sure, fine uh, yeah.

317  
318 AC: **00:28:15** Because it's about that exposure, it's about like, it's something about being outside  
319 when it's not real, real hot, you know that like really nice fall day, or that really nice spring day  
320 and you're just outside and you're watering the flowers and the vegetables and it's just like, it's  
321 like this energy just kind of like hits. It's like being in those days, it's like a beautiful thing and  
322 you get to see a lot of the vegetables grow but like it's hard work to get there. You know, you

323 plant the seeds or amending the soil and that, that kind of stuff. And so to get to that point or to  
324 like, you know, um, when you're in the process of re-doing or revitalizing an area, it can be hard  
325 work at first and then once you get past that hard ruckus, it's a beautiful thing. And so, um...

326 MR: It's rewarding.

327 AC: Yeah, it is rewarding in itself. Like kids need to be a part of that, especially when you know  
328 stuff around them are so chaotic. Like to be in the garden is like a beautiful thing. And really you  
329 don't need like 50 students. Like you really only need a good ten students to really make an  
330 impact in a garden.

331 MPB: And I think **00:29:35** what impacts the students more when you're speaking about that.  
332 They don't see us. So, like we had a, um, we have a couple of [inaudible], we have extension  
333 master gardeners, we have urban farms school and then you have like a community mentorship  
334 program. Our community garden leader, she's white, nothing against you, she's really sweet, but  
335 she's white. Um, she goes to work at one of the most predominately black high schools around  
336 the corner. Where most people would be scared go. And uh, we don't have us, going in with  
337 them, when everybody else looks different from them. Um, so I'm just trying to work with our  
338 urban farmers to... I know they don't like coming to the building, I know historically they don't  
339 like it, but I tried to put them in places and use them because I'm like, you all come through the  
340 urban farm school program, which is nothing but predominately black people that want to learn  
341 about farming and agriculture people that want to learn about farming and agriculture for  
342 whatever need. **00:30:34** And, um, I try to use them more so than the others because I bet you  
343 guys are just as much a wealth of knowledge as they are. I need you guys to go out there because  
344 if they see you, um, if you talk to them, cause you have a different way to talk to them, then  
345 they'll understand a lot more because you put, I mean it's kind of like some of these American  
346 biscuit places. You all put Black people in these places and expect the kids to be okay with it.  
347 They don't know like they are not going to pay attention to any of it.

348  
349 Robert: **00:31:03** The Renaissance Co-Op...

350 KB: Didn't they close down?

351 GROUP: Yeah.

352 AC: You said what?

353 Robert: The Renaissance Co-Op...

354 LC: Oh yeah, but they had like **00:31:10** Deep Roots prices though

355  
356 Robert **00:31:15** It was also run by two white people, that was from two totally different states  
357 other than here.

358  
359 KB: **00:31:21** I remember when they were launching that, they were using Black peoples' faces  
360 like, to market

361 Robert: Because it's in the middle of Phillips Avenue.

362 LC: That place is surrounded by Black people. Yea, off of Phillips.

363 Robert: **00:31:30** Across from a rec center and how black and in a black library.

364

365 AC: **00:31:36** I think that the thing with the Renaissance though is that a lot of folks said they  
366 didn't have like name brand foods that people eat. You know what I'm saying? Like it was more  
367 expensive and then they didn't have the same choices that you would at a Walmart.

368

369 LC: **00:31:52** I cannot believe that, because they did say that black people owned that...

370

371 Robert: **00:32:00** I mean they have a committee **00:32:04** but they hired white people to run it.  
372 So, here's my, here's my issue with that. It's not about, I don't think it's about name brands. I don't  
373 think it's about giving people what they used to. I think it's about, what kind of space are you  
374 creating for the people in the community? That area could've, that store alone could have easily  
375 been turned into a goldmine. That... they had the space, they could have had indoor growing.  
376 They could've had some greens, everything, but they didn't, they didn't center the market around  
377 the people that we're actually going to be interacting with **00:32:40** that store. They tried to bring  
378 outside people with money into that community. That right there is the beginning of  
379 gentrification.

380

381 KB: **00:32:48** Well this is what I think. I think that within the food space, like just being around  
382 and being involved in these committees and around all these foods councils and all that. They  
383 aren't necessarily opportunity... Well they're opportunities for us if we know where they're  
384 going. But to me in every single one I've seen, it looks like since white people are moving back  
385 to the inner city, they're just using this whole idea of healthy and affordable food to set up  
386 locations for when they move back.

387 Robert: Just like in Baltimore...

388 KB: Because they're moving our people out of the city, it's happening. It's happening in Durham  
389 [NC], it's happening in Raleigh it's happening everywhere that I've seen all within that area.  
390 That's the only thing that they are doing and we're not going in thinking we're going to make a  
391 change; but they already, they put these big universities in, and they've already put out, they've  
392 already created the blueprint. They just use you for your input and expertise.

393 Robert: Some of that stuff has been in the works since the 80s.

394 MR: **00:33:45** We need to, you know, we need to learn how to engage with each other, and you  
395 know, really come together to get something. You have Asian markets, you know, they don't  
396 have, they have food from, shipped wherever they come from out of the country, but think they  
397 go and they won't promote, got little American here and there, but they cover, you know, so, um,  
398 we need to come together bring your farm, your farm, you know, collaborating and do something  
399 within ourselves.

400  
401 LC: **00:34:16** They do have like, very successful like China towns. I've always wanted to be  
402 like...

403 Robert: Like Super G Mart area?

404 Group: (reminiscing about experiences at Super G Mart).

405 AC: [inaudible] **00:34:34** I wanted people to help at my, with my capstone and things like that.  
406 But I also, it's like we have this almost like white savior complex too in our community where  
407 like issues happen and then like the white people come in with these organizations and they  
408 come to help us. Um, and there's this, you know, there was an article that I read the other day  
409 that was like, people profit off of poverty like poverty hasn't changed because people are  
410 profiting off of poverty. So, when that, when the food insecurity, um, uh, article came out in  
411 2014 you had all these food organizations in Greensboro [NC], Winston-Salem [NC] coming  
412 together and there was this meeting, um, they have the meeting every, every month? Um, it's  
413 with the, the Greensboro Parks and Rec, um, they are the, they're the overseers of this Food  
414 Insecurity committee and it's just, it was literally like three black people in the room when I went  
415 in there and I think one may have been like an intern and it was like all these like white folks,  
416 white faces talking about food insecurity in Greensboro. **00:35:53** And so what do you like they  
417 didn't have a, you know, they're having a plan about what's going on in east Greensboro so I was  
418 like, we have to have our, we do have to create our own spaces and we have to like come up with  
419 our own plan and our own game outside of what they do. Because we know historically you can  
420 change the rules at any time. But if we're playing our own game and our own rules, we can keep  
421 the roots consistent and not changing, you know, when it doesn't, when it no longer, you know,  
422 is in our favor.

423 KB: I think what would really help us... Well I think this is the answer to number four or five.  
424 **00:36:36** Well what's helped with the youth that we work with on our farm, I communicate to  
425 them all the time that we have to look at ourselves as a nation of people. So anytime you leave a  
426 space and you're interacting with other people, you're more so like a diplomat to bring more  
427 resources so we can get things done in the community. So, what I've really drilled into their  
428 heads is uh, alright look, I've had to go to USDA, interact with all these different organizations,  
429 the interaction's the same in all of them. But what you guys got to do is prepare yourselves to go  
430 off, somebody needs to go in real estate. Someone needs to go out and um, and technology so we  
431 can bring back resources and then we can buy more land, we can run things how we need to run  
432 it out and put them together. **00:37:22** And I think if we had that mindset, then we can develop a  
433 game, outside of the game and then when these people come to us, we're interacting with them in  
434 a position of power and not in a position where they can tell us what to do. Because most of the  
435 time they come into a community to propose A, B and C and the community is like, all right,  
436 well they don't have an organization or a body within the community and say, no we don't want  
437 this. So, then it's just them inflicting their will upon... Just like with the school system, **00:37:50**  
438 same exact thing.

439 MR: Just think about it, how much power would come back to us. We are feeding ourselves...

440 KB: We could do anything we wanted.

441 MR: If we were feeding ourselves

442

443 Robert: **00:38:01** It would shut down so much. Stores calculate how much they're going to buy

444 based on how much people buy. If we're in there, purchasing those items then they're going to

445 continue to buy those items.

446

447 MPB: **00:38:17** Someone on Instagram is raising the money to build a grocery store.

448

449 KB: **00:38:23** It's a soul food market?

450

451 MPB: **00:38:27** Yeah, maybe. I don't know. It's Lex-something. It was on Instagram. They was

452 doing a like campaign with everybody, like where everybody pretty much donate the money

453 cause it was so much million they were trying to raise

454

455 KB: **00:38:36** Trying to raise 1.2 million...

456 MPB: Yeah. To get the grocery store, but I'm like, we can go out here and buy J's (Micheal

457 Jordan Shoes) We're all excited about tax time. I'm like come on, help us out.

458

459 MR: **00:38:48** And you know, we look at it from that standpoint like, true, you know, but at the

460 same time it's about extending out life, a healthy lifestyle, **00:39:01** healthy eating.

461 AC: Well I think too, it's like, I'm sorry...

462 MR: You go ahead...

463 AC: **00:39:05** We say like healthy eating, we say growing food, but like you go, I go to the Food

464 Lion and the Walmart near my house and like, I try to buy the organic vegetables and they're all

465 like mushy. They're just like yucky and they don't last.

466 MR: Because they come from the storage.

467 AC: We're not eating these organic fruits and vegetables either.

468 Robert: They're not looking good either.

469 AC: Yeah, but the thing is, like, we need to have it. There needs to be a renaissance and I think

470 we're getting there. Uh, we need to start rethinking how and what we're eating, where it's being

471 grown, all of these things. I think like, I think we're coming to that, but it's like you keep like I

472 grow vegetables and I'll give them to people and people will look at me and be like, what do I do

473 with Zucchini or what do I do with, with a fresh tomato or whatever. Cause they're not used to

474 cooking with fresh vegetables. So, like, we're growing vegetables, but we also have to like show

475 people in masses, how to also cook with it too so we can like change our own situation.

476 MR: Yeah, we had...

477 Robert: Eat it raw...

478 AC: **00:40:22** But people aren't used to that kind of stuff, not in the masses maybe us at this  
479 table, you know we cook but when we look at like our community as a whole...

480 MR: Reintroducing.

481 AC: Yes.

482

483 MR: **00:40:36** It's like something we have to relearn to a certain extent. We have to do, we have  
484 to realize though, we had a generation to die out. You know, Grandmama and Granddaddy, we  
485 had a generation to die out, and the training wasn't carried on. As a matter of fact, we sold out to  
486 it. The food, the fresh food, stuff like that, they changed that. Supermarkets, when they started  
487 coming in, they changed that, all for a quick production. Mass production. They took the smell,  
488 created a smell.

489 AC: Yeah.

490 MR: They dyed our food

491

492 **00:41:10** Yeah.

493

494 **00:41:12** You know, all these preservatives that's, that's killing us now. That was programmed,  
495 the chicken, raising the chicken, the eggs, all the mass production. It took away a sense of... I  
496 remember when my grandparents I think, loss the taste for what was coming out of the grocery  
497 store. Because they knew, it wasn't real, and it had been altered. So, we, we've been broke down  
498 in certain situations not to know. And um, we are trained to go by McDonald's, or

499 KB: Krispy Kreme...

500 MR: Or either go buy the boxed food... Yeah. The boxed food out the grocery store, the crack  
501 store. **00:41:44** Yeah, we do, and it's important that we reintroduce and teach our people how to  
502 cook properly.

503 KB: I think that the only way we can really, like fully reeducate the people, we got to have an  
504 agricultural center or something where we can teach our kids because [inaudible] the students at  
505 the farm, they can be with me and then as I'm dropping off, or we getting ready to be done,  
506 they're like man, we got to go back to school. Cause they know they're not getting the same  
507 information. But if we had a center, but we could...

508

509 AC: **00:42:19** I mean, Dr. Umar Johnson about to have a whole, Ag. curriculum

510 MR: Speaking it into existence, these are things that we have to try to create.

511 AC: He bought to teach our kids everything they need to know.

512 KB: Well, whoa whoa



513 Robert: What?... Who?  
514 AC: Dr. Umar Johnson  
515 Robert: Ok, I thought you said him.  
516 KB: Well well um,  
517 Robert: We'll see...  
518 AC: But he's on to something though...  
519 Robert: **00:42:31** Yeah he, but I mean, I think that that information is out there like we know that  
520 that's what we need, but we also need something a little bit more practical  
521 KB: (Yeee-ah)  
522 Robert: Like you trying to pull in money from around the country when you can do something in  
523 locality.  
524 KB: Exactly...  
525  
526 AC: **00:43:01** I think one of the practicalities is... and that's what I was trying to use my  
527 capstone as an example of, you have all these people going and getting masters degrees and  
528 whatever, whatever, like use your... what you're learning to do an after school program at a  
529 school or team up with some of the clubs they already have. They have business clubs, they have  
530 financial clubs and things like that, like come once a month and teach or do presentations.  
531  
532 MPB: **00:43:31** It's kind of like you have to work your way in there. Because it's like, I'll tell  
533 you that, it's a charter school down in Winston [Salem]. I literally went in there, I said, I don't  
534 want anything from you. I just want to work with your kids.  
535 KB: They said, no.  
536 MPB: Give me your time, but I would come in. If you give me 2-3, I will come in here 2-3. Like  
537 what do you need, I'm here. You want to know what they told me, sent me and what the email  
538 said? Since you cannot financially and fiscally help us, we'll contact you when we're ready for  
539 you to come in. So, they shut it completely down.  
540  
541 AC: **00:44:06** But I've done that same thing and had doors open.  
542  
543 MPB: **00:44:11** Yeah well, it was a whole other back story and they were already working with  
544 another organization. I didn't even know it. They received funding from the county, and they  
545 have to phone up there, everything through the county. They wanted full control over their  
546 money. The county didn't give them full control without bringing in somebody else with the  
547 education piece. So, you all wanted to have, let's say they asked for \$50,000, they were granted  
548 \$10,000. Y'all was granted 10,000 but y'all didn't have no workers in place. Y'all wasn't teamed  
549 up enough, like you didn't **00:44:39** have anything in place to get your full amount. You know

550 what I'm saying? I wasn't even going to all that, I was doing youth development, but because  
551 that's how they went in the door. They was like cut them off. So basically they tell me, and was  
552 like, well, no, because we just trying to get all our 10,000 and then we trying to leave you all  
553 alone. You know what I'm saying? But I'm like, I can't fiscally give you money, I cannot. But I  
554 can help your kids get scholarships to go to a school with agriculture, animal science, or take  
555 them to camp or you know, do other stuff. But because I didn't have money, they didn't want me  
556 to come in.

557  
558 **KB: 00:45:18** I think the best thing to do for us is if you can work with the organization in the  
559 school that supports the mission and vision, work with them. Like communities in schools, I  
560 work with them in Durham [NC] and I go to a school every Friday to go over garden stuff with  
561 them. So, the people I have, are like you got full creative control of what you want to do. But the  
562 other end, the academy that I run, on my farm in Orange County. With every single black male,  
563 we have one student, he's El Salvadorian, but my perspective on people of Latinx decent, is, is,  
564 they're African in my perspective. That's just how I view them. But he, every single one of the  
565 kids, is from Durham public schools, but Durham public schools would not, I proposed the idea  
566 to them, first. And they shut it down. So, I was like alright, cool. Then I mentioned it, instead of  
567 going back and forth with the institution, it's better that we have full creative control because the  
568 school system isn't going to let you build up a child that would expose the school system.

569 **00:46:18** So, if you go in there and give the kids skills, they can actually practically use, they're  
570 not really for that. Because then it makes their curriculum look baseless. So, if we could like  
571 really come together and put our ideas and say we can create and support our own programs,  
572 that's what we do.

573 **MPB: 00:46:33** They have no way of testing and assessing them, pretty much.

574 **KB: 00:46:37** And, and the way that they do assess the kids, it's like, all right, what is the end  
575 goal of it, what is, by this kid doing this, like EOG's [End of Grade Testing] and stuff, like what  
576 does this say he's going to be able to do? Last time I checked when I ride through his  
577 community, everybody in the community went to Communities in Schools and the communities  
578 still look bad. So y'all not giving the people anything they can use to change the situation.

579 **AC:** Right...

580 **LC:** Wow...

581  
582 **AC: 00:47:01** It's just numbers, it's hitting these numbers. I worked at a specialty high school,.  
583 It's called Twilight [High School]. So um, kids will come in at 2 and would leave at eight  
584 o'clock. Um, a lot of kids would come in, you know, we have 62 day semesters. So, it was an  
585 accelerated program, but a lot of the students didn't know how to read, they didn't have basic  
586 math skills and they, they're almost out of high school. They have eight credits or less to  
587 graduate and you don't have basic math skills, basic reading skills? You don't even know what  
588 you're going to do, like we're preparing you to work at McDonald's and Popeye's.

589 KB: They aren't going to be able to get them, McDonald's got the little automated drink machine  
590 and all that type of stuff.

591 Robert: Oh they're about to get to the menu soon...**00:47:49** So, we kind of already been doing  
592 these questions. I really didn't read them out to y'all, but number two was what themes or quotes,  
593 either video or gallery, um, stand out the most to you. We kind of talked about that and why, um,  
594 were there, were there any lessons learned through reading and viewing your narratives? Um, did  
595 anyone notice any lessons that they might've learned from being in, a part of this program or this,  
596 **00:48:17** uh, project?

597 LC: Just to make sure that I include the families in my plans, um, for stuff because, I hear and  
598 I'm around conversations like this all the time and I need to like jump down to like number six.  
599 And that's a lot of what my thought process does. I'm like, oh there's a problem, let's create a  
600 solution. Let's do this. And sometimes I'm just miss that middle portion of making sure that I'm  
601 understanding how to get to people, um, you know, and creating programs that are in the school  
602 systems. But then having the trouble of actually getting them there. It is a lot. It is a lot, and  
603 people to the point where people will come into the school saying, Oh, I have this great program  
604 and idea and the first thing they say is, "Oh, have you heard of SAS, Ms. Clemons?" And like  
605 my office is like right there, and they're like, "We got somebody for you." Um, but... yeah, and I  
606 remember you saying something about coming in there at least once a month. Learning that it  
607 does, it has to be so much, so much more than that. Um, and I think that's why we're maybe  
608 having such a hard time because, in looking at everything and looking back at my responses, um,  
609 **00:49:38** and just the entire process in general, we have all these things going on, but what will it  
610 take to actually get there? Like how many programs are we going to have to put it into schools  
611 and we have to come there multiple times a week. Mr. Ruff is at Hairston twice a week and  
612 sometimes the kids still forget the information that he tried to place into them. Um, so I, yeah...

613 AC: I feel like it's **00:50:03** more of that exposure then anything. Like, I mean, I'm going to be  
614 honest, I think, even in college, if I didn't learn, I learned basic skills, like how to research, how  
615 to look at things, but when I talk about like the things that I've really learned, I learned them on  
616 my own, but I was exposed to them through different programs. Youth Document Durham taught  
617 me about journalism and got me interested in photography and just learning people's stories. So  
618 you're not gonna, you're planning with seed, it's not going to be this amazing sunflower  
619 tomorrow you're, you're nurturing it and so you may never see the seed blossomed in front of  
620 you, but it, it will do that maybe, I don't know, 10 years down the line or when they're 30 or  
621 something and it was just like, you know what, I, I went to a Sankofa Farms when I was little  
622 and I only went once, but I, you know, they were growing food and I want to grow my own food.  
623 **00:51:00** It's, you know, it's, it's having, having that exposure and I think as long as you're  
624 continuing to expose people and not expecting to see change right then and there, I think you'll  
625 be okay. Like that's, that's my, like my viewpoint. And I love that we're all coming from different  
626 backgrounds and we're all bringing something different to the table. Um, so I think, I feel like  
627 that's a beautiful point of like, you know, watching the video today and, um, and you know, the  
628 board, like we're all teaching people, but we're coming from different aspects of it, um, and so

629 people are, we're connecting with hopefully with students in different ways. Um, that will  
630 blossom one day.

631 MPB: Yeah. I feel like, when I was listening to y'all earlier, **00:51:52** when you were talking  
632 about your son, the whole internship and networking piece. I feel like somewhere along the line  
633 we have totally lost track of this whole networking component. Like I feel, cause I'm only in  
634 Forsyth County, but I mean, if it's a way I could get my kids to you, or move them, I would do it.  
635 But I feel like for me, I've been gone from North Carolina for like five years. So, I started doing  
636 my networking in Kentucky, Louisville, Kentucky. So, when coming back here, yeah, where I  
637 was born and raised, but I lost connections because everybody's a little different. And it's like  
638 where can I pick up those connections, like, he said, he was a chef. Oh cool, bam. I want to do  
639 cooking classes. Great, that works in my favor. Um, you have a farm. Okay. So maybe I can do a  
640 summer program and I can, I have access to a van. **00:52:43** I'm going to bring my kids to your  
641 farm. But where have... how can we get to a point where we can collectively network, you feel  
642 what I'm saying? **00:52:51** Like I can cross my programming with you, but I have to have a  
643 reason. You get what I'm saying? I don't go to Hairston, but like how can I connect Hairston  
644 with this school, or that school? You know, how can I do it. Um, and I think we just forgot how  
645 to network. I should be able to readily figure out a database for somebody where I can be like,  
646 bam, this is who I need to contact right here because this person is, I know like I should be able  
647 to call you and be like, "Hey, can you come over here and this is the way, uh, I can't give you  
648 money, but I got some food, what can you help me do?" Um, but I feel like we've, I've missed  
649 the networking component, like somewhere along the line, like I seen you before. But I'm like,  
650 okay, I seen him, I don't remember the farm. But I was like, I'll probably never see him again,  
651 right? You know, because you never know who your networking with when you're networking. I  
652 just feel like I've missed that component somewhere, just listening to everybody talk.

653 MR: **00:53:48** Yeah, We have trust issues amongst ourselves as a race of people. That hinders us  
654 too. We have to tell the truth about it. I think that was something that somebody was talking  
655 about earlier about getting in the door, with my program versus your program. How can we  
656 collaborate to make it, make it all work, and for the better? And so, it's kind of... I've been  
657 puzzled. When you talk about resources, we have the resources, and we have the money. You  
658 know today, we all church folk, I'm sure we belong somewhere. We have the resources and we  
659 have the money. We deposit it in the bank Monday morning. We're going to deposit it in their  
660 bank, Monday morning. Everybody a part of it Black. That's our church. We got the money,  
661 church land. Cadillac is going to be park on the yard. But the health issues surrounding all of  
662 this, the importance of going out and doing something in the agriculture field so people stop  
663 getting sick cause they're eating wrong, unhealthy. You know while we praying to the Lord, we  
664 supposed to be eating healthy too. You know, so this thing is big.

665  
666 Robert: **00:54:57** They're going to be praying for some greens.

667 GROUP: (Unanimous Agreeance)

668  
669 MR: **00:55:12** You know, We have so many resources and it's going to take, you, you, me,

670 teaching our young people, reeducating. Um, because we do, that's what angers me so. You  
671 know, we don't collaborate, we have trust issues amongst each other, but you've got a break that.  
672 That's got to be broken. It's shameful that we can't work together. It's shameful that we are in the  
673 same community can't do what we need to do. You got to keep yours separate from mine...No.  
674 They tell you to collaborate. You have more power.

675  
676 KB: **00:55:45** You get more money.?

677 MR: You get more profit, more money, collateral. Collaborate .

678 MPB: Some of us really just don't know. I think we just, we just lost it somewhere. We just  
679 don't know. I would never bump into you like in a grocery store like who are you, oh what are  
680 you doing at A&T, I work at A&T, like oh.

681 AC: Right.

682 KB: **00:56:08** I feel like, A&T [NCA&TSU] could have a larger role because, if they were to  
683 help us network, they could do it in a larger capacity. They could connect us together. So, if there  
684 was some kind, maybe they can work on like an agricultural database because I know every time  
685 that somebody comes there for agriculture, and like Ag. education, they list like, the same  
686 number of people. So, like they do it in that sense. But on a larger basis, like when I came out  
687 wanting to be a farmer, well one of those professors, we still worked together now. Dr. Jakai,  
688 he's in, **00:56:44** um, what building, uh...

689 AC: Is it Carver?

690 KB: Carver, he's in Carver. (brief pause) **00:57:05** In Carver, he's, he's really helpful. But as far  
691 as like the other, the other professors when I was beginning my journey of becoming a farmer.  
692 They couldn't help me at all. So it was, but I know that, I know that they have a lot of, oh, they  
693 keep track of students from the time they leave, and they keep relationships with them. So, there  
694 should be something there where we, cause that's a lot on us if they already have our resources  
695 for it.

696 Robert: Well, I think they're starting that now. Because I am seeing that the students are thinking  
697 about that. They actually have an Aggie entrepreneurs page on Instagram.

698 KB: **00:57:42** Yeah yeah. I um, yeah, it's something, it's something.

699 Robert: You know what I'm saying? Even if you tag the actual page, at least your picture will  
700 **00:57:51** pop up you know, under their feed.

701  
702 KB: It's like I can go to him as a liaison but when I go in to do the application for the farm, he  
703 never talked with me or he couldn't connect me anyone. We had an agent get in contact with  
704 FSA agent in another county, that went to A&T and then she was my ally and walked me  
705 through the process. And so, like the school could have did that instead of me. I literally got  
706 lucky. Well I obviously lucky. **00:58:19** Things were ordered in a specific way, but they could  
707 have made that connection. Oh, Beverly is the loan director. She has a really high position. You

708 could put in an application and she could get it sent, and she can verify it. And so it's just like  
709 anyway, I mean they have, we have the resources just...

710 AC: **00:58:38** It's like instead of being one step to go to the source, you're like, you're going at  
711 five different people telling them what you want to do. And then the fifth person is like, oh yeah,  
712 dadadada...

713

714 KB: **00:58:49** Oh and you're from A&T too, who was your professor, oh Dr. Alston, Dr.  
715 English, oh. Me too. It's like I don't get this. **00:58:57** We could do that because it was a lot  
716 more time.

717

718 MR: But when we net, start networking because we got some **00:59:02** challenges... because  
719 even the grocery store, is a challenge Food Lion is a challenge because you know they get their  
720 produce from what, California and places like that that's brought in. So, we have to go in with  
721 goals, not only just to grow our own, but to impact our community. Y'all need to buy from us.  
722 Let us start growing for you all. Or cut back, we'll just buy from ourselves. But you know, you  
723 got issues there. They got, you know, stuff that's in place. That's why Food Lion is there, with  
724 low prices and you've got the little card, to go to them. **00:59:35** But, you know, those of you, I  
725 thought about that with A&T too. Man A&T does everything here. **00:59:39** Why we aint got a  
726 grocery store? We aint got our food, our meats...

727

728 KB: One thing I have seen from working at the farm, I worked at the swine unit. **00:59:49** I think  
729 they rebuilt it, but it was completely outdated.

730

731 Robert: **00:59:54** The swine unit?

732 KB: Completely outdated.

733 Robert: Yes sir. Yes sir. I used to work there.

734

735 KB: **00:59:59** and then, since I went to Bee School. I was like, ah. I went and contacted one of  
736 the farmers, that used to work there, you actually know him. His name was Brad [inaudible].

737 Robert: Mm, I'd have to see him.

738 KB: **11:00:10** He's short, uh, short, brown skin but I called him and said, hey, did A&T ever  
739 have bees? He was like, no. But then if we go, if NC State invites us to go out, when we go out  
740 to NC State, they got a whole apiary everywhere. So, it's just like, us being able to get up to  
741 speed on what we're doing, so we can have a little farmer's market with a 500 acre farm that has  
742 the resources to produce food all year round. We can do it.

743

744 Robert: **01:00:35** Okay. So, on that note, and then we'll go to the next question. The whole bee  
745 situation, if you're looking at like new programs being implemented, you got to have people that  
746 know what they're doing and that teach that and study that. So, like for me, like if we're going to

747 talk about personal endeavors, me personally, I would love to go back to A&T, because I'll turn  
748 that joker out.

749 KB: I would want to go back too.

750 Robert: Because I know that between my, my background in animal science and industry, my  
751 background in agriculture education, my background in community leadership, my background  
752 in development, like all of that, can come. I know where to make the connections. That's the  
753 thing, like there's not really anyone making those connections. We have the connections. We  
754 know that those connections are there, but I don't think that no one is really executing and then  
755 on top of that, being in academia alone, it's very time consuming. **01:01:28** It's so much, so much  
756 paperwork. There're so many other things that you have to do as far as managing your, managing  
757 your classes. That like, I don't think that they've really been able to change how they teach.

758 KB: That's a good point, That's a good point.

759 Robert: You know what I'm saying? At Virginia Tech, a lot of my classes are just like what  
760 we're doing right now. I don't go in there and like learn stuff. Like we go in there and learn from  
761 each other. It's, it's totally collaborative work.

762 KB: You gotta be kidding me..

763 Robert: No, no. They give us a article and we read it that week. Like three articles that you'll  
764 read. We come in there and we discuss those articles based on the topic area of the course itself,  
765 and then from there you find yourself learning new things from each other. You might end up  
766 being the black liaison of everybody else on the campus. Speaking for food justice, speaking for  
767 **01:02:20** your neighborhood that you come from or you seen, because you the only black person  
768 in the room.

769 AC: **01:02:25** The thing is, is so, when we're talking about food insecurity, right? In the black  
770 community...A&T should be, we should be doing more like, more practical classes. We should  
771 have professors at Dudley [High School]. We should have professors at Hairston [Middle  
772 School],

773

774 Robert: **01:02:40** But they have to have a practical background or do that.

775 AC: Helping, you know what I'm saying?

776 KB: They got the people...

777

778 LC: **01:02:45** Well, that's what I'm, I'm listening to you guys talk and it's, it's amazing. At the  
779 same time, I'm trying to figure out how, when does it actually connect to the rest of the black  
780 community that isn't academic based, that isn't college educated, um, these parents that have two  
781 or three jobs, that work third shift and so it's like, I understand what you were saying earlier  
782 about, it doesn't have to be something consistent, but from what I see at Hairston, it has to be  
783 something consistent. I got kids selling drugs, I got kids in gangs and the young lady that I had  
784 put in your class for agriculture, that's the first time that they've even seen her in a whole year do

785 something where she's interacting and she's not disrupting the class. Like those kids, they need  
786 consistency. They need somebody to show them not only what to do but to show them that they  
787 love them, so, we can like plant seeds but like the people in the community that I work in, and  
788 that I live in, because I live on the Southside of Greensboro, Randleman Road. **01:03:39** Like we  
789 got to be in there all day every day because they need to see that and they're working all day  
790 long, they're not going to also want to work three jobs as well as go outside and do stuff. Um,  
791 they're not going to work three jobs and then have to worry about figuring out how they're gonna  
792 fix food and things like that. They're going to catch something quick. So, the education has to  
793 include things for these families that... things that they can do, but then also ways that it's still  
794 going to be convenient for them when it's a mom with five kids. So. So what does that, what  
795 does that look like? How does that connect?

796  
797 **KB: 01:04:08** [inaudible] So all my students, in our program come from lower socioeconomic  
798 backgrounds, I'll just use the correct term, because I don't want to say, they from the hood. But,  
799 all of them come from one of those backgrounds, except for two. And all of the students that I've  
800 been getting were coming from the background the majority of the students come from. And the  
801 student that I have, that's been in the program, well two students have been there for four years.  
802 This'll be their fourth summer. The one, his name is [Kamani], he um, is probably from one of  
803 the roughest upbringings that I could, like, even, that I've even heard or experienced. Because I  
804 experienced part of it because he's in the program. And, when he first got in, he told me, he was  
805 like, "Man I don't want to hear nothing you saying unless..." he was like joking but, he said  
806 "Unless we growing hamburgers and hot dogs on this farm, I ain't eating this." That's what he  
807 told me, it was pretty, funny. We actually got into a long argument about it. **01:05:02** But I was  
808 thinking like, okay, how do I engage his parents like his guardian, his grandmother and I would  
809 try things. I was like, hey, if I send him home with these eggs, will you eat them? She was like,  
810 are they white or brown? And I was like they're brown. I ain't eating no brown eggs, and such  
811 and such and such and such. But what's happened since he's been in the program and since he's  
812 bought in, when we go to other farms, or when we get food from the farm, I go, try this. And  
813 he'll go, I like that. So, then what's happened is he's introduced it to his house. So, I haven't had  
814 to do any other programming with his grandmother to get her buy in, because she's seen, she's  
815 witnessed the change that it's made in his life. So, that makes her interested in it as well. So, now  
816 he's in bee school and she talks about bees, more than I do. I'm like, dang. I just called to see  
817 how you're doing but, she's talking, she posting up on Facebook about honeybees and stuff. So,  
818 what happens is, and I haven't had to get [Kamani] every single day. I get the students because of  
819 finances, picking them up is pretty expensive. But um, we getting them around two times, a  
820 month during the school year and then the summers, every day. And what we do is they end up  
821 welcoming and taking that information back home. So, when they buy-in, the parent, with the  
822 garden will eventually buy it? And then you have something special. So

823  
824 **LC: 01:06:22** How do you do that on the masses though. So, I have a couple of students I have  
825 had that level of success with. But then I, when I think about like all 247 of my kids, um, I'm  
826 trying to figure out how to reach the masses. Like when I think of things... Like, what will it take  
827 to get there? I think of like how can the conversations that we're having in this room right now,



828 how can we start... getting everybody, not just Hairston, but Jackson, Lincoln, see what I'm  
829 saying? Like how do we, yeah.

830

831 KB: **01:06:47** I see what you're saying, so, I think the best way we can learn is sharing our  
832 experiences. Yeah. So, like a shared experienced that I can share with you guys is I tried to do  
833 that at the beginning, and I tried to grow the program from four students to like 10 from the first  
834 year, to the second. The next thing you know, we end up back here with three kids because the  
835 kids got to fighting. I'm like how can I get the message to the masses? Then we almost lost all  
836 the kids. So, what I seem to focus more on is, the individual on a personal basis. And then,  
837 they'll market the program for you. So, you're not going to, you're not going to have to go out  
838 and talk to the masses because the best form of marketing is word of mouth. So, I had a lady  
839 walk in, I should say, I had a woman walk up to me **01:07:36** Walk up to me that's just substitute  
840 taught with me, But somebody wants to talk about the program. She just walked up to me on  
841 Friday and she was like, "I want you to mentor my child". And I was just like, all right, have him  
842 to come over, tell him to come see me. So, somebody told her about program, So, that's why I  
843 said the numbers are going up. Varying from like 7 to 10, but people will talk and do all that for  
844 you and you're not going to have to lay out some theoretical framework to get to everybody  
845 because the people are slowly coming in. Then after that you're going to have to deal with the  
846 point that everybody is not going to come.

847 MR: **01:08:05** You know, and that's true too. But um, the garden itself, it's about nurturing right,  
848 you have to nurture the plant, the garden. We have to look at it from that point, standpoint with  
849 the children **01:08:18** because the children up there talking about, how families, or whatever, we  
850 have all these issues. Whether we on south side and north side, projects or my house we have  
851 issues. But uh, it's about nurturing. So, when you get the children, we have to have that  
852 component within us. We are going to nurture this, I'm going to nurture this program we are  
853 actually mentoring directly or indirectly. We are nurturing our own people actually, our people.  
854 We've got to have that kind of component in creation. Then maybe we need to start thinking a  
855 little bit outside the box. Agriculture is clothing, designing things to reach our youth. Designing  
856 clothing to reach our youth. Make it cool, make gardening cool, make it fun. We got videos,  
857 we've got all this stuff out here, available to us, and it could be one by one, root by root. Enhance  
858 it. You know, we have to think like that, it's good. [inaudible] Tell them all the health benefits  
859 and stuff, make it fun and enjoyable.

860

861 AC: **01:09:27** And it, sometime it's um, like at, at Dudley [High School] we offer service  
862 learning hours. Um, so, um, I have about a good core, maybe sometimes it's just two students,  
863 sometimes it's 10 students and then we'll do like a Martin Luther King Program. So, then I'm  
864 working with, we're making, you know, seed bombs and 60 students or we'll have an Earth Day  
865 and it's, it's another 60 students or something like that. So, you can, you can have, you know,  
866 your everyday program where you're dealing with maybe 10 students who are interested in the  
867 club. And then you have big events where you're bringing more people to the thread. **01:10:11**  
868 Um, you know, to be event. So, um, it doesn't, it doesn't have to like, you're not gonna reach  
869 everybody at once, but you might reach them in that one program that you do, um, or you know,  
870 it, it's hard because you want to help everybody, but sometimes you just have to focus on what

871 you have. And if it's only two students, then guess what? We're to focus hard on these two  
872 students. Um, if we get 60 students, we're going to focus on those 60 students.

873  
874 MR: What do they need? The diabetes, health issues **01:10:49** obesity, children are unhappy.  
875 Low self-esteem because they're too big or too small or this issue [inaudible]. It's so much that  
876 we can tap into to tie agriculture into it, to make it and enhance it ourselves.

877  
878 AC: **01:11:05** And I, and I think too is letting kids know, like with... my philosophy with  
879 volunteering is letting people know the impact of what they're doing. So, if, if you say for  
880 instance, I would, I don't know if y'all have ever registered people to vote, right? But to register  
881 someone to vote can take some time. Um, and so we would have volunteers coming in and say,  
882 Oh, man, I only registered four people. Right? So, they come in, they only registered four people.  
883 They spent an hour, they don't feel like that was a lot of time. But if you say, man, that was  
884 pretty good because usually it takes me about, it takes me an hour, I can rate on average, it's  
885 about six people. So, they know like, Oh, man, I did, I did. I most six people, like that's pretty  
886 good. So next time I'm gonna come in with the goal of registering 10 people in an hour or  
887 something like that.

888  
889 **01:11:56** So you give, if you let people know what goal they've accomplished, then they want to  
890 come back and break that goal, um, or increase it... whatever that impact is. So, if you're doing a  
891 program and you're saying, hey, like less, um, create, uh, I dunno, let's see if we can over the  
892 course of this semester, donate 10 pounds or a hundred pounds of food to the school's, um, uh,  
893 do you guys have a, a food drive or a food pantry?

894 LC: Mm hm... and a refrigerator

895 AC: **01:12:33** Yeah. So, let's see if we can grow a hundred pounds of food for the food pantry,  
896 vegetables and then they're like, guys, we did that. We hit that mark. You know what I'm  
897 saying? So, if you can bring students in with goals, sometimes that works too.

898 MR: Yeah.

899 Robert: Start Small and work your way up.

900 LC: And even with parents sayin hey, we just want to say if you can, if you can come to, you  
901 know, uh, three programs this semester just as participation. You know what I'm saying? Well,  
902 we'll plan a pizza party or something, you know, that might get them involved. Like, okay, well  
903 let me come to my student, my daughter can get a pizza party. It's not gonna work for everybody,  
904 but it might work for some.

905  
906 MR: **01:13:22** You know too, therapeutically... I used to work for a program where we would  
907 come by and pick up the child after school and you would go to his home and pick him up.  
908 Maybe take it to the library, engage with them, go over the case management with them. There  
909 for the whole family, if they need to go somewhere.

910 AC: Is it Youth Focus?

911 MR: **01:13:38** Mm no. But if we would have an agriculture program or did home cooking  
912 classes there, engage from the school to the home? You know food would be prepared, show  
913 them how to prepare it. And how that would help make the family more wholesome and to eat  
914 healthy. I'm just saying there's a whole lot of ways that we can do things. Someone doctor's  
915 degree and you had a patient that had obesity hey, get agriculturally involved. [inaudible] Some  
916 health issues... just teaching how to he held, he would bring the high blood pressure down, move  
917 that heart problem out the way. So, a lot of ways that we can collaborate and make things work  
918 to a point.

919  
920 Robert: **01:14:27** I'm going to uh, at least save these questions. So, cause like we're literally  
921 touching on all this stuff. But um, number four is how do you see your work fostering the  
922 creation of social justice and black youth and empowerment? Number five is what is the role of  
923 agriculture education in the community to support black youth empowerment. And then number  
924 six is when you think of the future for black youth, what do you hope for? What will it take to  
925 get there? And we've kind of been like touching on these things, but I'm hoping that we can  
926 maybe elaborate a little bit more. We have about 20 minutes left in here. But um, yeah. So, like  
927 how do you see, like we were hearing about how your work is fostering, but where do, where do  
928 you feel like, what do you feel like you can, you can do differently than what you've done now,  
929 been doing so far. That also ties into what you've been learning from this process. Like what do  
930 you feel like you can do different? Um, how can we get this thing going on? Like what will it  
931 take?

932  
933 MR: **01:15:43** For me, I'm looking at being more of a mentor with what we're doing, educating  
934 and getting information to our youth. To let them know what's available through agriculture, the  
935 careers that are out there, the money that could be made, the job opportunities that are out there,  
936 [inaudible]. To let them know that there are things out there other than basketball and football,  
937 that they can engage in and be successful at and really push on that. I feel that from the  
938 agriculture and garden aspect, it's very therapeutic and will help out with our youth especially,  
939 not be so aggressive and get rid of that anger is by working in the garden and enjoying nature. I  
940 would encourage them to do it.

941  
942 KB: **01:16:41** I think if I, if I could track their behavior, I would have done a better job of  
943 tracking them from the beginning. When they got into the program, until now, because I have  
944 one student, he's in jail. So, if I felt like, if I would've been able just to like have some kind of...  
945 like, just talk to his parent, have her fill out something we could've nipped the issue that he has  
946 now, in the bud earlier so he wouldn't be in this position. So this is more so like just keeping  
947 better track of like all **01:17:10** the student's behavior. I was also thinking about like, I want to  
948 go to his court dates but I can't cause I got a nine to five and I can't be there to support him in  
949 that way. So, we'll just be there to support the student cause once you're in their life, you can't  
950 just dip out. So, they would be able to really maximize the opportunity I have with them.

951 Robert: You can write a letter... for his lawyer to use in the case as well. You could probably do  
952 something like that, I had a similar situation.

953 KB: Alright, I'm gonna do that.

954 MPB: A letter of reference. **01:17:45** Um, I think for, I guess what I get out of this, is we're  
955 changing a little bit out there. Because, you know I'm not gonna say it's just all black students I  
956 have. I have Hispanic students, and so, I have a mixture of the two, they're great students,  
957 they're awesome students, they're like my students if gone go don't go, the school lets me walk  
958 in, take them out. But I feel like for them **01:18:20** I want to expose them to something different,  
959 not necessarily pressuring them into it, just exposing them to something different. We do have  
960 side conversations, um, stuff that they're not aware of. So, I think for me it's just trying to bring  
961 those college prep stuff in, to the meets. The idea is you don't just have to go to be a nurse, or a  
962 doctor. What about ag-business, what about ag-econ like, you know, I try to like open their  
963 opportunities up and um, and I try to, since I'm coming in from, since I work with them  
964 sometimes, um, try and break down the, I guess perceptions and stereotypes that we're  
965 encountering with the whole extension program itself. Um, where we're going from an all-white  
966 traditional dynamic to, what does traditional look like? What does urban programming look like,  
967 um, how can I get the traditional homeschool students to not be so fearful to go. **01:19:23** Even  
968 just ask this young lady her name. How can they help or get them just in the same room?  
969 Because they're still, they'll be in the same room and still be segregated. Um, so how to change  
970 those dynamics. So, um, I think that the agriculture, urban agriculture, well agriculture  
971 education, just kind of, I guess mending the two, for us. What does traditional versus non-  
972 traditional look like? What does rural versus urban programming look like? Um, so breaking  
973 those barriers down, because I'll take them out there every day. No, I do not work on anybody's  
974 farm. I'm not against it, but Ms. Mo ain't out there with the chickens, so I'm your person if you  
975 want to do like STEM stuff, but Ms. Mo aint out there with no chickens. I was like, I had my  
976 spare of chickens, we just don't get along. **01:20:13** Like, I done got chased by one, but I got  
977 you, if that's what you want to do. I will support you, we will go to a farm and I will gear up,  
978 like you said. We'll go get those chickens if you want to do it. If it is all about exposure, I am  
979 down for the cause, moving on. Um, so I think it's just supporting them for their future.  
980 [inaudible] It's kind of got me at heart, you know, gardening is hard work, agriculture in itself is  
981 hard work. Um I think with this generation and the generation coming after them, my child  
982 included. Um, hard work is not in their vocabulary. You tell them they got to think about  
983 something, they got to sit down...

984 AC: They'll give you the side eye.

985 MPB: Right? These kids break completely down, they just don't understand.

986 Robert: They got to think about it for a couple days.

987 MPB: Right, like we're coming in there like, what can I do? Like we're a turtleneck generation I  
988 read that somewhere. Like we're ready. Like if the entrepreneurship fails, like we are, you know,  
989 lie Steve Jobs. **01:21:16** We're the turtle, black turtleneck. You know, we're that generation. If  
990 one thing fails, we're like, okay, well what's my next entrepreneurial venture? We're on to the  
991 next. This generation wastes hard work, because something fails for them, everything fails,  
992 everything collapses. Everything just, just goes down the drain, they just don't know how to

993 recover and understand the components. So, I think for the future I was just like, how can we  
994 instill in them what is hard work?

995 Robert: Well they aint doing that no more.

996 MPB: I mean I usually say that because my mom is one of those moms too. I was raised that you  
997 know, you step out of line, you get whooped. and then, yeah, now I got a... she's over  
998 grandchild, and she's like, I told him if somebody touch, she will check it... I'm like, whoa whoa  
999 whoa. When I went to school, you whooped me. He over here cutting up a monkey. "Well I got  
1000 his back." Ma, you can't be like that, but consistency is one too. These kids do not have  
1001 consistency. **01:22:16** So you know, you when you talk to one kid, they always want to go with  
1002 you but like, ok I need to mail some paperwork. Oh, well I'm at a different address. Like, okay,  
1003 where are you at, so I can get it to you, who are you with? So, it's just, it's, it's far past our youth,  
1004 some of it's out of your control. Um, but what I do is try to tailor and cater to what I can cater to.  
1005 Um, it's just, instilling in them that it's not all about you, you know, there's a future, It's not all  
1006 about you baby. You gotta you gotta do, you got to put in a little bit of work, to get a little bit  
1007 back. It's not all about you, so, hard work is not in your vocabulary right now.

1008 MR: Um, we so many social issues that, **01:23:01** these young people go through today. Started  
1009 with what you said, you know, being groomed inside. They have everything at their fingertips,  
1010 they have no reason to... it's new to them to get their hands dirty and you know, mud, you know,  
1011 sweating and the bugs. But the more it's introduced to them, the more they see that nature is a  
1012 part of them and they are a part of nature. I have never seen, I mean really I hadn't seen none that  
1013 didn't like engaging, even if they said, no and want to be prissy. Once they saw the others in, and  
1014 then if you put them in a totally different environment, they would have really engaged and  
1015 really enjoyed it. They just act standoffish because the other little girls was around acting cute  
1016 too. So um, I think it's just like I said, how it's in our make-up. We just need to stir up some of  
1017 those gifts. You know how our parents and grandparents taught us how and how to appreciate it.  
1018 Our kids are lazy to a certain extent but, you know, we make them. They in the house, not my  
1019 house, aint no way. The dog got to work at my house. If he doesn't work, he got to leave because  
1020 if he don't bark or do something... I gotta feed you. **01:24:29** So we have to introduce, introduce  
1021 it to some, you know, because some of these babies into it, nut for some it's Greek. They never  
1022 seen nothing but the pictures and then [inaudible]. Strawberries, doing things like that. They  
1023 didn't know picking up strawberries so they will know that they'll get that end result out of  
1024 strawberries. We have to train them, but you gotta understand this too, think about it. There are a  
1025 lot of prison farms, a lot of prison farms. A lot more than you think.

1026 KB: There's one out in Greensboro [NC] I think.

1027 MR: Those guys are doing cheap labor.

1028 Robert: That mean they can do it when they get out.

1029 MR: When they get out, they got the skills. How to work the equipment and everything  
1030 [inaudible].

1031

1032 AC: **01:25:19** I think it's important to, especially when we're working with African American  
1033 youth and Hispanic youth to understand too, the background is definitely different. And so, if  
1034 you can understand what their family background is, you can kind of deal with their attitudes a  
1035 little bit better. And in some of the, the way that they come across you, you have an  
1036 understanding, you know. There was a girl, um, she was, I don't, do you guys know what like,  
1037 life skills classes are in school.

1038 LC: **01:25:54** Like, home economics. That's something that they learn. Like, sewing and stuff  
1039 like that.

1040 AC: No, it's the adaptive learning, you know, like, adaptive learning students? So those are  
1041 students that are like severely, have like severe disabilities and things like that. And it was one  
1042 girl that I, they, like really loved the garden. And so, it's one girl that was in that class and her  
1043 mom had dropped her off, like moved and dropped her off at her grandma's house, like, here you  
1044 go, you know what I'm saying? **01:26:25** And so her uncle though was like this like crazy kid,  
1045 just kind of, you know, he was getting in trouble, you know, walking around school, like not  
1046 being in class and you know, just walking around. But he would come to the garden and, you  
1047 know, pick weeds or pick vegetables and asked me what the questions were. But like,  
1048 understanding that like his mom had eight kids and then his sister had like another five or six  
1049 kids, you know, just kind of understanding that family background, you understood kind of why  
1050 he was, you know, walking around and skipping school and skipping classes and stuff like that.  
1051 But he was still engaged like when the tornado happened, um, in April, like he was, you know,  
1052 volunteering his services and like really, really compassionate and had like this beautiful heart.  
1053 Um, so we have to understand that just because kids act a certain way, like we can't write them  
1054 off and we have to understand like that background and where they come from. And that's, I  
1055 think that's the difference between us working for us in our community and someone else coming  
1056 from the outside working in our community. They don't understand our children. They don't  
1057 understand, um, you know, the background and all those other things.

1058 MPB: They're so quick to throw them away. They're scared to do something against the grain.

1059

1060 AC: **01:27:47** Right, there's no compassion.

1061 MPB: They're just throwing them away. As soon as that they have a little, you know, if they can  
1062 think on their own and stand on their own, oh, you're just trouble, you're just going to end up  
1063 over here. You're already throwing them away.

1064 AC: And the thing is, even as a **01:28:05** black educator, you have to check that at the door  
1065 sometime too, because you have to check your, your biases. You have to check being human too,  
1066 at the door and understand that this is a child.

1067 MR: And where they're coming from. **01:28:20** Right, and where they're coming from. So, like,  
1068 you know, cause sometimes, you know, they talk like they grown to you, you said you gotta be  
1069 like, hold on now. So, you have to, you have to check that at the door and say, you know, this is,  
1070 this is... when I'm working with them, this is always a, a learning moment for them. And My,  
1071 the way that I deal with them is a learning moment. Because if you're just used to someone

1072 yelling at you all the time, like I was babysitting my little cousins and the, um, my youngest  
1073 cousins, um, four and two. And so, the little boy was just like yelling at his sister. I was like,  
1074 she's two, like, she's not like you have to, you know, tell her why you know you want her not to  
1075 do that. Not just like "STOOOP!!!", you know the, you know, at the height of your voice. So, it's  
1076 about just teaching them something different than what they're used to.

1077  
1078 MR: **01:29:14** That's, where I found that the garden was therapeutic. The gardening is good. Had  
1079 one of the students that worked there, they had special needs too, had children that act out and  
1080 wasn't really at home. They were gonna stay at one place for so long and things of that nature  
1081 and they would really act out, well not act out, but there were some cases and um, we would  
1082 have coffee. They would say, Mr. Ruff, can you come get Jason, and take him outside? Take him  
1083 outside in the garden? We get in the garden, he'll settle his mind and then he was able to go back  
1084 into the classroom. You know, it touch my heart, if every child is given the opportunity, you  
1085 know, and taught on their level. You know, his mind wasn't going to tolerate too much  
1086 classroom. Because I didn't want the classroom, my mind is on the outside. You know, but he  
1087 was acting out and I've seen some be abused. And then it hurt when you see some come in the  
1088 door because I knew when, his hair wasn't combed, he wasn't, you know, face wasn't clean,  
1089 shoes untied, one shoe on the wrong foot. Generally they are going to have a bad day because of  
1090 last night. They didn't have no breakfast, got to school late, missed breakfast at school guys, he's  
1091 hungry. How you gonna learn when all the kids hungry. Then you give them a snack at school. I  
1092 mean the meal at school isn't healthy, healthy. Because most of that is processed. You know,  
1093 macaroni and cheese. So, Johnny he has a time, so, we have to learn how to nurture. **01:30:55**  
1094 Same with teachers. Like you said, [inaudible] I saw something the other day, and it hurt me that  
1095 I couldn't say nothing, so I stood there for a while, hoping to get her attention. I saw a white,  
1096 younger white teacher bring the little black boy outside and she just drilled him. Like, pulling  
1097 him down, "You know, you're the worst little...", you know everything but calling him a... and  
1098 I stopped, and I looked at her and she just gonna look at me, you know and sort of calm down a  
1099 little bit. But she was tearing him now. You know, going into him like he was worthless, you  
1100 know what I'm saying? He's interrupting your class because he's hungry, he don't have the right  
1101 clothes on. He's not feeling well amongst his peers, So, he's acting out. Don't beat him up.

1102  
1103 AC: **01:31:42** And he doesn't like you because you're mean. He didn't like you because you're  
1104 mean.

1105 MR: You're mean, and this was on purpose. **01:31:49** You know, this was being done purposely.  
1106 You can tell when somebody's chastising a child. Or sitting standing there tearing into him.

1107 Robert: I think that really **01:31:59** speaks to the importance of, of people like, that look like us  
1108 doing this type of work.

1109 MR: Right.

1110 Robert: And we have **01:32:07** in order for us to truly expose black youth to what this looks like,  
1111 we have to be that example because a white person farming, you can't tell a black person what it  
1112 is like to be a black farmer **01:32:20** or community, you know?

1113 AC: What it looks like. Cause I, I had a mentor, um, who... you are you familiar with SEEDS?  
1114 They used to work with black youth. and she was like, you know, I would see these, you know,  
1115 predominantly white, um, instructors telling kids, okay, go pick those weeds. And then they  
1116 stand around and watch them. And he was like, do you know that looks like even if they're not  
1117 talking about slavery, that looks like?

1118 MR: Slave masters. Slavery aint over now...

1119 AC: Yeah, you stand there, you the gatekeeper. **01:32:56** It's like. That's why I like, even though  
1120 I'm African American, like if I'm going to ask you to pick weeds, I'm gonna pick weeds too  
1121 students, right? If I'm going to ask you to shovel mulch. I'm going to be in the hot sun, shoveling  
1122 mulch.  
1123

1124 KB: **01:33:14** And they're getting called out for it, and they're trying to restructure their  
1125 programming. They've actually tried to contact the kids that work with our program, to try to get  
1126 him to come there because they want to have some, some more black students.

1127 MR: We can't be naïve, like white folks don't know what they are doing, when they do that.  
1128 They do know what they are doing...

1129 KB: And they ended they ended up getting a grant for \$1 million building that ushered in that  
1130 whole getting gentrified. So now they can, they're trying to bus kids in from all over to show that  
1131 they are working with children of color for everybody that  
1132

1133 MPB: **01:33:48** I was about to say, I think we need, we just can't do it on our own. We need  
1134 volunteers. We need, people who would be able to come in, Eh, you know, hate to say it but fast  
1135 learners because, hey, it's just me. You can't be at every site and every county that you had, you  
1136 came in every school in Durham Academy, you know, you can't be everywhere. So, I think we  
1137 need to take a step back as far as agriculture education, but helping the community understand  
1138 that we need them in order for us to progress a little bit more. People just so fast paced. If you  
1139 can't pay him, you not getting something out of it, they don't want to move. You know what I'm  
1140 saying?  
1141

1142 AC: **01:34:29** [Inaudible] Have you guys written grants, like, how does that process look like?  
1143 Like what, what do you know that the committees are looking for? What can I put in my  
1144 programming? You know, because the thing is, is that certain people know how to write grants  
1145 and get money, you know what I'm saying? But the work that they're doing, is not making the  
1146 same impact that we're doing. So how can we come together and do, I don't know, grant cooping  
1147 something where we're,  
1148

1149 MR: **01:35:01** We need to tie things together, to where it trickles down yeah, you know,  
1150 branches off and things like that. Just conform to get something started

1151 KB: We just started getting grants, like, they've been rolling in. It took us like two years, well,  
1152 like a year and a half to really figure out what they were looking for. But the best thing that



1153 helped, was knowing the people who you are writing your grant to. So, everyone that we've  
1154 gotten, we've either applied once and didn't get it and then people then start following the work  
1155 and then you apply again. Or we knew somebody that was on the grant committee. So, I know  
1156 some, I know some organizations [inaudible] Never met a 100,000 dollar one yet, that's gonna  
1157 take some time. But the small like, 10,000, 11,000 like those type, I know some organizations.

1158 MR: They'll work to get you started.

1159  
1160 LC: **01:35:55** And that how, is what I was talking about. Like the how, how not necessarily how  
1161 to get... all the kids on the same, like, because all the kids aren't gonna want to do agriculture  
1162 **01:36:04** you know, they just, they want to do boxing and they want to do screen printing, but  
1163 how do we go from this, back to the community? How does that happen? And you just  
1164 mentioned a really good idea. Bringing everybody to the table that has something to offer as  
1165 saying, okay, **01:36:22** how do we pull all this stuff together?

1166 AC: And I think at the, at the core of it, it's that Nike mentality of just doing it. Like, just gone  
1167 out here and doing it, um, it, it started on a whim of like I taught at twilight, it was a teacher that  
1168 taught at Dudley. Um, and I was hanging out with her and another teacher at Dudley. And I met  
1169 the guy at Walmart and that was like, "Hey you guys, I want to do something for my capstone."  
1170 And he was like, what we're trying to, in the process of trying to get the green house together, it  
1171 still looks crazy, but um, you know, come in. And so, I started from that and just showing up  
1172 every day and being consistent with it. And that's how I kinda got the inroads. Um, so it's just  
1173 kind of showing up and doing it. I guess, in the basic simple terms.

1174  
1175 Robert: **01:37:20** I went to the BUGS [Black Urban Growers] conference. And one of the  
1176 biggest things I took from that conference was cooperatives. Um, when you're thinking about,  
1177 and, what really brought on the conversation and the thought processes around cooperative's was  
1178 hemp. Um, and what it's going to take because we're already systematically being pushed out of  
1179 that market before we can even have that opportunity to apply to get in it. And this open  
1180 opportunity for textiles, shirts, shoes, all that kind of stuff. Like we all are talking about, hemp  
1181 can be used to do that. It's a legal product now here in North Carolina and...

1182 AC: There's a hemp store downtown.

1183 Robert: Yeah. And even Winston uh. Winston [Salem] already has dispensary's and all that stuff.  
1184 So, it's like, you know, at this point... Now it can, it can take you bout, I asked the people in a  
1185 Winston and they said it could take you between five and \$20,000 to get like started with  
1186 something like that. With doing what they're doing. But even if we took it from the aspect of  
1187 getting into. If we know that this person is qualified to grow it, this person has the land, this other  
1188 person, it has had experience with two pilot programs which they are also requiring for you to  
1189 grow hemp. Like you have to basically have been doing this illegally in order for you to be,  
1190 prepared to jump into this.

1191  
1192 KB: **01:38:52** I have my application pending right now. So, what they did with this was, they  
1193 launched the pilot program, but then they ended up making it kind of like the good old boys club,

1194 exclusive. And then they had the um, so black people actually got in relatively early. Black  
1195 farmers did get in early. What the hold-up was, the white farmers who already had the  
1196 infrastructure to do it, were selling black farmers the male plant. So, you have to keep buying  
1197 seeds from them every year. So then once the black farmers found that out, some of them  
1198 couldn't keep doing it cause they, the additional investment was like 3 dollars a plant. So, it must  
1199 have to do off planet 3000 plants grow in an acre. And then what ended up happening was the,  
1200 uh, there's some black farmers that did really, really well on it. But they're really, really like,  
1201 closed mouth about their product. One guy [inaudible], he was like, oh, I made, somebody stole  
1202 an acre of it, but I still made, I think he said 90,000. Or something like that. [inaudible] **01:39:54**  
1203 So, like the opportunity is there. I just don't know how it's gonna play out in a long term. I don't  
1204 know if it's going to be like the clean energy where everybody got in early and then started  
1205 growing soy beans and corn, and sorghum and it lasted for about five years. And now, all those  
1206 farmers are in debt, because nobody else is buying it, so I don't know if hemp is going to be the  
1207 same way. So, I think there is an opportunity up front, but long term, I mean nobody knows what  
1208 it looks like. But the farmers with 500 acres, they aren't transitioning to it, they're still talking  
1209 about food. So, I don't, I don't know where [inaudible]

1210 AC: I feel like it's a lot around that.

1211 MPB: It is because you actually have to call, I know they call our office has any small farms  
1212 agents were working with anybody that is growing hemp and you have to report it to the sheriff's  
1213 department.

1214 KB: They have 24-hour access to your farm at that point too. **01:41:03** And then the THC level  
1215 and it can't be over 3%. [inaudible] So, with that, it's like if you have one plant that tests for that  
1216 quality, they can destroy the rest of like, your farm. So, it's like you're literally giving them  
1217 access to the land. I mean if you're making money from it, you're good. But if you don't, by then  
1218 you have to worry about people coming out there. Because like the farmer I said, somebody stole  
1219 a whole acre from him. So it's just like, there and then if you're doing other things on your farm,  
1220 it's like my 12 acres farm, I can't have farm tours out there because somebody might want to  
1221 burn. They'll be like oh, you don't live out here either. You're going to come out here and he,  
1222 granted it will be difficult to do it, then after taking into consideration, I have students out there  
1223 too. So, what happens if somebody comes out there to steal with my kids?

1224 MR: The way I look at it, I don't know too much about what to do about it. **01:42:04** It's money  
1225 in it. They're going to top the market. They're going to control that. Just like anything, the only  
1226 reason they are legalizing it now, is that the government could find a way to tax it and rise  
1227 companies that sell the medicine and stuff like that. And um, so, alcohol was the same way. I  
1228 heard it was a good stock right now.

1229  
1230 Robert: **01:42:44** Oh yeah, I'm already on that. [inaudible] Um, so yeah, I just want to let y'all  
1231 know. I appreciate y'all, y'all have really been supportive throughout this whole process and I  
1232 just, I hope that y'all, like I said, for real, got as much out of this as I have, and we can continue  
1233 to grow from here. Like I don't mind, you know, continuing these connections and continuing  
1234 these conversations and I think that jobs should also exchange information and even do that with

1235 each other. Um, I see this as, even if the, even if y'all don't end up actually working together, the  
1236 fact that you're all likeminded but have different experiences, it can help us all to grow in some  
1237 sort of way in the general areas that we're focusing on. So. I just want to thank y'all for coming  
1238 out and, um, you know, I just, I appreciate everything.

1239

1240 KB: **01:43:35** No problem, thank you for tying me into this.