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Communications for Action

FRAMING STRATEGY MOBILIZATION

Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders
June 21, 2011



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Farms – food – hunger

Qualitative research August 2010

ACTIONMEDIA



This project was conceived at a meeting convened by William Penn Foundation to discuss unifying the communications advocacy work of different interests working on these issues.

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FOCUS GROUPS

- ▶ Fifty respondents, Philadelphia & Montgomery County
- ▶ Voters, mix of political preference
- ▶ 2 groups screened for income, 10 respondents at or below AMI
- ▶ 4 groups screened for education, active in community



But first, we want to show why we do this kind of research:

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OBESITY



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QPFSITX



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OBESITY



So, what do people know and believe about obesity?

People believe it is true that there is an EPIDEMIC – SHARED PROBLEM – HEALTH CARE COSTS –
CROSSES CLASS LINES

Obesity vs. Hunger ?

- ▶ *“You can get cheap food, but it’s not healthy food. So if you’re looking – you’ve got a dollar to spend – you can get the most calories for that dollar in the least healthy foods.”*

They see NO contradiction between obesity and hunger or poverty – they understand the relationship very well.

More Healthy Choices



Most frequently mentioned cause of obesity -FAST FOOD,
Then LACK OF EXERCISE
EDUCATION, ACCESS – Applies to existence of supermarkets in under-served
neighborhoods – Aware and approving of new markets in Philadelphia.

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HUNGER



How do people think of hunger?

Hunger is real

- ▶ Hunger is hidden. It's a shame
- ▶ "Not knowing where your next meal is coming from."



The word Hunger often triggers 3rd world images – contrasts to American hunger, which is hidden
"Food insecurity" makes instant sense to people

Waste, in a land of plenty



Waste is bad, and comes to mind immediately
But discussion of “the hungry” quickly goes the other way

The UNDESERVING POOR



These negatives hold across political orientation and economic status

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“I’ve seen them pay with food stamps and drive away in a Mercedes.”



Urban legend

Positives for WIC,
School breakfast & lunch



Anger and suspicion at food stamps in particular, not government food assistance

Everyone says they care

- ▶ Respondents volunteer and donate food / money



In a post-discussion survey, twenty of fifty respondents reported that they or a family member have received food assistance at some time. Many report that they have volunteered in a food drive or other assistance effort, and all say they have donated food or money for food drives.

Community participation



Focus on delivery institutions and volunteers – church, etc

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Shopping and cooking

- ▶ How to shop, reading labels, what to eat
- ▶ Understanding nutrition



Knowing what to buy and how to fix it is perceived as a need of the poor, and
CROSSES CLASS LINES: Concerns about food safety and nutrition generally -- people
shop for convenience, but. Not only for convenience.

The safety of our food

- ▶ Disease prevention
- ▶ Food is not healthy, can be contaminated



Everyone is well aware of food recalls, salmonella outbreaks, e coli etc.

Local farms, farmers market

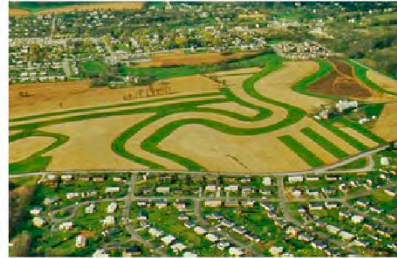


Farmers markets are appreciated. Their use is based on location, hours and convenience. All things being equal everyone likes farmers markets, but few use them often.

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Keep Farmland

- ▶ Productive and profitable



Very strong positives on this

“Organic”
???



Organic does not mean better – concerns about foreign production, the spinach contamination,

“Sustainable farming” ???



**Food
Shelf
Life
Stability**



College educated groups, no idea what this means... “year around farming,” “Israeli desert agriculture,” “longer shelf life for food,” “new kinds of food products.”

The local economy

- ▶ Community
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Health
- ▶ Security



Want to buy local and keep farmland because it's good for the community and local economy.

Same values apply to all the issues we discussed with these groups, and of all these values, the most frequently evoked seems to be Security

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security

- ▶ National security/ local security
- ▶ Food safety/ personal security



Transportation and processing, production standards
Environmental effects, health consequences – people readily see the connections

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The Big Picture

- ▶ Solutions must be comprehensive



Because voters see the connections, solutions can be presented in terms of those connections

Greater Philadelphia's Food System Plan

Abstract: "Food can be viewed through the lenses of homeland security, emergency preparedness and human services, private industry and business, environmental stewardship, land use and public utility, among other categories"



Greater Philadelphia's Food System Plan

“As growers, providers,
producers,
distributors, and
consumers we play a
part in our region's
food system.”



What do you bring to the table?

“Just as our tastes have changed over the years, the way we grow, harvest, process, package, deliver, and prepare the foods we eat has, too.”



What do you bring to the table?

“The challenge is making sure that it all changes for the better.

That’s where you come in.”



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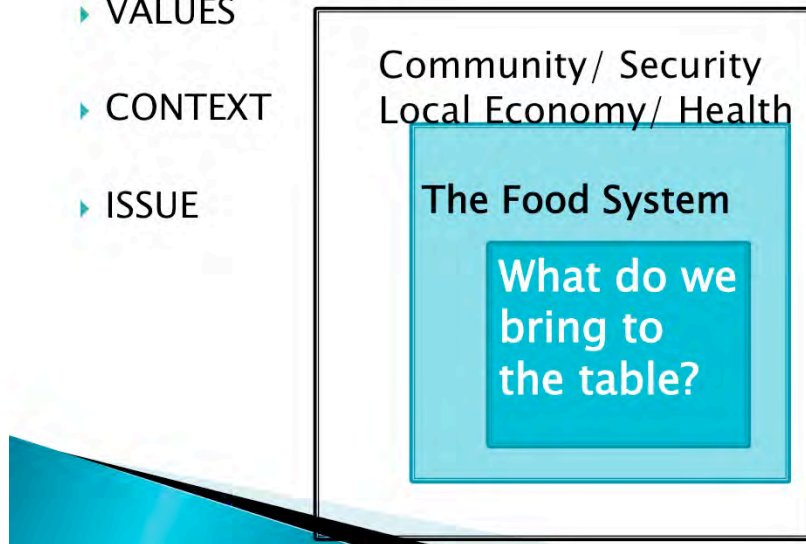
summary

- ▶ Hunger is real – food stamps are divisive
- ▶ Hunger and Obesity are not contradictory
- ▶ Obesity is a shared health & security issue
- ▶ Local is Good
- ▶ Values: **Community**
Safety
Health
Security



Framing The Issues

- ▶ VALUES
- ▶ CONTEXT
- ▶ ISSUE



Explain hierarchy –

Will begin with context, which we believe is the food system, getting a clearer picture than that little diagram

Not seeking to answer that task now – time for questions about the research findings ??