

Research Methods for Business

Idea Paper

How Community Gardening Is Changing How We Source Our Food

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### **Abstract**

Cities like Vancouver and Detroit are at the forefront of community farming and drastically changing how we source our food. This idea paper will investigate the growing trend of community farming and how cities like Vancouver and Detroit are encouraging community farming and shaping how we source our food. It will discuss creative ways residents are adopting this new trend and implementing this new practice in a highly dense urban environment. I will also narrow down into future dissertation the effects on community involvement, health, environmental impact and education. A thorough analysis of this growing trend through research, questionnaires and interviews will hopefully support the adoption rate and the benefits of community farming.

### **How Community Gardening Is Changing How We Source Our Food**

Global warming is affecting everything from sea levels, weather, and wildlife to human health. To help slow this rate of change, cities around the world are creating policies and more avenues for their residents to participate in this shared responsibility to save our environment. The city of Vancouver continues to create more bike lanes to cut down on auto pollution. Garbage recycling includes a green bin to help recycle and reduce waste going into our landfills. Recently, the city and parks board have started to encourage community gardening, dedicating public space in parks, school yards and even on the grounds of city hall to encourage residents to grow organic, putting less chemicals into our soil and less pollution getting our food from farm to table.

Organic just doesn't have to be for the wealthy anymore and people can participate and be more accountable for what goes into the soil and eventually into our bodies. Community farming, growing local organic produce in people's backyard, community, and even in schools is being adopted across many neighborhoods in the city. The participation rate has overwhelmingly exceeded the city's expectation so much so that different, more creative ways are being developed to meet demand.

### **Advisory Committees**

Paul Lau, Food & Beverage Instructor, VCC

Brendan Chan, Founder, Roots on the Roof

Denny King, Sous Chef, River Rock Casino

### **Supervisor Endorsement**

Brendan Chan, Founder, Roots on the Roof

### **Second Reader**

Robert Lin, classmate

### **Introduction**

Cities like Vancouver and Detroit are encouraging and making community farming more accessible to their residents. These early pioneers are showing that community farming helps bring families and communities together by working toward a common goal. In Detroit, studies have shown residents who work these gardens on average eat 2.5 times more servings of fruits and vegetables daily than their neighbors. Property values near these urban gardens have also risen. People are choosing to be more informed about the food they eat and community farming allows them to be more accountable about their food sources.

### **Purpose Statement**

My purpose is to understand how community farming is changing the way we source our food and the effect it has on our health, neighborhoods and our food choices. As more and more people adopt community farming, we are seeing stronger neighborhoods with families working toward a common goal eating healthier, more organic food while lowering their food costs. I will look into cities like Vancouver and Detroit and how these early pioneers of community farming are making it easier and easier for people to get involved. Additionally, I will interview urban gardeners, restaurants and innovators in the field of community gardening for their opinion on where this trend is heading and the effects on our health and society.

### **Methodology**

I will employ a mixed methods approach that incorporates observation, surveys and interviews.

### **Positionality**

An avid cook, I believe using fresh ingredients makes a better meal. We have choices on what we eat and how we source our food. I don't believe eating healthy should be just for the wealthy and given some effort, everyone can eat fresh, organic produce without exorbitant costs. Participation with a common goal makes every community stronger.

### **Timeline**

I try to schedule a 3.5 month timeline that may be changed due to my personal issues or committee's meeting because when I am actually doing my research paper, timelines are usually changing.

January	2016	3 Idea Papers
February	2016	Draft Research Proposal
		Doing Research
		Data Collection
March	2016	Revised/Refined Research Proposal
April	2016	Approval of Research Paper

### **Reflection**

As more and more cities encourage community farming, the first thing that confronts you is the speed at which neighborhoods are adopting this practice and the creativity of those implementing community gardens in highly dense urban centers. People are willing to put in the time and effort to collectively grow their own food, being accountable for what they put into the soil and eventually the food they eat. The scope of this idea paper is to highlight the magnitude of community farming in our communities and how it is educating us on what we eat and where it is sourced.

How much time and effort are people and communities willing to expend to grow and maintain community gardens?

Cities are making more land available for community gardens in parks, community centers and other public spaces. What's the public perception when they see urban farms within traffic circles, along sidewalks and on rooftops?

Do people perceive value from locally grown produce over that imported from other countries and is there a taste difference?

Can community gardens replace all our fruits and vegetables we buy from the store or only supplement what we purchase?

Community gardens continue to grow in popularity and cities are struggling to come up with new ideas and spaces to encourage residents to participate. Knowing what goes into our food and how it is grown from farm to table empowers us in making healthier food choices and helps us protect our environment through unwanted chemicals going into the ground.

(Word Count: 251)

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