

Community Voices on Inclusion in Local Food Initiatives: A participatory Action Research with Black Immigrant Families in Edmonton Alberta

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Abstract

Black immigrant families experience disproportionate food insecurity (40.4% vs. 22.9% general population), yet their voices remain underrepresented in food systems research. This community-based participatory action research will examine institutional barriers to accessing emergency food initiatives that marginalize African/Black immigrant households. Using an Afrocentric lens grounded in African oral storytelling, 20-25 Black immigrant families will serve as co-researchers documenting experiences of institutional racism, identifying discriminatory practices, and developing advocacy roadmaps for systemic transformation. Four fireside chat sessions will facilitate collective analysis of how organizational policies create forced choices between cultural dignity and nutrition, while recognizing community expertise in alternative food networks and resistance strategies. A community knowledge synthesis workshop will chart collective action priorities and develop recommendations for strengthening cultural inclusion within emergency food systems. This research will challenge deficit-based narratives by centering community knowledge and resilience, demonstrating how authentic community-institutional partnerships can produce policy recommendations to support cultural food needs. Preliminary engagement reveals strong community readiness to advance from individual survival strategies to collaborative advocacy for institutional change serving Edmonton's diverse immigrant populations. The study will address identified gaps in understanding how institutional racism manifests in daily food access experiences and provide concrete pathways for food system transformation grounded in lived experiences those most impacted by current inequities.



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