

COMMUNITY FOOD ASSESSMENT



BED-STUY

2009-2010

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I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No one can tell you more about a community and the issues it faces than the people who live in it. Thus, this Community Food Assessment would not have been possible without the dedication, input, and openness of the residents in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. We thank all those that participated in our surveys, interviews, and programming. We would also like to thank the bodega owners who gave their time during business hours to tell us about the community's eating habits.

Furthermore, we thank all the organizations that were so willing to share their time and knowledge for the sake of this project: the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the District Public Health Office, New York City Coalition Against Hunger, Brooklyn Rescue Mission, Brooklyn Food Coalition, Agape Social Services, Council on the Environment of NYC, Bed-Stuy Restoration Corporation, Mayor's Office of Comprehensive Neighborhood Economic Development, New York Community Trust, Youthmarket, Bed-Stuy Farm Share, and Macedonia Disciples of Christ. We also greatly appreciate the two agencies, Mt. Paran Baptist Church and Open Door Church, for so graciously allowing us to survey large groups of their clients while they used the soup kitchens.

Finally, this project was made possible by the vast number of publications and studies cited throughout every section. We thank all of them for providing us with the thorough and thought-provoking data that informed much of this report.

The primary City Harvest staff who worked on the planning, facilitation, and writing of this CFA report include: Girmay Zahilay, Community Partnerships Fellow from the Congressional Hunger Center, Carla Kaiser, Senior Manager of Community Partnerships, Sheila Crowley, Director of Community Partnerships, and Lam Vo, Intern from Columbia University. They would like to thank the following other staff members who contributed to various parts of this project: Keltus Campo, Kristen Mancinelli, Marianna Silfa, Rosanna Campitiello, and Jenique Jones.

II. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this Community Food Assessment is to create a platform to improve access, demand and availability of healthy affordable food in Bed-Stuy by:

- 1) Identifying the “gaps” perceived by community members whereby community members are not able to access healthy affordable food.
- 2) Determining what research has been done on food access, demand, and availability in the Bed-Stuy community, while listening to reactions from community members, leaders and local activists.
- 3) Identifying ways that City Harvest resources and expertise can be used to bridge Bed Stuy’s vision for itself and a network of public, private, and community based organizations interested in improving the food environment in Bed-Stuy.
- 4) Providing a menu of funding opportunities that can support City Harvest and other organization’s efforts to improve access, demand and affordability of healthy food in Bed-Stuy.

III. PREFACE

1. INTRODUCTION TO CITY HARVEST

City Harvest is a food rescue organization that has served New York City's hungry for over 25 years. The organization has saved millions of pounds of good food from going to waste and distributed it to people in need throughout all five boroughs. In addition to its emergency food programs like food pantries and soup kitchens, however, City Harvest also strives to address the underlying issues of hunger including availability and affordability of healthy foods for low income residents. Furthermore, because diet-related illnesses tend to be concentrated in areas where people most frequently utilize emergency food programs, City Harvest also partners with community members and local organizations to understand and tackle the health problems of the community. Since its inception, the organization has expanded to include initiatives that provide nutrition education, increase the availability of produce, and build the capacity of organizations it works with.

Healthy Neighborhoods is a multi-departmental initiative through City Harvest that aims to increase access to healthy foods in four low income neighborhoods of New York City: South and Central Bronx, Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, and Staten Island's North Shore. Its goals include working with community members to stimulate demand for healthy affordable foods, and to improve the local food systems that serve these communities. Healthy Neighborhoods achieves these goals through Community Food Assessments, Nutrition Education, Mobile Market produce distributions, and pilot projects like Community Supported Agriculture, Buying Clubs with key community partnerships.



The iconic City Harvest truck making its way down Manhattan during a delivery.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE CFA

A Community Food Assessment (CFA) is a program component of Healthy Neighborhoods and seeks to document the reality of available food and nutrition knowledge in the target neighborhoods. City Harvest works with residents to learn more about the community's perceptions and experiences of food, health, nutrition, and hunger. A CFA identifies obstacles to eating well and creates sustainable solutions to overcome them. Overall, with this CFA, City Harvest and its community partners sought to identify ways to both improve the local food system in Bed-Stuy while also enabling residents to make healthier use of it. Recognizing that much work on food systems has been facilitated in this specific Brooklyn neighborhood, much of this report is based on research that has previously been conducted, with additional research added by City Harvest Staff.

3. WHY IS THE CFA NEEDED?

City Harvest's Healthy Neighborhoods initiative is targeting Bedford Stuyvesant because of its high poverty rate, high incidence of diet-related disease and status as a food desert. This initiative will use a Community Food Assessment (CFA) as the vehicle for gathering data regarding health and food access, and will subsequently determine how City Harvest can best work with its local partners to further strengthen collaborative planning, action and results.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE CFA

The information for this Community Food Assessment was collected from a combination of interviews, surveys, and publications. A preliminary outline was written to structure the report, much like the Table of Contents, and information was subsequently added to each section on a rolling basis. Footnotes at the bottom of any page cite the sources of all secondary data and quotations.

Secondary Data

Various publications from sources like the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Census Bureau, the New York City Administration for Children's Services, and the Headwaters Group provided very detailed secondary data regarding health, poverty, and food access in the community. Several maps, charts, and graphs from these sources were also added to support significant findings with visual representations.

Primary Data

SURVEYS

The primary data was collected by surveying and interviewing Bed-Stuy residents and organizational leaders. Two page surveys were distributed at the Ralph, Utica, and Kingston Throop subway stations along the A/C line. Forty people were surveyed using free metro cards as an incentive, and respondents not living in Central Brooklyn were

excluded from the subsequent statistical analysis using Survey Monkey. A second and third round of surveys were conducted at two local churches: Mt. Paran Baptist Church and Open Door Church. Because these respondents were sitting down and eating their lunch as opposed to rushing through a subway station, the surveys were extended to three pages in order to gather more information. Combined, the two group surveys achieved 49 respondents (again, non residents of Central Brooklyn were excluded from the analysis).

Summary: 40 Field Surveys

+ 49 Group Surveys

89 Total Surveys Completed

See Appendix for full Group and Field survey results.

INTERVIEWS

While the surveys focused on collecting quantitative data, the interviews largely focused on compiling the qualitative outlooks of people very familiar with certain aspects of the community. This was accomplished by asking open-ended questions instead of having people respond to multiple choice questions. Community members ranging from soup kitchen volunteers to government workers shared their perspective on food access and health in the community. Their anecdotes shaped general themes throughout the report, provided essential quotes, and most importantly, gave City Harvest ideas on where it could best intersect with ongoing efforts.

Eighteen interviews were completed via face to face sessions or over the phone discussions. There were specific sets of questions designed for specific fields in order to tap into the specialized knowledge of each interviewee. For example, there were advocate questions for advocates, Greenmarket questions for Greenmarket people, so on and so forth.

Summary: 18 Total Interviews Completed

See Appendix for full example of interview questions.

V. MAIN REPORT

1. BACKGROUND AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Issues of Food and Health

In October of 2009, the United States faced an unemployment rate of 10.2%, the highest it's seen in 26 years¹. In light of this economic downturn, 36 million people used the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) to help put food on the table². This 24% increase from August of 2008 in Americans seeking nutrition assistance is a testament to devastatingly high levels of food insecurity— what the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines as “not [having] access at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life”³. Current data by the USDA shows that the number of food insecure households in the U.S. grew from 11.1% in 2007, to 14.6% in 2008⁴. With this spike in food insecurity, many low and middle income families have found themselves unable to access healthy foods for reasons ranging from financial viability to physical availability. A dearth in affordable healthy food options for neighborhoods is a serious issue that can lead to impairments in growth and cognitive development in children, while concurrently producing diet-related diseases such as diabetes and obesity at any age.

In New York City, obesity and overweight are significant problems: 56% of the population fits these descriptions⁵. Consequently, more than half the population is at risk for the plethora of health concerns associated with unhealthy weight and diet. Diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease, and even cancer are among the many possible outcomes. The statistic for Brooklyn, the most populated borough in the City, is slightly higher with 59% overweight and obese residents. Although these figures independently are enough to generate alarm in New York City's public health service community, they pale in comparison to the regions the Department of Health has deemed “high-risk” neighborhoods: South Bronx, North and Central Brooklyn, East Harlem, and Central Harlem are a few. High-risk neighborhoods tend to be the lowest-income communities in the City, and are no exception to correlations seen across the country between low socioeconomic status and poor health. The residents in these neighborhoods are four times as likely to report being in fair to poor health, and on average have life expectancies that are eight years shorter than the wealthiest neighborhoods in the City⁶.

Central Brooklyn is a high-risk area including neighborhoods of Bedford Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, and Brownsville. Bedford Stuyvesant specifically has

¹ National Unemployment Rate. Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey. Bureau of Labor Statistics. http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet?data_tool=latest_numbers&series_id=LNS14000000

² SNAP Monthly Summary. United States Department of Agriculture. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/34SNAPmonthly.htm>

³ Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan02013/efan02013.pdf>

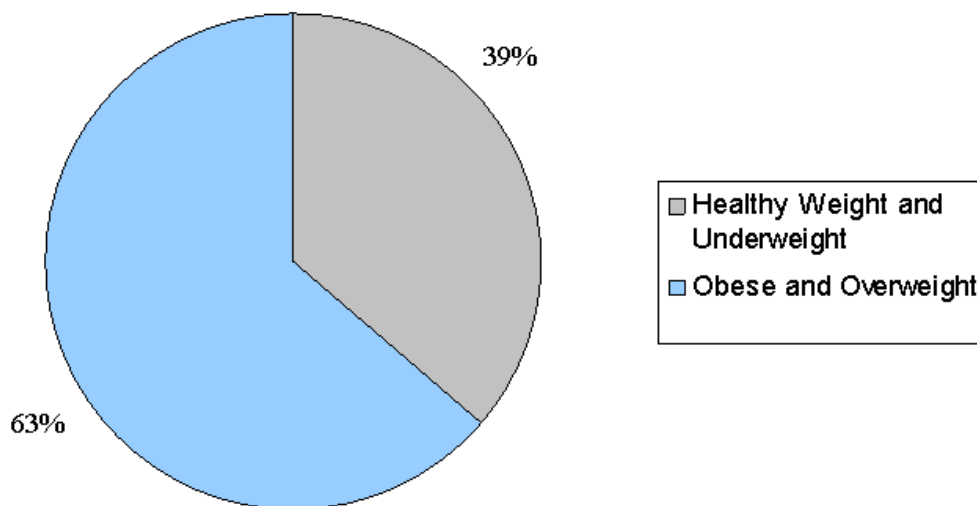
⁴ USDA Report Monitors Food Insecurity Among U.S. Households. United States Department of Agriculture. http://www.usda.gov/blog/usda/entry/usda_report_monitors_food_security

⁵ Community Health Survey, 2008. EpiQuery. NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. <https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/epiquery/EpiQuery/CHS/index2008.html>

⁶ Health Disparities in New York City. NYC DOH. www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/disparities-2004.pdf

an overweight and obesity rate of 63%⁷. This is a significant 7% higher than the 56% citywide average and it only accounts for the adult population. Forty-two percent of Head Start participants, 45% of kindergartners and fifth graders, and 35% of high school students are obese or overweight as well. The health disparities are even more apparent when Bedford Stuyvesant is compared to a more affluent community within the very same borough: In Northwestern Brooklyn, which encompasses neighborhoods like Park Slope, the overweight and obesity rate is 53%— 10% less than the adult average in Bed-Stuy. A Department of Health official noted that, “Northwestern Brooklyn has a much higher median income and a much lower rate of disease.”

Figure 1.1: The District Public Health Office found that obesity and overweight are common at every age in Bed-Stuy. In adults specifically, 63% are obese or overweight⁸.



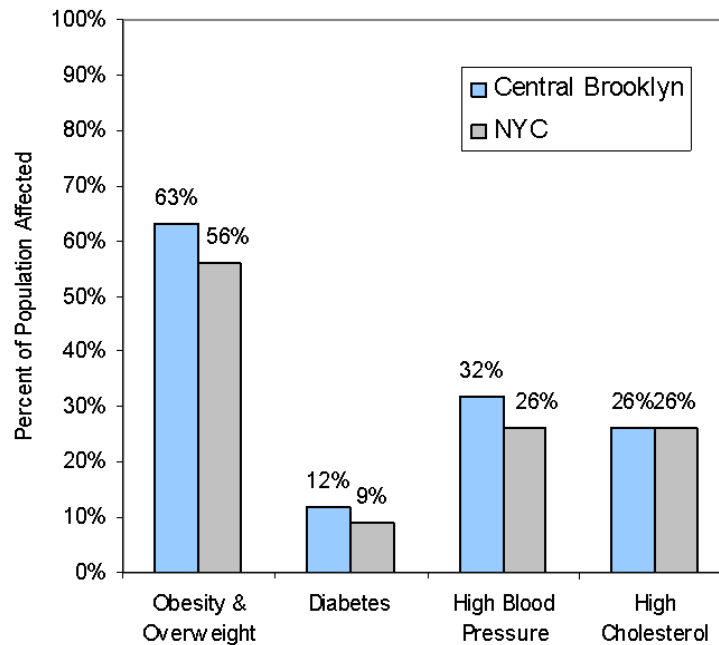
Reinforcing obesity’s association with other health problems, 12% of Bedford Stuyvesant residents suffer from diabetes (9% citywide), 32% have high blood pressure (26% citywide), and 26% have high cholesterol (same citywide)⁹. Heart disease remains the leading cause of mortality in New York City, and consistent with the other health trends, the rate of hospitalization for this deadly disease in Bedford Stuyvesant and Central Brooklyn is 10% higher than in New York City overall. Given that these statistics only include cases that were diagnosed by doctors, it is very possible that the actual disease rates could be worse than what is presented here (especially when it is taken into account that 29% of residents in this neighborhood are likely to be without a doctor). Ultimately, the resident population in Bedford Stuyvesant is not physically well. The logical question remains, then, what factors are contributing to these health deficits and disparities?

⁷ Obesity in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick: A look across generations. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2007. www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/.../dpho-brooklyn-obesity.pdf

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Central Brooklyn Community Health Profile. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2006. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/data/data.shtml>

Figure 1.2: Central Brooklyn has higher incidence of diet-related disease than NYC overall¹⁰.



New Yorkers who report not eating the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day have higher levels of obesity. It should come at no surprise then that Central Brooklyn, the region with the highest rate of obesity in Brooklyn, also has the highest proportion of residents who do not eat the recommended servings of produce. A massive 94%-96% go without adequate produce consumption¹¹. On the surface, this behavior can be seen as an issue of personal responsibility; however, upon closer and more thorough research, experts have found that the more direct and influential obstacles at hand include availability, affordability, and physical access to fresh fruits and vegetables for the neighborhood's residents.

The Importance of Produce

Fruits and vegetables play a vital role in human nutrition, and thus human wellbeing. They provide several necessary vitamins including C, A, B, E, thiamine, niacin, as well as minerals, and dietary fibers¹². Furthermore, they are packed with phytochemicals that are linked with reduced risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and other chronic diseases including obesity and diabetes. From a psychological perspective, access to fruits and vegetables from an early age is very important because people eat foods that are accessible and familiar to them. Children growing up in a neighborhood with little access to fresh fruits and vegetables will not easily learn to like those foods due to limited

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Obesity and Health: Risks and Behaviors. NYC Vital Signs. NYC Department of Health. www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/.../survey-2005obesity.pdf

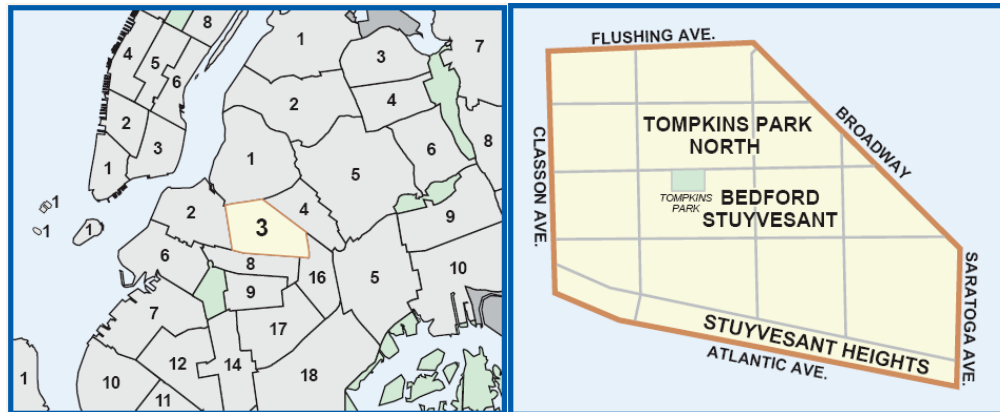
¹² Importance of Fruits, Nuts, and Vegetables in Human Nutrition and Health. Adel Kader, Department of Pomology, UC Davis. postharvest.ucdavis.edu/datastorefiles/234-104.pdf

exposure, and subsequently will not incorporate them as part of their diets. This sets them up for increased risk of the diseases mentioned above, reducing their quality of life, and shortening their average life span. For these reasons, the high prevalence of nutritionally inadequate bodegas (small convenience stores) coupled with a dearth in supermarkets creates cause for concern and gives residents and advocates impetus for action.

A Snap-Shot of Bedford-Stuyvesant

The bustling brownstone neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, more affectionately referred to as Bed-Stuy, is a predominantly African-American (76.8%) community within Central Brooklyn¹³. It is a hub for Black culture, producing famous names such as Jackie Robinson, boxer Mike Tyson, comedian Chris Rock, and rapper Jay-Z. Bed-Stuy is bordered by Classon Avenue to the west, Flushing Avenue to the north, Broadway and Saratoga to the east (bordering Bushwick and East New York), and Atlantic Avenue to the south (bordering Crown Heights). The main street for commerce is Fulton Street, which runs east to west, directly above the A/C subway line. Of the neighborhood's 54,835 square feet of land, 61.3% of it is occupied by housing or shelter for families, 11.9% by institutions, 7.5% by mixed commercial and residential structures, 5.7% by vacant land, 3.8% by industries, 3.3% by commercial or office spaces, 2.8% by open and recreational spaces, and 2.2% by recreational facilities¹⁴.

Figure 1.3: Community District 3, Bedford Stuyvesant, as defined by the Department of City Planning¹⁵.



[Courtesy of NYC Department of City Planning]

This central Brooklyn neighborhood is undergoing many changes, as a recent wave of gentrification has slowly diversified its resident population. According to Edward Hargett, the head coordinator for a small food pantry on Marcy Avenue called Agape Social Services, “Hundreds of new White people have been moving into the neighborhood.” In addition to shifts in the racial demographic, this influx has raised apprehension in community members like Mr. Hargett about the future of Bed-Stuy.

¹³ Brooklyn Community District 3. NYC Department of City Planning. www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/lucds/bk3profile.pdf

¹⁴ Brooklyn Community District 3. NYC Department of City Planning. www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/lucds/bk3profile.pdf

¹⁵ Ibid.

Down the street from where a shoeless man lay on a piece of cardboard on the sidewalk one recent afternoon, a two-bedroom condo was for sale at 609 Myrtle Avenue for \$675,000. On one side of Myrtle Avenue are the Marcy Houses, one of Brooklyn's biggest public housing projects and the former home of the rapper Jay-Z, where the average monthly rent, subsidized by the federal government, is \$334. Across the street is the luxury building...the Mynt, at 756 Myrtle Avenue.

- "Growing Pains Come and Go in Bed-Stuy", NY Times Article ¹⁶

"Bedford-Stuyvesant is like a tale of two cities in itself," said City Councilman Albert Vann, a lifelong resident whose district takes in most of the neighborhood. "You have college graduates and professors, and people of low income and the indices that they impact: health, lack of educational achievement, unemployment and so forth."

- "If You're Thinking of Living In/Bedford-Stuyvesant", NY Times Article ¹⁷

A final New York Times Article in August of 2009 noted that¹⁸, "Today, the idea that Bed-Stuy is different is nothing new. A friendly cafe with the playful name Bread Stuy, on a hip strip of Lewis Avenue, serves iced chai tea and terrific banana bread." While changes like these may seem attractive to middle class White residents, the spike in property taxes and creation of businesses that cater to a more affluent base of consumers will inevitably displace poorer residents and lead to concentrations of poverty elsewhere. Moreover, this displacement will generate misleading statistics that show decreasing trends in poverty and chronic disease when, in actuality, neither of these issues is being solved for the residents; they're just being moved to different neighborhoods.

Although the New York Times' delineation of Bed-Stuy stands in stark contrast with the neighborhood that was once devastated by the crack epidemic of the 1980s and early 90s, the neighborhood remains an area requiring immediate intervention for the people who live there today. Data from the Census Bureau shows that of the 143,867 residents, 35% of them live under the federal poverty line, and 18,499 households make under \$15,000 annually. October's 10.2% national unemployment rate, the highest national unemployment rate in 26 years, is dwarfed by Bed-Stuy's 17.9% unemployment rate¹⁹. Given that the most recent Census data was collected in 2000, it can be theorized that the current economic recession has exacerbated these statistics significantly. A City Harvest employee who works in the Agency Relations department noted that the number of Bed-Stuy residents using food pantries and soup kitchens has gone "through the roof" in 2009. Specifically, City Harvest's annual report that tracks how many residents utilize the 21 Bed-Stuy emergency food agencies showed a 14% increase in usage from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009.

¹⁶ Fernandez, Manny. Growing Pains Come and Go in Bed-Stuy. New York Times. July 27th, 2008.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/27/nyregion/27gentrify.html>

¹⁷ Donovan, Aaron. If you're Thinking of Living in/Bedford Stuyvesant. New York Times. September 21st, 2003.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/21/realestate/if-you-re-thinking-living-bedford-stuyvesant-brownstones-tree-lined-block.html?pagewanted=1>

¹⁸ Vandam, Jeff. History, With Hipper Retailing in Bed-Stuy. NY Times. August 2009.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/23/realestate/23living.html>

¹⁹ Brooklyn Census Tracts. NY City Map. <http://gis.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap/>

Figure 1.4: Bed-Stuy's (CD3) unemployment rate exceeds that of NYC overall by a staggering 8.2%²⁰. [Courtesy of NYC Administration for Children's Services]

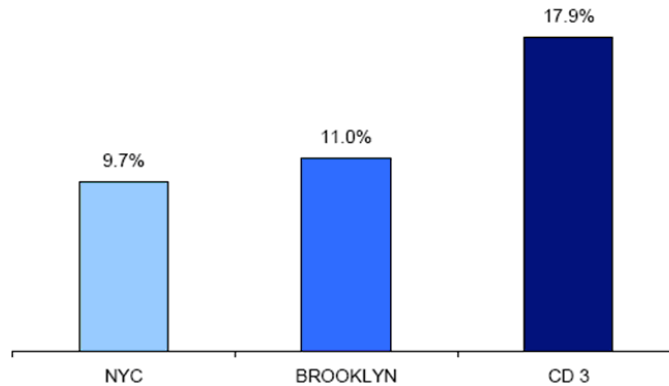
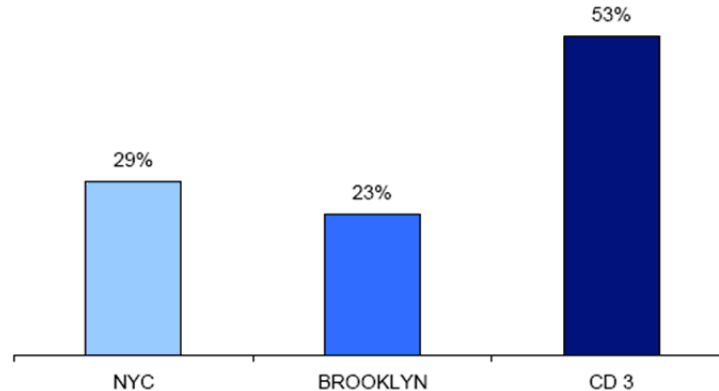


Figure 1.5: The percentage of Bed-Stuy (CD3) children living under the poverty line exceeds that of BK and NYC overall.



Poverty and unemployment greatly impact education systems in the United States. Consequently, the education system in Bed-Stuy has been a problem in the past, and remains a problem today. A 1972 report by the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) showed that:

Approximately 78.5 percent or 45,543 Bedford-Stuyvesant children are reading below the national norm, and 80.6 percent or 46,761 Bedford-Stuyvesant children are doing math below the national norm. As the children advance from grade to grade, more and more fall behind²¹.

The 2008 projections by The Nielsen Company present figures that are still troubling. Only 53% of Bed-Stuy students are performing at or above their grade level in math and

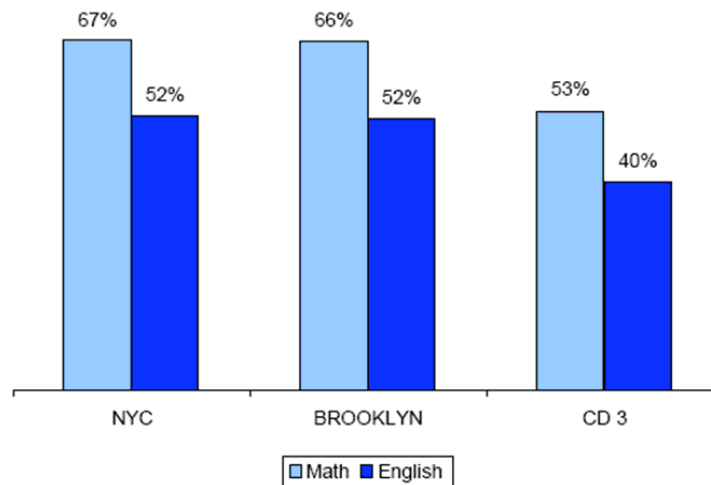
²⁰ Community Snapshot 2008. CD3: Bedford Stuyvesant. NYC Administration for Children's Services.
http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/downloads/pdf/cd_snapshots/brooklyn_cd3_bedstuy.pdf

²¹ Jenkins, Percy. Education Resources Information Center. A Report on Education in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Some Proposals for Change. 1972.
http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED103529&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED103529

a mere 40% are in English. The 48% of adults without a high school diploma may be a reflection of these educational shortcomings²² (see Figures 1.6 and 1.7). One factor contributing to these shortcomings is likely the education system itself. After all, the community's District Needs Statement for 2007-2008 suggested many changes to improve schools: more emphasis on equipping students to enter the work force, preparing students for college, and making classes less crowded were a few recommendations²³. What's more, the New York City government's finding that only 16% of Bed-Stuy schools are in good or fair condition is another indication that there isn't enough investment in the community's education system²⁴.

In addition to overcrowded schools and poor building conditions, however, other factors could be affecting student performance. The frequency of child abuse in Brooklyn (15%) is lower than the NYC average (17.4%), but Bed-Stuy specifically has a frequency that is almost double the city-wide average (33.3%)²⁵. Furthermore, drug usage in the community is relatively high. Creola Smith, who volunteers at All People's Church of the Apostolic, is a Bed-Stuy resident who has noticed this issue. "Crack. Cocaine. Weed. The drug problem is raging here. And the people who are on these drugs feel like no one cares for them- they look so lonesome." The drug-related hospitalization rate in Bed-Stuy (920/100,000 residents) is higher than in Brooklyn (547/100,000) and NYC overall (595/100,000). These undue stressors and distractions can increase anxiety in children and further perpetuate poor academic performance.

Figure 1.6: The percentage of Bed-Stuy (CD3) students performing at or above their grade level is less than that of BK and NYC overall.



[Courtesy of NYC Administration for Children's Services]

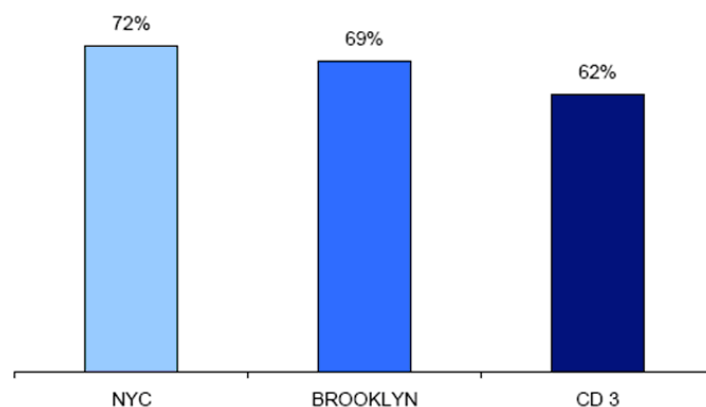
²² Community Snapshot 2008. CD3: Bedford Stuyvesant. NYC Administration for Children's Services. http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/downloads/pdf/cd_snapshots/brooklyn_cd3_bedstuy.pdf

²³ District Needs Statement. Brooklyn Community Board 3 <http://cb3bedstuy.org/maps.htm>.

²⁴ Community Board #3. My Neighborhood Statistics. <http://gis.nyc.gov/ops/mmr/address.jsp?app=MMR>

²⁵ Community Snapshot 2008. CD3: Bedford Stuyvesant. NYC Administration for Children's Services. http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/downloads/pdf/cd_snapshots/brooklyn_cd3_bedstuy.pdf

Figure 1.7: Bed-Stuy (CD3) has the lowest percent of residents with a high school degree or equivalent when compared with BK and NYC²⁶.



[Courtesy of NYC Administration for Children's Services]

Poverty, underperforming schools, and drug use are problems that negatively influence health in this neighborhood. Interconnected with these issues and another major health concern is the quality and accessibility of the food retail environment. The neighborhood's vastly residential, densely occupied landscape in combination with its high poverty rate makes it unfavorable for supermarkets chains to build new stores in the area. Indeed, researchers at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine looking at the availability of fresh produce in segregated Brooklyn neighborhoods found large disparities in the number of supermarkets between predominantly White versus predominantly Black areas. White neighborhoods on average had eight supermarkets per census tract, while Black neighborhoods on average had zero²⁷. For this reason, Bed-Stuy is often referred to as a "food-desert"—a place where affordable, nutritious food is very difficult to obtain (discussed in more detail in Section 2).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Morland, Kimberly. *Disparities in the availability of fruits and vegetables between racially segregated urban neighborhoods*. Mt. Sinai School of Medicine.
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=1427848>

SECTION 1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

BACKGROUND AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

In light of the poverty rate, incidence of diet-related disease and status as a food desert, Bedford Stuyvesant is being targeted by City Harvest's Healthy Neighborhoods initiative.

- Lack of healthy food options can lead to impairments in growth and cognitive development in children, while concurrently producing diet-related diseases such as diabetes and obesity at any age.
- Bedford Stuyvesant has an overweight and obesity rate of 70%²⁸— 13% higher than the 56% citywide average.
- Reinforcing obesity's association with other health problems, 12% of Bedford Stuyvesant residents suffer from diabetes (9% citywide), 32% have high blood pressure (26% citywide), and 26% have high cholesterol (same citywide)²⁹.
- Central Brooklyn has highest proportion of residents who do not eat recommended servings of produce. 94%-96% go without adequate produce consumption³⁰.
- Bed-Stuy is undergoing gentrification.
 - This has raised apprehension in the existing community
 - May create misleading statistics about reduction in poverty
- 35% of residents live under the federal poverty. 17.9% are unemployed.
- Only 53% of Bed-Stuy students are performing at or above their grade level in math and a mere 40% are in English. The 48% of adults without a high school diploma may be a reflection of these educational shortcomings

²⁸ Obesity in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick: A look across generations. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2007. www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/.../dpho-brooklyn-obesity.pdf

²⁹ Central Brooklyn Community Health Profile. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2006. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/data/data.shtml>

³⁰ Obesity and Health: Risks and Behaviors. NYC Vital Signs. NYC Department of Health. www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/.../survey-2005obesity.pdf

2. THE FOOD RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

The residents in this community are constantly ridiculed for their eating habits, but it wasn't their decision to put McDonald's here- or to put all these fried chicken places here. This is what's been available. This is their reality.

- Reverend Devanie Jackson, Brooklyn Rescue Mission

Having lived in Bed-Stuy for several years, and serving the neighborhood through a community farm and food pantry that she and her husband started together, the Reverend has an acute sense of the region's food retail environment. In her emphatic statement she highlights an easily overlooked, yet ironically obvious fact about human eating habits: people eat what is available to them. Most societies in the world use the resources that grow around them for the preparation of their staple foods. People in an urban society with minimal physical or financial access to other food sources are also limited to finding food locally. To put it simply, if the local food retail environment leans towards high fat foods, those who cannot travel outside of that area will eat high fat foods. Bed-Stuy's food environment heavily favors unhealthy foods and some of its residents have little option but to use what's available.

The Food Desert

In order to understand the relative plight of residents in this area, one must first understand the concept of a food desert. Very technically, sources such as The Associated Press and The Headwaters Group, a service provider for philanthropic groups including the Kellogg Foundation, have defined urban food deserts as communities where residents have to travel at least one mile to get to the nearest supermarket. Supermarkets, or grocery stores, are large self-service stores that have the capacity and technology to stock a wide variety of foods, including perishables such as fresh meat and produce. Their ability to carry fresh foods makes them an integral part of any community, and their absence is often translated into stress and malnutrition for residents without a car to travel long distances, enough time to make the trek, or the energy to carry groceries for several blocks.

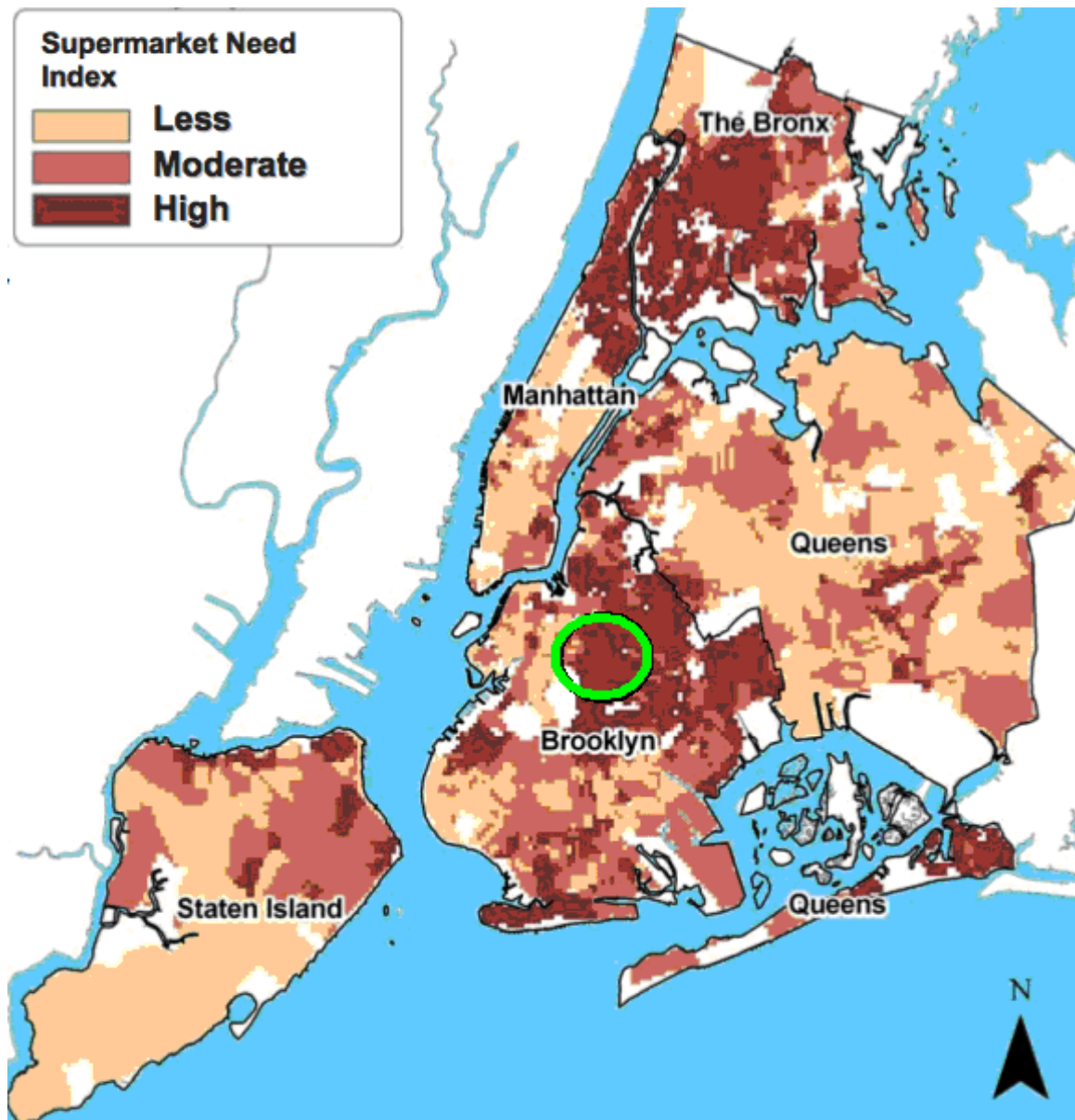
In addition to the scarcity of supermarkets, however, food access includes issues of pricing and quality of food options³¹. If healthy food is too expensive for the poorer residents, the neighborhood for them is functionally the same as a traditional food desert. Likewise, if the quality of food available does not meet certain nutritional or food safety standards, people will make poor choices or not purchase the food at all. This can perpetuate chronic disease and the consequences can be just as harmful as a place with limited retail options.

According to the Headwaters Group, "poor access to healthy, affordable food is a serious and widespread issue across the country." According to them, an estimated 25% of U.S.

³¹ "Obstacles to Children's Access to Good Food: A Closer Look at Food Desert and Solutions." The Headwaters Group. Prepared for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. <https://foodandsociety2009.org/obstacles.pdf>

counties are considered low-access areas and 13% are what they call “more severe food deserts”. The high need for fresh food purveyors affects approximately three million New Yorkers³², and the neighborhoods on the economic margins feel the greatest impacts: as seen below, Harlem, Bed-Stuy, Bushwick, and South Bronx have some of the highest needs³³.

Figure 2.1: Bed-Stuy (circled below) is a supermarket high-need region, alongside Harlem and South Bronx.

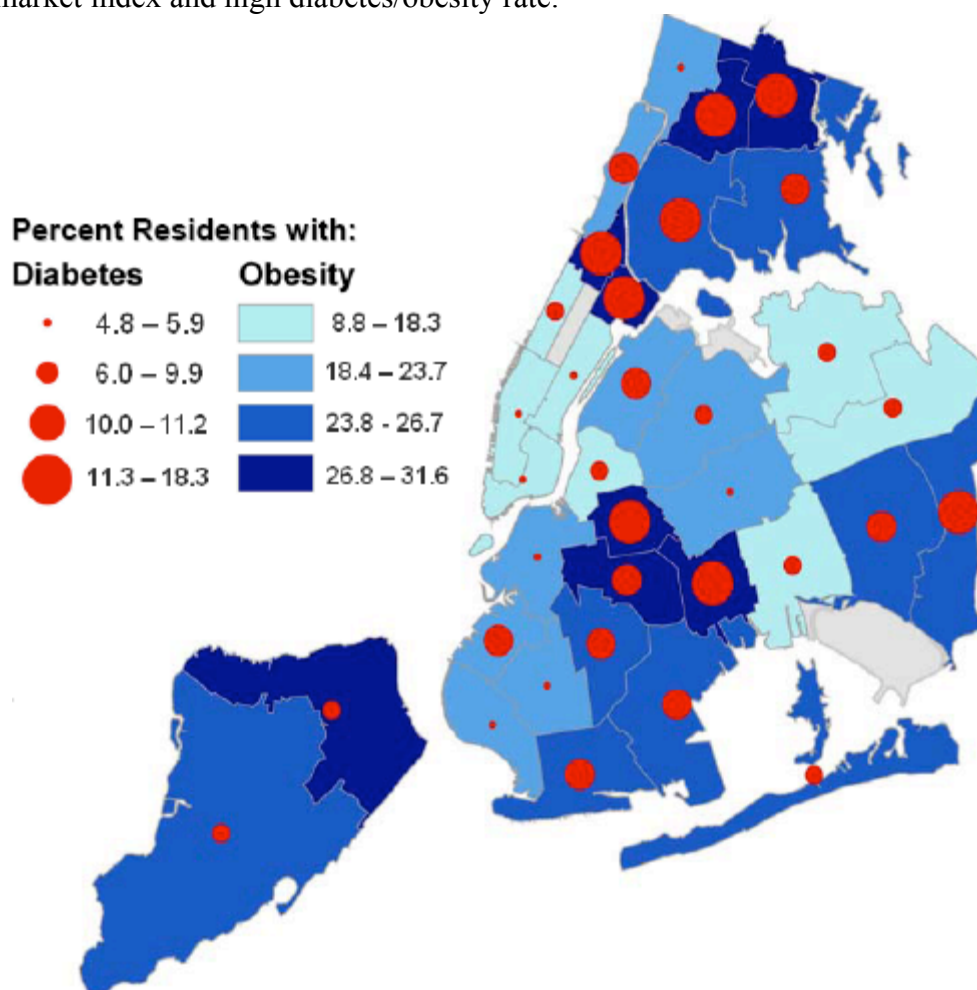


[Courtesy of NYC’s Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) initiative]

³² *American Journal of Public Health*. 2002. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12406805>

³³ *Obstacles to Children’s Access to Good Food: A Closer Look at Food Desert and Solutions*. The Headwaters Group. Prepared for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. <https://foodandsociety2009.org/obstacles.pdf>

Figure 2.2: Bed-Stuy has one of the highest rates of both diabetes and obesity in New York City³⁴. Compare with Figure 2.1 and notice the correlation between low supermarket index and high diabetes/obesity rate.



[Courtesy of NYC's Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) initiative]

Several studies have highlighted the correlation between low food access and poor health, chiefly in the context of low socioeconomic status. As reported by The Food Trust in 2006, “Health disparities among U.S. population groups are related to inequalities in socioeconomic status— disparities which may be affected by unequal access to healthy food.”³⁵ Comparing Figure 2.1 to Figure 2.2, one can see that fresh food access and rate of diet-related disease are very much related.

Like Reverend Jackson, many of the Bed-Stuy residents City Harvest interviewed for this study, from food pantry coordinators to local food advocates, emphasized the issue of availability of healthy alternatives as one of the major obstacles to healthy eating for this community. People without specialized knowledge about food issues felt this way too. For example, when residents of Central Brooklyn were asked at three Bed-Stuy subway

³⁴ Food Retail Expansion to Support Health. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/supermarket/presentation.shtml>

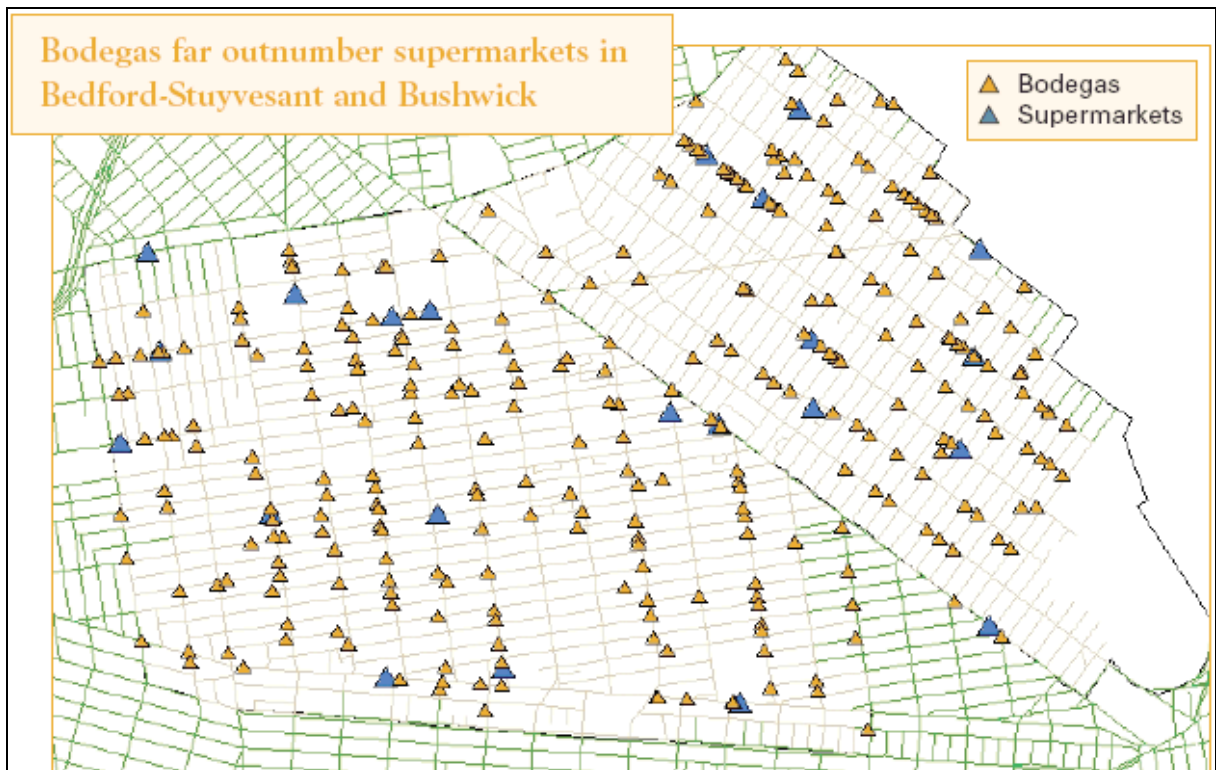
³⁵ *Food Geography: How Food Access Affects Diet and Health*. The Food Trust. February 3, 2006. http://www.thefoodtrust.org/catalog/download.php?product_id=120

stations to complete the sentence “It would be easier for me to add more fruits and vegetables into my diet if I could have...” 70.8% respondents said “more food outlets that carry fresh fruits and vegetables.”

Their sentiments were corroborated by the New York City Department of Health’s (DOH) research. In a study entitled “Eating In, Eating Out, Eating Well”, the DOH examined Bed-Stuy’s retail environment, and the various obstacles the residents face in accessing healthy foods. First, they found that bodegas were very common in the community: among the 216 food stores, 176 of them were bodegas (81%). The prevalence of these corner stores is quite apparent while walking down any residential or commercial street in Bed-Stuy (see Figure 2.2). While these stores may offer more convenient hours and locations, they tend to contribute to unhealthy eating habits by offering a narrower range of affordable healthy foods than traditional supermarkets.

Only 1 in 3 bodegas sells reduced-fat milk compared with 9 in 10 supermarkets. About 28% of bodegas carry apples, oranges, and bananas, compared with 91% of supermarkets. Leafy green vegetables are available at few bodegas (about 1 in 10).³⁶

Figure 2.2: The DOH’s map shows that bodegas far outnumber supermarkets in Bed-Stuy and neighboring Bushwick.



[Courtesy of District Public Health Office]

³⁶ Eating in, eating out, eating well: Access to healthy food in North and Central Brooklyn. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2006. www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/.../dpho-brooklyn-report2006.pdf

In addition to investigating unhealthy bodegas, any food assessment would be remiss if it did not also examine the types of restaurants in the area. There are 94 restaurants in the community, the most common types being pizza parlors, Chinese restaurants, and Latin American restaurants. The aforementioned DOH study found that in Bed-Stuy and neighboring Bushwick (to the East), national fast food chains including Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's comprise 13% of the total restaurants. Additionally, 3 out of every 4 restaurants in Bed-Stuy sell only takeout food. Edward Hargett, the pantry coordinator for Agape Social Services, bleakly commented on the consequence of this reality: "Most people in this area only eat takeout and fast food. They go get a fried egg on toast and end up paying as much for that as they would a dozen eggs." Again, time-constrained residents may benefit from the convenience of takeout and fast food, but they simultaneously sacrifice financial and nutritional value. When the Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture studied the consequences of American households shifting towards takeout food and food generally prepared away from home, they found that these types of foods are far less healthful. They contained more calories per meal, and were higher in total fat and saturated fat on a per-calorie basis than home-cooked food³⁷. Furthermore, they found that these foods contained less dietary fiber, calcium, and iron on a per-calorie basis. Among adults, food prepared away from home was also more sodium and cholesterol dense. Similar to food available in bodegas, takeout food high in sodium and cholesterol can similarly increase risk for cancer, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. These consequences weighing heavy on his conscience, Mr. Hargett looked disheartened as he shared his experience with young students eating fast food for breakfast and lunch— "Walking to school with a bag of chips and a fried egg," he recounted to the interviewer while shaking his head.

Real Alternatives

In the midst of this ocean of unhealthy foods, a few beacons of hope shine through. Residents of Bed-Stuy and organizations from outside the community have looked to farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs (CSAs), and community gardens as methods of bringing fresh foods to this neighborhood. Bedford Stuyvesant Greenmarket on Lewis Avenue, and Weeksville Farm Stand on Bergen Street, sell locally grown produce for reasonable prices, and were recommended by the Brooklyn District Public Health Office as good sources of healthy food. In addition, the Magnolia Tree Earth Center CSA Program located on Lafayette utilizes the potentially self-sustainable method of purchasing shares of a farm's product to receive regular produce distributions, as a means for community access to fresh produce. Unfortunately, despite these endeavors Bed-Stuy continues to be a food desert with high rates of diet-related disease. The fact of the matter remains that 12 supermarkets for a population of 143,867 is insufficient and perpetuates the use of less healthy alternatives like convenience stores and fast food restaurants. The national ratio for supermarkets to people is 50,000 square feet of supermarket per 10,000 people³⁸. But this standard is geared toward suburban environments, and does not work for New York City's denser, pedestrian-oriented, urban landscape. The city-wide average for supermarkets is 15,000 square feet to 10,000

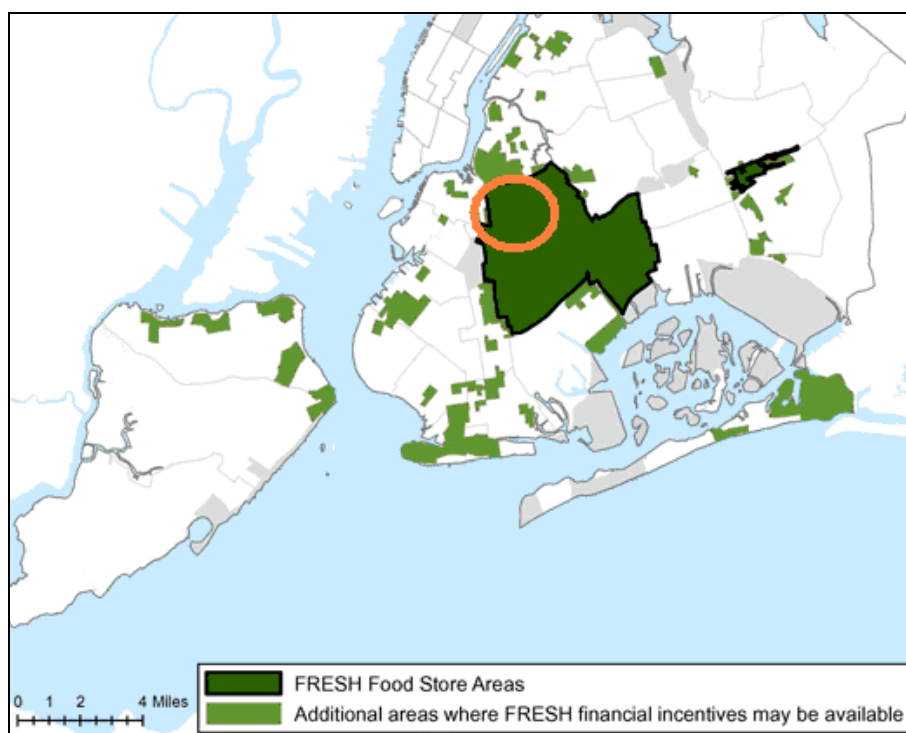
³⁷ Role of Food Prepared Away from Home in the American Diet, 1977-78 versus 1994-96: Changes and Consequences. US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. www.sciencedirect.com

³⁸ Food Retail Expansion to Support Health. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/supermarket/presentation.shtml>

people, but Bed-Stuy's is even less than this.³⁹ It should be noted then that the sheer number of supermarkets in this neighborhood is not the only factor for issues pertaining to food access; more importantly, it's the number and size of supermarkets relative to the population density. The tendency for supermarkets in Bed-Stuy to be packed with customers because of their slight prevalence and sometimes small sizes may also be a deterrent from customers frequenting them. A 2002 study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* supported the idea that access to supermarkets is a key component in determining the diet of residents in the area. They found that for each supermarket in a census tract, Whites increased their intake of produce by an average of 11%, while Blacks increased their intake by a compelling 32%.⁴⁰

The New York City Department of City Planning has recognized the nutritional inadequacy of Bedford Stuyvesant's retail landscape and the potential benefits supermarkets can bring to the area. Hence, it is targeting the neighborhood in its FRESH Initiative (Food Retail Expansion to Support Health), which passed through City Council as of December, 2009. This project aims to combat the effects of food desertification by creating zoning and financial incentives for the establishment and retention of neighborhood grocery stores in underserved communities like Central Brooklyn⁴¹. Their goal is to increase the supermarket index to 30,000 square feet per 10,000 residents.

Figure 2.3: Bed-Stuy (circled below) is being targeted by the City's FRESH Initiative⁴².



[Courtesy of NYC's Food Retail Expansion to Support Health initiative]

³⁹ Food Retail Expansion to Support Health. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/supermarket/presentation.shtml>

⁴⁰ Morland, Kimberly. "The contextual effect of the local food environment on residents' diets: the atherosclerosis risk in communities study." *American Journal of Public Health*. 2002.

⁴¹ Food Retail Expansion to Support Health. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/supermarket/presentation.shtml>

⁴² *American Journal of Public Health*. 2002. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12406805>

Although the FRESH Initiative is a practical and innovative long-term solution, it must also be complemented with nutrition education to aid in breaking the habit of relying on unhealthy foods. Organizational efforts would best serve the community by advocating for retail expansion while also engaging the community about nutritional practices. This multilateral approach to changing the neighborhood's food environment is a better way to bring about the better Bed-Stuy that its residents would like to see.

SECTION 2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

THE FOOD RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

Bed-Stuy's food environment heavily favors unhealthy foods and some of its residents have little option but to use what's available.

- Three million New Yorkers are in need of more fresh food purveyors
- Residents say a lack of healthy alternatives is an obstacle to healthy eating
- 81% of food stores in Bed-Stuy are bodegas
- Bodegas stock more unhealthy options than healthy
 - 1 in 3 bodegas sells reduced-fat milk, vs. 9 in 10 supermarkets.
 - 28% of bodegas carry apples, oranges, and bananas, vs. 91% of supermarkets.
 - 1 in 10 bodegas carry leafy green vegetables
- There are 94 restaurants in the community; National fast food chains comprise 13% of the total restaurants.
- 3 out of every 4 restaurants in Bed-Stuy sell only takeout food. Take out food is statistically healthier on the national level.
- Community members and organizations have looked to farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs (CSAs), and community gardens as methods of bringing fresh foods to this neighborhood.
 - National ratio for supermarkets to people is 50,000 square feet of supermarket per 10,000 people⁴³. The city-wide average for supermarkets is 15,000 square feet to 10,000 people, but Bed-Stuy's is less than this⁴⁴. Thus, there's a tendency for supermarkets to be overcrowded which may also be a deterrent for frequent use.
- The New York City Department of City Planning is targeting the neighborhood in its FRESH Initiative (Food Retail Expansion to Support Health). Their goal is to increase the supermarket space to people ratio to 30,000 square feet per 10,000 residents.

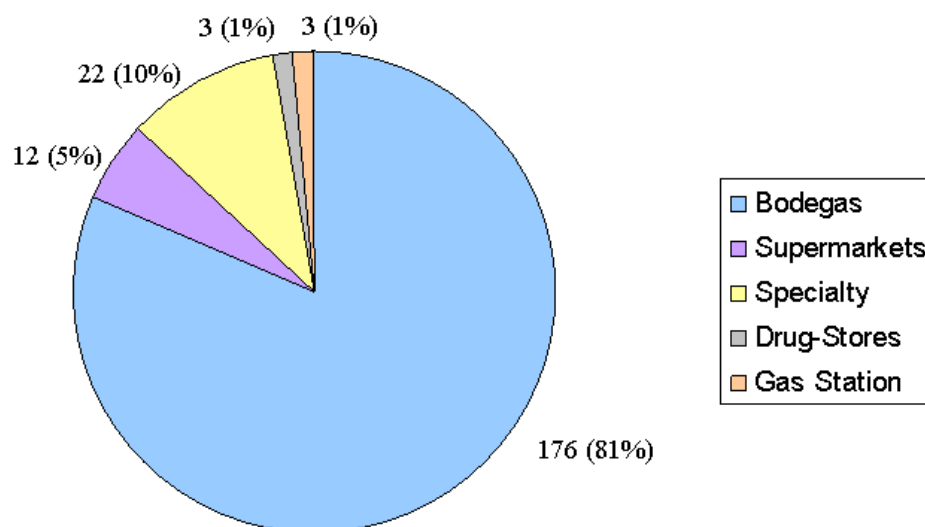
⁴³ Food Retail Expansion to Support Health. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/supermarket/presentation.shtml>

⁴⁴ Food Retail Expansion to Support Health. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/supermarket/presentation.shtml>

3. A CLOSER LOOK AT BODEGAS

With the colorful advertisements that adorn their windows, and the “ATM” and “EBT” signs that dangle lazily from the awnings that crown them, bodegas are seen on street corners throughout New York City. In Bed-Stuy, they are the go-to option where supermarkets are scarce. For decades, they have beckoned to the community’s residents with promises of relaxing cigarettes, warm sandwiches, sweet treats, and ice-cold beer; all topped with the ever-attractive element of convenience. Among the most convenient aspects of bodegas are their locations. The neighborhood’s densely occupied landscape limits the space supermarket owners have to open new chains, and the low median income in the area deters them from investing in stores with higher real estate costs. Largely because this supermarket vacuum has created demand for more easily accessible food options, bodegas are more ubiquitous in Bed-Stuy than any other stores that sell food (see Fig. 5 below).

Figure 3.1: Bodegas comprise 176 of the 216 food stores in Bed-Stuy⁴⁵.



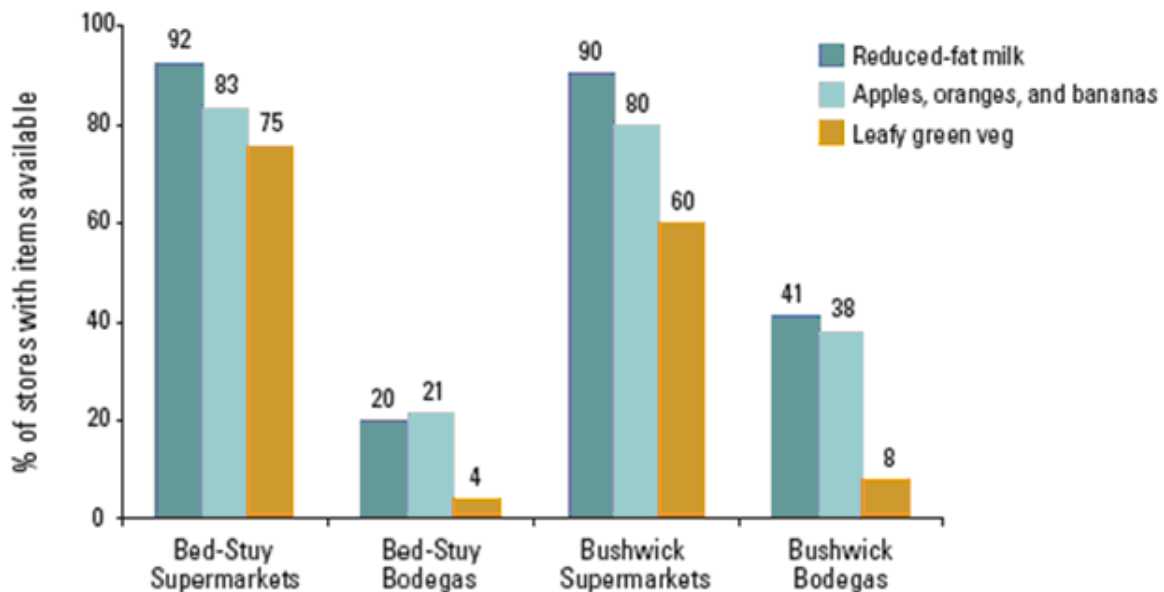
Due to their small size relative to supermarkets, bodegas must be more selective with the foods they stock, often at the expense of perishables like fruits and vegetables, and in favor of items like alcohol, cigarettes, and processed foods. Possibly attributable to their physical capacity as well, bodegas do not buy in bulk at the same volume that supermarkets do. Consequently, they tend to sell their individual products at higher prices. This ironic reality of higher food prices in low-income neighborhoods, alongside the lack of nutritious food and the promotion of unhealthy products, make bodegas one of the biggest barriers to healthy eating in Bed-Stuy.

As seen in Figure 3.1, 81% of Bed-Stuy’s 216 food stores are bodegas; yet, according to the DOH’s 2006 publication on healthy food in Central Brooklyn, few of them provide

⁴⁵ Eating in, eating out, eating well: Access to healthy food in North and Central Brooklyn. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2006. www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/.../dpho-brooklyn-report2006.pdf

customers with reduced-fat milk, fruits, or leafy green vegetables.⁴⁶ Instead, many provide a preponderance of salty, sugary, fatty, and processed food. A 2008 study conducted by the Adolescent Action Advocates—a youth group supervised by a non-profit organization called SCO Family Services—surveyed 22 bodegas around their Bed-Stuy high schools and found trends similar to the aforementioned 2006 DOH study. The students assessed the availability of unhealthy and healthy foods, the pricing, the storefront advertisements, and the product placements within the bodegas.

Figure 3.2: The 2006 DOH study shows that Bed-Stuy bodegas offer far fewer healthy options than supermarkets.



[Courtesy of District Public Health Office]

The Adolescent Action Advocates began by defining a “healthy food basket”, and an “unhealthy food basket” based on salt, sugar, or fat content. A healthy basket contained: baked chips, granola bars, bananas, whole-wheat bagels, apple juice, and 1% milk. Conversely, the unhealthy basket contained: Doritos®, Hershey’s Chocolate®, bacon, egg and cheese on a roll, punch, and individually wrapped cake. The results of their survey showed a high availability (64-91%) of unhealthy basket items in all of the bodegas⁴⁷. The availability of healthy basket items paled in comparison, only having 5-38% availability across all 22 bodegas. None of the surveyed bodegas carried all six of the healthy basket items, but 32% carried all seven unhealthy basket items. Unhealthy basket items ranged from \$.38 to \$2.31 per unit, while healthy basket items ranged from \$.31 to \$4.16 per unit. The students, who attend Bedford Academy, Boys and Girls High School, and Foundation Academy, commented on the relative expensiveness of healthy food; “The average price of 1% milk was \$4.16 [for a half gallon]. From experience, we know that we can get a two liter bottle of soda for \$2.” For reference, two liters is about .52 gallons. Although the amount of soda is slightly more than the half gallon of 1% milk, it costs about half as much.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

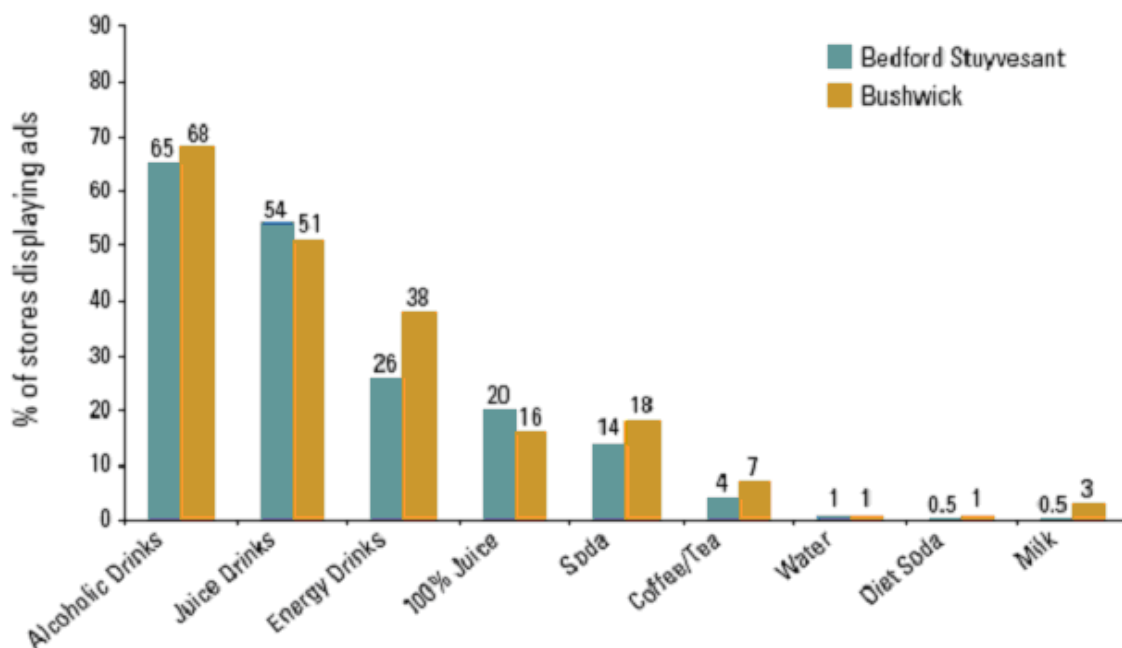
⁴⁷ Bedford Stuyvesant Community Food Assessment, August 2008. SCO Family Services. Adolescent Action Advocates.

Next, the Adolescent Action Advocates counted the number of storefront ads in of the following categories: junk/snack foods, healthy foods (fruits, vegetables, cheese and fresh meat), sugary foods, diet foods, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco products. They found that 79% of bodegas advertised sugary beverages on their storefronts, 63% advertised alcoholic beverages, and 50% advertised healthy food. Finally, the students evaluated the placement of products within the stores and found that bodega owners placed candy all around the cash register at 100% of the bodegas. In 72% of the stores, cookies were placed around the cash register, and in 62%, chips were placed around the register.

The students concluded that there is a high availability of junk food around the schools they attend, and that healthy foods were generally less available. Furthermore, their observations showed that sugary beverages were the most heavily advertised on storefronts, and that product placement inside bodegas heavily promoted junk food. For these reasons, several organizations have taken the bodega issue into account as they work toward increasing healthy food access in this community.

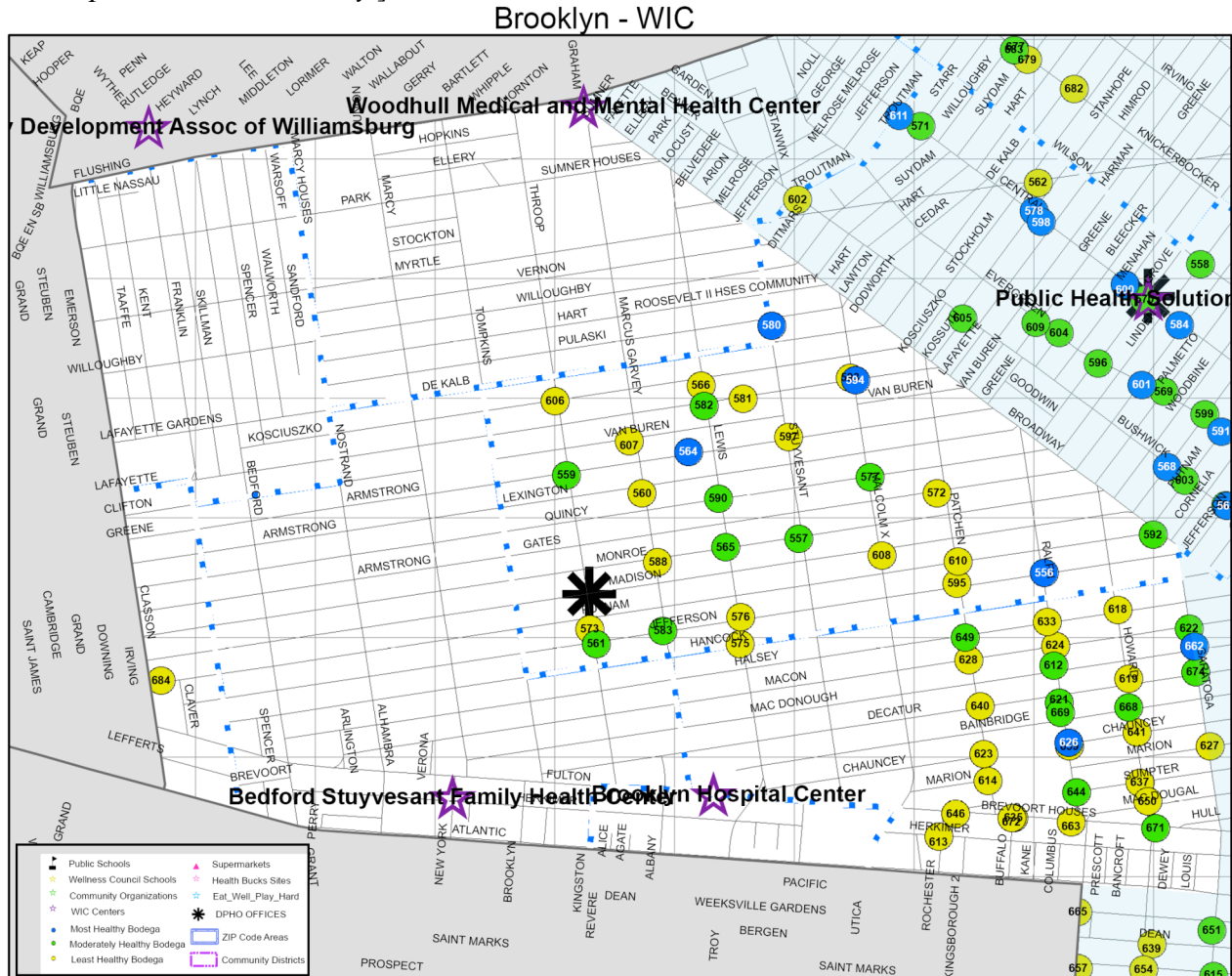
The Department of Health created a “Healthy Bodegas Initiative” to partner with local bodega owners to expand the availability of healthier food options (e.g. 1% milk and produce) in target neighborhoods including Community District 3—their name for Bedford Stuyvesant. Likewise, Bed-Stuy Farmshare, a local CSA, is currently seeking funding to designate bodegas as ordering sites for the fruits and vegetables the farm grows locally. With this model, residents would walk into a bodega and order a box of produce that was collected from Farm Share’s annual harvest. Ideally, this method is self-sustainable because the produce is grown in the community with resident investment, and does not require bodega owners to stock the produce in their limited space.

Figure 3.3: The Department of Health’s study corroborated the Adolescent Action Advocates’ findings that storefront ads disproportionately promote unhealthy products.



[Courtesy of District Public Health Office]

Figure 3.4: This map from the Healthy Bodegas Initiative shows the relative presence of unhealthy bodegas (yellow circles) to healthy bodegas (blue circles). Moderately healthy bodegas are indicated by green circles. [Note: The Western half of Bed-Stuy is not represented in this study.]



The goal of this section is not to portray bodegas and their managers as the monsters of the neighborhood. On the contrary, during City Harvest's three interviews with bodega owners around the area, it was very apparent that they are an integral part of the community. The residents know managers by their first names and frequently laugh as they tell each other stories during transactions. The managers lend children money to catch the bus, and allow customers to buy food on credit. Indeed, bodegas provide a necessary service for Bed-Stuy residents and contribute to the ever important sense of community. That being said, however, their negative impact on health and food access must not be overlooked. Thorough investigations have shown that bodegas do not make nutritious foods readily available to residents in the community. On the contrary, as seen in the statistics above, they make *unhealthy* food readily available. Because their large presence in the community can amplify any micro, individual level effects of unhealthy food, bodegas pose a long term threat to wellness on the macro, community level. A plan of action to address food access and health in Bedford Stuyvesant would benefit greatly from addressing the bodega issue.

SECTION 3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A CLOSER LOOK AT BODEGAS

This ironic reality of higher food prices in low-income neighborhoods, alongside the lack of nutritious food and the promotion of unhealthy products, make bodegas one of the biggest barriers to healthy eating in Bed-Stuy.

- Largely because this supermarket vacuum has created demand for more easily accessible food options, bodegas pervade Bed-Stuy with a ubiquity unmatched by other food stores. 81% of Bed-Stuy's 216 food stores are bodegas.
- Bodegas tend to sell their individual products at higher prices than supermarkets
- Few of them provide customers with reduced-fat milk, fruits, or leafy green vegetables. Instead, many provide salty, sugary, fatty, and processed food.
- A study by the Adolescent Action Advocates showed that there is a high availability of junk food around the schools they attend, and that healthy foods were generally less available.
- Furthermore, their observations showed that sugary beverages were the most heavily advertised on storefronts, and that product placement inside bodegas heavily promoted junk food.
- Although bodegas provide a necessary service for Bed-Stuy residents, and contribute to the culture of the community, their impact on health and food access must not be overlooked.

4. COMMUNITY HABITS AND AWARENESS

The residents of Bed-Stuy know all too well the obstacles and challenges that face their community. When the Brooklyn District Public Health Office (DPHO), which is located in Bed-Stuy, created resident discussion groups to explore resident perspectives on health and food access, they found that 100% of the 57 participating residents knew obesity to be a crisis in their neighborhood. Furthermore, they recognized that eating habits and nutrition figured greatly into this issue.⁴⁸ Why then, one might wonder, don't more people eat healthy foods and why isn't there a higher demand for healthy food options in the community? After all, bodega owners defend their food options with the reasoning that they do not create the demand; they simply supply it. If people tend to buy chips, soda, and cigarettes far more often than produce, it is in the bodega owner's better business interest to stock more chips, soda, and cigarettes.

The problem by and large does not seem to be obliviousness to the consequences of obesity and unhealthy eating, but the subsequent ability to make a lifestyle change with that knowledge.

People are very concerned about their health here. Obesity and high blood pressure are so pervasive that they've become a normal part of life. They are concerned but they don't know what they can do at this point.

- Kimberly Bylander, District Public Health Office

Some of the residents, primarily those that had developed health conditions, attempted and did change their eating habits. Many more, however found it difficult to make lifestyle changes due to several factors. Among the challenges they stated were having busy lifestyles, limited resources to making better food choices, familiarity and comfort with less healthy foods, mental health issues that lead to overeating, obesity and overweight connected to heredity, and an overabundance of mass media advertising unhealthy foods.⁴⁹ To overcome these obstacles, the residents in this study proposed a few potential solutions to the DPHO. First, they wanted the DPHO to develop inexpensive, quality food options in local stores. Second, the residents recommended the DPHO offer community education opportunities around food and nutrition.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education in particular is a reoccurring theme in what residents say could be improved in Bed-Stuy. In City Harvest's interviews, community members ranging from reverends to food pantry coordinators shared their stories:

When a White child walks through the garden at age two or three, they're already able to recognize many of the vegetables they see. But a Black child at that age is not.

- Reverend Devanie Jackson, Brooklyn Rescue Mission

⁴⁸ Neighborhood Resident Discussion Groups: Obesity in Bedford Stuyvesant and Bushwick. District Public Health Office.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Only some people are concerned about the accessibility [to fresh fruits and vegetables]. Most though are not concerned because they are not educated enough to know the importance.

- Mary Clarke, Macedonia Disciples of Christ

In Central Brooklyn, obesity is an epidemic- but people don't have the education or resources to address the issue.

- Ajamu Brown, local activist

As a testimonial to what they portray as a lack in education, a few residents during various City Harvest interviews brought up specific anecdotes regarding the mentality around pork consumption. They described how watching several movies, and growing up around a Muslim population had led many residents in the neighborhood to believe that pork was the unhealthiest of all foods and that its elimination from their diet is very healthy. This act on its own probably isn't harmful; however, the idea that the removal of pork is the cure-all to their dietary woes is detrimentally misinformed.

During the holidays, the unhealthiest looking men who are slumped over their seats will complain about pork in their food—but they're the ones using drugs! If TV and other things have people brainwashed to believe pork is bad, why can't they do that for drugs?

- Mary Clarke, Macedonia Disciples of Christ

Because the community has lots of Muslims, many places don't sell pork So people are so falsely proud that they don't eat pork, but they don't realize the bodega owners are doing it because of their religion, not for health reasons. So people are eating turkey alternatives that are not healthier- they're processed and filled with salt. People are deceived into thinking this is healthy, but it's not.

- Reverend Devanie Jackson, Brooklyn Rescue Mission

Moreover, this occurrence exemplifies one of the ways in which cultures can influence eating habits. In a second example, African American residents of Stapleton, another City Harvest Healthy Neighborhood site, frequently rejected certain types of produce, deeming them “only for Mexican people”. Any effort to address the eating habits of a community must operate in a culturally sensitive way, understanding the ways in which tradition, religion, race, and ethnicity influence dietary preferences.

With this in mind, City harvest responded to the educational need by beginning a Nutrition Education program in 2000. The program “provides tools to low-income individuals, families, and communities to help them prevent and manage diet-related diseases like obesity and diabetes while encouraging independence from emergency feeding programs.” In Bed-Stuy, Nutrition Education has used several courses including Operation Frontline, Produce Education Program, and Well Seasoned to reach its

clientele. Its goals are to increase knowledge, skills, and healthy decision-making at the individual and community level. In 2009, the programs reached a total of 86 participants in Bed-Stuy.

The term “education” is associated with many things. Schools, books, classrooms, pencils, and tests may be a few of the images that flash into one’s mind when the word is uttered. More generally, however, education can also refer to the broader set of information one accumulates throughout a lifetime— in or outside of the classroom setting. The sense City Harvest has gotten from speaking to adult residents of Bed-Stuy is that children growing up in this neighborhood are “educated” by their surroundings to become comfortable with certain types of food. They may be aware of obesity as a consequence of unhealthy eating, but this knowledge alone does not free them from the mire of unhealthy habits accumulated over a lifetime of living in an environment that doesn’t lend itself to healthy practices.

[Residents] go there and buy fast food, French fries, and fried chicken three times a day. YES, they know about diabetes and high blood pressure, but they just don’t heed because it’s a habit.

- Creola Smith, All People’s Church of the Apostolic

In a neighborhood where “fast food, French fries, and fried chicken” permeate the landscape and recreational programs are few and far between, people can become entrenched in unhealthy habits. A coalition known as the Brooklyn Food and Fitness Taskforce, led by the New York City Department of Health, surveyed 278 residents in Bed-Stuy, Bushwick, East New York, and Brownsville. Their study found that few respondents ate five or more servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day, “the amount recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to promote good health and prevent cardiovascular disease and certain cancers”⁵⁰. Most (59%) reported only eating one to two servings per day, and 8% reported eating zero. When City Harvest surveyed residents of Bed-Stuy and bordering communities at two local churches (Mt. Paran Baptist Church and Open Door Church), similar results were found: 85% of respondents reported not eating the recommended 5 servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day, and about 30% said they eat just a few servings per week or less.

Surprisingly, although a lack of supermarkets is a problem in Bed-Stuy, it does not seem to be the primary factor contributing to these habits. In fact, the Brooklyn Food and Fitness Taskforce found that 92% of the residents they surveyed got most of their food from supermarkets. A street survey conducted by City Harvest at three Bed-Stuy subway stations also showed that a majority of respondents got most of their food from supermarkets (77.1%). When asked if they are able to easily find fruits and vegetables in their neighborhood, 41.7 % said no, and 58.3% said yes. The ones who said they cannot easily find fruits and vegetables are a testament to Bed-Stuy’s classification as a food desert (as described in Section 2); but what of the majority who said they *are* able to easily find fruits and vegetables? One might wonder how Bed-Stuy can be a food desert when most of the residents are saying they can easily access produce and also manage to buy most of their food from supermarkets. The answer goes back to a phrase from

⁵⁰ NYCHA Residents’ Food and Physical Activity Practices. Brooklyn Food and Fitness Task Force. November 2006.

Section 2: In addition to the scarcity of supermarkets, food access includes issues of pricing and quality of food options.

Quality and Pricing of Food Options

From its Central Brooklyn discussion groups, the DOH found that residents strategize to locate the best prices and quality for their money when shopping for food. Unfortunately, “they report frequent poor food quality in local stores and restaurants”⁵¹. The group members went on to communicate how supermarkets and bodegas do not carry quality and healthy foods, and how “some local stores are dirty.”

Creola Smith is a food pantry coordinator at All People’s Church of the Apostolic, which sometimes receives donated produce from Greenmarket- a local farmers market that allows small family farmers to sell their produce to New Yorkers. She gleefully mimicked, “Ooooh, these are so fresh,” as she recounted the reactions of her clients upon seeing the quality of Greenmarket fruits and vegetables compared to those generally available at supermarkets. She went on to say that people are much happier when they see real healthy food, and that they finish the supply very quickly on the days when this produce is available. She emphasized the need for more “vegetable markets” in the community, because supermarkets- in her opinion- did not have fresh enough food.

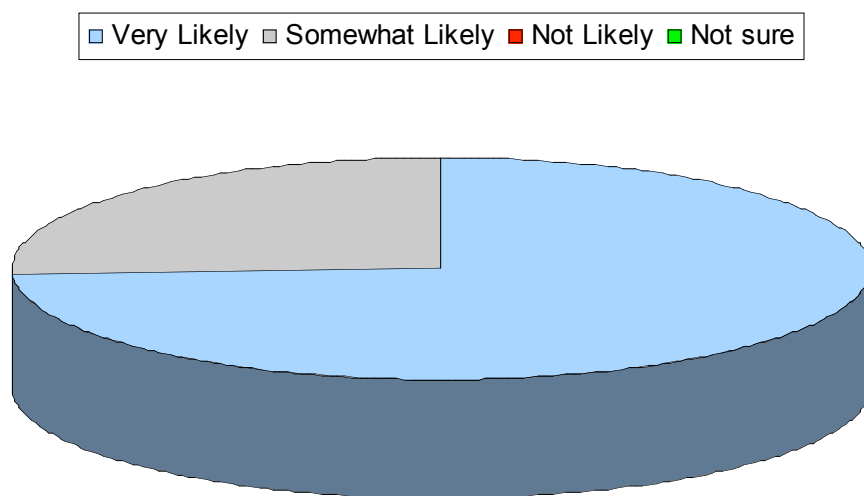
There are no vegetable markets. And if you go to the one supermarket, the food is wrapped up and never fresh. No matter where you go it’s rarely ever fresh. And it’s very expensive.

- Creola Smith, All People’s Church of the Apostolic

The issues of quality and pricing may be at the root of the following statistical results as well. When City Harvest asked people at Bed-Stuy subway stations if they’re able to easily access fresh fruits and vegetables in this neighborhood, the majority of them said yes (58.3%). When asked how likely they would be to buy “high quality” fresh fruits and vegetables if they were more “available and affordable”, 74.3% of respondents said they’d be “very likely”, and 100% said they’d be at least “somewhat likely”. In combination, these two sets of data may be an indication that although residents are already able to access produce, most of them would be much more likely to buy produce if it were higher quality, more affordable, and more available.

⁵¹ Neighborhood Resident Discussion Groups: Obesity in Bedford Stuyvesant and Bushwick. District Public Health Office.

Figure 4.1: Results from the survey question, “If high quality fresh fruits and vegetables were more available and affordable in your community how likely would you be to buy them?”



SECTION 4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

COMMUNITY HABITS AND AWARENESS

The problem by and large does not seem to be obliviousness to the consequences of obesity and unhealthy eating, but the subsequent ability to make a lifestyle change with that knowledge.

- Residents of Bed-Stuy know challenges that face their community.
- Residents know obesity is a crisis in their neighborhood, recognizing that eating habits and nutrition figure greatly into this issue.
- Ability to make a lifestyle change with knowledge has been difficult for residents: Among the challenges they stated were:
 - limited resources to making better food choices, including time
 - familiarity and comfort with less healthy foods
 - mental health issues that lead to overeating
 - obesity and overweight connected to heredity
 - overabundance of mass media advertising unhealthy foods
- Nutrition education in particular is a reoccurring theme in what residents say could be improved in Bed-Stuy.
- The Brooklyn Food and Fitness Taskforce found that most (59%) survey participants reported only eating one to two servings per day, and 8% reported eating zero. City Harvest found that 85% of survey participants reported not eating the recommended 5 servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day, and about 30% said they eat just a few servings per week or less.
- 92% of the residents surveyed by the Brooklyn Food and Fitness Taskforce received most of their food from supermarkets.
- Food access in Bed-Stuy includes issues of pricing and quality of food options.
- Residents report “frequent poor food quality in local stores and restaurants”
- Data indicates that although residents are already able to access produce, most of them would be much more likely to buy produce if it were higher quality, more affordable, and more available.

5. THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK

During the 1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression, poverty and bankruptcy plagued New York City. Because African Americans were treated as second class citizens during this time, Bed-Stuy felt some of the greatest impacts of this economic downturn. The neighborhood continued on this decline into the 1960s when incidences of crime and racial conflict became dangerously high⁵². A Civil Rights judge named Thomas R. Jones was fed-up with study after study being conducted on the community with little to no action being taken to improve its condition. He confronted Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1966 and challenged him to help make tangible changes to Bed-Stuy.

I'm weary of study, senator, very weary. The Negro people are angry, senator, and judge that I am, I'm angry too.

- Justice Jones to Senator Kennedy, Bed-Stuy 1966⁵³

After taking walking tours through its dilapidated streets, Senator Kennedy led one of the first major movements to develop Bed-Stuy several years after the Depression. He announced a seven-point action plan that would serve as the national model for community development and recruited help from the foremost members of the American business community⁵⁴. In continuation of these efforts, Justice Jones formally established one of the nation's leading organizations to renovate urban ghettos: Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation (known in short as Restoration)⁵⁵.

Image 5.1: Senator Robert F. Kennedy (left) and Justice Thomas. R. Jones (right) worked together and founded the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation.



[Courtesy of <http://www.urbanology.org/BedStuy/>] [Courtesy of <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/01/obituaries/01jones.html>]

⁵² Good in the Hood: Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. Idealist in NYC. <http://idealistnyc.wordpress.com/2009/12/07/good-in-the-hood-bed-stuy-brooklyn/>

⁵³ Chan, Sewell. Thomas R. Jones, 93, a Judge Who Agitated for Urban Revival, Dies. November 1st, 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/01/obituaries/01jones.html>

⁵⁴ History. Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration. <http://www.restorationplaza.org/about/history>

⁵⁵ Chan, Sewell. Thomas R. Jones, 93, a Judge Who Agitated for Urban Revival, Dies. November 1st, 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/01/obituaries/01jones.html>

Economic Development in Bedford Stuyvesant

Today, Restoration's efforts continue to thrive as its 300,000 square foot commercial plaza houses "scores of local businesses, non-profits and government agencies, including bank branches of Chase, Washington Mutual Bank and Citibank, Super Foodtown, the College of New Rochelle and Assembly woman Annette Robinson's office."⁵⁶ Since its founding in 1967, Restoration has catalyzed several economic and educational advancements by building housing units, placing youth and adults in newly created jobs, and offering classes in dance, music, visual arts, and theater to 400 students each year. Concerted efforts like these to bring businesses and financial investments into the community can produce jobs, decrease poverty, and improve general quality of life for residents. With the help of other initiatives like FRESH (Food Retail Expansion to Support Health), the neighborhood's economy can slowly experience an upward spiral of prosperity.

As Bed-Stuy grew in population since the 1960s so did the efforts to address its major concerns—poverty, poor health, joblessness, food access, crime, and more. In addition to Restoration, many other locally based organizations and organizations from surrounding communities have been active in Bed-Stuy for many years. The efforts come from a range of sources: government departments and elected officials, to grassroots organizations and individual advocates.

Figure 5.2: Type of organization and number of groups in Bed-Stuy, according to City Harvest data and the Department of City Planning

Community Based Organization Type	Number in HN
Green Market	0
After School Program	31
College/University	2
Head Start Program	16
Public School	29
Universal Pre-K	44
Day Care Center	14
Hospital	2
Senior Center	5
HRA Office	2

⁵⁶ History. Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration. <http://www.restorationplaza.org/about/history>

NYCHA Service Center	0
City Harvest Agency Only	20
City Harvest Kosher Agency	1
City Harvest Agency and Fruit Bowl	3
City Harvest Agency and Fruit Bowl and Nutrition Education	1
City Harvest Agency and Nutrition Education	2

Churches

Churches are an integral part of the Bed-Stuy community and can be seen on dozens of streets throughout the neighborhood. As stated by Matias Echanove, a Columbia masters student in Urban Planning who did his thesis on economic development in Bed-Stuy, “[Churches] have been instrumental in preserving some sense of pride and solidarity in the community and to a large extent filled up structural holes left by the lack of formal political and economic institutions”⁵⁷. When he interviewed Assemblywoman Robinson, who represented the 57th precinct (which encompasses Bed-Stuy), she noted the numerous benefits churches brought to the community: they serve as a focal point for religious residents to come together and worship, they help residents bond and form relationships, and also provide forums for discussing issues and potential improvements to the neighborhood. Furthermore, they serve as a venue for direct social programs such as food and clothing distributions, affordable housing development, and financial support for small businesses.⁵⁸

Image 5.2: Antioch Baptist Church on Bed-Stuy’s Greene St.



[Courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Antioch_Baptist_Greene_jeh.JPG]

⁵⁷ Echanove, Matias. Bed-Stuy On the Move. Urban Planning Programming, Columbia University.
<http://www.urbanology.org/BedStuy/>

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Emergency Food Programs

National and city-level entities like the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Bank of NYC, and City Harvest have worked alongside locally based organizations, especially churches, to distribute food to the hungry in an attempt to address food insecurity. City Harvest specifically works with 21 “agencies” (churches, food pantries, soup kitchens, or other local organizations) in Bed-Stuy to bring a variety of foods to the neighborhood. According to the City Harvest Agency Capacity Expansion (ACE) survey facilitated in fall 2009, which assessed the capacity and status of these agencies, “there exist various levels of functionality, from agencies operating at an extremely high level to those that should probably cease operation.” The analysis went on to describe the following:

Despite these agencies falling into different categories of functionality, there were common themes for the agencies regardless of their level of function. Some of these themes include:

- Lack of adequate fundraising operation (e.g. agencies are not utilizing various forms of funding)
- Volunteer recruitment that does not meet the needs of the agency either in number or skill
- Insufficient use of technology due to absence of equipment or do not have the proficiency to utilize computers
- Lack neighborhood affiliations either in the form of political relationships, memberships or involvement in community organizations

With the exception of one agency, all reported various challenges in their day-to-day or long term goals. The two most cited obstacles were a lack of money and food for distribution. As financial deficiency can lead to a lack of food and other issues like insufficient availability of technology, many of the problems that were stated are interrelated. The Agency Relations department at City Harvest noted that with few exceptions all the agencies would benefit from assistance with fundraising, budget management, the building of networks and the creation of organizational systems. Even outside of City Harvest’s agencies, these specific changes have been recommended by other local leaders as key ways of improving the organizational efforts in Bed-Stuy.

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH) is another non-profit organization that represents food pantries and soup kitchens throughout the City. A landmark study by Feeding America entitled “Hunger in America 2010” reported in January of 2010 that more than 37 million Americans (1 in 8 people in the country) use emergency food each year from food pantries and soup kitchens⁵⁹. Of them, 14 million are children and 3 million are seniors. This finding indicates a 46 percent increase since

⁵⁹ Hunger In America 2010. Feeding America. <http://feedingamerica.org/newsroom/press-release-archive/hunger-in-america-2010.aspx>

Feeding America's previous study in 2006⁶⁰. Organizations like NYCCAH and City Harvest work in Bed-Stuy to ensure residents get immediate nutritional assistance while also employing programming that aims to make the community self-sufficient.

Figure 5.1: A list of emergency food programs in Bed-Stuy (many of these are City Harvest agencies and agencies recommended by NYCCAH).

Free Food and Assistance Programs in Bed-Stuy	Type
Bedford Stuyvesant FHC WIC Program	WIC
Jon Wesley United Methodist Church	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry
Mt. Sinai Baptist Church	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry
Newman Memorial MC	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry
Salvation Army Bedford Temple Corps	Food Pantry
Siloam Presbyterian Church	Food Pantry
Stuyvesant Heights Christian Church	Food Pantry
Bedford Stuyvesant Youth Market	Farmer's Market
Faith Based Food Distribution & Dev. Corp	Food Pantry
Full Gospel Tabernacle of Faith Church	Food Pantry
Madison Residence for Except. Persons	After School Program
Macedonia Church of Christ	Food Pantry
St. Phillip's Episcopal Church	Food Pantry
Northeastern Brooklyn Department of S.S.	Food Pantry
Unity Faith Outreach	Food Pantry
St. Stephen Outreach	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry
All People's Church of The Apostolic Faith	Food Pantry
Mount Sinai Spiritual Church of God	Food Pantry
Union Baptist Church Community	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry
Agape Social Services-Beulah Church	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry
Upper Room Gospel Baptist Church	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry

⁶⁰ Hunger In America 2010. Feeding America. <http://feedingamerica.org/newsroom/press-release-archive/hunger-in-america-2010.aspx>

Open Door Outreach Ministry	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry
Ready Willing & Able The Doe Fund, Inc.	Residence Program
Faith Assemblies of God	Soup Kitchen/ Food Pantry
Project Street Beat of Brooklyn	Food Pantry
South Road Tabernacle	Food Pantry

Fresh Produce

Residents of Bed-Stuy and organizations from outside the community have also looked to farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs (CSAs), and community gardens as methods of bringing fresh foods to this neighborhood. Bedford Stuyvesant Greenmarket on Lewis Avenue, and Weeksville Farm Stand on Bergen Street, sell locally grown produce for reasonable prices, and were recommended by the Brooklyn District Public Health Office as good sources of healthy food. In addition, the Magnolia Tree Earth Center CSA Program located on Lafayette utilizes the potentially self-sustainable method of purchasing shares of a farmer's product to receive regular produce distributions, as a means for community access to fresh produce. Similarly, Bed-Stuy Farm Share allows residents to purchase shares of a farmer's products. The organization then delivers the fresh vegetables, fruits, and eggs straight from the local farmer to Bed-Stuy once a week starting in June for 20-22 weeks out of the year. The CSA is beneficial for both the residents and the farmers, whose businesses are being supported by a stable financial base.

City Harvest provides free, fresh fruits and vegetables to residents of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) in Stapleton, Staten Island and Melrose, Bronx through its Mobile Market program. The Mobile Market is a component of City Harvest's larger Healthy Neighborhoods initiative and distributes produce to an average of 400 residents four times every month.

Another method of making produce available to a community is through a food cooperative, or food co-op. These can take the form of a collectively owned grocery store and aim to make fresh, natural foods more available and affordable to the community residents who decide to become members. Kalabash is a food co-op founded and based in Central Brooklyn with the mission of making "affordable and ecologically responsible organic food and produce" accessible to a region that has "staggering health concerns"⁶¹.

Health

Beginning in 1805, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) has served New York City in the field of public health. Recognizing that certain regions needed more attention than others, the DOHMH targeted "high-risk" areas

⁶¹ Kalabash Food Coop. <http://www.kalabashfoodcoop.com/>

like Bed-Stuy by building local government branches called District Public Health Offices (DPHO) in 2003. These DPHOs could focus on that region's specific issues. Central Brooklyn's branch, which is located in Bed-Stuy, is active in several initiatives that aim to increase access to healthy foods in the neighborhood. For example, the Healthy Bodegas Initiative works with bodega owners and other community members to make healthier foods like produce and low fat milk more available in the local convenience stores.

Coalitions

While some organizations aim to address issues within a specific arena (i.e. health, economy, food access), others aim to bring residents and activists together to focus the various change efforts in the community. The Brooklyn Food Coalition is a grassroots partnership of individuals and groups who "strive to give an effective voice to all those who live in or serve Brooklyn and wish to achieve a just and sustainable system for tasty, healthy, and affordable food."⁶² The coalition serves as a forum to bring the community's leaders together to discuss pertinent issues and possible collaborative solutions.

The Coalition for the Improvement of Bedford-Stuyvesant (CIBS) is another alliance that is dedicated to working towards greater cooperation of local organizations. They say their primary goal is "to maintain an equitable, healthy and sustainable community that produces economic and social betterment for the indigenous people of [the] community."⁶³

With their Community Action Boards, NYCCAH brings together several residents of Bed-Stuy whom have been affected by food insecurity. Residents from around the neighborhood come to these meetings and share their personal experiences dealing with food insecurity and provide recommendations that can better shape local efforts that aim to address issues of hunger and food insecurity.

Political Issues

Because of its dire state during many parts of the past century, Bed-Stuy has had much attention from local and external organizations. Although BFC and CIBS are two groups that strive to unify these positive endeavors, the organizational efforts in Bed-Stuy continue to be hindered by a lack of unity and a strong sense of competition. During interviews with City Harvest, the leaders of some of the organizations listed above delved into the mistrust, competition, and discordance that lie within the community's organizational framework.

The community has lots of resources but it needs coordination to focus these efforts. There are too many competing interests.

- Ajamu Brown, Local Activist

⁶² Brooklyn Food Coalition. <http://www.brooklynfoodcoalition.org/>

⁶³ Coalition for the Improvement of Bedford Stuyvesant. <http://www.cibsbedstuy.org/>

Whenever we collaborate with another group to do a project, the labor seems to always fall on us. There is a lot of competition amongst community groups in Bed-Stuy. It's like groups feel threatened by one another.

- Anonymous person from a local CSA

These power struggles have kept people and organizations from collaborating and choosing leaders to represent bigger movements. This mistrust is not only felt by one local organization for another local organization; sometimes it is also felt by local organizations for outside organizations that operate on a city-wide level. Certain leaders in Bed-Stuy feel as though outside organizations go about helping the wrong way. Instead of using their greater resources to support current efforts in the community, larger organizations sometimes take over the ideas of local organizations. This prevents sufficient input from the local organizations from which the original ideas came. This dynamic cultivates mistrust of external help in the community and also does a disservice to well-intentioned efforts that could benefit greatly from collaboration.

There have been a lot of city-wide advocates who have come in and offered their help, but it seems like they come in and steal the ideas. Local organizations feel disrespected and belittled by this. Instead of giving support to the existing framework, they take the idea and run with it as if it's their own.

- Anonymous person from a local CSA

Despite their wariness of city-wide groups, there is a general willingness in Bed-Stuy groups to work with groups like City Harvest. One reason for this is that leaders in the community feel as though working with larger organizations gives their endeavors more credibility. One member of the Brooklyn Food Coalition stated her frustration that without big name logos to represent local efforts, they are thought of as “grassroots nobodies”. Secondly, local and external groups cooperate because they bring complementary skills to the table: while local organizations can give great insight about the community and gain the community’s trust, external organizations tend to have greater resources to implement the changes desired by both sides.

VI. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

After careful evaluation of the findings in the Main Report, the Community Partnerships Department of City Harvest has compiled a list of recommendations that may be used to shape future initiatives in Bed-Stuy.

TRAINING

No one, not any expert, doctor, statistician, or demographer, can tell you more about a community and the issues it faces than the people who live in it. Accordingly, as an outside organization that strives to optimize its service to this community, City Harvest must make sure any initiatives it pursues highly encourage community participation and leadership. One component of the “Political Issues” paragraph in the last section addressed the issue of external organizations leading top-down efforts in Bed-Stuy that fail to incorporate community input and guidance. This occurs primarily because the skill sets for spearheading initiatives are not always found in every community member. Many people are passionate about making positive impacts in the community, but passion does not always translate into competence. Competence requires the training and resources that are not readily available to many residents.

City Harvest can hold workshops on the following:

1. How to write a business plan including a mission statement and methodology
2. Grant writing
3. Budgeting and fundraising techniques
4. Utilizing and expanding technology (including training with Microsoft Office)
5. Advocating skills toward local government
6. Public speaking and effective communication

With the results of the ACE surveys in hand, the Agency Relations department of City Harvest will work with City Harvest Agencies to assist with fundraising techniques, budget management, the building of networks and the creation of organizational systems.

EDUCATION

One of the greatest ways to empower people is through education. Raising awareness about issues, and sharing certain skills for combating those issues are great ways to address problems effectively.

City Harvest is already engaging Bed-Stuy residents in this manner through the Nutrition Education department. One method Nutrition Education utilizes to increase nutritional awareness is the cooking demonstrations they do in Bed-Stuy, South Bronx, and Harlem in collaboration with the DOH’s Healthy Bodegas Initiative. After forming a working relationship with bodega owners, members of Nutrition Education prepare a healthy recipe outside of those bodegas and hand out samples to residents as they walk by. They also distribute a fact sheet that highlights the nutritional value of each ingredient, and discuss eating habits with those residents that decide to chat while they enjoy the sample.

Kim Bylander of the Central Brooklyn DPHO stated her approval of cooking demonstrations because of the large numbers of people they can target in a short amount of time. She said that, “The cooking demos hit home. People should have free access to nutrition education so they can know how much fat’s in a Big Mac.” This comes from a government organization that has an acute sense of what Bed-Stuy’s community members want.

City Harvest can improve nutrition education by:

1. Expanding the cooking demonstrations to target more stores and to do them more frequently
2. Training residents (students, neighbors, seniors, etc.) to put cooking demos on themselves
3. Create an after school program to teach children about the importance of nutrition. There are many fun ways to engage kids, especially if there are tasty (healthy) treats to eat afterwards. The coordinator at Open Door Church even suggested that we provide Bed-Stuy high school students with City Harvest internships.

Main areas of work are DEFINITELY on the education side. The concept of the food system is not taught in standard primary/secondary education curriculum, and without that basic knowledge, communities aren’t armed with the tools needed to battle food deserts and food insecurity.

- Mara Gittleman, independent advocate working with CENYC

4. Bed-Stuy residents proposed the DPHO offer the following community education opportunities around food and nutrition, and City Harvest should look into these requests as well:
 - How to shop more effectively for healthy options.
 - How to cook healthy options, including foods that may not be familiar (e.g. tofu); use the model of TV cooking shows.
 - How to set proper eating expectations (portion control).
 - Promote healthy eating and nutrition education that is consistent across different providers, like doctors, WIC programs, and other venues visited by residents.

COHESIVENESS

As discussed in Section 5, there is lack of cohesiveness amongst community groups, and also a lack of collaboration amongst retail outlets. These groups should be encouraged to work together.

City Harvest can benefit the community greatly by promoting unity:

1. City Harvest can work to promote organizational affiliations and networks in the community amongst community groups that have common goals. This can be done through workshops, town hall meetings, and collaborative projects.

2. City Harvest can also facilitate conversations between retailers. This can take the form of market research. For example, because farmers markets carry a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, they can do market research to show what there is demand for in the community. This data could greatly benefit bodegas and restaurants that are willing to stock healthier foods if they know what people are willing to buy. Upon initial presentation of this idea, bodega owners seemed to be very interested.

Community cohesiveness is also important for funding purposes. Pat White of the New York Community Trust stated her foundation's desire to see more community consensus around a plan. She said this would help them, the givers of grants, make more informed funding decisions. Consequently, building networks and affiliations in Bed-Stuy may also help City Harvest acquire more funding for bigger and more effective projects in the long run.

QUALITY OF PRODUCE

The data in this report has shown that an absence of fresh food retailers is an obstacle to healthy eating in Bed-Stuy, but so is the quality and pricing of the foods already available in supermarkets and bodegas.

To help with the quality issue, City Harvest can:

1. Collaborate with local organizations to bring in Greencarts. A good location for one is Fulton and Utica, where there is enough space and heavy foot traffic.
2. Bring new farmers markets where applicable and support existing ones where necessary.
3. Support community gardens including the one at Brooklyn Rescue Mission (led by the two Reverend Jacksons.)
4. Support the FRESH Initiative
5. Work with Healthy Bodegas Initiative to develop the systems already in place for bringing healthier foods to Bed-Stuy.
6. Discuss locations for a new Mobile Market in partnership with NYCHA. There is vacant lot available across from Myrtle Houses that could serve as Mobile Market distribution site, or a community garden. Melissa Lee of the Mayor's Office of Comprehensive Neighborhood Economic Development said any new Mobile Market needs to be located in an area where there are no other services or strong retail presence.

MARKETING

The manufacturers of fast food, sweets, and other junk food spend millions of dollars on the marketing of their products every year. Many of them tap directly into their target audience's psyche by incorporate specific colors that are hunger triggers like red and yellow. Because healthy foods tend to be naturally occurring products, their production and sales have less corporate structure and utilize less marketing strategy. As a result, when competing against less healthy foods, food items like fruits and vegetables can be much less appealing to the community. Creola Smith from All People's Church of the

Apostolic suggested that, “Whatever you introduce to the community must be appealing. French fries are marketed in a more appealing way than healthy foods.”

In light of this issue, City Harvest can:

1. Work with local organizations and run a Communications Campaign to encourage residents to make healthy choices.
2. Work with bodega owners to identify foods good for health conditions and nutritional value and subsequently highlight them in an appealing way. Colorful ads and signs that draw attention to the produce section of a bodega could greatly increase their sales
3. Work with bodega owners to ensure shelving and presentation of the produce area are up to date, clean, and all around appealing for customers.

Trust me, if I had nicer fruit in a nice display, people would buy them.

- Sharif, bodega manager of Food Market

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

In City Harvest’s discussions with community members regarding food and public health, people consistently brought up the issue of exercise. Residents of Bed-Stuy are concerned about the lack of exercise facilities in the community. Reverend Devanie Jackson from Brooklyn Rescue Mission had this to say: “There aren’t enough facilities here- no after school programs. Because of this, there isn’t great physical fitness here either.” Edward Hargett from Agape Social Services felt similarly about the lack of exercise outlets:

Organized sports are not very available in the community—only basketball courts. In the Redhook section [a more affluent Brooklyn neighborhood], White kids get bused around all over the city for track, softball, and all kinds of healthy activities.

- Edward Hargett, Agape Social Services

The Department of Health recognized that the lack of resources for physical activity is not the only problem, but also that many people just don’t know what outlets there already are. Because of this, they compiled a list of all the facilities that exist in Bed-Stuy for physical activity in a small “Food and Fitness” pamphlet. City Harvest may also contribute to the physical well being of the community by raising awareness of the existing structures in place. Another opportunity for City Harvest to intersect with ongoing efforts may be to collaborate with some of the exercise venues listed in the DOH’s pamphlet to put on a healthy eating and physical activity event or long term campaign.

FURTHER RESEARCH

City Harvest would do a great service to bodega owners who want to bring in more fresh fruits and vegetables in their stores by gathering data on which healthy foods residents want to eat. Because bodega owners do not believe they create the demand, but instead simply respond to it, collecting that information for them would allow them to know which healthy foods would sell and thus stock accordingly. This data could also be used for the many restaurants in the community that do not always make healthy foods available (especially the take out restaurants.) Below, two managers of a local bodega share their frustration with not knowing what types of produce there is demand for, and the obstacle they faces trying to create demand. If they already knew what there is demand for, they could save money without having to play a guessing game.

Fawaz: I try different items; they just sit there and I have to throw them away.






Eddie: They would buy it if they were familiar with it, but by the time they do become familiar we've already lost so much money that we don't want to stock it again."

- Fawaz and Eddie, L&H Market

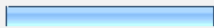




City Harvest could also do further research on the eating habits of community members. The field and group surveys Community Partnerships (the Department who compiled the CFA) conducted showed a very interesting statistic: the majority of respondents only ate three home-cooked meals a week. Information like this must be known and expanded on to shape future initiatives. How often do people frequent restaurants and bodegas? How often do people eat at home? When people do eat at home, how often are they preparing full meals versus microwaving TV dinners?

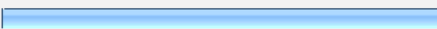
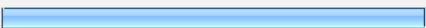
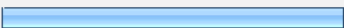
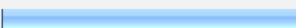
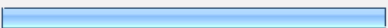
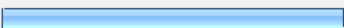
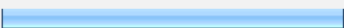
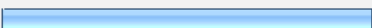
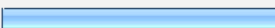
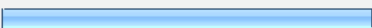
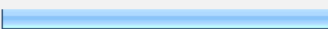
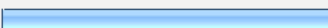

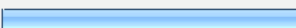

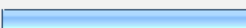

VII. APPENDIX

Item 1: Bed-Stuy Field Survey Results [Compiled using Survey Monkey]

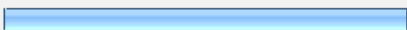
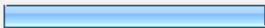

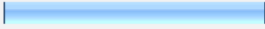
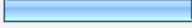
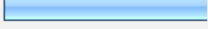
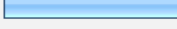
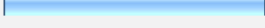
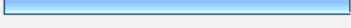
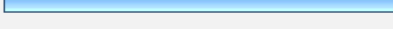
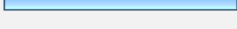
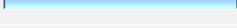
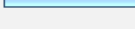
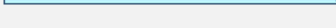
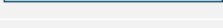
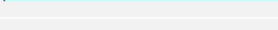

1. What neighborhood do you live in?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Bed-Stuy		75.0%	27
Crown Heights		16.7%	6
Bushwick		0.0%	0
East New york		2.8%	1
Other		5.6%	2
answered question			36
skipped question			0

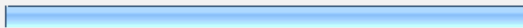
2. Where does most of your food come from?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Supermarket		77.1%	27
Bodega/Corner store		20.0%	7
Restaurant/ Take Out		5.7%	2
Farmers markets, green markets, or garden		5.7%	2
answered question			35
skipped question			1

3. Is it difficult or easy for you to get to the supermarket?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
easy		42.9%	15
somewhat easy		11.4%	4
neutral		17.1%	6
somewhat difficult		17.1%	6
difficult		11.4%	4
answered question			35
skipped question			1

4. When you shop at supermarkets what do you usually buy?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
milk		91.4%	32
cheese/yogurt		88.6%	31
fresh fruits		71.4%	25
deli meals		62.9%	22
eggs		80.0%	28
fresh vegetables		71.4%	25
raw meat, chicken, fish		71.4%	25
breakfast food, cereal		77.1%	27
soda		57.1%	20
juice/ water		77.1%	27
pasta/ rice		68.6%	24
canned fruits, vegetables, beans		68.6%	24
cigarettes or alcohol		17.1%	6
snacks, candy, chips		62.9%	22
bread/ tortillas/ baked goods		65.7%	23
sandwiches or other pre-made food		51.4%	18
other		14.3%	5
	answered question		35
	skipped question		1

5. How often do you shop for food at bodegas and corner stores?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
every day		37.1%	13
once every few days		28.6%	10
1 time a week		14.3%	5
once a month		11.4%	4
twice a month		8.6%	3
less than once a month or never		0.0%	0
	answered question		35
	skipped question		1

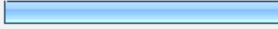
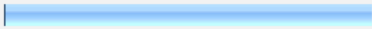
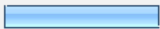
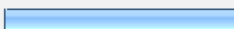
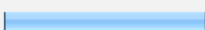
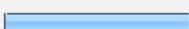


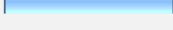
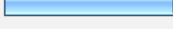
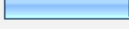
6. When you shop at bodegas and corner stores what do you usually buy?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
milk		77.8%	28
cheese/yogurt		50.0%	18
fresh fruits		50.0%	18
deli meals		50.0%	18
eggs		36.1%	13
fresh vegetables		38.9%	14
raw meat, chicken, fish		33.3%	12
breakfast food, cereal		50.0%	18
soda		66.7%	24
juice/ water		75.0%	27
pasta/ rice		44.4%	16
canned fruits, vegetables, beans		44.4%	16
cigarettes or alcohol		25.0%	9
snacks, candy, chips		63.9%	23
bread/ tortillas/ baked goods		41.7%	15
sandwiches or other pre-made food		52.8%	19
other		11.1%	4
		<i>answered question</i>	36
		<i>skipped question</i>	0

7. Do you feel comfortable making meals from whole, fresh ingredients?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		100.0%	36
No		0.0%	0
		<i>answered question</i>	36
		<i>skipped question</i>	0

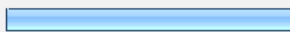

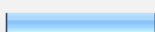

8. Are you able to easily find fresh fruits and vegetables in your neighborhood?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
yes		58.3%	21
no		41.7%	15
answered question			36
skipped question			0

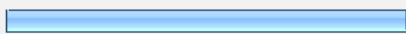




9. If high quality fresh fruits and vegetables were more available and affordable in your community how likely would you be to buy them?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
very likely		74.3%	26
somewhat likely		25.7%	9
not likely		0.0%	0
not sure		0.0%	0
answered question			35
skipped question			1

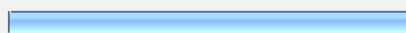
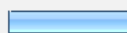
10. Do you feel like you eat a balanced and nutritional meal?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		58.3%	21
No		25.0%	9
Unsure		16.7%	6
answered question			36
skipped question			0

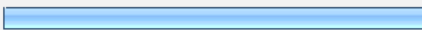
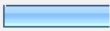


11. It would be easier for me to add more fruits and vegetables into my diet if I could have...			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Help with budgeting and managing expenses		52.9%	18
more food outlets that carry fresh fruits and vegetables		70.6%	24
more skills to cook and prepare food		29.4%	10
my family eat more fruits and vegetables		44.1%	15
a farmers market or community garden where i live		38.2%	13
more knowledge about the nutritional benefits		35.3%	12
better quality fruits and vegetables at stores in my neighborhood		44.1%	15
cheaper fruits and vegetables		50.0%	17
more fruits and vegetables at food pantries or soup kitchens		32.4%	11
more times in my day to buy and prepare fruits and vegetables		32.4%	11
more reasons and motivation to make a life style change		23.5%	8
other		0.0%	0
answered question			34
skipped question			2

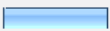


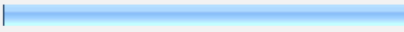


Item 2: Bed-Stuy Group Survey Results [Compiled using Survey Monkey]

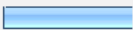
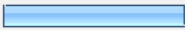
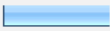



1. What neighborhood do you live in?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Bed-Stuy		55.1%	27
Crown Heights		2.0%	1
Bushwick		28.6%	14
East New York		0.0%	0
Other		14.3%	7
answered question			49
skipped question			1


2. What is your ethnicity?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Black/ African		77.1%	37
Hispanic/Latino		10.4%	5
South Asian		0.0%	0
White		2.1%	1
East Asian		0.0%	0
Caribbean/ West Indian		14.6%	7
Other		2.1%	1
answered question			48
skipped question			2

3. In the past 12 months, have you had trouble stretching your food budget to the end of the month?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		77.1%	37
No		22.9%	11
answered question			48
skipped question			2

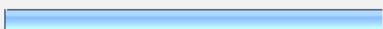
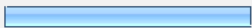
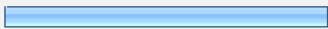

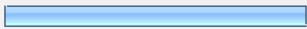
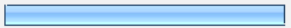
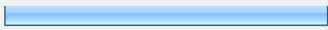
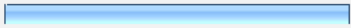
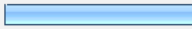
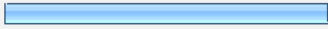
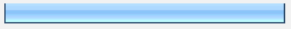
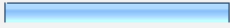

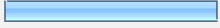
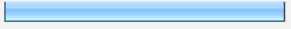
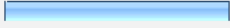

4. Where does most of your food come from?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Supermarket		83.3%	40
Bodega/Corner store		20.8%	10
Restaurant/ Take Out		6.3%	3
Farmers markets, green markets, or garden		4.2%	2
		<i>answered question</i>	48
		<i>skipped question</i>	2





5. How do you usually get to the nearest supermarket?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Bus		20.4%	10
Taxi		4.1%	2
Subway		2.0%	1
Walk		79.6%	39
Personal car		12.2%	6
Friend's vehicle		10.2%	5
		<i>answered question</i>	49
		<i>skipped question</i>	1

6. About how much time does it take you to get to the nearest supermarket? (in minutes)			
		Response Percent	Response Count
1-5		25.0%	12
5-10		35.4%	17
10-15		20.8%	10
15-30		8.3%	4
30-1 hour		6.3%	3
More than 1 hour		4.2%	2
		<i>answered question</i>	48
		<i>skipped question</i>	2




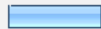
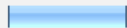




7. Is it difficult or easy for you to get to the supermarket?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
easy		54.5%	24
somewhat easy		27.3%	12
neutral		11.4%	5
somewhat difficult		4.5%	2
difficult		2.3%	1
		<i>answered question</i>	44
		<i>skipped question</i>	6

8. How often do you shop at supermarkets?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
every day		4.5%	2
once every few days		15.9%	7
1 time a week		15.9%	7
once a month		36.4%	16
twice a month		25.0%	11
less than twice a month or never		2.3%	1
		<i>answered question</i>	44
		<i>skipped question</i>	6




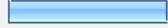


9. When you shop at supermarkets what do you usually buy?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
milk		79.1%	34
cheese/yogurt		51.2%	22
fresh fruits		67.4%	29
deli meals		48.8%	21
eggs		62.8%	27
fresh vegetables		58.1%	25
raw meat, chicken, fish		67.4%	29
breakfast food, cereal		72.1%	31
soda		39.5%	17
juice/ water		67.4%	29
pasta/ rice		58.1%	25
canned fruits, vegetables, beans		46.5%	20
cigarettes or alcohol		11.6%	5
snacks, candy, chips		44.2%	19
bread/ tortillas/ baked goods		58.1%	25
sandwiches or other pre-made food		46.5%	20
other		14.0%	6
answered question			43
skipped question			7

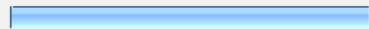

10. How often do you shop for food at bodegas and corner stores?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
every day		22.7%	10
once every few days		40.9%	18
1 time a week		11.4%	5
once a month		4.5%	2
twice a month		6.8%	3
less than once a month or never		13.6%	6
answered question			44
skipped question			6



11. When you shop at bodegas and corner stores what do you usually buy?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
milk	65.1%	28
cheese/yogurt	30.2%	13
fresh fruits	23.3%	10
deli meals	39.5%	17
eggs	39.5%	17
fresh vegetables	25.6%	11
raw meat, chicken, fish	23.3%	10
breakfast food, cereal	37.2%	16
soda	41.9%	18
juice/ water	48.8%	21
pasta/ rice	16.3%	7
canned fruits, vegetables, beans	16.3%	7
cigarettes or alcohol	25.6%	11
snacks, candy, chips	44.2%	19
bread/ tortillas/ baked goods	34.9%	15
sandwiches or other pre-made food	51.2%	22
other	7.0%	3
	answered question	43
	skipped question	7

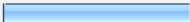


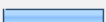
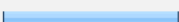
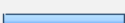

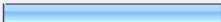
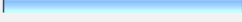
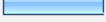
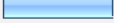

12. About how many home cooked meals do you eat in a week?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
0		0.0%	0
9		0.0%	0
10		0.0%	0
11		0.0%	0
12		0.0%	0
13		0.0%	0
14		2.5%	1
15		5.0%	2
1		7.5%	3
2		17.5%	7
3		22.5%	9
4		15.0%	6
5		12.5%	5
6		5.0%	2
7		12.5%	5
8		0.0%	0

13. Do you feel comfortable making meals from whole, fresh ingredients?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		76.2%	32
No		23.8%	10
answered question			42
skipped question			8

14. How many fruits and veges do you eat a day?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
more than 5 a day		7.5%	3
4-5 a day		7.5%	3
2-3 a day		25.0%	10
1-2 a day		30.0%	12
a few a week		20.0%	8
1 a week or less		10.0%	4
		<i>answered question</i>	40
		<i>skipped question</i>	10

15. Are you able to easily find fresh fruits and vegetables in your neighborhood?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
yes		69.0%	29
no		31.0%	13
		<i>answered question</i>	42
		<i>skipped question</i>	8

16. Do you feel you eat a balanced and nutritious diet?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		50.0%	22
No		34.1%	15
Unsure		15.9%	7
		<i>answered question</i>	44
		<i>skipped question</i>	6

17. It would be easier for me to add more fruits and vegetables into my diet if I could have...			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Help with budgeting and managing expenses		39.5%	17
more food outlets that carry fresh fruits and vegetables		48.8%	21
more skills to cook and prepare food		20.9%	9
my family eat more fruits and vegetables		20.9%	9
a farmers market or community garden where i live		37.2%	16
more knowledge about the nutritional benefits		25.6%	11
better quality fruits and vegetables at stores in my neighborhood		34.9%	15
cheaper fruits and vegetables		46.5%	20
more fruits and vegetables at food pantries or soup kitchens		51.2%	22
more times in my day to buy and prepare fruits and vegetables		20.9%	9
more reasons and motivation to make a life style change		23.3%	10
other		9.3%	4
	answered question		43
	skipped question		7

18. How interested are you in using...				
	Very Interested	Somewhat Interested	Not Interested	Response Count
A farmers market?	74.4% (29)	23.1% (9)	2.6% (1)	39
A fruit and vegetable stand?	78.9% (30)	13.2% (5)	7.9% (3)	38
Free classes on nutrition and cooking with fresh foods?	64.1% (25)	17.9% (7)	17.9% (7)	39
A shuttle that goes directly to a grocery store?	52.8% (19)	19.4% (7)	27.8% (10)	36
Regularly maintaining a local outdoor area where you could grow some of your own vegetables?	62.2% (23)	29.7% (11)	8.1% (3)	37
	answered question			42
	skipped question			8

Item 3: Bed-Stuy Interview Questions. Example for Coalition/Advocacy Groups.

Bedford Stuyvesant CFA Questionnaire:
#3 – Coalitions/Advocacy Groups

Coalition/Advocacy Group: _____

Who Interviewed: _____

Date of Interview: _____ time started: _____ completed: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Known about Agency prior to interview:

- Describe City Harvest prior relationship, if any

 - Length of time in operation _____ # clients per month _____
 - Affiliations: _____
 - Other: e.g. advocacy items, policy work, projects or special services:
 Specify _____

-

City Harvest is working in Bedford Stuyvesant to improve access, demand and availability of healthy and more affordable food. City Harvest has already been working in the South Bronx and Staten Island with similar goals. To get started, we are trying to pull together what's already been learned about food, health, nutrition and related social justice issues by the agencies and individuals based in the community, and then we hope to determine how to best work with our local partners to further strengthen collaborative planning, action and results.

2. Can you tell us the range of activities you're engaged in, and update us on the initiatives your agency is engaged in and their status now? What's been most successful...what's been achieved? Is there any specific progress on organizational and policy level issues?

First- Checklist of activities:

Advocacy

Public benefits screening

Holding policy discussions

Policy development

Organizing

Other_____

Describe focus of organizing,
advocacy or policy

work_____

Programs,

Specify_____

Describe any food system advocacy or policy work and updates on status, with comments on what's what has been successful and what's been achieved

What is it about this work that has made it effective? What were the elements that led to success? Are there aspects of the work that you wish you could change? What has failed to work, and/or what lessons have been learned? What do you think are the main areas of work still to be undertaken?

3. Who are the partners you've been engaged with at organizational and community levels? What are the key networks or organizational groupings that your organization relates to and how are they impacting the work? Are there other coalition or advocacy groups that are showing promise today?

4. What investigations or studies have you completed around food issues, or were done by others that you have used or are aware of? (Names, references, collect copies if possible).

5. Has the history of social justice influenced the food movement in the area? If so, in what ways?

6. How would you describe the quality of life in the community? How would a high quality of life be different than what you described above? What are the key changes needed, and how do these changes relate to your work?

7. What health issues do you see most in your community? Where do you get your information? (prompts: current obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure trends, and any other health conditions associated with diet; fitness and recreational activities; other big health problems)

8. What is the food environment like in Bedford Stuyesant now? What are the main changes that have happened in the last 3-4 years? What are the main gaps or barriers in the environment now to healthy eating? (Present 2006 DPHO map to interviewee, if available, for reference)
(Prompts: adequacy of walkable supermarkets; volume of small corner type, convenience stores, bodegas; types/quality of food available at them including fruits and vegetables; access to green outlets such as farmers' markets, CSAs, farmstands; costs, variety and quality of food available locally; other unique pricing or transportation issues? types and quality of foods are missing in the neighborhood, or items the people travel outside of Bedford Stuyvesant to procure)

9. Have you studied the extent to which food is affordable among your clients or in general in the community? What have you learned? Where do your clients go to purchase food, and how do they use emergency food and benefits available to them?

10. The Safety Net: What factors drive families to access emergency foods? How effective have safety net organizations been in meeting their needs and stabilizing and rebuilding their lives?
(prompts: percentage of eligible families accessing food stamps/other benefits; major gaps, if any, in EFP service delivery in Bedford Stuyvesant; agency networks and their working status; expanding employment opportunities; other non-food organizations that play key roles in the community; quality of support from citywide gov't. agencies and non-profits; health care access in the community;)

11. In general, how are food and nutrition viewed, communicated, or learned about in the community? How motivated are people to work on food issues?

(prompts: awareness of diet as it relates to health, and knowledge of the “right” types of food to eat; cooking knowledge; extent to which people are eating healthfully now, e.g., the frequency of people eating out and eating at home, number of servings of fruits and vegetables are eaten per day; how local residents describe the top three food problems in the community; effect of culture on diets, availability of ethnic foods; extent to which residents are willing to work on food issues, examples)

12. What else needs to be done? How do you think City Harvest can apply its resources and energy to help Bedford Stuyvesant realize better access to affordable healthy food? To what extent are other organizations at State, City, and neighborhood motivated and engaged collaboratively in working on this?

Item 3: Bodega Manager Interview Questions.**Manager Interview Survey****Manager Name:****Surveyor Name:****Store Name:****Date:****BACKGROUND**

1. When did your store first open?
2. Has the store changed in any way? (Sales, structure, products, customers, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

 - a. If yes, how so?

INVENTORY

3. What food items do you sell most of in your store? Rank the top 3.
4. What items do you sell least of? Rank the bottom 3 beginning with the least.
5. Do you carry fruits and vegetables in your store?

☐ Yes ☐ No

 - a. **If no**, why not? Check all that apply. → *you may skip to #8 after answering.*
 - ☐ I have just never tried
 - ☐ People won't buy it them (no demand)
 - ☐ I don't have space in my store for them
 - ☐ The shelf life is too short (they don't last long enough)
 - ☐ I don't know where to obtain them
 - ☐ I can't get a good enough price to make a profit
 - ☐ Other – Please explain
 - b. **If yes**, have you had difficulty selling fruits and vegetables?

☐ Yes ☐ No

c. If yes, please explain what kind of difficulties.

6. About how many fruits and vegetables do you sell a day? (Circle unit: by items or pounds)

7. About what percentage of your total weekly or monthly sales (circle one) do they comprise?

8. What would you be willing to try in order to sell more fruits and vegetables? **

- ☐ More advertising
- ☐ Introducing more variety or better quality
- ☐ Finding a better distributor
- ☐ Creating more space
- ☐ Better placement in the store
- ☐ Cleaning and organizing the produce area more
- ☐ Cooking demonstrations
- ☐ Selling creative snacks out of fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Other- Please explain

***Remind the manager that we can help with all of the above.*

CUSTOMER INFORMATION

9. What time of day is your store the busiest?

- ☐ Early Morning/ Breakfast (between 6am-11:00am)
- ☐ Noon/ Lunch (between 11am-2:00pm)
- ☐ Afternoon (between 2pm-5:00pm)
- ☐ Evening/ Dinner (5pm-8pm)
- ☐ Nighttime (8pm-7pm)

10. Do students shop here on their way to or from school?

☐ Yes ☐ No

a. If so, about how many come a day?

b. What kinds of food do they buy?

11. Do many of your customers use EBT/ WIC? About what percent of them do?

12. Excluding meat and produce, which of the following sources do you currently use to acquire food items/products for your store? (Please Check All that Apply).

- € A food wholesaler
- € A large national manufacturing company
- € A direct store delivery vendor (DSD)
- € Decision made at headquarters
- € Directly from a small food producer (including farmers and small food entrepreneur business)

13. Would you be open to acquiring more products from local/regional producers and farmers? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why/why not? _____

14. Which of the following are the three most important criteria used to decide which food products will be place on the shelves in your store? Which one is the MOST important? (Choose three, then circle the most important reason.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| € Available shelf space | € Label printed in English <u>and</u> Spanish |
| € Product category | € Customer recommendation/request |
| € Sales history/Profitability | € Supplier recommendation |
| € New Product | € Packaging |
| € Ability to re-stock | € Option of consignment sales |
| € Promotional help | € Other (please list)_____ |
| € Shelf Life | |

15. Do you consider health issues in the community when selecting your food offerings? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or Why Not?

16. Do you offer items or information to people with issues like diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure or other diseases? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, please explain:

17. Do you get requests from customers for fruits and vegetables?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, what kind?