

Public Gardens as Agents of Social Empowerment



CHANGING PERSPECTIVES: **PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE**

2016 AMERICAN PUBLIC GARDENS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Presenters



Jennifer Schwarz Ballard, Ph.D.
Vice President of Education &
Community Programs
Chicago Botanic Garden



Eliza Fournier
Youth Programs Director
Windy City Harvest
Chicago Botanic Garden



Randee Humphrey
Director of Education
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden



Adi Bar-yoseph
Hub for Social and
Environmental Activism
Jerusalem Botanical Gardens



Josie Hart
Farm Program Manager
Denver Botanic Gardens
Chatfield Farms



Don Rakow, Ph.D. (Discussant)
Associate Professor, School of
Integrative Plant Science
Section of Horticulture
Cornell University





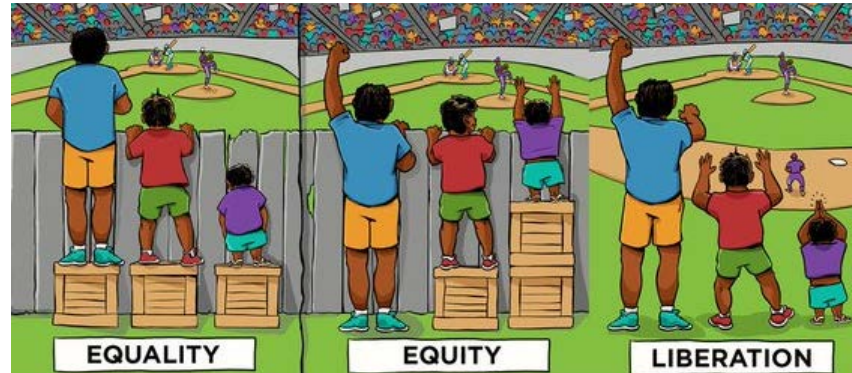
Agenda

- About social empowerment
- *Interactive 1*: What motivated you to come to this session?
- Examples of garden-supported social empowerment work
- *Interactive 2*: What resonates with you from the examples?
- About asset based community development
- *Interactive 3*: Applying asset based community development to your work



What is social empowerment?

- Providing appropriate opportunities and resources to support the success of all individuals
- Recognizing the gifts of every person
- Respecting individuals and preserving their rights.
- Evening the playing field





The environment goes beyond nature

- Our environment includes
 - Social systems
 - Economic systems
 - Political systems
 - Educational systems
 - Healthcare
 - Infrastructure
 - Ecosystems
- Human health is dependent on environmental health
- Public gardens have to be conscious of all other aspects of our environment





We are already doing this work

- Many public gardens are already doing social empowerment work, though often not overtly
- Cross-contextual work is essential to the relevance of public gardens
- It *is* explicitly and should be openly connected to our collective mission
- Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is one framework that can help us do that



Interactive 1 (5 min)

- Is any of the work your garden does grounded in social empowerment? In what ways?
- Is the approach implicit or explicit?



Examples of garden-supported social empowerment work

- *Food access* – Chatfield Farms (Denver Botanic Gardens)
- *Social enterprise* – Windy City Harvest (Chicago Botanic Garden)
- *Climate change* – CONNECT (Chicago Botanic Garden)
- *Greening up capacity* – BeautifulRVA (Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden)
- *Economic growth* – Hub for Social and Environmental Activism
(Jerusalem Botanical Gardens)
- *Comments & Summary* – Don Rakow (Cornell University)





Grow-Distribute-Educate-Nutrition

We started with the space we were using to grow ornamentals – and slowly have been transitioning more and more to food production. Once we established a food production and distribution model – we enhanced our outreach through education and important partnerships.

Grow: Chatfield Farms, Mariposa Urban Farm, Community Gardens, Seeds of Unity Farm

Distribute: CSA, Farm Stands, Donations, Sell, Partnerships

Educate: Plant to Plate, Feeding Communities, Veterans Farm Program

Nutrition: CSU Extension and Cooking Matters - cooking demos, juices and smoothies, recipes

Community Assets and Partners:

Denver Human Services – SNAP Program

Denver Housing Authority –built in garden spaces

Kaiser Permanente – Colorado

Environmental Learning for Kids –at risk youth employment

Cooking Matters- Nutrition and Cooking Education

CSU Extension – Nutrition and Education

Rocky Mountain Farmer’s Union –Farmers Support

LiveWell Colorado – Double up Colorado (SNAP Incentives)

Mayor’s Food Vision – Office of Economic Development

Veteran’s to Farmers- Partner in growing/distribution

Denver Producers – Education, networking, support

SAME Café – donations, discounted meal preparation

Philanthropic Organizations - interested in health/human

services and supporting food access in food deserts

Denver City Council – summer youth employment, food

access and policy support

Veteran’s Services – educational support





Our veterans work at each farm stand. This season we will have four weekly SNAP farm stands and 16 veteran participants over the summer.

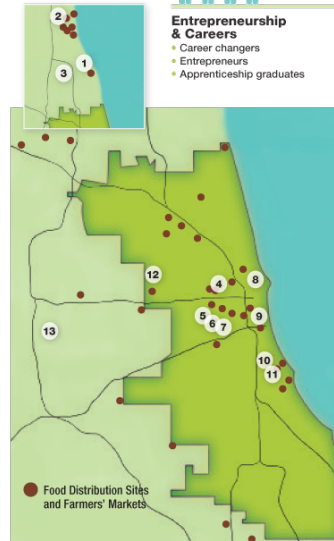
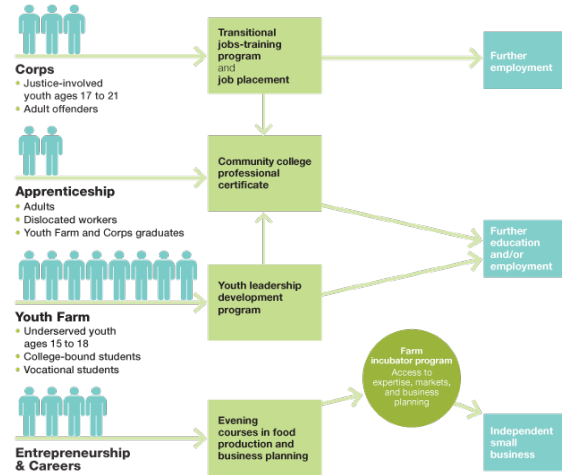


DENVER BOTANIC
GARDENS
Urban Food Initiatives



Windy City Harvest

Mission
To connect people and plants through engagement in sustainable food systems



Windy City Harvest production and food distribution in the greater Chicago area

- Chicago Botanic Garden**
1000 Lake Cook Road
Glencoe, IL 60022
- Youth Farm at Lake County/Greenbelt**
1215 Green Bay Rd.
North Chicago, IL 60064
- Kraft Foods Garden**
3 Lakes Drive
Northfield, IL 60093
- West Garfield Park**
215 N. Kenneth Ave.
Chicago, IL 60624
- Youth Farm at North Lawndale**
3555 W. Ogden Ave.
Chicago, IL 60623
- Rodeo Farm**
26th & Washieraw
Chicago, IL 60608
- City Colleges of Chicago/Arturo Velasquez Institute**
Arturo Velasquez Institute
3100 S. Western Ave.
Chicago, IL 60608
- After School Matters Urban Garden Lab**
66 E. Randolph St.
Chicago, IL 60601
- McCormick Place Rooftop Farm**
2301 S. Lake Shore Dr.
Chicago, IL 60616
- Legends South Farm**
4500 S. Federal Street
Chicago, IL 60609
- Youth Farm at Washington Park**
555 E. 51st St.
Chicago, IL 60615
- PCC Austin Family Health Center Garden**
328 N. Lotus Ave.
Chicago, IL 60644
- Native Plant Production Project with Forest Preserves of Cook County***
Salt Creek Woods Nature Preserve
500 W. Ogden
Western Springs, IL 60558

*Potential future training opportunity for Windy City Harvest students



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

“EAT Plants”



“EAT Plants” motto

We **E**ducate about the impact a plant-based diet has on health, the economy and the environment.



We provide **A**ccess to locally and sustainably grown fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income and food insecure community members.



We **T**rain individuals for a diverse workforce on work readiness and industry-specific skills to prepare them for a variety of career opportunities.



Windy City Harvest Program Statistics

- 13 Off-site locations
- 820 Teen participants since 2003
- 85 Apprentices graduate since 2009
- 452 Inmates participate in garden program since 2009
- 162 Ex-offenders enroll in Transitional Jobs since 2010
- 85% rate of placement “in the field”
- 9,320 WIC boxes distributed Since 2010
- 425,000 pounds of produce distributed
- 5 Community farmers markets annually
- 85+ Community partners



Climate Change

Climate change is
a justice issue;
it amplifies
existing inequities.



Black, T. (2016)

Hoerner, J. A., & Robinson, N. (2008)

Kasperson & Kasperson (2001)





- Starts with communities rather than with (distant) nature
- Engages community members in co-creating sustainable solutions
- Encourages open discussion of climate change and it's impacts
- Supports communities in identifying their assets
- Provides resources and template project ideas for easy start-up



connect

community + climate + action

connectcca.org



Migration Stories: Monarchs and Me



Faith in Place & Covenant United Church of Christ

– South Holland, IL

Goal: Nurture Environmental Stewardship in Communities of Color Migration stories workshops and Climate 101 events connect African American heritage with climate positive traditions using ecological and personal stories. (Photos: Veronica Kyle & Velma Pate)

Linking cultural and ecological migration stories makes meaningful community connections



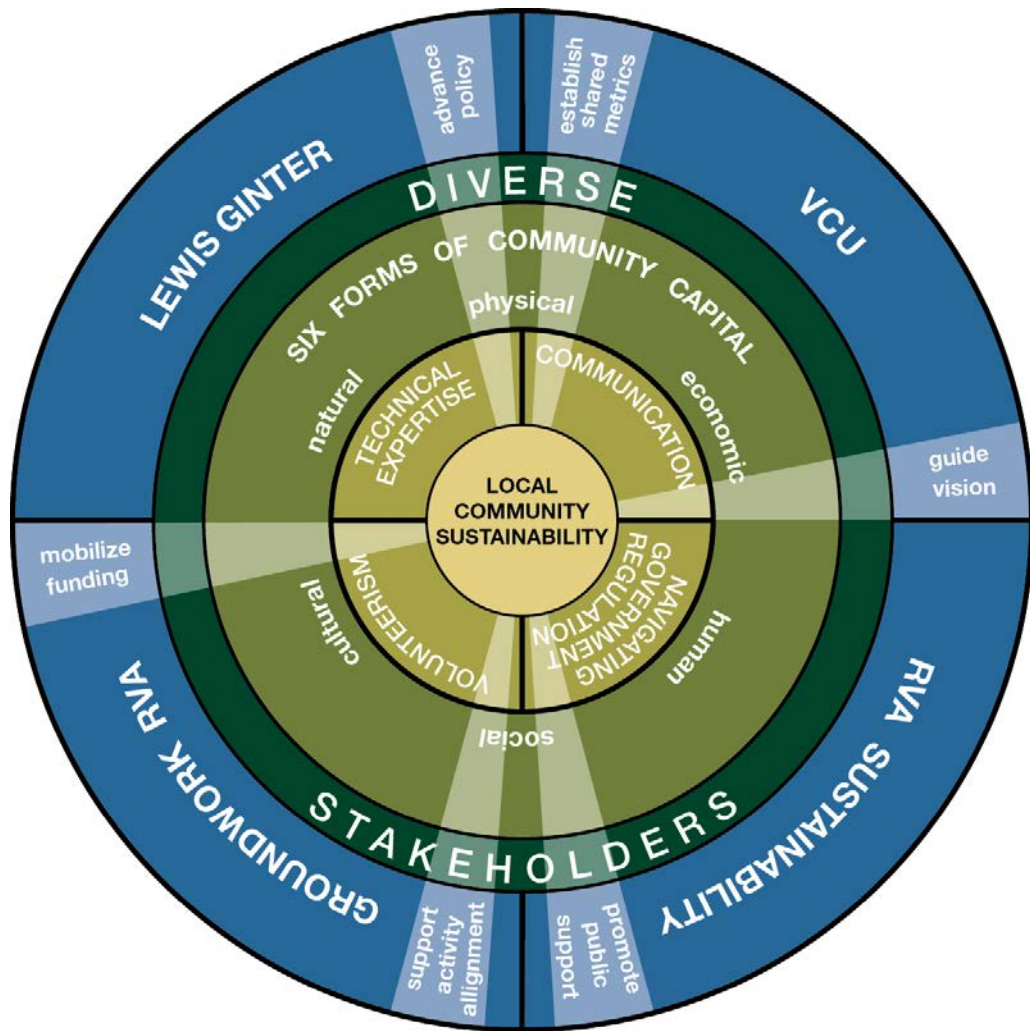
Traditional lifestyle practices find new significance across generations in the context of climate change





Beautiful RVA is a social movement that nurtures community engagement in urban greening through collaboration, advocacy, and celebration.

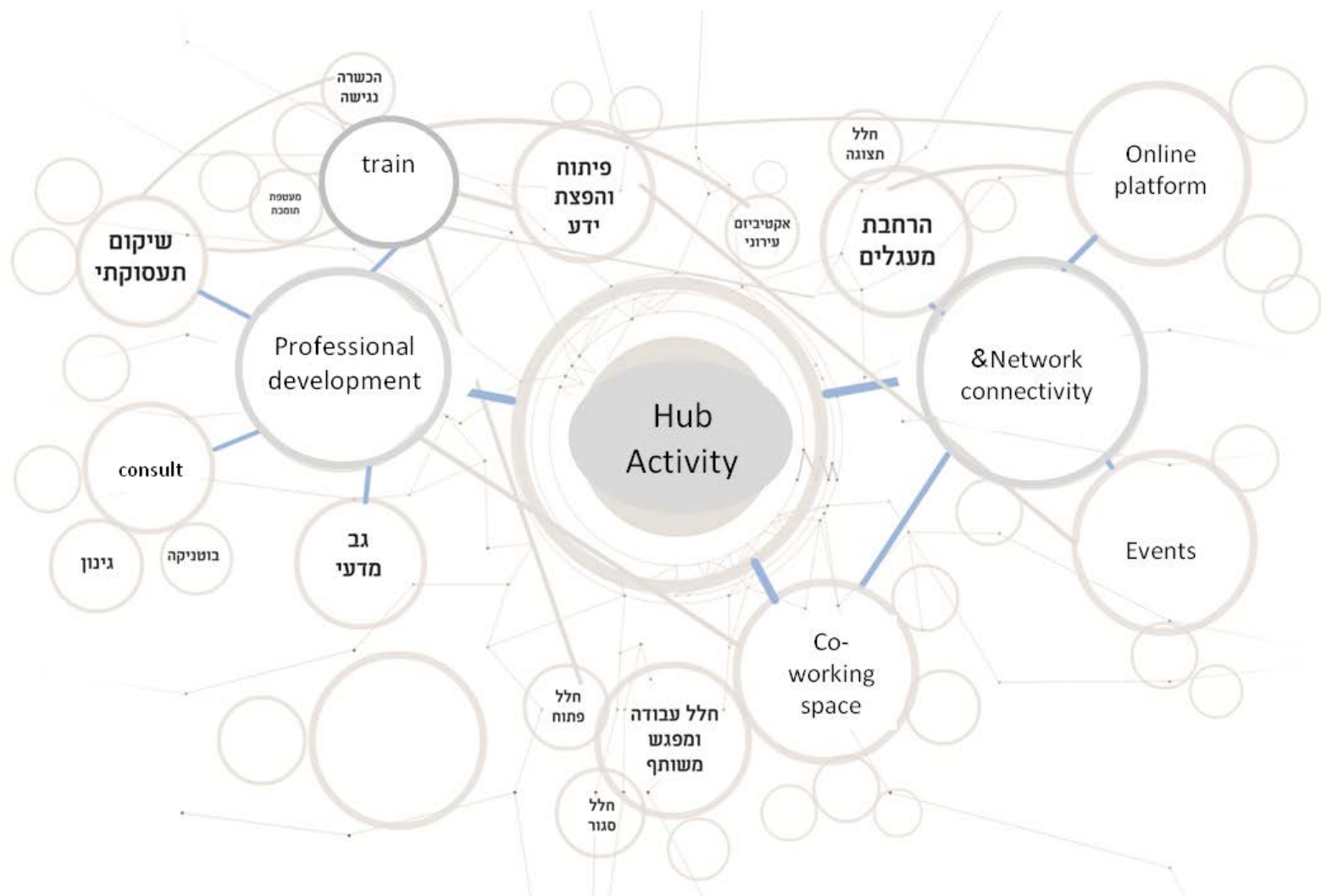






Advancing environmental entrepreneurship and community development for a sustainable Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem Botanical Gardens Hub is a physical, ideational and (soon) virtual home for organizations and individuals operating in the fields of horticulture and sustainability on a wide interdisciplinary spectrum.





Interactive 2 (5 min)

- What resonates with you from the examples?
- Is there any work that you're doing that you feel is “undercover” in it's social goals?
- How might you connect that work more explicitly to your Garden's mission?



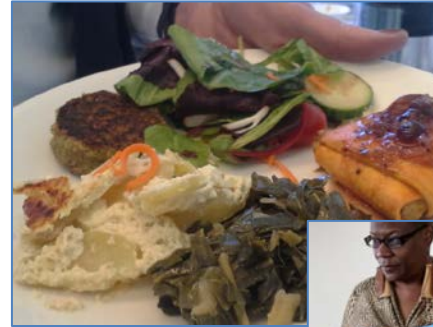
Asset Based Community Development

- Strategy for sustainable community-driven development
- Mobilizes individuals, associations, and institutions to come together to build on their assets—not concentrate on their needs
- Builds on what is *already* in the community
- Grounded in participatory approaches to development



Guiding Principles

- Investigate and listen
 - Everyone has gifts
 - People care about something
 - Ask questions rather than give answers
- Involve people
 - Relationships build a community
 - Citizens at the center
 - Community members as active participants
- Be responsive
 - Citizen-centered “inside out” approach
 - Institutions as servants





Benefits

- Collaborative, inter-personal, and cross-organizational
- Effectively leverage existing resources to greater effect
- Community buy-in and engagement
- Increased long-term commitment
- Capacity building
- Results in innovative, culturally-tailored approaches



Community Assets





Project Planning

- Meet people where they are
- Connect to the everyday
- Build on the positive
- Focus on solutions
- One size does *not* fit all



Riding a bike



Using reusable bags



Composting



Gardening and learning together



Growing vegetables



Growing native plants

Interactive 3: Applying ABCD to your work (30 min)

- Identify community and organization assets (independently 5 min)
- Identify complimentary garden and community expertise and explore potential mutually beneficial collaborations (in groups 15 min)
- Report out (10 min)



Thank you

Jennifer Schwarz Ballard, Ph.D.

Vice President of Education &
Community Programs
Chicago Botanic Garden
jschwarz@chicagobotanic.org

Adi Bar-yoseph

Co-Founder
Hub for Social and
Environmental Activism
Jerusalem Botanic Gardens
baryoseph.adi@gmail.com

Eliza Fournier

Director of Programs
Windy City Harvest
Chicago Botanic Garden
efournier@chicagobotanic.org

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Farm Program Manager
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dr14@cornell.edu



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