Rural Child Hunger & Faith Community Engagement

SEPTEMBER 2020

LEAD RESEARCHER AND AUTHOR

Emma Lietz Bilecky, Duke World Food Policy Center

CORRESPONDENCE CONTACT

Kelly Brownell, Kelly.brownell@duke.edu

EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Kelly Brownell, Deborah Hill, Sarah Zoubek, and Jen Zuckerman of the Duke World Food Policy Center; Derrick Lambert, Share Our Strength

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the advisory board members who informed the direction of this report and provided valuable feedback in its revision: Dr. Wylin Wilson of Harvard Divinity School, A-dae Romero-Briones of the First Nations Development Institute, Rev. Richard Joyner of Conetoe Family Life Center, Dr. Adrienne Krone of Allegheny College, Liza Lieberman of MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, Christina Tobias-Nahi of Islamic Relief USA, and Jeremy Everett of the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty. Thanks also to Dr. Norman Wirzba of Duke Divinity School and Robb Webb of The Duke Endowment for providing input in the development of this project, and Alexandra Treyz for her earlier leadership and coordination of the World Food Policy Center's food and faith initiatives.

Semi-structured interviews with key individuals shaped this report's content and structure. The following individuals generously shared their insight and experience to help identify key themes and recommendations: Justine Post of Resourceful Communities at the Conservation Fund, Rev. Richard Joyner of the Conetoe Family Life Center, Rev. Jabe Largen of Faison United Methodist Church, Rev. Nurya Love Parish of Plainsong Farm and Ministry, Jeremy Everett of the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, Larry Karow of UMC Food Ministry, A-dae Romero-Briones of First Nations Development Institute, Josie Walker of the Black Church Food Security Network, Falak Zaffer Ghatala and Zamir Hassan of Muslims Against Hunger, Ryan Cumming of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Justin Fast of Public Sector Consultants, Tia Ramey of the State of Ohio Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives, and Rosa Saavedra of Bread for the World.

DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and recommendations of any World Food Policy publication are solely those of its author(s), and do not reflect the views of the Duke University or its other scholars.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 Acknowledgements
4 Executive Summary
6 Introduction

14 Themes
- 15 The Moral Dimensions of Hunger and Poverty
  - 15 Responsibility to the Poor
  - 16 Hunger & Spirituality
  - 17 Responding to Hunger & Poverty through Advocacy
- 18 Moving from Charity to justice
  - 18 Beyond Emergency Food Assistance
  - 18 Identifying Root Causes
  - 20 Paying Attention to Community Identity
- 22 Context is Key
- 24 Scarcity vs. Abundance

26 Recommendations
- 26 Listen: Understand and Share Moral Frameworks to Address Hunger and Poverty
- 26 Support: Move from Charity to Justice through Community-led Institutional Partnerships
- 27 Analyze: Partner in Community-led Contextual Analysis
- 27 Lift Up: Practice Asset-Based Approaches with an Abundance Worldview

28 Conclusion

29 References
34 Appendix A. Resources
35 Appendix B. Methodology

TABLES & FIGURES

- 6 Table 1. Households with Low Food Security Status and Food Insecure Children by Race & Ethnicity, 2018
- 9 Table 2. Factors Influencing Rural Food Security
- 8 Figure 1. Food Security by Race & Ethnicity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rural child hunger is prevalent in the U.S., but it remains a challenge to identify and address across large and varied geographic areas. Fostering equitable partnerships with faith communities, religious organizations, and communities of shared belief and practice who are invested in rural areas can help address this complex problem and its root causes. Community-led, faith-based models can offer innovative solutions. Such models often attend to community needs more comprehensively than top-down organizational models or faith-placed interventions.

Faith and Indigenous communities can be loci of social, ecological, and intergenerational relationships rooted in culture care and place-based knowledge. Food is often central to the identity of these communities, who engage in hunger-relief work using various cultural frames. Such communities provide charitable food assistance but may also seek to achieve food sovereignty, health equity, environmental justice, and ecological stewardship. A faith community's hunger relief work can be an important stop-gap solution to meet urgent needs. However, it may also reflect broader ethical or theological frameworks.

This report focuses on rural child hunger and represents a joint effort of the World Food Policy Center at Duke University and Share Our Strength. This report combines a review of existing literature with key informant interviews to illustrate current practices and future opportunities for faith communities to address rural child hunger.

The Duke World Food Policy Center prepared this report in collaboration with Share Our Strength. A leading anti-hunger organization, Share Our Strength supports coordinated efforts to address food insecurity through federal nutrition assistance and public-private partnerships. This report identifies themes, barriers, and opportunities for addressing rural child hunger within faith-based organizations and communities.

THEMES

This research was guided by a central question: how are faith communities addressing hunger in rural areas, and rural child hunger in particular? We identified four overarching themes to describe faith-based approaches to addressing rural hunger.

- THE MORAL DIMENSIONS OF HUNGER AND POVERTY
  Faith and Indigenous communities see hunger as a witness to imbalance in the world: a deeper problem than a calorie deficit. When communities see hunger as a social, economic, and moral problem, they take systemic and collective approaches to its resolution.

- MOVING FROM CHARITY TO JUSTICE
  Many of the organizations and individuals we interviewed described their work as a movement from charity to justice. Justice-focused solutions to rural child hunger address environmental justice, land justice, social justice and racial justice.

- CONTEXT IS KEY
  Building successful and equitable partnerships with rural faith communities requires paying attention to rural contexts along with their unique needs and concerns.

- SCARCITY VS. ABUNDANCE
  Discussions on rural hunger sometimes focus on what rural communities lack, for instance, equal access to healthy food through conventional food retailers. Many faith community leaders instead start with a community's strengths, like dense social networks, strong local foodways, or food provisioning practices that support self-reliance.

It is vital that partners develop a shared understanding of the root causes of rural hunger and poverty, as framing shapes working models and applications in varying contexts (Jones et al. 2020). Mission alignment can help to create equitable partnerships that are community-led and sustained. Charity-based approaches have dominated the hunger relief work of faith communities for several decades. This report highlights emerging models and communities integrating social justice frameworks with spiritual traditions to respond to inequities causing hunger in rural places. This report recommends asset-based, contextualized approaches in partnership with rural stakeholders to achieve sustainable and equitable solutions to rural child hunger.

We highlight notable community and faith-based responses to rural food insecurity. Such efforts seek to overcome challenges such as the stigma and low nutritional quality of food assistance as well as the bureaucratic and political barriers to program implementation. We recommend ways to support, expand, and partner in community-led work that addresses the underlying inequities perpetuating rural child hunger.

RECOMMENDATIONS

LISTEN:

Understand and Share Moral Frameworks to Address Hunger and Poverty

SUPPORT:

Move from Charity to Justice through Community-led Institutional Partnerships

ANALYZE:

Partner in Community-led Contextual Analysis

LIFT UP:

Practice Asset-Based Approaches and an Abundance Worldview

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE OF RURAL CHILD HUNGER

Sixty-three percent of U.S. counties are rural, but they comprise 87% of counties with the highest food insecurity rates (Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2020). In 2016, 15% of Americans faced food insecurity in rural areas, compared to 11.8% in metropolitan areas (Food Research and Action Center, 2018). This mirrors poverty rates—16.4% in rural and non-metro areas vs. 12.9% in metro areas (Pender et al., 2019)—and participation rates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—16% in rural vs. 12% in metro area households (Food Research and Action Center, 2018). Of the 150 counties with the highest rates of SNAP participation, 136 are rural (Reinhardt, 2018). Both rural areas and small cities have higher proportions of households with children who receive SNAP benefits (Bailey, 2014).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as: "a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food." In contrast, hunger is defined as: "an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity" (USDA 2019). The Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP) has defined hunger as: "the mental and physical condition that comes from not eating enough food, due to insufficient economic, family or community resources" (Sharkey et al., 2013).

Food insecurity has particularly severe consequences for children (Singletary et al., 2012). Undernourishment during critical development phases can create physical, mental, cognitive, and behavioral difficulties for children throughout their lives (Aspen Institute, 2016; Feeding America, Child Food Insecurity, 2018). Food insecurity has enduring economic and mental health consequences for families, perpetuating poverty and inequality for generations (Chilton et al., 2014; Gundersen & Ziliak, 2014; Wehler et al., 2004).

Childhood food insecurity affects communities of color and Indigenous communities disproportionately. Black and Hispanic households experience low food security at more than twice the rate of white households (Table 1). In 2020, the highest food insecurity rates were in Southern counties (Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2020). In many rural, Southern counties, and on rural reservations, poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity can be more than twice the national average (Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2020).

Native American communities likewise experience poverty and food insecurity at high rates. Twenty four percent of Native American households receive federal SNAP benefits, and 34% of

Table 1. Households with Low Food Security Status and Food Insecure Children by Race & Ethnicity, 2018

RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY	HOUSEHOLDS WITH LOW FOOD SECURITY	HOUSEHOLDS WITH FOOD-INSECURE CHILDREN
White (non-Hispanic)	4.9%	5.1%
Black (non-Hispanic)	12.1%	14.8%
Hispanic	11.1%	8.3%
Other (non-Hispanic)	6.0%	4.8%

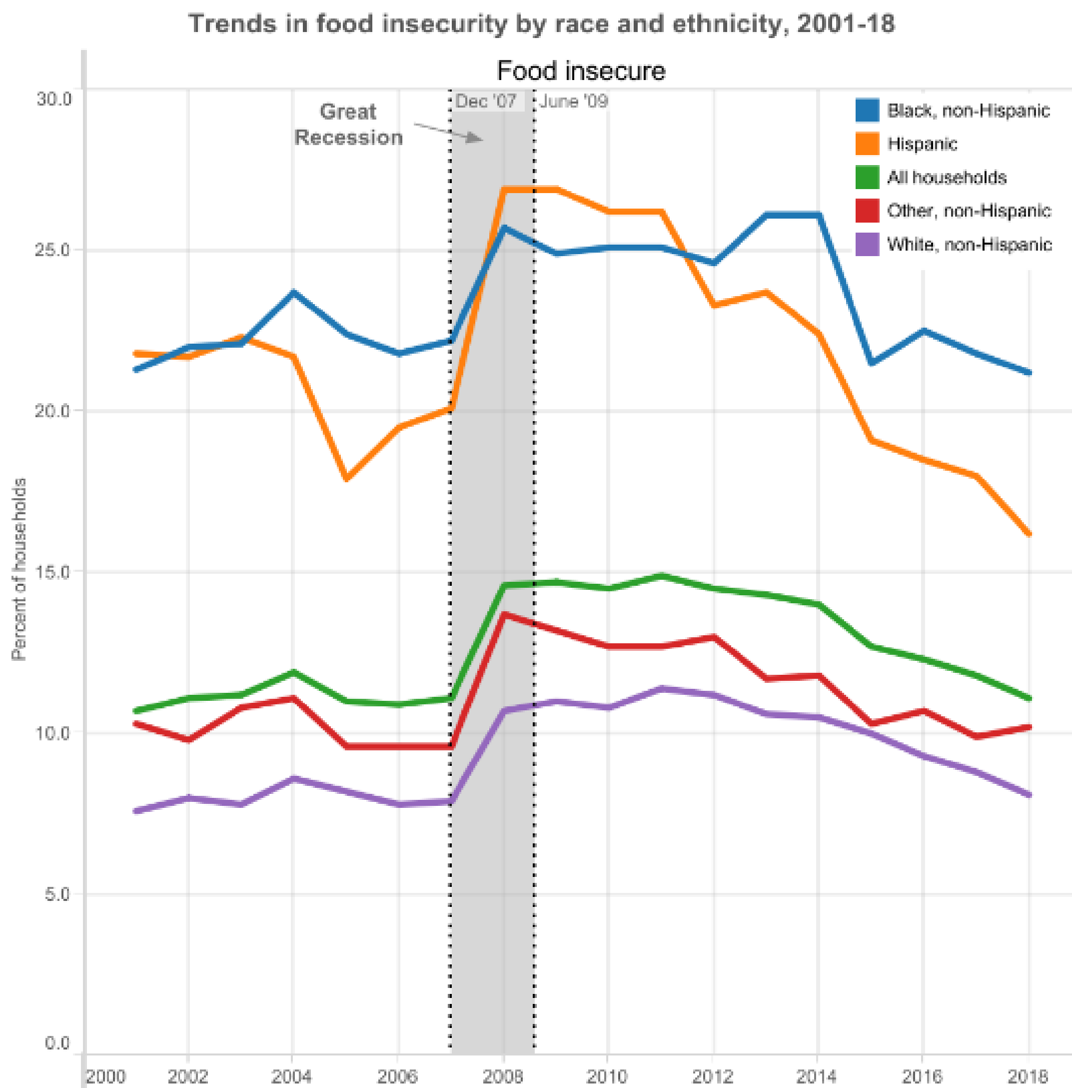
Source: Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019

Courtesy of Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health
STRONGER TOGETHER

American Indian children under 18 live in families below the federal poverty level (First Nations Development Institute, 2018). 90% of counties in the U.S. with the highest Indigenous populations, which are primarily rural, also have the highest food insecurity rates (Bread for the World, 2019). Native American households are four times more likely to report not having enough food to eat and have limited access both to traditional food sources and affordable food retailers after centuries of displacement (Kaufman et al., 2014; Partnership with Native Americans, 2017).

Rural food insecurity is a particularly challenging problem due in part to barriers like transportation, employment, and social service availability (Piontak & Shulman, 2014). Low population density creates food access challenges for families who live far from markets where they often pay more for food (Morton & Blanchard 2007). Grocers serving rural areas struggle to provide healthy food and stay in business. This contributes to low food access and diet-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity (Pinard et al., 2016; Bardenhagen et al., 2017; Morton & Blanchard, 2007).

Figure 1. Food Security by Race & Ethnicity



Source: Calculated by USDA Economic Research Service using Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data. http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us

CAUSES OF AND CONTRIBUTORS TO CHILD HUNGER IN RURAL AREAS

Rural child hunger emerges alongside larger economic pressures. The consolidation and globalization of rural agrifood systems contributes to higher poverty rates for farm operators and agricultural workers, negative health outcomes, and low food security (Brown, 2014; Constance et al., 2014; De Marco et al., 2009). Food retail consolidation similarly affects rural food insecurity (Whitley, 2013).

Systemic racism also shapes rural food environments. The ongoing effects of settler colonialism and land loss, consolidation, and financing have consistently undermined Black and Indigenous land tenure and food systems (Deloria, 1985; Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014; Penniman, 2018. See also *Keepseagle v. Vilsack*, 2011; *Pigford v. Glickman*, 1999). Economic and food security challenges persist within communities of color who have been alienated from food sources, land, and food production practices. Many communities experience intergenerational poverty and increased dependence both on corporate food systems and federal nutrition assistance. While Latinx immigrants and agricultural workers account for much rural population and economic growth, they also experience unique food access issues (Sano et al., 2011).

Rural food access is determined by more than physical proximity to food retailers, food pantries, or congregate feeding sites. Rural food landscapes—and food access—are also mediated by social and economic networks, cultural mores, and institutions (Meierotto & Castellano 2019, De Marco et al. 2009, McEntee, 2012) (Table 2). Food provisioning strategies can be culturally and politically determined, guided by rural values such as self-sufficiency or influenced by social capital (McEntee, 2011; Sano et al., 2011; Whitley, 2013). In some rural communities, participation in food assistance programs may be stigmatized (McEntee, 2011).

Table 2. Factors Influencing Rural Food Security

ECONOMIC	CULTURAL	SPATIAL
Rural poverty	Stigma associated with food assistance	Transportation infrastructure
Rural unemployment	Access to culturally appropriate foods	Proximity to traditional food retailers
Food affordability	Alternative food provisioning strategies	Land access & ownership
Rural agrifood systems	Systemic racism	Retail and distribution networks for fresh foods

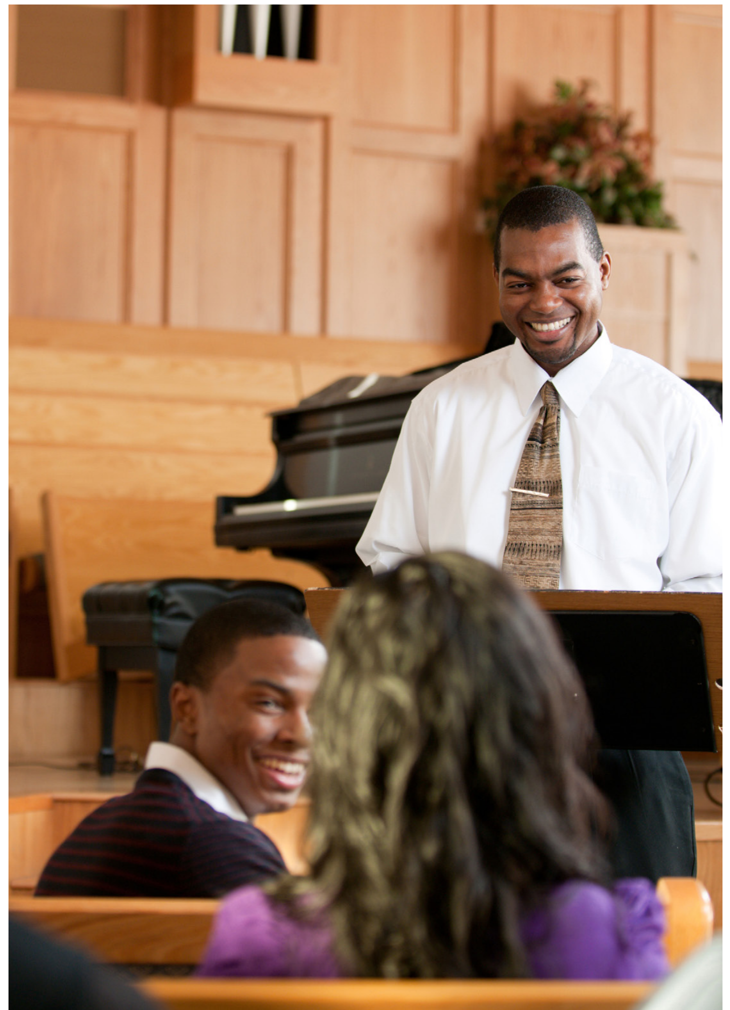
The Institute for Emerging Issues describes faith communities as “anchor institutions” providing social services in rural communities. Such institutions are deeply enmeshed within geographically isolated places and cultivate distinct religious identities (Hatcher, 2018).

These communities of practice are attentive to the context, history, and overall wellness of rural places. Faith communities understand and often possess resources to respond holistically to rural residents’ many needs. In addition to being cultural institutions, convening spaces, and hubs of social life, they address a wide range of physical, spiritual, emotional, and interpersonal concerns for families and intergenerational communities through “kinship care” (T. Ramey, personal communication, March 3, 2020). Faith communities can be well-equipped to pursue just and lasting solutions to rural hunger as they lead and uplift community-centered work.

Faith communities are a “second social safety net,” providing food assistance to address hunger in cases when federal aid is not available, accessible, or adequate (Cnaan, 1999). Churches, synagogues, and mosques are sites of food assistance. People of faith volunteer at food banks and donate to support hunger relief work globally and in their local contexts. Religious belief often serves as a primary motivator for charitable giving (King, 2017; Islamic Relief USA, 2019).

Faith-affiliated food pantries provide emergency food assistance to address acute hunger. Feeding America and other nonprofit organizations partner with faith communities across the United States to establish and sustain food pantries. Approximately two-thirds of **Feeding America’s** more than 60,000 partner agencies are affiliated with faith communities (Treyz, 2020, in preparation). In addition to food pantries, faith communities nationwide operate emergency feeding programs or soup kitchens.

MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF FEEDING AMERICA’S 60,000 PARTNERS ARE AFFILIATED WITH FAITH COMMUNITIES



Nutrition Facts

FAITH-BASED AND FAITH-PLACED ACTORS IN RURAL AMERICA

Rural communities, including faith communities, are diverse. Yet, this diversity is not always accurately conveyed in rural reporting or demographic data analysis (Dewees & Marks, 2017; Sharkey et al., 2013; Sano et al., 2011).

For this report, we define a "faith community" as a group of people with shared beliefs and cultural practices, who engage in food provisioning and/or preserving foodways as a practice of identity or devotion. Within the context of this report, Indigenous communities are distinct from faith communities but share a common emphasis on the ethical and spiritual implications of community food security.

A distinction between **faith-based** and **faith-placed** food assistance efforts can be useful. Faith-placed approaches draw upon community resources such as buildings, kitchens, or volunteer capacity to meet external objectives like service delivery, whereas faith-based approaches align more strongly with faith community identity and teaching and are shaped by both (Harris, 2018). Faith community engagement on rural child hunger can be faith-based, faith-placed, or both.

Faith-based:

programs and values draw explicitly from theological, ethical, or spiritual beliefs

Faith-placed:

utilizes a faith community's land, building, social capital or other assets, but does not necessarily align with the community's belief system

DEFINITIONS

FAITH COMMUNITY

A community which shares a common set of beliefs and/or practices such as a religious group or congregation.

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION (FBO)

An organization, often a nonprofit, whose mission and work are grounded in religious belief or spiritual practice, such as a food bank or an organization that provides technical assistance or leads advocacy efforts.

FAITH PRACTITIONER

An individual whose work and values are grounded in religious belief or spiritual practice. Faith practitioners may or may not occupy formal religious leadership roles.

ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

Focused primarily on education and research, for example, a divinity school, seminary, or university which produces scholarly work on the theological and ethical dimensions of food production, hunger, and poverty.

PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTION

A nonprofit institution that leverages its monetary resources to benefit society, such as a foundation or endowment which works in coordination with faith communities, nonprofits, practitioners, or academic institutions to address food insecurity and its root causes.

Source: Treyz, 2020

While faith-placed initiatives leverage faith community resources to meet community needs, they may lack mission alignment. They risk becoming extractive or creating a power imbalance between faith communities and intuitions with better access to resources. Those who partner with faith communities should learn about cultural and religious contexts, build trust, and be transparent about the costs and benefits of partnership. Equitable faith-based and faith-placed initiatives should engage communities on their own terms, follow their direction to identify root causes of complex problems, and pursue solutions recognized as such by all parties involved (Levkoe, 2006; Vitiello et al., 2015). This can be a years-long process.

For example, Indigenous communities see childhood food security as an issue of food sovereignty: the right to define food and agricultural systems to produce healthy, culturally appropriate food in ecologically sound ways (Alkon & Mares, 2012). Food insecurity in Native American communities is seen as a consequence of U.S. settler colonialism and alienation from ancestral homelands. The direct result is that Indigenous food and agricultural systems have been undermined, with profound implications.

> When you lose the land, you lose agriculture. When you lose agriculture as a way of life, you lose traditional food. When you lose traditional food, you lose culture and identity.
>
> LEE & PATRIE, 2006

While U.S. government programs provide food to address the immediate needs of low-income Native American households and families living on Indian reservations, such food can be low in nutritional value. Low food quality exacerbates health issues connected to forced reliance on commodity food programs (Partnership with Native Americans, 2017). For African American communities, self-reliance, both the sustained access to and control over the supply of healthy food, are integral features of food security. Particularly in the American South, high concentrations of rural hunger and poverty are connected to histories of institutionalized racism and Black land loss (Ashemore, 2008; Piontak & Shulman, 2014). Notable faith-based and other food security efforts seek to overcome these root causes and respond to the historic inequities denying equal land access and wealth to communities of color (Reese, 2018; Gross, 2019; White, 2019).

Understanding the cultural framing communities use to understand and identify child hunger solutions can also illuminate political or cultural barriers to equitable partnerships (Jones et al., 2020). For example, while some community-led responses to rural hunger comfortably utilize the

language of food justice, such terminology can alienate other rural faith communities because of its political and cultural connotations (J. Everett, personal communication, January 14, 2020). Those partnering with faith communities should work to understand how religious and cultural identity informs existing approaches to food security work and precludes others.

In this report, we lean on the language of food justice, following the lead of our key informants and contacts. While we acknowledge that diverse traditions inform faith communities, we weave threads between multiple approaches that utilize a food justice framework. The report is organized thematically and discusses commonalities that emerge from many faith traditions rather than attempting to describe each tradition for comparison purposes.

THEMES

In semi-structured interviews, we spoke with organizations, advocates, practitioners and researchers who held expertise in rural community organizing, child hunger, faith-based organizational management, and food justice. Most of the individuals with whom we spoke were trained in more than one of these areas. Through interviews and literature review, we identified four persistent themes.

- The Moral Dimensions of Hunger and Poverty
- Moving from Charity to Justice
- Context is Key
- Scarcity vs. Abundance

THEME:

THE MORAL DIMENSIONS OF HUNGER AND POVERTY

Faith and Indigenous communities see hunger as a witness to injustice in the world, a deeper problem than a calorie deficit. Their responses go beyond charitable food provision.

RESPONSIBILITY TO THE POOR

When communities see hunger as a social, economic, and moral problem, they take systemic and collective approaches to its resolution. (See, for example, **The Poor People's Campaign**) Within many Native American communities, hunger is understood not as an individual problem to be overcome, but as a consequence of strained and imbalanced relationships with others and the land (A. Romero-Briones, personal communication, March 22, 2020).

Biblical teachings motivate Christians to address food insecurity in their communities. In his ministry, Jesus performed miracles that fed the hungry. For many Christians, to follow Jesus means feeding the hungry as well. However, approaches vary significantly from charity and hunger alleviation to creating alternative food systems (Ayres, 2013; Bahnson & Wirzba, 2012). Christian scriptures speak extensively about hunger and poverty. Christians are taught to see and serve Christ in all people, especially those who experience affliction (Everett, 2019).

Addressing poverty and injustice in the word is a theme that unites all the Abrahamic traditions, according to Bread for the World president David Beckmann (Berkley Center, 2007). Just as loving one's neighbor is considered the greatest of all the commandments Christians observe (Matthew 22:37-40), among the most important of all the *mitzvot* in the Jewish tradition is to heal the world through acts of religious charity and giving ("Judaism's Commitment to Caring for the Poor and Hungry," MAZON). The practice of *Tzedakah*, translated as justice, righteousness, or charitable giving, implies a responsibility to the hungry in times of feast and famine (King, 2017).

Jewish teachings also state that "one who shows mercy to God's creatures will be shown mercy in heaven" (Shabbat 1516). This mercy for the poor is seen in the ancient agricultural laws of *pe'ah* that mandated Jewish farmers leave the corners of their fields unharvested so the hungry might take what they need freely (Krone, 2015). *Tzedakah* and *pe'ah* provided a food security safety net for those without access to land or resources to buy food (Krone, 2018).

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me

MATTHEW 25:35, NRSV

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

MATTHEW 25:40, NRSV

Rabbi Assi said: *Tzedakah* is equally important as all the other mitzvoth put together.

BABA BATRA 9A

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily, your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Eternal shall be your rear guard. If you shall pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Eternal will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

ISAIAH 58:7-8, 10-11

One of Islam's pillars, *zakat* - meaning charity--mandates that all Muslims tithe with monetary contributions or gifts in-kind (Barazangi et al., 1996; Clarke & Tittensor, 2014; Heyneman 2004). The practice of zakat, both a commandment and an act of worship, seeks in part to mitigate food insecurity (Clarke & Tittensor, 2014). Many Muslims also practice *sadaqa,* charitable giving beyond the required percentage prescribed in zakat. *Al musharakah,* the "the law of sharing," mandates that farmers offer food to those who cannot purchase it (Barazangi et al., 1996).

HUNGER & SPIRITUALITY

Hunger has special significance in many religious and spiritual traditions. While addressing and responding to acute hunger is vital, hunger also serves ritual use through fasting, feasting, and communion practices.

For many faith communities, food is not something to be earned, but a gift to be received and shared with others (see Exodus 16). Many see hunger as a human failure to share the abundance given (Z. Hassan, personal communication, February 5, 2020).

Hunger is more than a physical sensation. Humans hunger for justice, restoration, and right relationship with the divine, neighbors, and the earth. The spiritual reality of hunger is integral to the work of justice.

Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA) connects the Muslim practice of fasting in the month of Ramadan with food distribution programs in rural and urban communities and on Native American reservations across the U.S. through the IRUSA Ramadan Food Package. During the month of fasting and spiritual reflection, IRUSA encourages Muslims to donate food packed by volunteers across the country. This is to ensure that everyone has food to eat when breaking their spiritual fast (C. Tobias-Nahi, personal communication, March 16, 2020).

During the Passover celebration, **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger** encourages people of Jewish faith to remember those who are hungry through the bread of matzoh, signifying poverty and persecution, in the Seder meal. “The Passover Seder is meant to remind us that we know firsthand the suffering and degradation faced by those who are poor. We know the sharp pain of hunger, the slavery that is poverty, and persecution. And we also know that this memory, this shared experience, *compels us to act*” (Glazer, 2015).

RESPONDING TO HUNGER & POVERTY THROUGH ADVOCACY

Since the establishment of the White House’s Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships in 2001, collaboration between federal assistance programs and faith-based organizations providing social service delivery have grown (Terry et al., 2015, Pipes et al., 2002). Many faith-based anti-hunger organizations, including MAZON, Bread for the World, and Islamic Relief USA, along with many partners and congregations, work to end hunger through political advocacy.

Case Study:
National faith-based anti-hunger and advocacy organizations

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger was founded in 1985 to build a bridge between American Jewish communities with financial resources and hungry people across the country, particularly in rural areas (L. Lieberman, personal communication, January 24, 2020). MAZON began by adapting a Jewish law instructing that a feast should not begin until the poor and hungry are fed. Mazon encouraged American Jews to donate a portion of their life-cycle celebrations to those in need. Today, MAZON partners with hundreds of Jewish congregations, communities, and anti-hunger organizations to address hunger in a variety of ways, including through local and national advocacy efforts. For decades, the organization has employed unique strategies to prioritize food security and sovereignty in Indian Country. MAZON was the first non-tribal ally member of the Native Farm Bill Coalition. MAZON provides educational resources, legislative meeting toolkits, and hunger Shabbat guides to engage local congregations on the issue of hunger.

Founded to organize congregations giving time and resources to address domestic and world hunger, **Bread for the World** is “a citizen’s lobby on hunger based on Christian motivation” (Simon 2009). The organization seeks to address the root causes of hunger through advocacy, hoping Christians will respond to hunger by preventing it (“Our History,” Bread.org). MAZON and Bread for the World co-chair the Hunger Subcommittee of the Washington Interreligious Staff Community (WISC) Domestic Human Needs coalition. The coalition includes over 30 national faith-based organizations committed to policy change to end poverty.

In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, **Islamic Relief USA’**s goal is to end global hunger by 2030. To advance this goal, Islamic Relief coordinates food assistance programs in communities experiencing hunger. Food aid is the largest sector of IRUSA’s humanitarian aid. Islamic Relief supports food pantries, disaster relief, and worldwide meat distribution during the Ramadan season. It is the leading Muslim voice on hunger in Washington, DC. Through advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill, IRUSA supports legislation to strengthen domestic supplemental nutrition programs, international food aid reform, and emergency food aid in response to natural and man-made disasters.

THEME:

MOVING FROM CHARITY TO JUSTICE

Many of the organizations and individuals we interviewed described their work as a movement from charity to justice. Justice-focused solutions to rural child hunger address environmental justice, land justice, social justice and racial justice.

BEYOND EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE

Faith-based food pantries and food banks play an important role in meeting the immediate needs of those who experience hunger. Still, they may fail to address the underlying connection between hunger and poverty. Janet Poppendieck (1999) suggests that private and faith-based charities and their commodity surplus distribution plays a role in perpetuating corporate food systems and crippling effective policy solutions. Guided by case studies of Evangelical Christian and faith-based food banks, Rebecca de Souza argues that faith-based programs needed to move beyond the narratives of hard work, self-help, and economic productivity that treat hunger as an individual problem in order to become agents of food justice. Otherwise, they may perpetuate stigma against low-income households, single parents, or communities of color who utilize such services (de Souza, 2019). Food pantries can also seed division *within* faith communities. For instance, volunteers control food distributions, and recipients must take what is given according to rules made by others. The power imbalance between members of a worshipping community—though equal before God—can negatively impact a church's formal and informal communion practices (N. Parish, personal communication, January 29, 2020).

Since the 2008 recession, "emergency" food assistance and food bank programs have become an even more regular food source for the chronically hungry (Elmes et al., 2015). At the same time, food bank leaders and others in the U.S. are increasingly attentive to the ethical dimensions of hunger relief, diet-related disease, labor, racial justice, and their interaction (Elmes et al., 2015; Bread for the World, 2019). Faith communities and community-based organizations are incorporating concerns about the environment, wealth inequality, and food waste into food security efforts through new ministry models emphasizing capacity-building and agricultural self-sufficiency (McEntee, 2012; Vitiello, 2015; Dunning, 2020; R. Joyner, personal communication, January 14, 2020). Faith-based organizations increasingly recognize the connections between hunger and poverty and the differences between short-term and long-term solutions to hunger. While many continue to engage in emergency food assistance programs, they also seek to change the rural agricultural and economic systems that keep people poor, sick, and hungry.

IDENTIFYING ROOT CAUSES

For Rev. Joyner, the Conetoe community does not need to be saved from food insecurity; they need to save themselves (R. Joyner, personal communication, January 14, 2020). A just solution to the hunger and health crises Conetoe faces involves food production that drives economic change, promotes health, and enables self-sufficiency. Just solutions to rural food insecurity exemplify a "triple bottom line" approach which pursues social justice, economic development, and environmental stewardship goals (Post, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Conetoe's response to food insecurity addresses problems that are social, spiritual, and economic in nature.

Economic Development

Food insecurity is both driven and addressed by larger economies. Faith-based responses to food insecurity are increasingly attentive to the economic dimensions of hunger, devising solutions that emphasize local economic development (Aguilar et al., 2019) and draw from histories of community self-determination (White, 2019).

- **Resourceful Communities**, a specialized program of the Conservation Fund, supports a network of community groups, faith-based organizations, small towns, and resource providers. Resourceful Communities builds capacity for economic development, social justice, and environmental stewardship in economically- and socially-distressed places through technical assistance, small grants, and networking. Resourceful Communities seeks to uplift their partners and help communities to build on their greatest resources: natural, cultural, and human assets. (Conservation Fund, 2020).

- For members of the **Native Farm Bill Coalition**, **Partnership with Native Americans**, and other Indigenous food sovereignty organizations, long-term solutions to hunger need to do two things: reinstate local control of food systems and expand Indigenous communities' decision-making capacity in ways that support environmental health (Grey et al., 2015; Partnership with Native Americans, 2017). In some cases, this means utilizing available government resources to achieve community food sovereignty objectives, for example, through nutrition education with FDPIR foods (First Nations Development Institute, 2018).

- **First Nations Development Institute** provides grants to indigenous-led food sovereignty organizations. First Nations

CASE STUDY:

Conetoe Family Life Center

For Rev. Richard Joyner of Conetoe Family Life Center, just solutions are "community-led and institution-supported." "Toxic charity" models tend to make problems worse (R. Joyner, personal communication, January 14, 2020). The Conetoe Family Life Center in rural North Carolina sees rural hunger as a consequence of systemic racism and its spiritual, social, and economic effects. To solve these problems, Joyner proposes a paradigm shift. After identifying some of the root causes leading many of his parishioners to chronic disease and premature death, Joyner founded the Conetoe Family Life Center and a farm. The farm grows healthy food with and for the immediate community. In addition to improving access to nutritious food--in a town without a grocery store--the center provides afterschool and day camp programs. These programs teach agricultural skills to 200 young people each summer. The programs provide job training, junior master gardener certification, and marketing opportunities for home-grown produce in addition to food boxes for families in the immediate and surrounding areas.

Conetoe once served as a USDA Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) site. But the community became discouraged by poor food quality, food waste, garbage disposal fees, kitchen inspections, and restrictions on providing meals to family members children served. The current model enables families to produce food rather than merely receive it, a preferable scenario, according to Joyner.

At the Conetoe Family Life Center, food is more than calories and nutrients. To grow food is to be in the right relationship with one's neighbors and connected to God's world. At Conetoe, anyone is welcome to take anything, anytime, dispelling categories of theft and deservedness in a context where food is abundant. Faith compels Joyner to teach people how to provide for themselves and their community in the face of historical and contemporary injustices. "The issue is not food insecurity, but a culture that makes its living off of food insecurity and poor people," he remarks. Conetoe seeks to change this culture.

Development Institute acknowledges that accessing healthy food is a challenge for many Native American children and families. First Nations supports communities working to build sustainable food systems by improving food security and local control over Native agriculture. First Nations and their partner organizations acknowledge that food security is about more than having food to eat. It is about having sovereignty over food production in ways that promote health, preserve culturally important foodways, and build economic resilience locally. Food security is one aspect of First Nations' wider work, but integrally connected to broader efforts to promote financial, environmental, and physical health in Indian country.

Environmental Justice & Stewardship:

For Indigenous food sovereignty movements, hunger has always been about the environment, land, people, and their connection. But environmental justice and stewardship of Creation are central to hunger relief in other traditions, too. In the contemporary Jewish food movement and at places like the Jewish Farmer Network, Hazon and Adamah, *tikkun olam* – repairing the world – and *shmita* – the practice of giving the land a rest every seventh year – are both being reimagined to reconnect food production, food security, environmental health and justice (Krone, 2015). Emerging voices in food and faith seek to reconnect ecology, justice, health and Christian discipleship while responding to food insecurity in rural communities.

- **The Society of St. Andrew** is a faith-based organization that works with farmers and food banks to glean and redistribute fresh produce. A modern application of biblical mandates (Leviticus 19:9–10, Deuteronomy 24:19–22) they seek to reduce food waste, feed the hungry, and increase access to healthy food. The Society of St. Andrew partners with faith-based food ministries to provide produce that would otherwise stay in the field by mobilizing volunteer labor.

Building local food systems might not look like traditional hunger relief, but it can be a holistic, long-term solution to rural child hunger that addresses community health, economic development, and sustainability in ways that reform existing food assistance programs (Dunning, 2020). Care of land and Creation are often integral to food and faith movements, which seek not only to improve community health but to reconnect ecology and spirituality.

PAYING ATTENTION TO COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Faith and community partners should pay attention to how religious identity informs hunger relief in praxis. Traditional approaches to food banking can create ethical dilemmas. However, religiously affiliated food pantries can serve faith-community needs, for example, by provisioning Kosher or Halal foods for communities with limited access.

A just response to rural child hunger and poverty may begin simply by listening and learning what communities need.

- As the first non-Native member in the Native Farm Bill Coalition, **MAZON** has demonstrated commitment to supporting community-led responses to the root causes of rural child hunger in Native communities: removal from homelands and limited access to culturally relevant and healthy food (MAZON, 2019). MAZON's legislative advocacy to address federal underfunding of many Native American programs began by engaging directly with Tribal stakeholders in "genuine partnership to find Tribally driven solutions to food insecurity issues in Indian Country" (MAZON, 2019).

- Over the past year, **NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice** committed to listening to rural voices through their Rural Roundtable

Series before defining a legislative agenda, first grounding advocacy efforts in stories gleaned from listening sessions in small towns across the country (NETWORK, 2019).

- Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's **Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives** "Faith Friday" series takes a listening approach by inviting faith-based organizations to discuss health interventions, community development, funding constraints, and access to public programs and services and providing technical assistance in grant writing, nonprofit management, marketing and fundraising to build capacity locally (Mike DeWine, 2020). In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the office has hosted virtual calls and provided support services for communities.

Faith communities provide food for those in need, but they give much more than that, too. While a faith community's service may involve food distribution, it often seeks to address more foundational needs such as communion, health, and restoration. Though quantitative metrics—such as number of meals served or pounds of food distributed—are important, relying too narrowly on these metrics may cause misalignment with a faith community's identity and more holistic goals (J. Fast, personal communication, February 20, 2020). If a faith community's primary motivation is to show love, it matters not only how *much* food is distributed, but *how* it is being shared. Treating the hungry as "customers" at a food pantry, for example, can present a theological issue by perpetuating broken relationships between humans, Creation, and unsustainable economies (N. Wirzba, personal communication, January 8, 2020).

THEME:

CONTEXT IS KEY

Building successful and equitable partnerships with rural faith communities requires attention to rural contexts, along with their unique needs and concerns.

The faith leaders we interviewed cited administrative burdens as barriers to federal programs like afterschool and summer meal programs. Example burdens include compliance, recordkeeping, and access to central locations (J. Largen, personal communication, January 15, 2020). Respondents also shared concerns about ideological conflict, politics, and freedom of speech (L. Karow, personal communication, January 27, 2020; J. Everett, personal communication, February 4, 2020) as well as volunteer capacity, nutritional quality, and waste production as deterrents to federal nutrition programs (R. Joyner, personal communication, January 14, 2020; J. Post, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Food aid that is of poor quality may be unwelcome in places with strong food cultures (J. Walker, personal communication, February 4, 2020).

Effective faith-based responses to rural child hunger account for contextual needs while mobilizing existing community resources. Both require stakeholder engagement and deep listening. Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) frameworks identify strengths as the basis for contextually-appropriate responses to hunger.

Responding to rural child hunger looks different in different contexts. These programs creatively harness local resources to meet different kinds of community needs.

CASE STUDIES: RESPONDING TO RURAL CHILD HUNGER CONTEXTUALLY

Faison United Methodist Abundance Summer Meal Program

The **Faison United Methodist Abundance Summer Meal Program** is located in Duplin County, North Carolina--where 100% of students receive free breakfast and lunch. Food assistance for children and families is sorely needed throughout the summer months when children are not in school. The USDA Summer Food Service Program was not a fit for Faison United Methodist Church (UMC) because the church does not exist in a central location in such a large county. The church did not have the capacity to ensure hot meal delivery to the students it served. Furthermore, the food provided for the program from the state food bank was difficult to process, leading to food waste. Rather than giving individual meals to children, Faison UMC began distributing weekly food boxes containing ingredients for five breakfasts, five lunches, snacks, and dinners utilizing food donated from local sources. Because many parents work during the day, meals are kid-friendly and easy to cook. After learning that the majority of summer meal program participants were Spanish speaking, Faison UMC partnered with Faison Iglesia del Nazareno la Roca. The partnership with la Roca increases the program’s capacity to respond to families’ physical and spiritual needs. It provides a second, more central location for outreach and distribution. The program feeds 25 families with about six volunteers weekly and provides holistic, pastoral care to the families of the children it serves.

UMC Food Ministry

In Covington, Kentucky, **UMC Food Ministry** helps congregations connect with communities in neighboring rural areas by sharing a vital resource: church kitchens. UMC Food Ministry serves thousands of students every year through summer meal programs. It helps churches that formerly struggled to identify ministry opportunities remain relevant and engaged. Facilitating connections between churches, schools, government resources, and state agencies, UMC Food Ministry works across many sectors to coordinate a scaled response.

Texas Hunger Initiative

Texas Hunger Initiative (THI) describes its work as “incarnational organizing” to develop systematic hunger responses. In a state as large and diverse as Texas, THI strategically operates eight offices across the state, building Hunger Free Community Coalitions (Everett 2019). THI acknowledges that many individuals and organizations responding to hunger in their communities may not have the time or resources to collaborate. THI convenes, trains, informs, and supports communities “to assess local hunger…and evaluate barriers to food security.” This elevates community expertise and connections to coordinate lasting solutions and partnerships (Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, 2020).

First Nations Development Institute

First Nations Development Institute advocates a “Community Centered Strategy” in their food sovereignty assessments to honor and share contextual, place-based wisdom. “A community food sovereignty assessment allows Native communities to construct data-collection processes that allow for uniqueness, place, and also culturally-specific epistemology that are important to build healthy Native communities. In other words, at the heart of community food sovereignty assessment is the promotion of Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing about land, food, body, and community. A community food sovereignty assessment tells its own unique story of a community, and the data allow communities to imagine their distinct futures” (First Nations Development Institute, Food Sovereignty Assessments, 2017).

Islamic Relief USA

In 2017, **Islamic Relief USA** worked to support the certification processes to help An Nur Academy in Lanham, Maryland become an SFSP site. After identifying assets and specific barriers, IRUSA leveraged leveraged its resources to lend administrative support (Duswalt, 2017).

THEME:

SCARCITY VS. ABUNDANCE

Discussions about rural child hunger sometimes focus on what rural communities lack, for instance, equal access to healthy food through conventional food retailers. Some faith community leaders believe a better approach is to begin by assessing the strengths of rural communities. Such strengths could include dense social networks that foster community resilience, the preservation of local foodways, or alternative food provisioning strategies for community self-sufficiency.

NETWORK Lobby's recent Rural Roundtable conversation series across the U.S. affirmed the unique value of rural communities (NETWORK 2019). Starting from a deficit-mentality does not paint a complete picture and may fail to resonate with rural faith communities. Many informants expressed issues with a "scarcity mindset," which frames rural communities as places lacking resources or opportunities (e.g., as "food deserts"). Community food security and environmental justice approaches can denaturalize inequality by thinking historically and systematically about its sources while building equity across food supply chains (Rosenberg & Cohen, 2018).

In his work mobilizing faith communities on hunger and poverty nationally, Ryan P. Cumming of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) World Hunger prefers not to work with a scarcity mindset, claiming it neglects the assets of communities facing hunger and can foster pity rather than mutual respect (R. Cumming, personal communication, February 12, 2020).

Identifying assets is central to community organizing. ELCA World Hunger believes change is driven by local communities and webs of partnerships and encourages congregations to begin with a "listening campaign" in their neighborhood before starting a feeding ministry. Ascertaining which relationships already exist and need to be developed is key to authentic relationships and an authentic ministry (ELCA World Hunger).

Regional organizers with **Bread for the World** follow a two-step, asset-based approach to rural community organizing, first identifying leadership within a community, and then identifying opportunities for action. Beginning with rural communities' strengths allows partners to ask not just what communities *need*, but what they *have*. One organizer describes a food pantry that grew from a neighbor's woodpile and carpentry skills (R. Saavedra, personal communication, March 12, 2020).

The **Black Church Food Security Network** (BCFSN) began as a small network of Black churches utilizing land that they owned to grow food. BCFSN mobilizes sometimes-overlooked resources within Black churches—including land, people, and gathering spaces—to create healthier and more resilient food systems in and for Black communities. Field organizers work with Black churches and Black farmers in North Carolina, Virginia, and Ohio. In June 2020, BCFSN launched its Faith, Food, and Freedom Summer campaign, urging more congregations to grow gardens, patronize Black farmers in their community, and practice food preservation amidst global and economic uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A worldview of abundance has a theological basis but does not deny the reality of need created by human systems of oppression.

Many faith leaders recognize that hunger is not a problem of insufficient food supply but of injustice (R. Joyner, personal communication, January 14, 2020; J. Largen, personal communication, January 15, 2020). They affirm the value inherent in rural communities, framing hunger as an issue not of individual need or deservedness but distribution. Such a framework is vital for engaging with faith leaders who understand complex food access challenges inhibiting communities' flourishing.

In some cases, assets may come from outside the community. Partners can share abundance with rural communities by helping to improve utilization of federal assistance programs like SNAP, WIC, and afterschool or summer meals. However, such partnerships should also pay attention to assets found within communities, like industrial kitchens, land, or social networks which could help improve program participation or enrollment. Those partnering with faith communities should center community resources to build local capacity to meet needs for the long-term.

God has provided for all of creation, forming a world of sufficiency for all, and that inequality exists not because there is not enough, but because of the way resources are distributed; we depend on God and one another and are commanded to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the suffering and afflicted.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2015 A092 RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATIONS

LISTEN

UNDERSTAND AND SHARE MORAL FRAMEWORKS TO ADDRESS HUNGER AND POVERTY

Seeking to understand the frameworks communities of faith use to interpret the problem of hunger in their communities is a good place to start. Religious belief and spiritual practice may shape a community's response to hunger or make them wary of others. Learning about the lived history, traditions, and convictions communities use to address and understand hunger in their communities opens doors and fosters insight. Increasing stakeholder engagement and investing in long-term partnerships builds authentic, mutual relationships that can address rural child hunger's root causes.

EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

MAZON: a Jewish Response to Hunger, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America World Hunger, Islamic Relief USA, and Faith Food Fridays

SUPPORT

MOVE FROM CHARITY TO JUSTICE THROUGH COMMUNITY-LED INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

More faith-based organizations are responding to rural hunger utilizing food justice frameworks. While charitable food distribution is an important first line of defense against hunger, many faith leaders and others see it as a last resort (L. Lieberman, personal communication, January 24, 2020). Food justice and food sovereignty approaches intervene to address the social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors that produce hunger in the first place and work to build power from the ground up.

Institutions can support communities by promoting freedom, flexibility, and adaptability in hunger relief programs to fit within local contexts and build social, economic, and environmental resilience. Partnering organizations can help communities build resilience by providing grant funding, technical assistance, and training, and consulting or networking services to community-based organizations. In this way, institutions can support solutions developed by communities.

EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

Resourceful Communities, Conetoe Family Life Center, MAZON

ANALYZE

PARTNER IN COMMUNITY-LED CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Successful partnerships acknowledge that each rural community is unique. At a time when rural communities feel misrepresented or ignored, partners can show respect by acknowledging that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for rural communities. Many rural faith leaders excel in their ministries because they value the unique characteristics of the communities they serve. Learning the particulars rather than imposing universal solutions leads to more sustainable, long-term, and invested partnerships.

EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

Faison United Methodist Church Abundance Summer Meal Program, Bread for the World (Regional Organizers), First Nations Development Institute (Community Asset Building Strategy)

LIFT UP

PRACTICE ASSET-BASED APPROACHES WITH AN ABUNDANCE WORLDVIEW

Focusing on what communities lack and imposing ready-made solutions can lead to unsustainable cycles of dependency and mistrust. Adaptability and willingness to work with readily available resources are key to resilience. Asset-based approaches pay attention to who is present and what strengths a community already possesses, thereby building trust and practicing an “abundance worldview” to design solutions that work in rural areas.

An organization with a national platform can draw attention to the depth and diversity of work on rural hunger communities of faith and practice. Shifting the narrative from scarcity to abundance leads to solutions that empower communities to meet their needs in ways that align with their identities and worldviews.

EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

IRUSA, First Nations Development Institute (FDPIR Toolkit), Black Church Food Security Network, and the Black Farmer Directory

CONCLUSION

The informants with whom we spoke shared negative and positive experiences associated with food assistance and rural anti-hunger efforts. Even working with limited time, energy, resources, and volunteer capacity, many prioritized solutions that sought to meet the complex and dynamic needs of the communities they served. Often, their approaches moved beyond food assistance to include capacity building, community organizing, economic development, food production, and advocacy to address hunger's root causes.

In order to build effective partnerships with communities of faith, partners should ask what success looks like in different contexts. Success depends on cultural identity, a community's history, and the immediate challenges it faces. Anti-hunger and advocacy groups do best when they understand the complex social, spiritual and economic needs of specific rural communities and look to their desired outcomes and motivations to define success.

Religious identity is more than an affiliation; it is a lived engagement that continually forms and re-forms a community's way of seeing the world and their place in it. Meaningful and lasting solutions to rural child hunger with communities of faith and practice should seek alignment not only with a community's charity or advocacy, but their ways of being in the world. Addressing child hunger in rural communities requires considering the many dimensions of hunger, moving from charity to justice, and paying attention to context while centering the gifts rural faith communities bring to the table.

REFERENCES

Aguilar, K., & Andrade, L. (2019, October). *Equitable Food-oriented Development: Building Community Power*. The EFOD Collaborative. Retrieved from https://66f66dde-ed2c-4a65-b308-a2720180611b.filesusr.com/ugd/c3e56b_efe189f7gfc842bbb0b7c4fcd13b4a72.pdf

Alkon, A. H., & Mares, T. M. (2012). Food sovereignty in U.S. food movements: Radical visions and neoliberal constraints. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 29(3), 347-359. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-012-9356-z

Ashemore, S. Y. (2008). *Carry it on: The war on poverty and civil rights movement in Alabama, 1964-1972*. University of Georgia Press

Aspen Institute (2016, February). *Advancing health through food security: A multi-sector approach to address the disease burden and costs of U.S. food insecurity on our health system*. Retrieved from http://cbf64f51-1e36-4f21-9c35-c031422df221.filesusr.com/ugd/52203f-546c9201216941a69eacc41b71ca65a0.pdf

Ayres, J. R. (2013). *Good food: Grounded practical theology*. Baylor University Press

Bahnson, F. & Wirzba, N. (2012). *Making peace with creation: God's call to reconcile with creation*. InterVarsity Press

Bailey, C., Jensen, L., & Ransom, E. (Eds.) (2014). *Rural America in a globalizing world: Problems and prospects for the 2010s*. West Virginia University Press

Bailey, J. M. (2014, April). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and rural households. Rural Family Economic Security Project*. Center for Rural Affairs. Retrieved from https://www.ruralhealthweb.org/NRHA/media/Emerge_NRHA/PDFs/snap-and-rural-households.pdf

Barazangi, N.H., Zaman M. R., & Afzal, O. (Eds.) (1996). *Islamic identity and the struggle for justice*. University Press of Florida

Bardenhagen, C.J., Pinard, C.A., & Pirog, R. (2017). Characterizing rural food access in remote areas. *Journal of Community Health*, 42, 1008–1019. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-017-0348-1

Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty (2020). Hunger free community coalitions. https://www.baylor.edu/hungerandpoverty/index.php?id=85304

Berkley Center for Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown (2007). *A discussion with David Beckmann, president, Bread for the World*. https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-david-beckmann-president-bread-for-the-world

Bread for the World (2019, May). *Hunger and poverty in the Indigenous community*. https://www.bread.org/sites/default/files/downloads/hunger-poverty-indigenous-community-may-2019.pdf

Brown, D. L. (2014). Rural Population Change in Social Context. In Bailey C., Leif Jensen, L. & Ransom, E. (Eds.) *Rural America in a globalizing world: Problems and prospects for the 2010s* (pp. 299-310). West Virginia University Press

Chilton, M., Knowles, M., Rabinowich, J., & Arnold, K. T. (2015). The relationship between childhood adversity and food insecurity: "it's like a bird nesting in your head". *Public Health Nutrition*, 18(14), 2643-2653. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980014003036

Clarke, M. & Tittensor, D. (Eds.) (2014). *Islam and development: Exploring the invisible aid economy*. Ashgate

Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M. P., Gregory, C.A., & Singh, A. (2019). *Household food security in the United States in 2018*, ERR-270, United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=94848

Cnaan, R. (1999). Our hidden safety net. *Brookings Review*, 17(2)

Constance, D. H., Hendrickson, M., Howard, P. H., & Heffernan, W. D. (2014). *Economic concentration in the agrifood system: Impacts on rural communities and emerging responses*. In Bailey C., Leif Jensen, L. & Ransom, E. (Eds.) Rural America in a globalizing world: Problems and prospects for the 2010s (pp. 16-35). West Virginia University Press

De Marco, M., Thorburn, S., & Kue, J. (2009). "In a country as affluent as America, people should be eating": experiences with and perceptions of food insecurity among rural and urban Oregonians. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(7), 1010–1024. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732309338868

de Souza, R. (2019). *Feeding the other: Whiteness, privilege, and neoliberal stigma in food pantries*. MIT Press

Deloria Jr., V. (1985). *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence*. University of Texas Press

Dewees, S., Marks, B. (2017, April). *Twice invisible: Understanding rural native America*. First Nations Development Institute. Retrieved from https://www.usetinc.org/wp-content/uploads/bvenuti/WWS/2017/May%202017/May%208/Twice%20Invisible%20-%20Research%20Note.pdf

Dunbar-Ortiz, R. (2014). *An Indigenous people's history of the United States*. Beacon Press

Dunning, R., Bloom, J. D., & Brinkmeyer, E. (2020). Making a market for on-farm food loss: Exploring food banks as a market for Southeastern produce. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 9(2), 185–195

Duswalt, M. (2017). *Islamic Relief USA starts its first summer food service program*. United States Department of Agriculture. https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2011/08/01/islamic-relief-usa-starts-its-first-summer-food-service-program

Elmes, M. B., Mendoza-Abarca, K., & Hersh, R. (2015). Food banking, ethical sensemaking, and social innovation in an era of growing hunger in the United States. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 25(2), 122-138

ELCA World Hunger (n.d.) *Feeding ministries guide*. Retrieved from https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Feeding_Ministries_Guide.pdf

Everett, J. K. (2019). *I was hungry: Cultivating common ground to end an American crisis*. Brazos Press.

Faith Fridays training series (2020, March). *Faith-Based and Community Initiatives*. Mike DeWine: Governor of Ohio. https://governor.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/governor/priorities/faith-based-initiatives/news-and-events/faith-friday-training-series-April

Feeding America (2020). *Map the meal gap 2020: A report on county and congressional district food insecurity and county food cost in the United States in 2018*. https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Map%20the%20Meal%20Gap%202020%20Combined%20Modules.pdf

Feeding America (2020). *The impact of the Coronavirus on food insecurity*. https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/Brief_Impact%20of%20Covid%20on%20Food%20Insecurity%204.22%20%28002%29.pdf

Feeding America (2018). *Child food insecurity*. https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/research/map-the-meal-gap/2016/2016-map-the-meal-gap-child-food-insecurity.pdf

First Nations Development Institute (2017). *Cooking Healthier with FDPIR Foods*. Retrieved from https://www.firstnations.org/publications/cooking-healthier-with-fdpir-foods/

First Nations Development Institute (2018). *Outcomes under the nourishing native children: Feeding our future project*. Retrieved from https://www.firstnations.org/publications/outcomes-under-the-nourishing-native-children-feeding-our-future-project/

Fisher, Andrew (2017). *Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance between Corporate America and Anti-hunger Groups*. MIT Press

Food Research and Action Center (2018). *Rural hunger in America: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. Retrieved from https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/rural-hunger-in-america-snap-get-the-facts.pdf

General Convention (2015). Resolution 2015-A092: Affirm Support for Government Funding of Social Safety Net Programs. *Journal of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (p. 277). General Convention. Retrieved from https://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution.pl?resolution=2015-A092

Glazer, E. (2015, March 17). *Let all who are hungry, come and eat*. MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger. https://mazon.org/inside-mazon/let-all-who-are-hungry-come-and-eat/

Grey, S., Grey, S., Patel, R., & Patel, R. (2015). Food sovereignty as decolonization: Some contributions from indigenous movements to food system and development politics. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 32(3), 431-444. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-014-9548-9

Gross, Edie (2019, May 28). *A network of Black farmers and black churches delivers fresh food from soil to sanctuary*. Faith & Leadership. https://faithandleadership.com/network-black-farmers-and-black-churches-delivers-fresh-food-soil-sanctuary

Gundersen, C., Dewey, A., Hake, M., Engelhard, E., & Crumbaugh, A. S. (2017). Food insecurity across the rural-urban divide: Are counties in need being reached by charitable food assistance? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 672(1), 217–237. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716217710172

Gundersen, C., & Ziliak, J. P. (2014). *Childhood food insecurity in the U.S.: Trends, causes, and policy options*. The Future of Children. Brookings. Retrieved from https://futureofchildren.princeton.edu/sites/futureofchildren/files/media/childhood_food_insecurity_researchreport-fall2014.pdf

Hatcher, Beth (2018, March 28). *Rural faith communities play anchoring role*. N.C. State University Institute for Emerging Issues. https://iei.ncsu.edu/2018/rural-faith-communities-as-anchor-institutions/

Harris, D. (2019, March 12). Harnessing faith to improve community health [Audio podcast]. The Leading Voices in Food. Duke Sanford World Food Policy Center. Retrieved from https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/podcasts/darriel-harris-harnessing-faith-improve-community-health

Heyneman, S. (Ed.) (2004). *Islam and Social Policy*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
Islamic Relief USA (2019). Zakat. http://irusa.org/zakat/

Jones, S.J., Craig, J. D., Younginer, N., Whitt, O. Childers, C., Draper, C., Freedman, D. A., Blake, C. E., & Liese A. D. (2020). How cultural frames guide strategies to eliminate child hunger. *Journal of Poverty*, 24(1), 1-23. https://doi:10.1080/10875549.2019.1693130

Kaufman, P., Dicken C., & Williams, R. (2014). *Measuring access to healthful, affordable food in American Indian and Alaska Native tribal areas*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib-economic-information-bulletin/eib131

King, David (2017, November 28). Why faith inspires people to give. *The Conversation*. http://theconversation.com/why-faith-inspires-people-to-give-88206

Krone, A. (2015). “A Shmita Manifesto”: A radical sabbatical approach to Jewish food reform in the United States. Religion and Food, *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, 26, 303–325

Krone, Adrienne (2018). A Jewish perspective on food & faith - theological, spiritual and ethical grounding [Video]. Duke Sanford World Food Policy Center. https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/videos/jewish-perspective-food-faith-theological-spiritual-and-ethical-grounding

Lee, J., & Patrie, M. (2006, February). *Closing New Mexico’s rural food gap*. Farm to Table: The New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council. Retrieved from https://www.hungercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Closing-NM-Rural-Food-Gap-Patrie-Lee.pdf

Levkoe, C.Z. (2006). Learning Democracy Through Food Justice Movements. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 23, 89–98. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-005-5871-5

McEntee, J. (2011). Realizing rural food justice: Divergent locals in the northeastern United States. In Alkon A. & Agyeman J. (Eds.) Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability (pp. 239-260). MIT Press

McEntee, J. C., & Naumova, E. N. (2012). Building capacity between the private emergency food system and the local food movement: Working towards food justice and sovereignty in the global North. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 3(1), 235–253. https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2012.031.012

Meierotto, L., Som Castellano, R (2020). Food provisioning strategies among Latinx farm workers in southwestern Idaho. *Agriculture and Human Values* 37, 209–223. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-019-09959-6

Morton, L. W., & Blanchard, T. C. (2007). Starved for access: Life in rural America's food deserts. *Rural Realities* 1(4). Rural Sociological Society

NETWORK Advocates for Justice (2019). *Raising rural voices: Listening to the hopes and hardships of rural communities*. Retrieved from https://networklobby.org/raisingruralvoices/

Partnership with Native Americans (2017, April). *Combating food insecurity on Native American reservations*. Retrieved from http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/DocServer/2017-PWNA-NPRA-Food-Insecurity-Project-Grow.pdf?docID=7106

Pender, J., Hertz, T., Cromartie, J., & Farrigan, T. (2019, November). *Rural America at a glance: 2019 edition*. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/95341/eib-212.pdf?v=2235.6

Penniman, L. (2018). *Farming while Black: Soul Fire Farm's practical guide to liberation on the land*. Chelsea Green.

Pinard, C. A., Fricke, H. E., Smith, T. M., Carpenter, L. R., & Yaroch, A. L. (2016). The future of the small rural grocery store: A qualitative exploration. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 40(6), 749–760. https://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.40.6.7

Pipes, P.F., & Ebaugh, H. R. (2002). Faith-based coalitions, social services, and government funding. *Sociology of Religion*, 63(1), 49–68. https://doi-org.proxy.lib.duke.edu/10.2307/3712539

Piontak, J.R., & Shulman, M.D. (2013). Food insecurity in rural America. *Contexts*, 13(3): 75-77. https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214545766

Poppendieck, J. (1999). *Sweet charity? Emergency food and the end of entitlement*. New York: Penguin.

Reese, A. (2018). "We will not perish; we're going to keep flourishing": Race, food access, and geographies of self-reliance. *Antipode*, 50(2), 407-424. https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12359

Reinhardt, S. (2018, March 14). Food stamps cuts could hit rural America hardest. Union of Concerned Scientists. https://blog.ucsusa.org/sarah-reinhardt/food-stamps-cuts-could-hit-rural-america-hardest.

Rosenberg, N., & Cohen, N. (2018). Let them eat kale: The misplaced narrative of food access. *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 45(4).

Sano, Y., Garasky, S., Greder, K., Cook, C., & Browder, D. (2011). Understanding food insecurity among Latino immigrant families in rural America. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 32(1), 111-123.

Sharkey, J. R. (2009). Measuring potential access to food stores and food-service places in rural areas in the U.S. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 36(4S), 151–155.

Sharkey, J. R., Dean, W. R., & Nalty, C. C. (2013). Child hunger and the protective effects of supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) and alternative food sources among Mexican-origin families in Texas border colonias. *BMC Pediatrics*. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2431-13-143.

Shellabarger, R.M., Voss, R.C., Egerer, M. (2019). Challenging the urban–rural dichotomy in agri-food systems. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 36(91). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-018-9892-2

Singletary, J, Everett, J. K., & Nolen, E. (2012). Advancing childhood food security through organizing strategies. *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*, 3(1): 10. https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/childrenatrisk/vol3/iss1/10

Terry, J. D., Smith, A. R., Warren, P. R., Miller, M. E., McQuillin, S. D., Wolfer, T. A., & Weist, M. D. (2015). Incorporating evidence-based practices into faith-based organization service programs. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 43(3), 212.

The Conservation Fund (2020). *Resourceful communities: our approach*. Retrieved from https://www.conservationfund.org/our-work/resourceful-communities/our-approach.

Treyz, A. (2020). *Moving from charity to justice: faith communities and food systems*. World Food Policy Center. Manuscript in Preparation.

United States Department of Agriculture (2019, September 4). *Definitions of food insecurity*. https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx.

Vitiello, D., Grisso, J.A., Whiteside, K.L. (2015). From commodity surplus to food justice: Food banks and local agriculture in the United States. *Agriculture and Hum Values*, 32, 419–430. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-014-9563-x

Walker, D. (2019). *From generosity to justice: a new gospel of wealth*. The Ford Foundation

Wehler, C., Weinreb, L. F., Huntington, N., Scott, R., Hosmer, D., Fletcher, K., Goldberg, R., & Gundersen, C. (2004). Risk and protective factors for adult and child hunger among low-income housed and homeless female-headed families. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(1), 109–115

White, M. (2019). *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement*. University of North Carolina Press

Whitley, S. (2013). Changing times in rural America: food assistance and food insecurity in food deserts. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 16(1), 36-52, https://doi.org/10.1080/10522158.2012.736080

APPENDIX A. RESOURCES

RESOURCE HUBS FOR COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS

- Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty Hunger Data Lab

- Bread for the World Resource Library
  - Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition Assistance Programs

- Equitable Food Oriented Development Collaborative White Paper

- ELCA World Hunger Resources and Documents
  - Feeding Ministries Guide
  - Toolkits on Gender and Hunger, Hunger and Climate Change, Animals and Hunger, etc.
  - Seasonal Guides

- First Nations Development Institute Knowledge Center

- MAZON
  - “This is Hunger”
  - Hunger Shabbat
  - Synagogue Partners
  - Hunger and Jewish Texts

- NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice Raising Rural Voices

- Share Our Strength Child Hunger in Rural America Micro Report

- USDA Food and Nutrition Service Resources for Faith Communities and Partners

- WhyHunger Food Justice Resources

APPENDIX B. METHODOLOGY

This research was guided by a central question: how are faith communities addressing hunger in rural areas, and rural child hunger in particular? This research began with a literature review and included a series of semi-structured phone interviews.

During the semi-structured interviews, we spoke with organizations, advocates, practitioners and researchers who held expertise in rural community organizing, child hunger, faith-based organizational management, and food justice. Most of the individuals with whom we spoke were trained in more than one of these areas.

We examined research on rural hunger, rural child hunger, faith-based and religious responses to food insecurity, food insecurity, and public health, and community-based food justice approaches. Much has been written on hunger in rural America. We examined many efforts to address child hunger through public assistance programs like SNAP, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), National School Breakfast Program (NSBP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

Many hunger relief efforts in rural communities address child hunger as a component of broader food security and economic development efforts. We sought interviews with practitioners working at the intersection of food, faith, and economic development in rural communities. The following questions guided conversations with key informants:

- How does your religious/spiritual tradition understand food access issues and/or the meaning of hunger?
- How do the communities with whom you work confront food insecurity? What tools work for practitioners in rural areas? What motivates their work?
- How is rural child hunger being addressed within your community?
- What are some of the challenges of mobilizing communities to address food insecurity and its root causes?
- What strengths and assets do faith communities bring to this work?
- What does success look like in the work that you and your community do?
- How can organizations providing nutrition assistance build successful partnerships with communities and faith-based organizations in rural areas?

At the conclusion of each interview, we asked for additional initiatives or contacts to inform our research, following a snowball sampling methodology.

Interviewees and advisory board members included guests of the 2019 Rural Child Hunger Summit and 2018 Food and Faith Convening, organized by No Kid Hungry and the World Food Policy Center, respectively. We identified additional contacts through literature reviews and individual recommendations.

Advisory board members participated in a series of conference calls to inform the landscape analysis, literature review, and report editing process. These individuals had diverse backgrounds and experiences with rural hunger and religious community engagement. To maximize faith community, organizational and geographic representation, our advisory board included academics and practitioners, nonprofit and NGO leaders from Jewish, Muslim, Indigenous, and Protestant Christian backgrounds. Advisory board

members represented various approaches to food justice and hunger relief work in rural contexts and informed our landscape analysis through firsthand experience and knowledge of the field.

We took a broad approach to define *rural, faith,* and *hunger*, acknowledging:

1. Rural and urban food environments are interdependent and cannot be treated as entirely separate (Shellabarger et al., 2018, Gundersen et al., 2017)

2. *Religion* and *faith* can function as exclusionary or deterring terms. Many communities for whom food has profound spiritual and cultural value may not self-identify as faith communities. (A. Romero-Briones, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Similarly, many food justice advocates across different religious traditions share common ethical frameworks (for example, see the Washington Interfaith Staff Community Interfaith Working Group on Global Hunger and Food Insecurity). Further, members of any given religious tradition will have points of disagreement.

3. Hunger describes a phenomenon inseparable from poverty and economic inequality. Many efforts to address hunger within faith communities take a holistic approach, paying attention to interrelationships between hunger, financial security, and mental health. Food often becomes a pathway to achieve broader economic development or social justice aims (Aguilar et al., 2019).

Duke SANFORD | WORLD FOOD POLICY CENTER

The World Food Policy Center is a research, education, and convening organization within Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy. Its mission is to advance connected and inclusive food system policy and practice in support ofequity and resilience of local and global food systems. WFPC work centers on economic development through food justice; root causes and narratives of racial inequity in the food system; moving aid from charity to capacity building; governance insupport of equity in power and benefit; local food system analysis; and public health and nutrition.
wfpc.sanford.duke.edu

No child should go hungry in America. But in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, 1 in 4 kids could face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is working to end childhood hunger by helping launch and improve programs that give all kids the healthy food they need to thrive. This is a problem we know how to solve. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization committed to ending hunger and poverty.
www.nokidhungry.org/