IMPROVING FOOD ACCESS IN SAN DIEGO

Elle Mari, M.Sc., Director
Urban Food Environments
Center for Community Health
University of California, San Diego
Overview

Urban Food Environments

About the Team
UC San Diego CCH UFE

Food Access
Asset-based Approach

Neighborhood Lens: City Heights

UFE Projects
Summary
Elle Mari, M.Sc.

- Practitioner, researcher, advocate, collaborator, lifelong learner, all things food-oriented, first generation
- Director of UFE at UCSD CCH
- 6 yrs UCSD CCH
- Food Systems & Society Masters in Science
- 12 yrs food access and health equity
- 15 yrs community engagement (CHI, SAC, OAK, PDX, LA, SD)

"In our work and in our living, we must recognize that difference is a reason for celebration and growth, rather than a reason for destruction." - Audre Lorde
Lizzy Cooper, MPH

- Organizer, partner, advocate, learner
- Community Food Project Manager at UCSD CCH
- Masters in Public Health
- Emerson Hunger Fellow, Rockwood Building Power Fellow
- 10+ yrs community engagement (SFO, BOS, SD, PDX, ABQ, D.C.)

“Hunger is not an issue of charity, it is an issue of justice” - Jacques Diouf
INVEST IN OUR COMMUNITY

EVERYONE DESERVES ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS
Urban Food Environments

Improve Food Access by Building Upon Existing Neighborhood-Level Food Assets

Support small grocery markets, urban farms, farmers' markets, food pantries, and community members in building an inclusive, equitable, and economically thriving local food landscape.

Center City Market, City Heights
UC San Diego Youth Advisory Council
Dimensions of Food Access

**Availability:**
Is the food supply there?

**Accessibility:**
Where is the food? Can I get there easily?

**Affordability:**
How much does the food cost? Do I have enough $?

**Accommodation:**
Are my needs met here? Can I use SNAP EBT?

**Acceptability:**
Is this quality food? Is this relevant to my culture?
City Heights

Unique, densely populated, **culturally diverse** neighborhood, with over **30 languages** spoken, **numerous foodways**, low economic prosperity, **food insecurity**, and significant **health disparities** contributing to **poor health outcomes**.

African Caribbean Market, City Heights
Low-income household (<200% FPL) (18+)

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City Heights</th>
<th>San Diego County</th>
<th>California</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Heights</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
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Food insecure (18+)

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<tr>
<td>City Heights</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
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<td>San Diego County</td>
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<td>California</td>
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Obese (18+)

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<tr>
<td>City Heights</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
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Race/Ethnicity

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<th>San Diego County</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>11.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
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<td>15.4</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other / 2 or more</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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^ Demographics are provided for adults ages 18+.

Other includes American Indian / Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, and two or more races.

† Denotes statistically unstable estimate (CV > 0.3).
Asset-based Understanding of City Heights' Food Landscape

82 small retailers with staple foods
12 yro farmers' market
3 community gardens
5 urban farms/market gardens
Many restaurants offering diverse delicious cuisine
Multiple emerging women and refugee or immigrant owned food enterprises, e.g., catering/cottage foods
Building on Assets

Rema Halal Foods, El Cajon
UC San Diego Youth Advisory Council

COMMUNITY MARKETS

LIVE WELL COMMUNITY MARKET PROGRAM
AFRICAN CARIBBEAN MARKET
FRESH GARDEN MARKET
Building on Assets

FOOD PANTRIES

Triton Food Pantry, UC San Diego Campus
Supporting food pantry operators with practical, client-centered strategies that focus on health and dignity.

Working with 10 pantries across San Diego County, emphasizing COVID-19 prevention & safety during food distribution times.

Fresh Fruit Swap, Fair @44 in City Heights
Building on Assets

Tijuana River Valley Community Garden
1/4 Acre Farms
Resource Conservation District

SAN DIEGO URBAN GROWERS’ COLLABORATIVE
Urban Multi-Farm CSA --> Food Shed

Supply, Skills, Assets, Needs

Demand, Technical Assistance, Training

Collaboration & Pilot Project
Building on Assets

Example Mobile Farmers' Market
Freshest Cargo from Fresh Approach Bay Area
Project New Village
Good Food District
Mobile FM Launch

Making locally grown good food available to more low-income households in communities of color.

- Advising on development and launch of new mobile FM serving Greater Southeastern San Diego neighborhoods.
- Planning Southeastern food aggregation site in partnership with Food Shed Small Farm Distro to supply mobile FM truck.
- Providing operating capacity and infrastructure (e.g. cold storage) support to build and sustain Good Food District food justice agenda.

Ms. Diane Moss and Kamaal Martin of Project New Village. Photo Credit: PNV
Starting from an **asset-based perspective** allows us the ability to build and grow meaningful community partnerships to be in authentic service to residents, small businesses, and other stakeholders in our local food system.

Food access has **multiple meanings**. What does the particular group you're working with prioritize the most?

**We're here to help.** Our UFE team has a wide breadth of experience and knowledge working on food access issues. **Please reach out.**
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Thank you for your time!
Be well.