Cultivating a Local Food Culture in Phoenix

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Overview
To support efforts to craft a local food culture in Phoenix by better understanding key actors’ perceptions of and interests in developing new partnerships between local restaurants and growers.
Food and Community

- Urban Isolation from Food
  Food Deserts (Roosevelt Row corridor)

- Sustainable Community Food Systems
  Integrate food into urban community
  Community gardens, local farms, CSAs, Farmers Markets
  Promotes health and city beautification (use of vacant land)
  Reduces environmental impacts of food
  Community development (sense of ownership and "home")

- Food as Social Enterprise
  Combines mission and means
  Roosevelt Row Growhouse and IRC Gila Farm Cooperative
  Reliable consumer base -- Restaurants
  Barriers?
Research Methods

- Literature review
- In-depth interviews with community partners and local restauranteurs
  - Sampling Strategy
    - Purposeful sampling of restaurants in Roosevelt Row Corridor
    - Criteria: Well established restaurants; diversity of cuisine
  - Interview Process
    - 30-60 minutes
    - Structured and semi structured interviews
Restaurants interviewed

- Carly's
- Tammie Coe Cakes Cafe
- Athenian Express
- Pita Jungle
- Pizzeria Bianco
Restauranteur's perception of the Local Food Culture in Phoenix

- Developed within past 5-10 years
- More people health-conscious,
- More people interested in where their food comes from
- More more choice

Common Value: Food quality more important to consumers and producers
Perceived Barriers to increasing proportion of local produce

- Insufficient Quantity and Consistency
- High Prices
- Lack of know-how
- Restaurant Philosophy
Opportunities for Overcoming Barriers

Ideas identified by restauranters as helping promote local produce:

- Growing bigger amounts of fewer crops
- Developing a CSA model for restaurants
  - Contracted with restaurants to grow certain crops
  - Consolidate growing capacity and marketing power (i.e. GFC)
- Be proactive in marketing -- making connections
  - Make produce more accessible
  - Produce Catalogue
  - Price List
  - Sell through purveyor
Conclusion

By implementing strategies to overcome the barriers identified by restaurateurs, we can promote collaboration between growers and restaurants, and continue to foster a thriving local food culture in downtown Phoenix.
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