Identifying Community Partners

In Task 2-2 and Task 2-5, you collected some evidence about the local food culture and what the community thinks about food and nutrition. Now it is time to identify some community partners that can help you learn more. A community partner is any resource that has the potential to improve the quality of life within a community. Examples of community partners:

**People:** Health workers, school staff, doctors, and teachers all have knowledge that could be helpful for the team during your research.

**Places:** Hospitals, health centers, libraries, police stations, and community centers all have information that could be helpful for the team during your research.

**Community organizations and associations:** Organizations and associations are groups of people who are working together to advance a common goal, like food security.

**Government agencies.** The Department of Health or the Department of Human Services might have information that could be helpful for the team during your research.

In this task, the team will be focusing on the following question from the question map in Task 1-10: Who are local people, organizations, and associations that can provide valuable information related to this problem?

In this task, the team will identify some local community partners that could help you better understand the problem question, How do we ensure good nutrition for all?

1. Go to the Task 2-6 folder and get the Identifying Community Partners instructions, Ask the Team reading, and data sheet. There is only one version of this task.

2. As a team, read the Ask the Team reading about why it is important to identify and work with partners. For each person, identify one reason why they think it is important to identify and work with partners during their research. 3. Use the instructions and data sheet in the task folder to develop a list of possible team community partners.

4. Identify whether any of the community partners are within the research site map you created in Task 2-1. If so, mark and identify those on your research site map and add them to the legend.

5. If the majority of community partners are mainly outside of your research site map, consider expanding your map boundaries to include these partners within your research site, or create a separate community partners map to map out the locations of these partners in relation to the location of your research sites.

Hooray! You completed Task 2-5. Check it off the task list. Go to Task 2-6!
Task 2-6. Identifying Community Partners

1. As a team, work together to start making a list of different community partners the team should use in your research.

2. Brainstorm a list of individuals in the community who could possibly help provide information for questions on the question map from Task 1-10.

3. Have team members ask their family, friends, and people in the community to help come up with some names of people, organizations, or agencies that might make good partners.

4. Do some research online, in local phone books, and by calling different organizations to find out what people, places, organizations, and agencies exist in your community that can help you learn more about food and nutrition. Examples include:
   - School or community center staff might have information about food at the school or in the community
   - Parents or family members of the team might include professions who work with food, nutrition, or health
   - People who work at food markets or stores that sell food
   - People who grow or raise food, such as farmers
   - People who work at or own restaurants, such as a chef or wait staff
   - People who have community gardens to grow food for the community
   - Hospitals or health centers that treat people with food-related issues
   - Community centers that educate the community about food
   - Libraries that have information about food and nutrition
   - Parks
   - Universities and colleges
   - School organizations
   - Department of Health and Agriculture
   - Department of Human Services

5. Compile a team list. Use the data table below as needed.

6. Write a brief description of how the person, organization, or agency could be helpful to the team.

7. Determine how the team could contact the person, organization, or agency to get information from them.

8. With your team leader, develop a contact plan for reaching out to people in your community.
## Task 2-6 Identifying Community Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community partner</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>How it could be helpful to team</th>
<th>Contact information (address, phone, e-mail)</th>
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FOOD! Task 2-6. Identifying Community Partners

Why is it important to identify and work with a team of partners in your work?

ANDREA the ANTHROPOLOGIST
National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

My team for this project is one of the best I’ve ever worked with. We listen to each other, each member has her strengths—and yes, they are all women! Six members in all, from three institutions across the country. Collaboration is an essential part of modern science, because by combining experts from different areas we can ask bigger questions with multiple lines of evidence. That work takes time, money, and good communication between team members. When it works, like the team I’m on for EMPHASIS, it’s a great feeling.

ASHLEY the HISTORIAN
National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Most of our work is team-based. When we go out into the field to interview people and collect objects for the museum, we do so as a team. After collecting the materials, we work with museum specialists to catalog, preserve, and store the objects before they go on display in an exhibition. Another example of teamwork revolves around our public programming, like Smithsonian Food History Weekend. We partner with chefs, professors, community leaders, and activists to talk on panels, conduct cooking demonstrations, and share meals together with the public. Planning this event takes an entire year, and the Food History Team partners with curators and historians who have subject area expertise in the chosen annual theme. We bring these experts together weekly to brainstorm ideas about which questions we would like to ask and what people we would like to invite to the museum to speak. It’s very rewarding work.

CARLOS the GLOBAL HEALTH MANAGER
Johnson & Johnson, São Paulo, Brazil

We are always working in multidisciplinary teams to offer the best possible nutrition option for patients. We create fun weight loss competitions in a sustainable way and offer the largest choice of healthy foods possible.
Why is it important to identify and work with a team of partners in your work?

MIKE the ZOO NUTRITIONIST

Smithsonian National Zoological Park and Conservation Biology Institute

There are roughly 20 zoo nutritionists in North America. We all pretty much know each other. Very infrequently, we function together as an entire group. More frequently, our combined efforts are facilitated through a common professional organization, the Nutrition Advisory Group. If we have a big issue to address, like care and handling of feeder animals, we will gather a group of nutritionists and other partners together to develop commonly accepted guidelines to help all zoos with that issue. In the same way, each nutritionist in the United States functions as a nutrition advisor to a Species Survival Plan (SSP) or Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) program. These groups manage an entire species, such as cheetahs. The nutrition advisor to the cheetah SSP will not only provide nutrition guidance and direction to their own zoo, but also to all of the zoos managing cheetahs. In this way, the influence of the 20 zoo nutritionists can be more positive than just within their own zoo.

SABRINA the CURATOR

National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

There are many different skills involved in studying humans from past to present. Some people can identify evidence of malnutrition and disease in bones and teeth, whereas others can reconstruct a diet from isotopic signatures. Some people can extract and sequence ancient DNA to find certain genetic traits related to metabolism, whereas others can identify trace evidence of harmful chemicals and metals. Some people are experts in animal health or environmental health, which are critical for seeing the big picture. This is why it is helpful to identify and work with diverse partners, to get a much fuller picture when doing your research.

JENNIFER the MUSEUM CURATOR

National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution

Curators often collaborate with each other on research projects, but we most often work together on exhibitions. Right now, the Air and Space Museum is creating over 20 new exhibitions for the public, which will open starting in 2022. This is a MASSIVE team effort, and we sometimes need to help from specialists in many areas to make sure things are getting done on time.