The Many Facets of Food Justice

OKTjustice.org
What does food access look like in this community?

FOOD ACCESS
DISTANCE FROM
FIELD TO FORK
+
DISTANCE FROM
POCKET TO PLATE

FROM POCKET TO PLATE
- How much does it cost?
- Can I afford it?
- How can I pay for it?
- How do I get to it?
- Do I have to prepare it?
- Do I know how it’s prepared?
- Is it culturally relevant?
- What’s in it? Is it nutritious?

FIELD TO FORK

Grow
my own
Grow
and share

Community Garden
CSA, (offline/online)
Cooperatives
Local Farm
Farmers Markets,
on sight or mobile

Food pantry,
client choice pantry,
mobile (food truck)
Other - Food Based
Programs in
Community

Grocery Store
Big Box Store
(Meijer, Walmart, etc.)
Buying Club - on line
Local convenience
(gas station, corner store,
bodega, drug store)

Soup Kitchen
Carry Out and/or
fast food or casual
dining (Coney Island)
Family style buffet
Restaurants (other)
Food Justice is an idea, a set of principles and something we should all strive to practice. More importantly, Food Justice is a movement and, like most social justice movements, it was born out of the lived experience of people experiencing unjust conditions.

In many ways Food Justice is part of the Environmental Justice movement, which is the story of working class people beginning to realize that lack of access to affordable food was not the result of their own behavior, but a system that was motivated by something else.

It is fashionable for people to talk about how many who are living in poverty also live in a “food desert.” What this usually means is that people don’t live close to a grocery store. But the term “food desert” is problematic in many ways. First, it is a barren ecosystem and not a barren wasteland, as is often implied with the term. Secondly, identifying neighborhoods as food deserts ignores history and fails to acknowledge that most of those neighborhoods had small grocery stores, farmers markets, fruit & vegetable stands and lots of backyard gardens. However, economic and political actions driven by the current industrial food system resulted in neighborhoods being both abandoned and undermined, often resulting in food insecurity.

Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that neighborhoods experiencing a lack of access to affordable food are communities experiencing Food Apartheid. In Apartheid explains that a small number of people (agribusiness) determined the kind of food system that the masses—Apartheid imposed on Black South Africans, Food Apartheid imposed on many of us have a say in the current food system.
Food Justice

The benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is:

- grown,
- produced,
- transported,
- distributed,
- accessed and eaten

are shared fairly.
Food Justice transforms the current food system to eliminate disparities and inequities.
Food Justice focuses on issues of gender class and race.

When people think of farmers in the United States, the image that most people have is a man. For the most part this is true, especially with the onset of industrial agriculture, where men operate machines to produce food. However, globally women are vital in food production. According to the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), women produce about 80% of the world’s food.

If you think about food preparation and preservation, the image probably won’t be a man’s. This is also true. Whether it’s preparing meals, tending fruit, canning or saving seeds, women are responsible for the majority of these tasks.

Isn’t it ironic that while the world’s women are the most involved with food, they have the least to say in our current food system, which is dominated by an international corporations. This system doesn’t consider the wellbeing of women in the decisions it makes, especially not the well being of women of color.

Research shows that the current food system impacts disproportionately disease,
Food charity is not food justice.

Food banks and food charity are important but do not address the causes of food insecurity.
La Donna Redmond
Food + Justice = Democracy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydZfSuz-Hu8

Protecting Our Potential
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWukl6lqyJl
Food Justice ensures food security.
In May 2014, the Michigan Legislature passed a bill increasing Michigan’s minimum wage to $9.25 an hour by 2018. Most likely, this decision was made to undercut the Democratic Party’s statewide ballot initiative to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour. While raising the minimum wage is a step in the right direction, it ignores the larger issue of a living wage, especially as it relates to workers in the food industry.

A Living Wage is different than a minimum wage. It takes inflation into account inflation and addresses what the worker actually needs to earn in order to live in the community. Many Michigan residents around the country are calling $15 an hour a Living Wage and have run campaigns to get such an hourly wage passed.

These $15 an hour campaigns are mostly being organized by workers in the food industry, restaurant workers, and those who work in the fast food industry. These food industry workers have been among the most exploited in the US in recent decades. We are challenging a system that has made billions in profits by paying low wages.

Almost all workers in the food industry earn a sub living wage—from migrant workers and those working in food processing plants, grocery store clerks and people in restaurants, in national fast food chains and fast food chains. In both the restaurant and agriculture industries, minimum wage laws do not apply. Migrant workers are at the mercy of whatever farm owners want to pay them; people working for tips in restaurants have a whole different minimum wage standard applied to them.

For instance, the minimum wage for tip workers in Michigan is $2.65 an hour. The 2014 minimum wage law would increase that to a meager $3.52 by 2018. Imagine working for those wages and relying on the generosity of the public, especially when larger numbers of people in the US are currently living in poverty.
2. You cannot store or prepare healthy foods.

Definitions:

Food Insecurity
Food Insecurity

3. Only junk and fast foods are available in your neighborhood.
Food Desert

Neighborhoods with little or no access to large grocery stores that offer fresh and affordable foods.

Is this a good term?
Food Desert?

- A desert is a vibrant ecosystem.
Food Desert?

- Grocery stores are not a measure of food security.
Intentional political, historical and corporate influences limit availability of healthy food in certain neighborhoods.
Food Desert?

Nope – it’s Food Apartheid.
Food Policy for Food Justice: Food Justice & Public Health

Most Americans would put healthcare near the top of their list of concerns. Healthcare is not only an issue of cost, but deeply impacts our daily lives. Through the lens of Food Justice, Our Kitchen Table believes that Americans are facing a public health crisis; a major contributor to this crisis is the current food system.

Lack of access = disease

The consequences of poor health are directly linked to the kind of food we eat and have access to. Whether heart disease, diabetes, obesity or any number of current health issues, all connect to what foods we eat and have access to.

Though we all have some responsibility for improving our health, the current agri-business-driven food system is the main culprit in creating poor public health. From a Food Justice perspective, here is how we understand the issues of food and public health:

- Agri-business spends billions every year researching new ways to make food items that are highly addictive. This is why we all really like the stuff that is not healthy. Agri-business spends billions more marketing their products to the public. Children are taught to eat the highly processed foods that are marketed to them. Between the age of two and 18, the current agri-business driven food system most negatively impacts the people most marginalized in our country—people experiencing cities of color, children and immigrant communities.

Food Apartheid:

The intentional, systemic marketing and distribution of:

- profitable,
- nutrient-poor,
- disease-causing foods to income-challenged neighborhoods, mainly, communities of color (i.e. communities receiving the most food assistance dollars).
Why Do Our Neighborhoods Experience Food Apartheid?

IT'S PROFITABLE FOR THE FOOD INDUSTRY.
Ron Finley
Guerilla Gardening

http://www.ted.com/talks/ron_finley_a_guerilla_gardener_in_south_central_la?language=en
How did we get the food system that we have?
People moved to cities and stopped growing their own food.
### Estimated Average Annual Cost Of Low-Wage Workers' Public Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fast Food Chain</th>
<th>Cost (M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McDonald's</td>
<td>$1.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subway</td>
<td>$648</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burger King</td>
<td>$356</td>
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<td>Wendy's</td>
<td>$278</td>
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<td>Dunkin' Donuts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dairy Queen</td>
<td>$228</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sonic</td>
<td>$164</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domino's</td>
<td>$126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Caesars</td>
<td>$125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profits valued over people (and animals)

Sources: National Employment Law Project, Reuters
Industrial preservation.

Advertising taught us to trust factory-made food.
“In-season” changed from local to national to global.

Refrigeration & transportation.
Corporate control of the food system.
The Farm Bill gave $956 billion to agribusiness.

The current food system in the United States is bad for the environment, bad for public health and primarily benefits the largest agricultural companies. This may not be news to most people, but what is less known is who pays for the current US food system.

Every year, the US government adopts a new Farm Bill. The most recent Farm Bill, like the previous ones, provides billions of dollars to Big Ag and little to small, family run farms. The 2014 Farm Bill provides $956 Billion in taxpayer cash to huge corporations like ConAgra Foods, Archer Daniels Midland, Kraft and Wal-Mart, corporations which make billions in profits annually.

So why does the US government give these corporations so much of the taxpayers’ money? These companies spend millions of dollars lobbying Congress every year and they finance political candidates running for election. For example, in the 2012 election cycle, Monsanto contributed $1,209,714 to candidates. In 2013 alone, they spent nearly $7 million lobbying the US Congress. (Source: opensecrets.org)
Cut $8.6 billion from food assistance programs.

In Michigan, 2012 farm subsidies provided by taxpayers totaled $263 million, with most of that money going to large farms growing mono-crops or livestock: corn subsidies, $59 million; soybeans, $35 million; and the dairy sector, more than $22 million. (Source: http://farm.ewg.org/)

While providing huge subsidies to agribusiness, the 2014 Farm Bill cut $8.6 billion in Food Assistance. During a time when more and more Americans live in poverty and rely on government food assistance programs, Congress decided to drastically cut these funds and give more taxpayer money to large corporations.

What we need is a food system that is based on food justice, where food is a right and the government does not punish marginalized communities but provides them access to healthy, nutritious food. We need to promote and protect food sovereignty, giving everyone a voice in deciding what kind of food system they want for their community. This is work that Our Kitchen Table and Well House do. Help us promote and practice through their food growing and food justice work.

To get involved contact Our Kitchen Table at OKTable1@gmail.com.

OKTjustice.org
oktable1@gmail.com 616-206-3641
Corporate Influencers

In Government

America's "Subsidy Garden"

What the White House garden would look like if it were planted to reflect the relative costs of the main crops subsidized by US taxpayers. Rough total spent subsidizing these crops: $11 billion/yr, the majority of which goes to subsidize large-scale using conventional agricultural practices etically modified seeds, pesticides and es derived from fossil fuels, etc.).
Revolving doors

Federal Government
- US Congressman (D)
- US Senator (D)
- Dep Dir FDA, HFS (Bush Sr, Clinton)
- White House Senior Staff (Clinton)
- Sec of Commerce (Clinton)
- WH CSA, Gore’s SDR (Clinton)
- White House Communications (Clinton)
- Gore’s Chief Dom Policy Adv (Clinton)
- WH-Appointed Consumer Adv (Clinton)
- Deputy Admin EPA (Clinton, Bush)
- USDA, EPA (Clinton, Bush, Obama)
- Dep Commissioner FDA (Obama)
- US Sen (D), Sec of State (Obama)
- Dir, USDA NIFA (Obama)
- Ag Negotiator Trade Rep (Obama)

Monsanto
- Monsanto Consultant
- Monsanto Legal Counsel
- Chemical Lab Supervisor
- Director, Int’l Government Affairs
- Board Member
- VP, Public Policy
- Director, Int’l Government Affairs
- VP, Government & Public Affairs
- Monsanto Lobbyist
- VP, Government & Public Affairs
- Manager, New Technologies
- VP, Public Policy
- Rose Law Firm, Monsanto Counsel
- Director, Monsanto Danforth Center
- Monsanto Lobbyist

Toby Moffett
Dennis DeConcini
Margaret Miller
Marcia Hale
Mickey Kantor
Virginia Weldon
Josh King
David Beler
Carol Tucker-Foreman
Linda Fisher
Lidia Watrud
Michael Taylor
Hillary Clinton
Roger Beachy
Islam Siddiqui
**Prop. 37: Genetically Engineered Foods**

Requires labelling of food products made from genetically modified organisms.

**Outcome:** ✗ FAILED

### Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTOR NAME</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MONSENTO COMPANY</td>
<td>$8,112,857</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>E.I. DUPONT DE NEMOURS &amp; CO.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>PEPSICO, INC.</td>
<td>$2,485,400</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>GROCERY MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>KRAFT FOODS GLOBAL, INC.</td>
<td>$2,000,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>BAYER CROPSCIENCE</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>DOW AGROSCIENCES LLC</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>BASF PLANT SCIENCE</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SYNGENTA CORPORATION</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>COCA-COLA COMPANY</td>
<td>$1,700,500</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**OUR KITCHEN TABLE**

*Food Policy for Food Justice: Food Justice & GMOs*

GMOs are plants or animals created through the gene transfer techniques of genetic engineering. This experimental breeding merges DNA from different species, creating unstable combinations of plant, animal, bacterial and viral genes that cannot occur in nature or in traditional crossbreeding.

You probably eat GMOs every day.

30,000

PERCENT OF CROPS IN TOTAL DROP PRODUCTION

GMOs are part of the current food system in a big way, an integral part of the system that we are currently eating out of. And, they are something that the public has had little to no say on genetically modified organisms cause numerous problems.

1. Since most studies are not fully documented, we can't fully recommend their impact on human health over a long period of time. According to experts, there have been studies linking GMOs to:
   - Thousands of incidents of allergies.
   - Damage to ecosystems and animals, including toxic effects on the liver.

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   - Thousands of incidents of allergies.
   - Damage to ecosystems and animals, including toxic effects on the liver.
$1.8 billion in advertising target children with unhealthy foods via TV, product placement, online, phones, school events & materials etc.
U.S. Kids Watch Hundreds of Fast Food Ads Per Year

Fast food brands most advertised to U.S. children aged 2-11 (average # of ads viewed in 2012)

- McDonald's: 253.6
- Subway: 207.7
- Domino's: 128.8
- Burger King: 81.2
- Pizza Hut: 68.3
- Wendy's: 48.1
- Taco Bell: 46.2
- Little Caesars: 33.1
- KFC: 29.8
- Arby's: 18.6

Sources: Nielsen, Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy
A snapshot of corporate influence over university agricultural research 2012
“Get Big or Get Out”
Fewer Family Farms, More Mega-Farms

Number of Farms (Millions)

Average Farm Size (Acres)

1950: 5.38 million farms
1950: 213 acres avg. farm size
2000: 2.17 million farms
2000: 434 acres avg. farm size
Top 4 US Beef Companies

- Cargill
- Tyson
- JBS
- National Beef

80% of all US cattle
food company directors on non-profit boards
each line represents a shared board member

US-China Business Council
trade association

Pepsi

Coca-Cola

Cargill

General Mills

Smithfield

Hersey’s

Dean Foods

ConAgra Foods

Hormel Foods

American Meat Institute
trade association

Kraft

Campbell’s

Kellogg’s

SONIC

Nestle

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Knut & Alice Wallenberg Foundation
Swedish science & biomedical foundation

Council on Foreign Relations
policy think tank

Consumer Goods Forum
trade association

Grocery Manufacturer’s Association
CEO association

Unilever

National Pork Board
trade association

National Petroleum Council
trade association

Independent Petroleum Association
trade association

American Natural Gas Alliance
trade association

Chicago Council of Global Agricultural Development
funded by gates found.

OURKITCHENTABLE
Monopolization of food distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Retailer</th>
<th>Stores</th>
<th>Sales (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walmart</td>
<td>4750</td>
<td>264.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kroger</td>
<td>3624</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Costco Wholesale</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50% of all grocery sales

[walmartsubsidywatch.org](http://walmartsubsidywatch.org)
Food Justice

asserts that **healthy food is a human right.** No one should live without enough food because of income challenges or social inequalities.

growingfoodandjustice.org
The OKT Model

Building an alternative food system in Grand Rapids, MI
Food Diversity Project: Food Growing

OKT grows 1000s of organic starter food plants each spring.
Food Diversity Project: Food Growing

Yard gardens

OKT supplies:
• Plants and seeds
• Composted soil
• Containers
• Basic garden tools
• Garden Coach
Food Diversity Project:
Food Growing

GRPS school gardens – 2016
- MLK Jr. Leadership Academy
- GR Ford Academic Center
Food Diversity Project: Food Growing

Agency & Community Gardens
- Kent County Juvenile Detention Center
- KCHD WIC Garden
- And more
Food Diversity Project: Southeast Area Farmers’ Market
Food Diversity Project:
Collective Whole Foods Purchase Group
Food Diversity Project:
Popular Education

Cook, Eat & Talk
Food Diversity Project: Popular Education

Women of Color Series
Food Diversity Project: Policy Advocacy

Raising awareness about local, state and national policy.
Public Policy

International
• Navdanya Seed Freedom Campaign

Federal
• Farm Bill
• Affordable Care Act
• Food and Safety Modernization Act (seed saving now illegal)

Michigan
• Personal Responsibility Reconciliation Act
  ("Asset Test" Accumulative limit of 4 years to receive assistance.)
• Mothering Justice – Time to Care Coalition –
  Paid Sick Leave Campaign
• Yard Waste/Land fill act

Local
• Composting Ordinance
• Raising Chickens in Urban Neighborhoods
• Just Food Dollars Campaign
Monies funding food assistance programs are monies collected, in part, from taxes paid by the very people using the programs.

**Monies funding food assistance programs**

Just **imagine a just food system.**

OKT’s Just Food Dollars Campaign also seeks to promote a more just food system by accomplishing the following:

1) Educate the public about how their tax dollars are used to support an unjust and unhealthy food system.

2) Challenge the public to view government food assistance programs as beneficial and warranting increased funding.

3) Illustrate that government food assistance programs give public money back to the public. It’s our own money!

4) Invite more people experiencing poverty and food insecurity to sign up for any and all food assistance programs, especially the Double Up Food Bucks program. (Our Kitchen Table is signing people up for this program across the community and at the South East Area Farmers Market.)

5) Encourage people to support the local food system by patronizing the South East Area Farmers Market, participating in OKT’s Food Growing Program and attending workshops and food sharing opportunities so that we can build a movement that creates food justice and food sovereignty.

OKT invites you and all community organizations to partner with us in our Just Food Dollars campaign.

First, rethink how you yourself view government assistance programs that enable your neighbors to exercise their right to healthy food.

Second, refer your friends and neighbors using Bridge Cards to us so we can sign them up for Double Up Food Bucks.

Last, and most important, join us by posting and sharing our Just Food Campaign information so we can inspire a larger community conversation about how our food system is funded and how we can make it more just.

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OKTjustice.org
oktable1@gmail.com
616-206-3641
Food Diversity Project: Food Justice Handout Series

- What Is Food Justice?
- Women of Color & Food Justice
- The Farm Bill
- Food Workers & a Living Wage
- Food Justice & Climate Change
- Food Justice & GMOs
- Food Justice & Farmers’ Markets
- Food Justice & Public Health
- How to Save Seeds
- Food Justice & Oral Health
- Water Justice
- Politics of Food
How can you join the food justice movement?

• Attend OKT events.
• Support the Southeast Area Farmers’ Market (and others).
• Grow and share your own food.
• Join a CSA farm.
• Cook from scratch.
• Learn to can.
• Arm yourself and your kids against advertising lies.
• Save seeds.
• Eat local.

Fill in the blanks….

________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
Thank you!

Our Kitchen Table
www.OKTjustice.org
media@OKTjustice.org
616.206.3641