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Food Systems 101

Questions for Individual or Group Reflection

****Note:** These questions are particularly good for group visioning exercises. In 5-10 minutes, people can get a new understanding of the importance and enormous impact of the food system in our lives, day in and day out.

WHY

Why do humans eat?

What would happen if we didn't eat? How long can we survive without food?

What is the difference between surviving and thriving as it relates to food intake?

****If we did not need to eat (did not need food), how would our daily lives, our neighborhoods, our society be different?**

WHAT

What is food?

Describe your favorite meal: name the dishes and all foods in each dish.

What specific food(s) do you personally need to live your best -- healthiest, most enjoyable -- life?

How do your specific foods differ over time, meal to meal, day to day, year, to year?

How do your specific foods differ from others in your family, your friends, your neighbors?

WHERE

****Where do humans get food in your neighborhood? Name as many places as possible.**

Where do you get your food? How does the food get there? How long does it take to get there?

****If the nearby sources of food suddenly no longer existed (for whatever reason -- gas shortage, economic reasons, natural disaster, human-made disaster), how would you obtain food?**

What is a food desert?

Are you generally able to find and get the foods that you want (for yourself and/or your family), or do you have frequent problems finding and getting the foods you want?

If you have problems finding the foods that you want, what is the nature of those problems -- food availability, transportation, cost of food, seasonality, etc.?

WHO

Who produces food?

Are there humans involved where you get your food?

What do those humans do? Name at least 5 job titles.

Who else makes decisions about your food -- what you can eat, how it's served, where it comes from, how it's produced, etc.?

HOW

Have you ever grown your own food?

How many people did you feed?

Was it a satisfying experience?

What is needed to successfully and consistently produce a variety of high-quality, safe, affordable, nutritious food?

If we did not have money in our society (if money had never been invented), how would you get food?

Where does your food waste go? In your community, where does food waste from restaurants, stores, etc., go?