

Food Systems Change
Moving Along the Continuum...

FOOD
CHARITY



RIGHT TO
FOOD



FOOD
JUSTICE



FOOD
SOVEREIGNTY

Farm to Food Assistance
Community of Practice
January 11, 2024

Contradictions in the food banking economy

Food banks have been in existence for more than 50 years and have grown in number and size.

The number of food insecure households has steadily increased, as has a racialized gap between the rich and the poor.

Dominant Narrative

Reality

Hunger will always be with us so charity will always be necessary.

Charity alone will never end hunger. The root cause of hunger is POVERTY: low wages, job insecurity, and erosion of social services and entitlements, particularly for BIPOC communities.

Food corporations have a major role to play in ending hunger. Walmart and Sam's Club are Feeding America's largest donors with more than \$240 million in investments and 7.5 billion pounds of food donated over the last 20 years.

\$85 million of the total investment made to food banks was raised directly from Walmart's *customers*. Meanwhile, Walmart takes in the most food stamp dollars among retailers: an estimated 18 percent of taxpayers' dollars was allocated to SNAP last year, equal to \$13 billion, or about 4 percent of Walmart's total U.S. sales.

Volunteers are celebrated at food banks for serving up kindness. 51% of all food programs in the U.S. relied on volunteers in 2022. Worldwide the number of volunteers providing local hunger relief increased by 28% over the previous year – an all-time high.

For many, volunteering provides a moral safety valve for a society coming to terms with the dismantling of the welfare state. Volunteering often reinforces class and racial divides, especially if volunteer training does not include discussion about the root causes of hunger.

Food Waste = feeding people and saving the planet, "a win-win" for society.

Large-scale food waste is an inevitable outcome of the competition, speed, and growth-driven market mechanisms which rely on overproduction to generate profit at the expense of people and the environment.

Food Security in the U.S. Today

44
million people
are food
insecure

13
million
children are
food insecure

49
million people
turned to
food
programs in
2022

100%
of U.S.
counties have
food
insecurity



50 years of
food
banking...
are we
done yet?



Assumption: The purpose of our food system should be to produce food, health and well-being for people while renewing and protecting the planet.

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Right to Food

Food Sovereignty



Resource Equity



coordinated reform in food, agriculture, health, labor, and the environment



Communities collectively and democratically shape their own food systems such that food is a vehicle to justice, health and sustainability to all.

BIPOC/
Urban agriculture/
Youth/
Values-based markets



Organizing across sectors to build collective power and change the dominant narrative so that people are rights holders and governments are duty bearers



Social movements

Educate and Liberate



Build anew and transform



Dismantle and transform

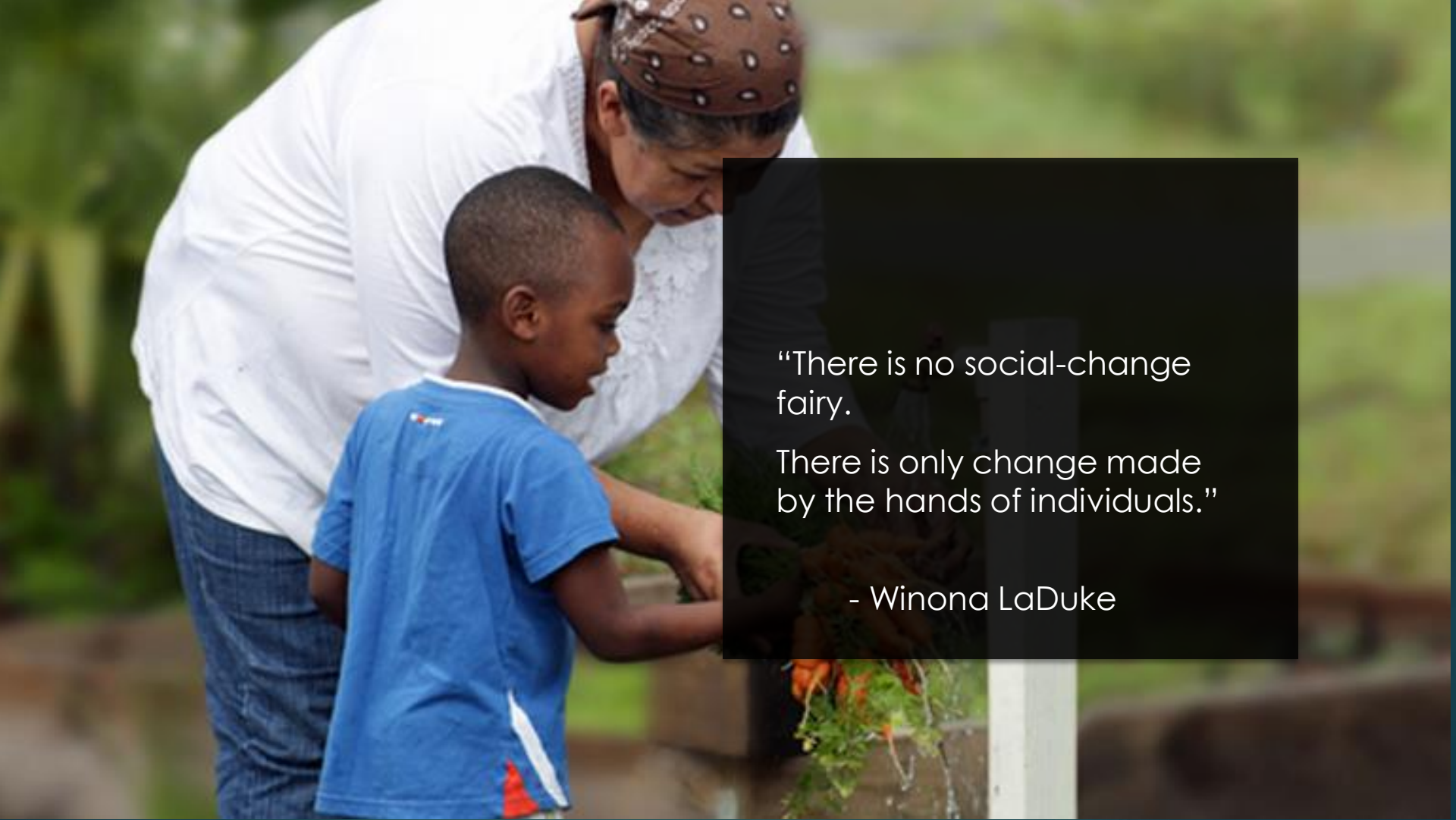
Racial equity, land availability, fair market value



Food is available, accessible, adequate, sustainable and self-determined for all people at all times.



People who produce, distribute and consume food also control the mechanisms and policies of food production and distribution



“There is no social-change fairy.

There is only change made by the hands of individuals.”

- Winona LaDuke

Resources:

Networks and shared learning:

[The National Right to Food Community of Practice](#)

[Closing the Hunger Gap](#)

[Poor People's Campaign](#)

[The HEAL Food Alliance](#)

[The National Black Food and Justice Alliance](#)

Strategies and Tools:

[The Next Shift](#) (toolkit and conversation guide)

[Center for Story-based Strategy](#)

[Organizing Engagement: Storytelling Project Model](#)

People's Implementation Guide to the Right to Food
(forthcoming)

For Discussion:

- *How can we balance the tension between the current need for food charity, including destigmatizing its use, while working towards its eradication?*
- *Where does Farm to Food Assistance fit into the continuum from charity to justice... Or how could it? What programmatic features would turn it into a lever for systems change, propelling us to move along the continuum?*

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