

Inspiration for Local Action

WELL-BEING AS WEALTH

Neighborhood Resources

Today's world can feel overwhelming, there's actually a lot we can do, if we come together. This series of documents is a set of conversation starters to help neighborhoods look at their reality and form a plan of action. Designed as a companion to **Collaboration Through Consultation: A Powerful Tool for Building Community**, these modules provide context for practicing the skills of consultation.

Consultation Basics

Consultation involves both principles and process. These are the skills you'll be practicing as you discuss the topics in this theme.

PRINCIPLES

- **Oneness of humanity:** We humans are one species, one race, one human family. We are infinitely varied in our expressions—language, culture, dress and customs—but we are one people. Once we understand this, everything else flows from here.
- **Harmony and Inspiration:** Simply put, a team that respects and appreciates one another is going to be far more effective than one that bickers. A team whose members reach beyond themselves and are inspired by a higher vision will tap into creativity they didn't know they had.
- **Inner Work:** Group work is only half the equation. The other half is the inner work each of us must do individually to develop spiritual qualities such as patience, service, humility, etc.



PROCESS

1. **Express your view:** Each participant must be free to fully express his or her viewpoint. This also means listening carefully to the views of others. You never know who will come up with the next gem of wisdom.
2. **Let it go:** Once you've stated your view, let go of it completely. Now the view belongs to the group.
3. **Seek truth:** The group then explores all the different views—sorting, sifting, combining, evaluating—to arrive at the truth of the matter.
4. **Support the decision:** Not every consultation results in a decision; sometimes the aim is deeper understanding. If a group does make a decision, everyone supports it—whether they agree or not. If the decision is wrong, it will quickly become apparent and a new decision can be made.

Well-Being as Wealth

The theme for this series of modules is “Well-Being as Wealth.” In today's society, we tend to think of wealth in terms of money.

But money, by itself, actually has no value. It's not something we can eat or put over our heads. Money is a symbol we have confused with wealth.

What if we started focusing on the things that actually matter? What are the things that keep us alive and make life worth living? What if we thought of our wealth in terms of well-being?

If we rethink wealth as collective treasure, rather than individual riches, we see things differently. We begin to understand how valuable clean air is, and clean water. We see that our community can't thrive if some of us lack basic needs. If wealth is well-being, how do we create it together?

Local Action Module #F1

FOOD WEALTH

Let's look at food as wealth. Obviously food is essential for life. But it is also the foundation of society. The farmer is the first one to take the raw resources of the earth and produce something from it. Without the farmer, civilization isn't possible.

Yet, there are many ways to farm. In today's society, we've become accustomed to huge tracts of land in cultivated rows. But indigenous peoples across the planet manage the land in a very different way, working with nature to maintain the balance of natural systems. We've been cultivating food for millennia and we have a lot yet to learn.



So let's start where we are. This module begins with an inventory of food sources and ends with lines of action. First we'll get a sense of what is happening now, where we live, in terms of food.

Step 1: Read Your Reality

Let's start by taking an inventory. Working together as a group fill in the table below:

- Where do you buy your groceries? List all the stores, markets and farm stands, etc. where you purchase your food.
- How far do you have to travel to each vendor?
- Is this distance bikeable or walkable?
- Does this vendor sell healthy food — fresh fruits and vegetables, for instance?

As you list these sources of food, allow the conversation to flow. Do you see a pattern? Are there any "Aha!" moments? What insights emerge? What challenges do you see?

Where do you buy your groceries?	Distance km/mi	Bikeable / Walkable?	Healthy? Fresh fruits/veg

Step 2: Explore

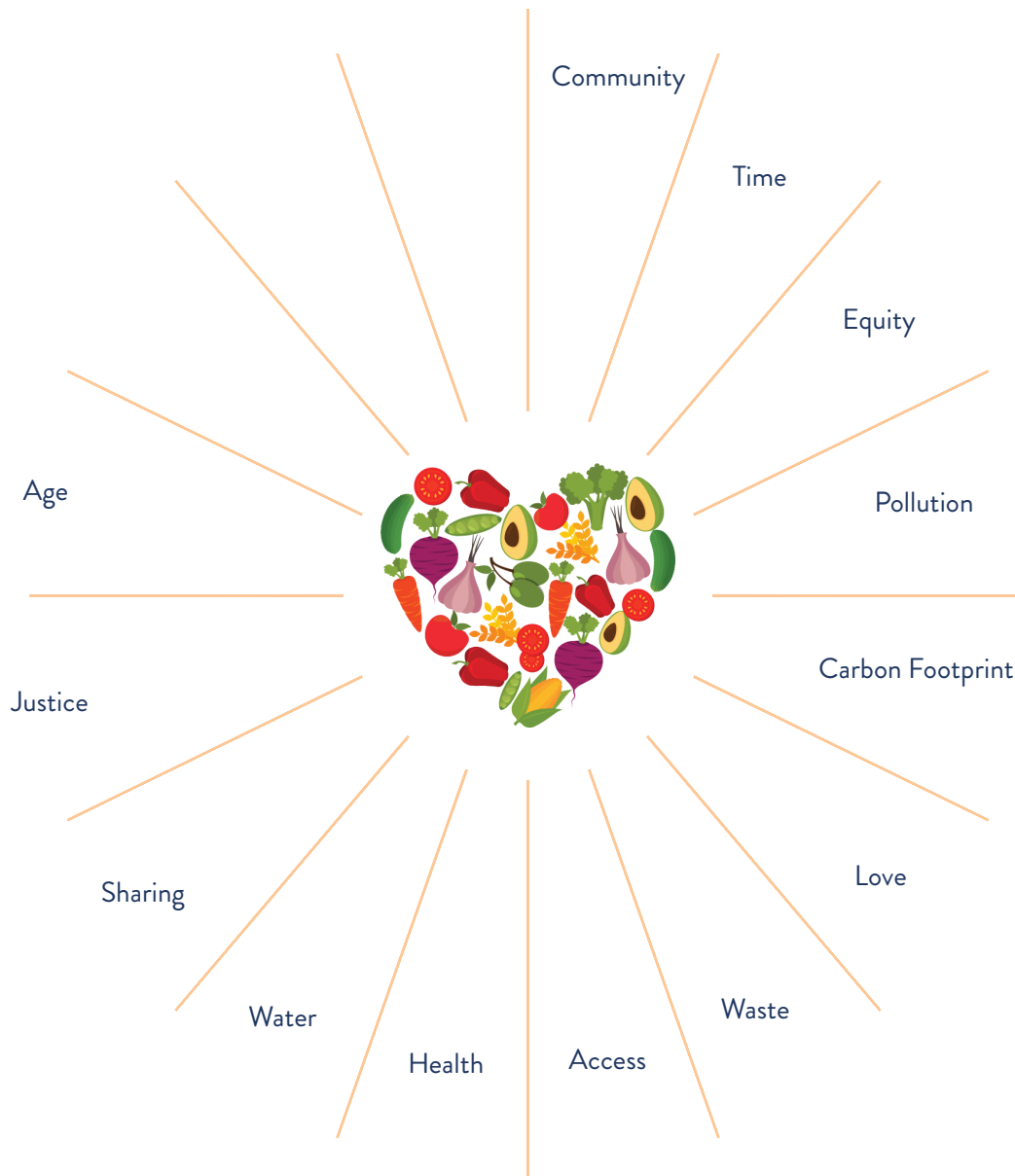
Now that you have a picture of your local “foodscape”, let’s take a deep look at food itself. As a group, discuss food from as many different angles as possible:

- How does food help build community?
- How is food related to time?
- How is food related to equity?

Below are a few perspectives for looking at food to get you started. Can you think of more?

Consultation is a truth-seeking process. Since each of us individually can only see a limited view, we need each other to get a full picture of an issue. This Consultation Recipe provides practice in looking at an issue from all sides.

Remember that an important skill here is that once you’ve expressed your viewpoint, *let it go*. Now that viewpoint belongs to the group. Watch what happens when all these viewpoints mix and mingle. What *new* insights emerge?



Step 3: Take Action

Now that you've read your reality and explored food from different angles, it's time to put what you've learned into action.

Maybe you discovered a need in your community or an opportunity has opened up. Maybe there's an elder in your neighborhood who just doesn't have the energy to cook anymore. Or maybe there's a space in your neighborhood that would be perfect for starting a community garden.

In the space below, capture the insights from your consultation. List any needs and opportunities that emerged.

Now decide on the next steps you can take, individually and collectively, to address these needs and opportunities. These can be very simple things like getting a compost bin for your kitchen. Or they can be more ambitious things like starting a buying club for your neighborhood so you have access to healthy food. Whatever it is, write it down so everyone knows what you decided together.

Needs	Opportunities

Next Steps

Step 4: Reflect

Once you've had a chance to carry out the actions listed above, come back together and reflect on how it went:

- What happened?
- What did you learn?
- How was your consultative process?
- What needs to happen next?

Let food be thy medicine
and medicine be thy food.

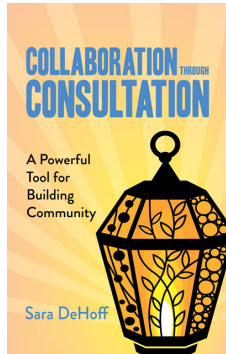
~ Hippocrates

Reflection

Next Steps

If you like these conversation starters...

Here are more resources for you:



Collaboration Through Consultation: A Powerful Tool for Building Community

This book provides more explanation of the principles and skills of consultation. Filled with stories, examples and practical tips, it provides the basis for the **Inspiration for Local Action** series. Find it at:

OurProsperousWorld.com/Consultation

Sign up for our newsletter to get updates and new modules as they become available.



Global Systems Accounting

Bahá'ís and colleagues are working on an alternative to using Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the main measure of success. This new alternative looks at environmental and social resources as collective wealth that needs to be stewarded. Learn more at:

IEFworld.org/accounting



One Planet, One Habitation: A Bahá'í Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship With the Natural World

The Bahá'í International Community recently released this statement on the environment and what is needed to address the urgent issues before us. Learn more at:

BIC.org

If you have questions, ideas, insights, stories about using this **Inspiration for Local Action** series, please contact us at: info@ourprosperousworld.com.

Enjoy!