

Food Systems Design Inquiry Abstract

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With passions for sustainability and social justice, our team engaged in a semester long design inquiry examining the food system. Our findings have indicated that large agribusiness has detrimental effects on our society, disproportionately affecting poor people of color. Rates of disease related to food inequality, particularly in food deserts, and other lower socioeconomic areas, have catastrophic financial and emotional implications on both an individual and societal scale. Additionally, environmental consequence and global conflict arise as we enter a new era of food production and distribution for a growing population.

Rather than work within the discriminatory system, we used design approaches that we've learned in the Communication Management and Design program at Ithaca College of appreciative inquiry, idealized design, and biomimicry to design a counter-system of support for small businesses focused on community-based food justice. Using innovative technology with traditional community structure has a proven record of creating lasting change from the bottom up. While there are many organizations that focus on this, our research indicated that there is a need for financial, legal, and consulting connections for the small businesses with a food security mindset. We designed procedures and structure to support the organizations that work on the ground and assist the communities that need it the most. We have consulted experts in the academic food systems field, small businesses centered on food security, and used a variety of secondary sources. This

has lead to our further understanding of the state of the problem connecting with the idealized direction; we are in a pursuit of a system that allows everyone to have access, participation, and understanding of their food.