Practical Visionaries Field Project 2013 – Theoretical Framework

This paper is divided into three main components – Community Economies, Food System Assessments, and Popular Education. Each component is defined and related theories or models are presented. The following information summarizes the research that the Practical Visionaries Field Project is based on. The research is intended to inform and support the Practical Visionaries Steering Committee member organizations (Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) and Somerville Community Corporation (SCC)) in their efforts for engaging their communities in conversations about challenges and opportunities for their local food economies. Furthermore, it provides valuable context for any community groups or individuals using the website, curriculum, mapping tools, survey, or other materials we’ve developed. This theoretical background is supported by the Practical Visionaries Workshop and interviews conducted by the project team, as well as publications included in the bibliography (page 15).

Community Economies

Theory and Background Information

Community economy theory is a framework for understanding diverse economic activities. This framework provides a broader perspective on our interdependent economic activities than the capitalist alternative. Some economic activities are excluded from capitalist data (i.e. labor force statistics, national income and product accounts)¹ but are included in the community economies definition. Examples of these activities include: household production, voluntary labor, bartering, skill sharing, and other types of social exchanges. Other terms often used to describe similar activities, “non-capitalist,”² “socialist,”³ “non-traditional,”⁴ “new,” or “alternative”⁵ economies, don’t acknowledge the community roots of non-capitalist, non-monetary economic models. There is plenty of literature on community economy ideas defined by these other terms. Ultimately, the community economy model does not separate our economy from society and nature⁶ – it considers both monetary and non-monetary actions as economic and valuable. For more detailed information on community economies, the Community Economies Collective (communityeconomies.org) and publications by author team J.K Gibson-Graham is a useful resource.

¹ The Community Economies Collective (2001, p. 4)
² The Community Economies Collective (2001, p. 2)
³ The Community Economies Collective (2001, p. 3)
⁴ Chaddad and Cook (2004, p. 349)
⁵ The Alliance to Develop Power (ADP) and the Community Economies Collective (2001, pp. 3-4)
⁶ Miller (2011)
Defining Community: “Community” is a term used throughout academic and popular literature and across the social and political spectrum to produce “social wholeness and mutual identification.” Proponents of community economy ideas advocate for this social wholeness as an economic goal.

Practical Visionaries and the Community Economy: The Practical Visionaries Team chose to use a “community economy” framework because the term “community” doesn’t establish an anti-capitalist position or imply a marginalized, fringe theoretical position. Our economic framework shouldn’t be defined by capitalism and can’t be presented as capitalism’s opposite.

The processes and deliverables of the 2013 Field Project are based on the assumption that economies are shaped through complex relationships among humans and their environments. A “household-based neighborhood economy,” which fits within the community economy framework, reinforces the importance of valuing economic activity outside capitalism – “paid work alone does not lead to well-being.” Community ownership is also aligned with the community economy framework, with community members exercising their right to make decisions related to the use of shared assets.

Criticisms and Other Economic Frameworks

Capitalism and the Community Economy: A community economy may include capitalist exchanges (wage, labor, and market-based), but capitalist – also defined as neoliberal or traditional – economic activities are just a few of the many diverse economic activities that the community economy recognizes. Functioning as an arm of the capitalist economy, businesses or government may drive economic development that is not based in the community economy. These private and public sector models don’t necessarily value social production or surplus and often neglect economic interdependencies. While both public and private economic activities are important components of a diverse economy, they don’t effectively engage a community’s potential.

Capitalism focuses on maximizing monetary profit, while community-based economic models work to balance priorities for equitable, sustainable, and participatory economies with monetary profit. The literature comparing capitalist and community economies was consistent in the differences between the two

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7 Gibson and Cameron (2001)
8 The Community Economies Collective (2001, p. 3)
9 The Community Economies Collective (2001, p. 12)
10 The Community Economies Collective (2001, p. 12)
11 Gibson (2012)
12 Chaddad and Cook (2004, p. 349)
13 Goodwin et. al. (2004)
models – one focuses on predictable, market-based activities\textsuperscript{14} and the other focuses on complex, interdependent, non-market interactions.

**Capitalism and Development:** The neoliberal capitalist model, which is based in neoclassical economics rather than community economics, provides analytical tools for developing economic predictions, generalizations, and patterns. Economic activities rooted in self-interest, competition, and market “freedom” (deregulation) are defining features of the capitalist framework, but the community economy framework presents a different, more inclusive frame. Assumptions inherent in traditional economic analyses define “laws,” (i.e. laws of supply and demand)\textsuperscript{15} but human behavior is more culturally specific and interdependent than economics can account for. The capitalist assumption that economic development is a force separate from the community and the environment limits environmental stewardship and social well-being.

The community economist may argue that the capitalist framework, in its separation of market and non-market economic activities,\textsuperscript{16} does not have the capacity for producing social wholeness or mutual identification. They’ll argue that producing social capital and individual, group, and environmental well-being must be the goal of economic activities – these products are difficult to quantify, even with progressive models that incorporate metrics related to social equity or opportunity.

Economic models that are closely related to the community economy model and advocate for similar goals and principles include:

**The Solidarity Economy:** The literature supporting community economies articulates goals for a more just, sustainable, people-based economy.\textsuperscript{17} The development of community economies is a process conducted by community members.\textsuperscript{18} For many proponents of community economy theory, a “solidarity” economy is the goal of community-based economic initiatives.\textsuperscript{19} Solidarity refers to the feeling of unity based on common goals, interests and sympathies. It is a term that is promoted by many social movements to help create social relationships based on justice and equality.\textsuperscript{20}

**Feminist and Substantive Economics:** The feminist economic perspective is also critical of the traditional capitalist model.\textsuperscript{21} Concern with the capitalist dominance

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item [14] Daly et. al. (1994)
\item [15] Goodwin et. al. (2004)
\item [16] The Community Economies Collective (www.communityeconomies.org)
\item [17] ibid
\item [18] Cavaye (2003)
\item [19] Miller (2010)
\item [20] Miller (2011)
\item [21] Waller and Jennings (1991)
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
of individualistic conceptions of social life is an example of how this criticism is aligned with community economy theory. Both feminist and community economic theories include the substantive economic nature of many political and familial activities, while capitalism doesn’t address the political, reproductive, or familial dimensions of market or industrial production.

Similarly to the feminist emphasis on non-market activities, Karl Polanyi's notion of "substantive economics," originally published in the 1960s, further developed the literature on the "livelihoods approach" to development. Gibson-Graham's formulation of the "community economy" offers another, similar framework for valuing non-market activities.

Applying the Community Economy Framework: In Practice/Cases

Some basic strategies for community economic development include: retaining and expanding local business; fostering new enterprises; attracting new industry, businesses and resources; “plugging the leaks” in the local economy; supporting local job initiatives and “social capital”; and improving infrastructure, safety, and other livability metrics. A.H. Gillespie’s asset-based Community Engaged Research (CER) approach provides useful guidance for university researchers, community leaders, and other food system stakeholders in collaborative leadership and community food decision-making.

Cooperative Ownership Models: Cooperative models generally stem from grassroots efforts to meet the needs of a community. They are a common example of putting community economy theory into practice. Generally, cooperatives aim to support community economic capacity building through skill development, business development, mentoring, and employment. They also contribute to social capacity building, providing a wide range of services in the health, social, and educational spheres, and cooperative ownership models redefine methods for designating ownership rights within a community.

Some models of cooperative ownership that may be useful for a community food system economy have been piloted by national agricultural cooperatives. Internationally, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization is actively promoting

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22 ibid
23 Miller (2011, p. 111)
24 ibid
26 Putnam (1993). Social surplus is the total value added (both direct and indirect) by an activity to all member of a society. Also cited at www.communityeconomies.org
28 Gillespie and Gillespie (2006)
29 Hammood Ketilson (2009)
30 Chaddad and Cook (2004)
31 ibid
small- and mid-scale agricultural cooperatives as a tool for equity and empowerment. In the Boston area, Urban Pickup Cooperatives organized through the Good Earth Community Supported Agriculture Farm (ended in 2002) and the Heirloom Harvest Community Farm are examples building community food economies through a cooperative model.

**Community food economy examples in Massachusetts:** there aren’t many organizations including community economic theory in food system activities, but Nuestras Raíces (Our Roots) is a regional “model for community led ‘agri-cultural’ development.” Since 1992, Nuestras Raíces has focused on urban agriculture, environment, food security, and small business development for Holyoke’s Puerto Rican community. The Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development also has a collection of examples of more sustainable and equitable community development efforts.

While the Community Economies Collective discusses how cooperatives can be an inclusive, supportive model for economic development through social surplus, Collective members also recognize the range of organizational models for supporting a diverse community economy – the household-based neighborhood economy, the gift economy, and other personal economic experiences inform community economy theory and practice.

### Food Systems Assessments

*Theory and Background Information*

As food systems planning field has budded, practitioners are developing tools to assist in the assessment and process of building strong food systems. Practitioners are increasingly utilizing Food Systems Assessments (FSAs) to evaluate the food systems cycle from inputs to production, distribution, processing, consumption, and waste management. This evaluation tool, which has taken many forms, is typically used to measure the assets and needs in communities, municipalities and regions with regard to food security, productive capacity of the land, and economic development. FSAs can be valuable tools for better understanding of the social, economic, regulatory and political context of the food

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32 UN News Center (2012)
34 Nuestras Raíces – About Us (http://www.nuestras-raices.org/)
35 Graham and Cornwell (2009)
36 Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development (www.agdevjournal.com)
38 The Community Economies Collective (2001, p. 30)
39 Freedgood, Pierce-Quinonez, and Meter (2011)
40 Pierce-Quinones (2012) and Raja, Born, and Russel (2008)
41 Freedgood, Pierce-Quinonez, and Meter (2011)
system\textsuperscript{42} and can point to opportunities for improving the food system with community intervention through policy making. FSAs can be useful in creating a common understanding of the food system and a shared vision and plan for developing a more sustainable food system.

**Practical Visionaries and Food System Assessments:** The Practical Visionaries Field Project team considered the range and capabilities of different types of food systems assessments in an effort to 1) contribute to the growing body of research of the Greater Boston food system and 2) develop tools that will increase the capacity of our Steering Committee partners to engage their constituents in discussion regarding the local food economy. The project team will map key features of the food economy in several Boston neighborhoods in order to evaluate the existing and future opportunities for local food business and jobs generation. These maps are also parts of a popular education workshop intended to guide community discussion towards creating a dynamic Community Food Asset Map. These activities, based in food system assessment techniques, will catalyze collaboration and action towards building a resilient local food economy.

**Major Criticisms**

Food Systems Assessments have emerged through the resurgence of interest in local food systems and the inclusion of food systems planning in urban planning. As practitioners utilize this tool as a means to evaluate and plan for the food system, there has been great variation in research approaches, scope and goals of FSAs;\textsuperscript{43} while some are comprehensive, others concentrate on specific aspects of measurement within the food system.

At this point there is no typology that differentiates FSAs from one another. Ken Meter, an expert in food systems assessments from the Crossroads institute, along with Mari Pierce-Quinonez and Julia Freedgood have made valuable contributions to examining the different forms of FSAs and categorizing the different iterations with regard to their scope and purpose. Based on this collaborative evaluation, they’ve identified eight (8) different types of FSAs (discussed in more detail below) that they hope will allow practitioners to more clearly define their food systems assessments and will enable better research, evaluation, impact assessment going forward.

Freedgood, Meter and Pierce-Quinonez suggest that FSAs represent one part of the process of examining and improving food systems, and that to be most impactful a FSA should also include or be followed up with a comprehensive strategy to work towards goals and evaluate change with regard to policy-making and community programming.

**Types of Community Food Assessments:**

\textsuperscript{42} Dunning, Creamer, Massey Lelekacs, O’Sullivan, Thraves and Wymore (2012)
\textsuperscript{43} Freedgood, Pierce-Quinonez, and Meter (2011)
Freedgood, Meter and Quinonez have defined the current iterations of Food Systems Assessments in the publications, "Emerging assessment tools to inform food system planning" and "Are We Planning for Sustainable Food Systems? An Evaluation of the Goals and Vision of Food System Assessments and their Usefulness to Planning." Following is a brief description of the purpose, methodology and limitations of the eight types of assessments as interpreted from these authors’ works.

**Foodshed Assessment:** The purpose of the Foodshed Assessment is to 1) evaluate the existing and future potential for local food procurement within a geographic area and 2) measure the needs for feeding a given population. This is more of a conceptual assessment and focuses predominantly on the productive capacity of the land, measuring soil quality, land use and production averages. It is a limited model in that it evaluates inputs, production and consumption of the food systems but does not evaluate distribution, processing or waste management.

**Comprehensive Food Systems Assessment:** This food system assessment typology is a multidimensional evaluation of the food system. Such an assessment considers qualitative and quantitative food systems data with regard to its social, economic and ecological components. A comprehensive food systems assessment might, for example, include information on the productive capacity of arable land as well as data collected from community stakeholders in order to represent multiple food system components. Not only will such an assessment evaluate and analyze the data, but it will also provide recommendations for action and a proposed strategy and timeline for reaching goals. Comprehensive Food Systems Assessments are visionary and practical in many respects, but can be very expensive to conduct and may be perceived as too complex to be useful.

**Community Food Security Assessment:** A Community Food Security Assessment measures the extent to which communities have adequate access to affordable, healthy food. It typically evaluates health indicators in low-income communities and the need and opportunities for developing infrastructure and programming that would increase healthy food access and affordability. While the results of such an assessment will likely demonstrate need for healthy food retail options, information is often lacking with regard to whether or not such areas have the purchasing capacity to support a food business.

**Community Food Asset Mapping:** This participatory model engages community members in charting the assets in their food system in the form of a map. Through workshops and focus groups, community members evaluate the positive assets within of their food system, and identify opportunities for future collaboration that will further strengthen the food system – food business owners, food sector workers, and consumers could work together to create better options for food

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44 Freedgood, Pierce-Quinonez, and Meter (2011)
45 Pierce-Quinonez (2012)
sourcing and consumption. For example, the owner of a convenience store learns that his neighborhood wants fresh produce and he begins carrying local tomatoes – he knows that demand from the community will guarantee that this perishable item sells. This participatory exercise can catalyze community engagement, and skillful facilitators can encourage this. Because the exercise is community-created, one of its limitations is that a community food asset map may not evaluate the food system comprehensively.

**Food Desert Assessment:** A Food Desert Assessment evaluates areas where there is inadequate access to supermarkets and grocery stores, typically presenting the data through maps. This form of food system assessment has been criticized both because it seeks to identify an ambiguous condition (there are several definitions of the term “food desert”) and because the focus is on what is lacking in the food system, which can de-motivate communities rather than catalyze new collaborative conversations and actions.

**Land Inventory Food Assessment:** A Land Inventory Food Assessment is typically utilized for evaluation of urban land that is currently unused and suitable for urban agriculture. This assessment generally evaluates the productive potential of land and the extent to which the land, if made productive, can feed the community. As with foodshed assessments, land inventory assessments typically focus predominantly on the inputs, production and consumption of food and do not address the other aspects of the food system. Such assessments can also rely heavily on data collection and using technology to conduct the assessment and may fail to engage the community’s participation.

**Local Food Economy Assessment:** This model of food systems assessment evaluates all components of the food system with regard to the existing and possible local food businesses and infrastructure. It frames strengthening the food system as an economic development strategy that engages stakeholders on community and municipal levels. The economic potential of local food business can present compelling arguments for investment. However, such assessments are sometimes criticized for overlooking the social and environmental assessment of local food economy development.

**Food Industry Assessment:** A Food Industry Assessment evaluates the key food industries in an area that are both locally and non-locally operated and owned. Such a model can help investors to identify promising markets or identify existing or potential industry clusters in the food sector. This model typically focuses primarily on the financial aspects of the food system and infrequently evaluates social and environmental aspects of the food system.

*In Practice/Cases:*

Food Systems Assessments are still in their early stages of development; only since roughly twenty years ago have municipalities, states and regions had access to
guidelines to conduct such assessments. Nonetheless, the quality and quantity of FSAs has been growing over recent years and there are several examples that can serve as models for future assessments. Vermont’s “Farm to Plate Strategic Plan” and the Philadelphia area “Eating Here: Greater Philadelphia’s Food System Plan” are both exemplary Comprehensive Food Systems Assessments. “The Economy of Local Food in Vancouver” is a remarkable example of the local food economy evaluated on a citywide level and “Homegrown: The Economic Impact of Local Food Systems in New Hampshire” is a thorough evaluation of the existing food economy and possibilities for food business development on a statewide level. The strength of these assessments lies in their long-term and strategic goals for improvement in the food system with embedded methods for evaluating progress. In its post-inaugural year, Vermont’s plan already began an annual evaluation and report on food system progress and change.

**Examples in the Greater Boston Area:**

At this time the Greater Boston Area does not have a comprehensive food systems assessment and plan. Sans such a plan that coordinates food systems goals and efforts, on community and municipal levels within the Greater Boston area, practitioners and politicians are nonetheless engaged in sustainable food systems work. Scholars and practitioners are making valuable contributions through research to the growing body of information on the area food system that may eventually inform a comprehensive food systems assessment.

There are notable efforts by practitioners on community, municipal and state levels towards strengthening food systems. Community organizations are developing on-the-ground programming in the form of community gardens, farmers markets, and food enterprise development. The City of Boston established the Office of Food Initiatives in 2010 to increase access to healthy food, expand local foods production, grow the local food economy and encourage partnerships in improving the local food system. The State of Massachusetts also established a food policy council in 2010 that seeks to improve the state’s food system and advise on shaping food policy.

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46 Pothukuchi and Siendenburg (Eds) (2002)
47 Kahler et. al. (2011)
48 Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRP). (2011)
49 Hild (2009)
50 Magnusson (2010)
51 Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund website http://www.vsjf.org/project-details/5/farm-to-plate-initiative
52 Mayor’s Office of Food Initiatives website http://www.cityofboston.gov/food/
Numerous scholars and practitioners have made research contributions to understanding and planning for the improvement of Greater Boston's food system. While not an exhaustive representation, these contributions include: a Boston food security assessment (evaluates the extent to which residents have access to healthy and affordable food)\textsuperscript{54}, a map of existing food sources and vacant lots of select neighborhoods in Boston,\textsuperscript{55} a local food policy toolkit (highlights policy that encourages local food systems development),\textsuperscript{56} and a toolkit that facilitates municipal and community collaboration around food systems.\textsuperscript{57}

The Practical Visionaries Field Project (PVFP) intends to contribute to the growing body of research of the Greater Boston food system and develop tools that will increase the capacity of our partners at Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) and Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) to engage their constituents in discussion regarding the local food economy.

**Popular Education**

*Theory and Background Information*

The term ‘popular education’ has acquired a variety of meanings throughout history. In both Spanish and Portuguese, the word ‘popular’ means ‘of the people.’\textsuperscript{58} The first use of the phrase referred to the extension of education to all citizens both rich and poor. In the 1970’s the term became linked to Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and community organizer.\textsuperscript{59} He worked directly with the poor, teaching them to read through a program he called ‘reading the word and reading the world.’\textsuperscript{60} The program participants not only became literate, but they learned to fight the system that was keeping them oppressed and impoverished. Our Field Project uses the term in reference to this second meaning.

**Defining Popular Education:** The term popular education currently defines many different types of educational activities and is therefore difficult to summarize. In fact, the Popular Education News collected definitions from leaders and organizers using popular education each month for two years in order to better define and understand what “popular education” means. While scanning the list may provide a

\textsuperscript{54} Unpublished Report of Boston Food Security Assessment authored by Jen Obadiah of the Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness
\textsuperscript{55} Unpublished community mapping resources created for Alternatives for Community and Environment, by Tufts University students Joshua Peters, Valerie Oorthuys and Heidi Stucker
\textsuperscript{58} The Trapeze Collective (2007)
\textsuperscript{59} Braster (2011)
\textsuperscript{60} Boyd (n.d.)
sense of popular education values and ideals, there is no succinct explanation. This un-definability is inherent in Freire’s Popular Education model – the model is a philosophical approach, not a set of prescribed activities or tools.\(^{61}\) Popular education was a paradigm shift in education philosophy, transforming the view of education from a “banking system,” where the teacher imparts knowledge to the empty mind of the student, to a liberating pedagogy that believes all people have valid knowledge and experiences. Bringing this knowledge and experience together lets us learn from one another\(^{62}\) in a respectful and productive way.

There is a common process that describes the popular education philosophy, although the products of each step of the process are unpredictable. A popular education experience always begins with the experience and struggles of ordinary people. Those experiences are then generalized in order to learn more about the problems that exist within society. This leads to a desire to bring about social and political change. In this model, no one is the “all-knowing” teacher. Instead there is a facilitator who guides the conversation and helps participants build on what they have learned.

The main assumption of popular education is that all participants are simultaneously learners and teachers. As a result, popular education can be an effective tool for empowerment, used to liberate and organize on a diverse set of issues throughout the world.

**Practical Visionaries and Popular Education:** The Practical Visionaries Field Project team completed a facilitator’s guide for a workshop that focuses on the “experience” stage of the popular education process. Tools and activities for an additional popular education workshop will further support the Practical Visionaries Steering Committee members in their efforts to start a meaningful conversation about the food economy in their communities.

**Challenges in Popular Education:** A major challenge within the popular education framework is the difficulty of generalizing the popular education work done. At its core, popular education is based in the experience of its participants. Since it is so dependent on individual and collective experience, it is extraordinarily difficult to draw conclusions about best practices. It also responds to varied political, social and economics contexts of each country and areas within a country.\(^{63}\) After interviewing multiple leaders in U.S. popular education, Professor Drick Boyd (n.d.) of Eastern University wrote, “popular education is a particular theoretical framework for supporting and encouraging social change.” He emphasized that the framework should have “a unique form appropriate for a specific group of people of a particular culture in a specific community.”

\(^{61}\) Jara (2010)
\(^{62}\) ibid
\(^{63}\) Kane (2010)
Not only does the unique nature of the philosophy make it difficult to define, it also makes it difficult to reproduce. There is general agreement about the basic philosophy, but there are different ideologies and methods for putting them in action. Although Freire has written many books, trainings tend to be based on word of mouth and workshops. This can cause core ideas getting blurred due to inadequate training, contributing to the inconsistencies within the framework of popular education. While popular education is a set of tools and techniques for participatory education for some groups, for others the sole purpose of the technique is empowering people towards social action. The different uses of the term can lead to confusion and frustration.

Another set of challenges for popular education are funding and resources. Costs vary among organizations, some with physical spaces and employee salaries for program support, while others are based on volunteers and/or internet resources. Most organizations raise funds through individual donations; projects are rarely funded by grants or government funding. This is partly due to the political nature of the work – because popular educations making it difficult to convince large donors to support an organization that is challenging the status quo. As a result of funding challenges, many organizations have had to stop their work or decrease the services offered.

**Key Concepts in Popular Education**

**The Popular Education Spiral:** Although popular education is a philosophy and not a set of tools, a common structure has emerged. The popular education spiral and the learning heads are two concepts made popular in the 1991 book Educating for Change by Arnold, et. al. The popular education spiral has five steps. First, it must start with people’s experience. Second, look for patterns in the collective experience. Third, new information and theory is added to the conversation. Fourth, participants create a plan for action. Finally, apply what has been learned to action. Some other references add a reflection step at the end of the process. The process is also understood to continue spiraling. This spiral makes up the core of any popular education model regardless of the theme being discussed.

**The Learning Heads Concept:** The learning heads concept, another key popular education component, assumes that 1) all people learn differently and 2) we retain more information when it is given to us in multiple formats. We retain 10% of information we hear only, 50% of information we hear and see, but if we hear, see, talk and do we can retain 90% of the information. This central belief leads to the multiple learning styles addressed in popular education. Information is presented in

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64 Kane (2010)  
65 Boyd (n.d.)  
66 ibid  
67 Arnold et. al. (1991)  
68 ibid
multiple formats to address these different learning styles and maximize retention.\(^{69}\)

**Popular Education Methodologies**

**Creative Methods:** Due to its emphasis on multiple learning styles, popular education is also known to use creative methodologies to draw on experience and analyze patterns within experience. One example of this is Theater of the Oppressed. This technique uses theater to examine experiences more closely. By acting out our experiences we can make connections to the larger issues in society and demonstrate the human face of oppression and injustice.\(^{70}\) Other creative forms of dialogue have been used as tools to share and generalize experiences including sociodrama, role plays, drawing, sculpturing (creating human sculptures of an experience), and songwriting.\(^{71}\) These tools help group members create a dialogue about the issues they are exploring.

**Workshop Facilitation Methods:** Other strategies and tools have been developed to help organizers facilitate popular education workshops. In *A Popular Education Handbook* by Arnolds et. al. (1983) seven key components to popular education are listed. These include warm ups, collective learning, using visual activities, debate, connecting histories and lives, creative educational events, and planning for action. The handbook gives multiple activities that can be used at each step.\(^{72}\) These activities are designed to create an open learning environment, helping participants feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and learning collectively.

**Popular Education In Practice**

Popular education methodology has been used to bring awareness to many political, social and economic inequities for the past forty years and is still instrumental for social change. A powerful organizing tool, popular education empowers people to take action on issues important to their well-being. For example, in the 1990s the labor movement used popular education methods to switch their labor education tactics from union maintenance to more empowering union building.\(^{73}\)

In addition to community organizing and political activism, other sectors and groups have recognized the effectiveness of popular education. At the Transformative Learning Center in Toronto, an Environmental Adult Popular Education curriculum was developed to examining the root causes of the current environmental crisis.\(^{74}\) Another interesting example is the use of popular education with trauma survivors,

\(^{69}\) Dr. Pop (n.d.)
\(^{70}\) Boal (1979)
\(^{71}\) Arnolds et. al (1983)
\(^{72}\) ibid
\(^{73}\) Delp, Outman-Kramer, and Schurman (2002)
\(^{74}\) Hall and Clover (1997)
where visual arts are used to help stimulate recovery and collective action. These are just a few examples of how popular education has been adapted to empower individuals to change the world around them.

**Developing a Popular Education Curriculum:** Many examples of popular education curricula exist. We will highlight just a few that are relevant to our work. First, a sample activity called ‘Jobology’ (the Catalyst Center, 2008) helps participants explore the history of class in the workforce by sharing their own history and experiences. Participants are asked to pair up and create a ‘Jobology’ chart or timeline that represents the jobs held by their relatives as far back as they are aware. Then they are asked to make generalizations about the charts as a whole group. This leads into a discussion about the history of work. This simple activity goes through three parts of the popular education spiral. It begins with participant experience, leads into generalizations and finishes with new information. This activity could be used as a stand-alone activity or as part of a larger popular education curriculum.

The second curriculum example is from United for a Fair Economy, which has developed comprehensive popular economics education workshops. They hold trainings for popular education facilitators and also facilitate workshops for community organizations. The Growing Divide Trainer’s Manual explains how to lead each activity for the workshop. The workshop begins with a warm up activity helping to create an open learning environment. The next activity ‘Signs of the Times’ gets the participants to share their experiences of the current economic situation and make generalizations. The next five activities give new information about the current economy and the history behind the issues. These activities are designed to be interactive and engage multiple learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and discussion. The last five activities help participants turn knowledge into action. This workshop goes through the popular education spiral and makes use of the learning heads strategy.

**Theoretical Background – Summary**

This paper highlights the major findings of the Practical Visionaries Field Project research related to Food System Assessment, Community Economies, and Popular Education. The concepts, criticisms, and examples presented all informed the final products from the 2013 spring semester and provide a foundation for the next steps in Practical Visionary work related to community food economies and popular education tools. The 2013 Field Project team hopes that this review of theoretical and practical resources surrounding community economies, empowerment, and

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75 Escueta and Butterwick (2012)
76 The Catalyst Center (2008)
77 United for a Fair Economy (2011)
78 United for a Fair Economy (2012)
food systems can support and potentially contribute to productive conversations for Steering Committee partners and other groups.
Bibliography (please visit [http://sites.tufts.edu/foodeconomyfinalreport](http://sites.tufts.edu/foodeconomyfinalreport) for a more complete set of resources related to the 2013 Practical Visionaries Field Project)

Food Systems and Asset Mapping


Community Economy


*Popular Education*


