



It's not all about food

The right to adequate food: A public health perspective

Carly Woodham, Polly Brodie, Toby Regan,
Healthy Social Environments Team
Regional Public Health



Goal

The long-term goal of the food security work at Regional Public Health is to reduce the health impact of nutrition related chronic diseases through the promotion of food security in the Wellington region.



Food Security

- Food security means having easy access to enough healthy food every day. It must be culturally and socially acceptable

OAC, 2009





Food security in NZ



- **Lack** of food is not the only issue
- Distribution of food and resources that enable access to food
- **Inadequacy** of food also threatens population health
- **Physical, economic, political and sociocultural** environments



Classical framing: Why food security is an issue for PHUs

- Being food insecure is associated with obesity
- Obesity is a risk factor for chronic disease: CVD, type II diabetes, other non-communicable disease
- Food security can also result in micronutrient deficiencies



Being food secure is a human right

- Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including **food**, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.



Food security is a prerequisite for health

- peace
- shelter
- education
- food
- income
- a stable eco-system
- sustainable resources
- social justice
- equity





Food charity to food justice



Social justice

- Everyone should have access to the resources that provide the stability and security to participate fully in society
- Ways of accessing food should maintain dignity and be acceptable to all
- Focus is on long term solutions that work on structural and systemic determinants



Focus on poverty reduction

- Food security is intimately related to income security
- Economic influences:
 - wealth
 - personal and household income
 - debt
 - cost of food
 - cost of transport
 - culturally specific expenses



Past

- Recognition of food security as a public health issue
- Food bank parcel analysis
- Centralised food bank supply system practicum
- Food bank data collection
- Food security workshop - 2008





Food bank project



- October 2008
- Some form of benefit was main source of income for 69% of clients
- Findings highlight the need to develop a programme that targets Māori, those with children, and those on a benefit
- Under-representation of Pacific
- Food banks are no longer an emergency service or “safety net”



PHU food security workshop

- November 2008
- Shared intervention ideas and PHU activities
- Brainstormed approaches and levels we should work at:
 - within the community
 - also as the link between community and policy development
- Food security network and ANA forum



Present

- Ongoing research into accessibility and availability of healthy food in Porirua
- Working on integrating food bank data collection into yearly cycle
- Stakeholder analysis of food security in Wellington – gaps and areas for action
- Developing programme of action for food security in Wellington



Future work

Individual / group

Support for internal RPH work
at individual/household and
group level

Communities

Porirua project
Peoples markets
Foodbank coalition
Food co-ops

Policy / structural

Benefit rights
Benefit entitlement equity
Fringe lending
Local authority policy

Research and evidence building