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Strengthening Youths' Understanding of Food Insecurity Through Experiential Learning



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Designing An Impactful Learning Experience

Through their involvement in youth development organizations, young people often have the opportunity to participate in activities designed to address food insecurity. While this can be a positive experience, participating in one experience alone does not constitute a deep understanding of the issue.

Experiential learning (1) means that a young person is involved in a food insecurity activity, reflects on the experience, uses analytical skills to conceptualize that experience, and then uses problem solving skills to use new ideas that stemmed from the experience. Work with youths to choose an experience from Stage 1, a reflection from Stage 2, an activity from Stage 3, and an application from Stage 4 to help foster youths' understanding of food insecurity.

Stage 1 Concrete Experience

(Try a new experience)

- Participate in a meal packing event
- Volunteer at a local food bank
- Serve a meal at a community center

Stage 2 Reflective Observation

(Contrast previous understanding to new experience)

- Journaling (5)
- Structured Reflection (2)
- Hunger Tree Activity (6)

Stage 3 Abstract Conceptualization

(Modify existing ideas)

- Research local food insecurity data (4)
- Create a Hunger Cookbook (6)
- Explore and connect with the community to create a resource list of what is currently being done to address food insecurity

Stage 4 Active Experimentation

(Apply learning in a new situation)

- Host a Hunger Banquet for members or community (3)
- Coordinate a local meal packing event, complete with a presentation on food insecurity
- Launch a media campaign (6)
- Start a community garden

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- It is possible to begin at any of the stages, but they should be used in sequence.
- To strengthen learning, each stage should be used. A stand-alone activity from a single stage does not promote deep understanding.
- Utilize the resources on the back of this brochure for more ideas. These are just a few suggestions to help you get started.
- Share this brochure with youths in your organization. Allow them to have as much agency in planning and carrying out these activities as possible.