

Notes from 5.15 Honoring Our Elders Training

Elders Small Group Discussion

Challenges of waiting on caretaker to take/transport:

- elders being patient, again and again
- on caretaker's schedule
- hold one's breath repeatedly
- goes around to ask one child after another to see which one will be willing to take elder to garden
- sometimes child/caretaker will go on their own, especially during harvest season (without the elder/producer – will bring some back to grower to consume as well)

Desires of elders/producers that would like caretakers/children to know/understand:

- want children to learn growing practices so that they can grow for their own family and continue ag legacy
- want child to better understand elders' physical ability and limits; child takes elder and elder can't stay long then child complains about if come why not stay longer
- want children to go to the garden with elders so that they understand/know growing practices to pass on growing techniques and strategies
- afraid of telling child/caretaker about their own inner desires because afraid children will come to think of them as nuisance or hate them, is willing to only go/ask if child asks to go once before – on child's own schedule, express sadness because child/children doesn't understand want/need to constantly and continuously going to tend to garden (has come to accept that garden will have knee high weeds and elder can't do much about it but let it be)

Joys:

- excitement of seeing plants germinate and process of growth
- understanding and willingness of a daughter to pick up gardening duties when health declines (express from only 1 elder)

-has a daughter that has learned the growing practices over time but the daughter will not consume the produce (or eat very little of it) only – disappointing that children hasn't come to learn to enjoy one's own harvest but is more willing to go buy and eat chemical filled produce from stores

-seed saving of cultural produce

-desire of wanting to see produce grow, exercise, health of fresh air

Fears from elders:

-doesn't consume much of produce grown but desire to grow it and preserve seeds (survival trauma triggers)

-growing practices and farming knowledge will be lost if offsprings don't go and see what they do

-won't have healthy (pest free – organic) and locally sourced produce to feed families

Large Group Discussion

Challenges of Child/caretakers:

-Growing at multiple locations; teb taub, teb pepper, teb corn. Grow every produce desire into one plot at one location to minimize time of elders and children's efforts (to be considerate of one's own effort, physical ability, and complication of others' helping) – this is specifically for self-consumption, not for market growers

Counter from elders: one plot has better soil for one produce type therefore the multiple locations

-advice from child: grow enough for one's own consumption only, not for desire and for community because it's work for both elder and caretaker

Counter from elders: grows for oneself only but has desire to want others good looking produce as well

Note: HMoob history of growing up in different environments (elders in Laos and caretakers/children in America), other cultural influences (hill tribe living vs urban living – 1st world and 3rd world challenges), and abundance of access to food & convenience of access (Laos - one must grow for their own consumption & reliance on what nature provides; America – urban living has grocery stores everywhere with culturally relevant products exported from elsewhere for year round consumption)

-Sadness from elders because they are constantly waiting on child's schedule; asking one child after another to help transport elders to gardening locations

Counter from child: child sees that programs like Healing Therapy Garden helps elders 75% and child covers the other 25%

-Elders know and see that produce they grow children will not consume or consumes less of it, even if they harvest and cook the produce

-Caretakers are concerned of elders' health and physical limitations; elders' health is caretakers' concern; there are other factors to consider for such as their own children to care for too, cost of gas for transportation and time; harvests too much to be stored into the home but not consume enough throughout the winter season then growing season comes

Desires of elders want children to learn growing and gain ag practices.

Counter from children: elders are still privileged because their own children, at least 50% are still willing to learn and take care of elders like traditionally practiced but their own children doesn't even like the idea of gardening itself