

Simon Family Research Fellowship 2016: New Farms for New Americans

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The goal of this project was to provide NFNA with a better understanding of the niche it occupies in the local urban agricultural community and how NFNA is a resource for other community partners and organizations. A second goal of this project was to provide a more in-depth illustration of the value of the program for the participants themselves; the refugee farmers. As this project looks at both the participants of the NFNA program and the community partners of NFNA there were two major components to the project. One component addressed the refugee participants of NFNA and documented the social, economic, cultural and ecological benefits of NFNA as a program. The contemporary refugee community in Burlington is composed of multiple different groups with the largest population being the Bhutanese. I interviewed a family from several groups – one from each of the Bhutanese, Somali, Burundi and Burmese communities – to understand both the social and material impact of the organization that are specific to individual cultural groups as well as outcomes that are more universal. I built a relationship with the farmers throughout the summer through participatory research to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of having a farm to grow crops, and whether or not it provides an important social exchange or community within the larger refugee community and the backdrop of resettlement.

The other component this research addressed the perspective of other community partners involved in local urban agriculture who share the space of the Winooski Valley Park District at the Ethan Allen Homestead as the location for their gardens. The other organizations involved in this project were the Winooski Valley Park District, Burlington Area Community Gardens and Vermont Community Garden Network. I asked leaders from each of these organizations a series of in depth questions about the value of the NFNA project and the benefits they see of sharing space with NFNA as well as areas they see of improvement both for NFNA and in relation to NFNA.

I employed a mixed methods qualitative approach to this study. I used participant observation and in-depth interviews to collect data on the impact of NFNA for the participating farmers (see Appendix 1 for farmer interview questions. I used semi-structured in-depth interviews to collect information on NFNA's impact on the other community organizations (see Appendix 2 for organization interview questions). I transcribed each of these interviews to better understand and refamiliarize myself with the responses of the participants (See Appendices 3-6 for farmer interview transcriptions and Appendices 7-9

for organization interview transcriptions). For the farmer interviews, I added my own annotation to the participants' responses below each response to add context and clarity to their interview responses.

The following report indicates some of the ways that NFNA's participants feel that NFNA could better serve their needs as well as future collaboration opportunities outlined by the other community organizations. From these suggestions, I outline several opportunities for potential future research projects with NFNA that could benefit both NFNA and the communities it serves. I conclude with documentation of my time and some of my own reflections on the project.

Future Collaborations

I will here outline three areas of future collaboration suggested by the other community organizations and then three areas of further ways NFNA could serve its participants.

Community Organizations

- Additional ways of knowledge sharing between New American Farmers and the VCGN teaching garden. Particularly in terms of different crops, different ways of growing food and different relationships to land and farming.
- Opportunities to help get culturally significant crops into local food stores. This suggestion came from Jess Hyman of VCGN. She suggested that if farmers themselves could not grow enough of these crops to supply local food stores, there might be an opportunity to work with other larger scale agricultural enterprises. She noted that there were many New Americans who did not know that these culturally significant crops were being grown in the area and did not have access to them. She suggested that there might be a way to pair New American farmers with knowledge on how to grow these crops with other local, large scale farmers who could learn these skills from the New American farmers and then supply local ethnic food stores.
- Open community talks at WVPD to get people interested in what's going on at the park. WVPD was all around incredibly pleased and enthusiastic about the work of NFNA. The only suggestion they had was creating opportunities for the general public who use the Homestead land and trails to get more interested in what is going on at the homestead.

Farmers

- Workshops or other ways of sharing knowledge of how to select appropriate plant starts and seedlings at stores like Gardeners Supply. Farmers would like to know, especially as new-comers, what kinds of starts and seedlings to buy at the store such as what varieties of tomato plants.
- The African farmers would like access to a grain mill so that they can grind their corn into cornmeal. They indicated that if a mill were to be found and made accessible, there would be a significant increase in the number of people wanting land to grow corn. They also stated that they would be willing to pay to use the mill if that were required in order for the mill to be maintained
- Farmers would like information on land regulations—especially as new farmers—that are in place at the Ethan Allen homestead. This has been a point of tension between the farmers and the WVPD managers at the homestead. The WVPD managers indicated that they understand that the land use regulations in place at the homestead are not necessarily in the cultural understandings of land of the farmers and have noted that that is an area that they also need to work on to improve their communication with the farmers.

Future Research Opportunities

In this section I will outline several areas of possible future research opportunities for NFNA to collaborate with students.

1. One question that I was asked by several of the community organization leaders was whether or not I was interviewing anyone not directly related to the NFNA community. So, my first suggestion for a possible research opportunity would be to expand the idea of this study to the greater New American community as well as the greater Burlington community at large. This would be a rather large project and so may need to be broken down into smaller components such as just the broader refugee community or the broader Burlington community
2. A second research possibility would be to explore the ways that the farmers would be interested in partnering or collaborating with the other community organizations to see if there are areas where there is overlap that could provide more meaningful exchange for the New American Farmers.
3. A third research idea would be to develop some programming based on the suggestions of further collaboration mentioned above. To explore areas where VCGN students might learn from farmers and how these exchanges might be set up. Or to think about community events that would get the

general public interested in what is going on at the homestead, which would involve all of the organizations there. A third idea along this line would be to interview other commercial farmers and better understand how they might be interested in connecting with New American farmers or collaborating with NFNA.

4. A final suggestion, born out of my own interest as well as several comments by Dan Cahill and Jess Hyman, is to explore different understandings of and relations to food and land. Both Dan Cahill and Jess Hyman noted the difference in the approaches to community gardening and growing food between the non-refugee participants and the New American participants in their programs. I think that this could be really fascinating to explore and could help provide insight on how to better serve the NFNA farmers and the facilitate collaboration between NFNA and the other organizations at the Ethan Allen Homestead.

Conclusion

I completed roughly fifty-five hours on this project in total (see Figure 1). I spent about a half an hour a day in the field, three days a week for the summer. I spent five hours interviewing participants and twenty hours transcribing interviews. I spent an additional five hours creating research questions, meeting with Alisha and working on project documentation. I think that the time spent down at the field was important, as it made me visible and known to the farmers so that when I asked to interview them they knew who I was. It also allowed me to understand the particular farming practices and some of the crops grown by the farmers whom I later interviewed. The participant observation time also gave me insight into the other organizations at the Homestead and how they interacted with NFNA which was useful in my later interviews with the organization leaders.

Activity	Time (hours)
Participant Observation	20
Interviews	5
Transcription	20
Interview Questions, Meetings and Field-Work	10
TOTAL	55

Figure 1: Time allocation of research project.

Though the transcriptions took a considerable amount of time, I got a chance to listen to the interview again and catch things that I might have missed while it was happening. I think that this lent itself to a fuller understanding of the participants' responses and made it easier for me to draw connections across the interviews. I think that it was also important for me to have an understanding of

the scope of the operation of NFNA which I got through my previous internship and was reinforced in the time I spent working with Alisha on this project. Knowing how much work is necessary to run the program and make the season work from beginning to end was an important context in which to place the information that I gained from both the farmers and the organization leaders. NFNA is an incredible program and is greatly appreciated by both the farmers it serves and the other organizations that it works with. The farmers are incredibly appreciative of having the space to grow fresh food and the WVPD, VCGN and BACG are grateful for how much they have learned through their relationships with NFNA.

Appendix 1: Questions for Farmers

1. How did you find out about the New Farms for New Americans farming/gardening program?
2. What do you grow?
3. What do you do with your food? (Eat fresh, save sell? Who much do you eat fresh, save, sell?) Is it difficult to grow food to store? How many people do you feed with the food you grow?
4. Why do you farm with the New Farms for New Americans instead of other local gardening programs?
5. What is the most helpful thing you have learned about how to grow food in Vermont, from NFNA or other Farmers
6. What do you feel would be helpful to know to better grow food in Vermont? What advice would you give people trying to grow food in Vermont?
7. Do you see the farm/garden as a place where you go to primarily: grow food? See friends and socialize? Make money? Save money? —Check all that apply and rank in order of importance.
8. Why is farming important to you? Why is farming important in your culture? Why do you farm?
9. Have you always grown food wherever you have lived? Where have you lived? Where are all of the places that you have grown food/had a farm? Tell me a story about growing food in one of these places.
10. What did these farms look like?
11. How is farming in Vermont different than other places you've lived (other than the climate)?
12. What things about NFNA are important to you? How has working with New Farms for New Americans impacted your life in Vermont? How has growing food helped with getting used to life here?
13. Tell me story about learning to grow food. Who taught you to farm/grow food? How is this knowledge being passed down? Do you think the next generation will farm?
14. What are your goals or dreams/hopes for your farm and its future?

Appendix 2: Questions for Community Organizations

1. Can you tell me a little bit of your organization's history with New Farms for New Americans?
2. What kinds of questions do you get from your participants about NFNA?
3. How do your participants relate to NFNA participants?
4. In what ways do you feel NFNA could better serve your organization?
5. In what ways do you imagine you could partner with NFNA in the future?
6. Why is NFNA important in the community?
7. How has NFNA benefited your organization at the Homestead?
8. What have you learned about the refugee community by having NFNA on site?
9. How does having NFNA on site change the space (dynamics, community, culture, identity) of the Homestead?
10. If NFNA wasn't there or if there was no NFNA what would Homestead look like, where would people go? How would it impact your organization?
11. What value do you feel NFNA brings to the Homestead site (as a community of gardening programs)?

Appendix 3: Interview of Muna and Tlal Pradhan

Interviewer: Emma Tait

Interviewees: Muna and Tlal Pradhan

September 9, 2016

Emma: How did you find out about the farm?

Muna: We heard from Rita, she called us and told us that we have farm and we need to pay how much we want. Like \$25 or \$50. We think about and then. I love to farm and the work. I love to work on the farm so maybe I just want to try it and then I just consider.

Emma: What do you grow?

Muna: Like so many things. Tomatoes, hot chilies, hot peppers, corn, spinach, gourd, cucumber, potatoes, onions. So many things

Emma: Do you eat it all as you pick or do you freeze some or can some or save it?

Muna: I just save in frozen. It helps in like 2-3 months after. I just use that again.

Emma: Why do you farm with new farms instead of one of the other programs?

Muna: Other programs?

Emma: Yes, there are a bunch of other garden programs all up here. They're all like this... you never knew?

Muna: No, I knew the family room garden, I knew that the family room was giving small plot for a baby, I heard that. It's from VNA I think. I heard from VNA, VNA brought me here and made to meet Sarah and she gave me a little small part. I put some tomato, and what else?

Tlal: squash

Muna: Squash, yeah something there also. So other things I have no idea about that.

Emma: Do have a whole big plot down there (with NFNA)?

Muna: Yeah, I paid \$75

Emma: So that's a lot of land

Muna: Yeah, I paid \$75.

Tlal: Huge plot

Emma: Did you ever go to the workshops from new farms?

Muna: No

Emma: What has been the most useful thing you've learned about farming in Vermont at your plot?

Tlal: Kind of seasonal only, just in the summer time. But, its really, back in Nepal we used to go all season. The most important thing is just growing every kind of vegetables that we find or see around and then keep it for the winter time.

Muna: So here in Vermont, tomatoes, potatoes, corn, does ok

Emma: What would you tell someone coming to farm here about growing food? That you think would be helpful to know starting out? If someone was brand new what would you tell them?

Tlal: We can grow different kinds of vegetables so it's not like the particular one. The particular one goes there, not other kinds of vegetables, so we can have different varieties of vegetables.

Muna: For the new people we just encourage them, if we put something in a garden, we can grow so many things, right, and we just keep for winter season too. So it helps a lot. So we encourage like that.

Emma: Do you come to the garden just to grow food or do you come to visit with other people? Do you have other family members that garden?

Muna: Yeah, all family, our family, like all of them have garden. First of all, I encourage them for the garden so I told them that I heard it helps a lot so I encourage them so we need to do something. So lets go and do something. So I encourage them. I told them. Ok then we just try it. So they start trying. From last year they start planting here.

Tlal: This is the second year. We have my sister is there, my daughter, two of my brothers, my sister in law's family also has,

Muna: My parents,

Emma: Do all come together?

Muna: Sometimes together, sometimes separate

Emma: Why is growing food important to you?

Tlal: Fresh

Muna: To get fresh

Tlal: We don't even know how long before we can just pick it from the plant, most of the vegetables we find in the super market. So just to get the fresh vegetables.

Emma: Which is something that you are used to?

Muna: Mhmm

Tlal: And besides that we can use any leisure time we can just simply come, hang out and do some kind of work. Its physical exercise also.

Muna: It's fun, you know. It's so fun.

Tlal: My boy also used to do that. He is seven years and whenever we come to the garden here we used to bring them. Today he is at school so he missed it. He love to put water around and pick the insects

Emma: Have you always grown food? In all of the places that you've lived?

Tlal: Yes. Like back in Bhutan we had a huge plot of land.

Emma: As big as this (NFNA) whole field?

Tlal: Yeah, in Bhutan it was so far. Almost like, ours is like even bigger than that. Its five acres.

Muna: Its for rice, wheat.

Tlal: We didn't used to depend on any of the food items from the market or from the grocery. We used to grow corn, rice, ???? millet and vegetables

Muna: And vegetables in a side. A lot

Tlal: Grow there, harvest. But back in Nepal we didn't have enough land. So just a small piece of land only. And even then we used to grow some vegetables at least. Here and there.

Muna: Fresh vegetables.

Emma: Do you grow the same kinds of food? Do you grow the same things here that you grew in Nepal and Bhutan?

Tlal: Yeah most of the things.

Muna: Except rice. I heard last year some people

Tlal: They plant rice also in Winooski

Emma: How long ago was it?

Tlal: We stayed in Nepal 20 years. So before 20 years and 4 years here. So 24 years. I was 11 years when I left Bhutan. So we had a five acres plot of land. It was rectangular shape. So we had our house here. And we had a rice field here. And all this portion of the land we had, we used to grow, just around the house we had vegetable. We used to grow the different kinds of the vegetables and some kinds of fruit were also there.

Emma: What kind of fruit?

Tlal: We had cardamom, that one was on the mountain side on the northern part, we had our first coconut,

Muna: Guava also

Tlal: Papaya, we had beetle nut,

Muna: pineapple also.

Emma: So it was warm enough and wet enough to grow those? I don't think you can grow any of those things here. I think people have grown avocado inside. I don't know the beetle nuts. Can you find them here in the supermarket?

Muna: Yes, in the Nepali market.

Emma: Are they soft?

Muna: They are hard.

Tlal: It depends if it is completely ripened then its hard but the fresh one are not very hard.

Muna: They grow a lot, so lovely,

Tlal: And this part of the land we use for other kind of the food crops like millet corn buckwheat.

Emma: And then you ground it by hand?

Tlal: No we used to take to the machine also in the market but its too far. We had a hand made machine. Big stone.

Emma: Did you pound it?

Muna: No, some people pound it in a small pot made of wood. But some other people.

Tlal: We used to make handmade machine out of big logs and also from stone. Our parents used to make that and then we used to grind them. We used to make rice out of it and then use that. Buckwheat, wheat millet corn. Various things. Like my parents used to grow different types of these kinds of items here in the field and that was their main work. They didn't have any kind of other work. So working from morning till evening. That's their main work.

Muna: For the men.

Emma: Five acres, that's a lot of work.

Muna: That's why they work morning till evening

Emma: And they didn't have to buy any vegetables so they did it well.

Emma: what about your plot and the program is important to you? What do you really like about it?

Tlal: it really too busy the garden when its exact time, when everything is grown and its time to take it. That's the most important time and it's a fun moment just to be in there and just see, enjoy.

Emma: and so many people growing so many different things?

Muna: so many things. Vegetables so its very nice to see.

Emma: Do you like how much land. Do you like that you have such a big section of land?

Muna: We had only the plot of land that we paid for \$50 then we realized we need still more so we paid \$25 more and we extended it.

Tlal: That's helpful. The potatoes last week we just harvested my sons waiting day. I didn't buy potatoes, tomatoes, it helps a lot, its money. Sometimes give to friends.

Emma: Who taught you how to grow vegetables?

Muna: Our parents. They just told us how to.

Emma: Did you have to work in the field when you were young?

Muna: we just go to make fun. To do work, just to make fun, have fun and also work with parents.

Emma: Did your parents every tell you stories about how things grew or why things grew?

Muna: Sometimes.

Tlal: mostly we went with the parents in the field and saw them working. So they taught us how to work. And we just learned like that.

Muna: yeah we saw how they working so we just learnt from them.

Emma: Do you think you will do the same for your kids?

Muna: Yeah,

Emma: Do you have any dreams or hopes for your garden or plot or growing food in the future?

Tlal: Not really, if we start to make more money and then maybe we buy a house with a space around for the garden. Then start to grow some vegetables, but like for now its just grow different types of vegetables then use for the [unknown word]

Emma: Anything else, questions?

Muna: My father in law and my father. If we get the same plot next year too it will be easy for us, we just put so many minerals and fertilizers and next year we will get a new one.

Emma: Alisha has a sheet so if you tell her you want the same one

Muna: We asked Rita last year and she said that yea you can get the same one but when we came it was totally different.

Appendix 4: Interview of Fatuma Hussein and Lillian

Interviewer: Emma Tait

Interviewee(s): Fatuma Hussein and Lillian (Fatuma's daughter)

September 10, 2016

Emma: How did you find out about the field and the farm?

Fatuma: you mean how found this place?

Emma: Yes

Fatuma: I found from AALV

Emma: Do you have a whole plot or just part of one?

Fatuma: I have small one

Emma: What do you grow?

Fatuma: I grow corn, beans, this year I grow potatoes and hot peppers, okra, squash, small eggplant.

Emma: The African eggplant?

Fatuma: yes, the Africa eggplant, cabbage, tomato, onion, many, many kinds

Emma: Do you eat all of it when it's picked or do you save some for winter?

Fatuma: No the time I make my garden, because I don't have a place to keep because my freezer is a small one. If my stuff is ready, I call some friend, come pick up some, tomatoes, some corn, every potato, because you can find customer for that, you share with people.

[No, I don't have place to keep food because my freezer is small. When my vegetables are ready I call my friends and tell them what I have. I share my extra with other people.]

Emma: Did you know about any of the other programs that have garden plots here?

Fatuma: I don't know any other

Emma: Have you learned anything here about growing food in Vermont that is new or different or that you would tell someone who is growing food for the first time?

Fatuma: before I found this place, I buy my plants, I think every year I buy. Example from onion I buy myself, from green pepper, hot pepper, many, many you buy yourself. Sometimes, I don't know which place they bring some here, it is too late. If you get it you can find nothing. But if you want good garden you have to buy your plants. There are new things. Because the time to get the farm. I don't take any school for my garden, I do all myself.

[Before I found NFNA I bought my vegetables. Sometimes there is a store that drops off plants. But if you want a good garden you have to buy plants. I did get taught how to garden, I taught myself]

Lillian: Like the same in Africa

Fatuma: but we teach to put spray, you say this is no good for your plant, this is no good. The time you go buy the spray, you have to ask the store you buy, please can you show me what I use for my cabbage for my potato for my onion, like this. They show you, use this this this this. Maybe sometime Alisha she have a class for somebody who have time, but me I don't have time because I work. I can't find any time to sit down for class. I think we have, for me, I don't have time for that. I do myself, this is good.

[We tell the new farmers about spraying plants. We tell them what is not good for their plants. Then when you go buy the spray you have to ask the store what kind of spray to use for particular plants. They will show you what to use. Sometimes Alisha has workshops for people who have time. I don't have time because I work, so I can't find time to sit down for a class. I do everything myself]

Emma: Do you come to the farm just to grow food or do you come to see other people?

Fatuma: No, I can come to come to look people here. I come to. Sometimes, right now, it is ready, my garden I come to pick up some. Like this is my daughter, I her tell my corn is ready, can you come to take my corn and I have some new people come from Africa. She don't know the food over here, we have to help, some, like corn. Like some for tomato. Is that I tell her to come pick up, to help her.

[No, I come to see other people. Right now my garden is ready so I come to pick things. This is my daughter and I tell her my corn is ready, can you come pick some corn. I have some new people who have come from Africa. She doesn't know the food over here, we have to help. Like with the corn and tomatoes. I tell her to come pick vegetables to help her]

Emma: Do you think that the new people will get a garden here?

Fatuma: I think she can't because she has a small baby. Maybe, I don't know. It's not me I think, for her
[unknown word]

Emma: Why is growing food important to you?

Fatuma: You know that one would grow here is the ...

Lillian: She likes it because it is natural, it doesn't have a lot of chemicals, yes organic, and the other things like the corn its African its not like those soft... You know here corn it's kind of vegetable but in Africa its not a vegetable its like hard, a grain.

Emma: we have sweet corn here its very soft.

Lillian: yes I like the sweet corn, sometimes I buy a lot, like at Costco, the frozen one. I put in my cart for dinner. But in the beginning, like in my first year, it was so hard for me to eat.

Fatuma: it is soft

Lillian: it is like water

Emma: Have you always grown food? Did you grow up growing food? Have you grown food in every place that you've lived?

Fatuma: Before I live in my country I don't know how to make garden. No. my food, all my food I was finding to at the market. But the time I'm a refugee is that I take practice to do farming. Before I don't know.

[Before I left my country I didn't know how to grow a garden. All of my food came from the market. But while I was a refugee I learned how to grow food]

Emma: Who taught you?

Fatuma: My life taught me.

Emma: So while you were a refugee you just learned, figured it out?

Fatuma: Yes, when you are a refugee don't you learn everything, but good, you have to know everything. Because if you, the food you [unknown word] give refugee. It is not to say sometime they give you food you can't cover for month. Maybe they give you food from the first (of the month) you find the food. They say this food you have to keep to the next first of November. And it is small. You have to think what you do for your family. I have maybe some. First year I tried to do sweet potato. Was easy for me. And I was don't know what to do. You know sweet potato? If you put the plant in the ground, you have to do. If you cut like this. The leaves see you have to grow down this one. This leaves is over these. If you switch these you have to put this down and I found nothing. You have to watch which I have to put down. But that time I don't know, I put every way. If I go to look, no nothing to grow up, this place is no good for my vegetables I've got to talk to my boss, no this place you give me is no good you have to change it. Why? I tell you see, I put my sweet potato no nothing I found. He said NO, can you show me what you do? And I go to take another one and I put it down and he says NO, you can't do that you see this. This leaves is over there. If you see this leaves. Because potatoes in Africa, we put like this one you have to put in the ground. But you see these leave they look like this, you change like this see, they grow up. Is me I was do that. I put it like this, I wait for it to grow up and no nothing. He got to tell me. Show me what you do. I cut many, many I put this one some, I put this one some. Many, many. He teach me, he say, no next year don't do that, that's how you do. I was like oh my god. Next year half the camp come to take sweet potato from me. More, more potatoes. Is that. I take practice to my camp.

[When you are a refugee you don't learn everything but you have to know everything. The food they give you as a refugee sometimes isn't enough to cover a month. Maybe they give you food on the first of the month. They tell you that this food is for the whole month, until the first of the next month. It is a small amount. You have to think about what you will do for your family. The first year I tried sweet potatoes. It was easy for me even though I didn't know how to grow it. when you plant sweet potatoes that have sprouted you have to put the growing part up. When I planted them the first time, I didn't know, I put them every which way. I would go and look and nothing was growing. I thought this is not a good place for vegetables. So I talked to my boss, and said this place you gave me to grow vegetables, its no good, you have to change it. He said why? I told him, you see, I planted my sweet potato and nothing is growing. He said can you show me how you planted them? And I went an took another one and put it in the ground and he said NO, you can't do that. You see this, the leaves are here, if you see the leaves you have to pub them up. Because potatoes in Africa, we have to put the growing part down in the ground.

But he said, you see the leaves, you have to change them to put them up, so that they grow up. He said show me what you do. I cut many and put some here and some there. He taught me and said no, next year don't do that, this is how you do it. I was like, oh my god. Next year half of the camp came to get my sweet potatoes. More and more potatoes.]

Emma: Where was this?

Fatuma: Tanzania

Emma: Are there things that you grow here that you also grew in Tanzania, or are most of the plants different?

Fatuma: Different beans, peanuts, corn, some vegetables like spinach cabbage onions. But beans and corn was harvest one place, onion cabbage many, many vegetable, we have some place like near to river to find the water.

Emma: So separate fields for different foods?

Fatuma: Yeah

Emma: Is it just you that works in the field or does more of your family?

Fatuma: No, I do myself

Emma: And when you grew the sweet potatoes was it just you too?

Fatuma: No. all kid, you know, no kid like to go to the farm. No kid like to do nothing. I do myself and some times in Africa I use some, I pay money for some to make my farm. Sometime I was doing, two hectares.

Lillian: if it's the time for harvest we get like three bags 100 kilos for every bag. I was found like 1000 kilos of corn.

Emma: Did you just save it or did you give it to people?

Fatuma: I sell and sometime I keep to my family. Because there nobody would have everybody would have herself. Nobody can come to you, oh can you help. No. anybody would have some, we have five maybe six do that.

[some I sell and some I keep for my family. Sometimes people come and say oh can you help]

Emma: Has being able to grow food here helped with living in Burlington?

Fatuma: Yes. Some. For me I think its good because you know, food is food. Like me, before the time I was work. I don't have food stamps. If I grow my vegetable like I find one cabbage, I don't buy from store because I have my cabbage to garden. If I have my onion, because I have my onion in my garden. Yeah its good because people see that it is going to be good because it is healthy food. But it is not too much because it is small. Maybe some we have big farms. You know what the problem is here? If America, we have the machine for corn to make flour, its gonna be good. People they're gonna take big farms, to grow corn. But this one, like now, if you have big

corn you can do nothing. You can't find flour. But if they find the machine to make flour, people are going to take big, big farms to find the flour from corn.

[I am on food stamps. If I grow my vegetables, I don't have to buy them from the store. It is good because people see that it is healthy food. I have a small garden so it is not too much. Some of us have bigger farms. But you know what the problem is? There is no machine to make corn flour. If there was a mill people would have big, big farms to grow corn]

Lillian: you know the corn, when it is dry, they put it in the machine to become flour, and then that flour they use to cook, there is a food they call Fufu, it's corn. All Africa, it's international all Africa. They boil water and then they put that flour so that it just mixes.

Fatuma: make like a bread

Lillian: we eat a lot so we have to buy flour. Because here there is no machine.

Fatuma: if they find the machine I think we make corn too much. But the problem is that.

Emma: Do you think you will make your garden bigger? Do you have any plans for your garden next year?

Fatuma: I can't make bigger because I don't have a place to sell my stuff. I make a small one because it's my. The one I do, I take half for \$50. Do you look at 50 dollars. It's a small one. I can't find a place to sell my stuff. If I make a big one, who is going to buy from me? I make my size, maybe if I find some I give to my friend, I give some to who wants. But I can't make big, no one going to buy. Example, you can tell maybe. You can put it for a place say you sell tomatoes, everywhere tomatoes, now there is more, more tomatoes. It is that if you make a garden you think this one is for me. Maybe some we have, government, we have a plan for them to sell, to find a place to sell. I don't have this plan. Because of that I make a small size for me.

I think if people find the machine to make flour for corn, I think many people, they're going to move here to find the places. To find the big farmer to do that one. We can't move. We can't make a big one because we can't find the machine.

Lillian: and the flour is so expensive because it's from Africa, and then you cannot get it in the big stores so you have to get it in the small stores. There's one store in Winooski called Nadia's store. It's Asia and then there is some downtown for Somalis, Asians, different kinds. But it is so expensive

Emma: You could grow it but there's not enough space?

Lillian: No, it's not just not enough space, it's the machine.

Fatuma: can I ask you a question? The question you tell me is it from government or from the place you work, because I need to ask you something. You need to tell them to find the machine because people, African people we like it the food from Africa from corn flour. They gonna find the machine to make the flour from corn?

Emma: I am a student and I am working with Alisha, who does the farm.

Fatuma: yes, you have to ask her.

Emma: We have talked about it, the challenge is to find farmers and space to grow lots of corn. And then to find the machine and then where to put the machine and how to keep the machine running, if it breaks or if it needs to be fixed.

Fatuma: and the machine, if we find this machine, anybody will go to make flour. Its money, its not free. If we some have the machine I thing we will find the money to for anybody to go to find the flour there. It's a business too. I don't know if America you have this kind of machine?

Emma: I think so, I'm sure that it exists. There are lots of people who like to do everything themselves so they might have something that would grind, corn. Or they might have something similar for wheat that would do the same thing.

Fatuma: In Africa, that machine is so expensive, it uses a lot of electricity. But if you put somewhere where people bring corn and have to pay money. They can buy then this can still get money.

For me this is an important message I give you to try to ask them if we have some to do for that please. Because if they find this one they find many, many people who do corn because we not find it.

Lillian: the garden is going to grow fast

Fatuma: Because this question I tell you anybody here we have this question about the corn. Last week I was in New Hampshire for my friend. She make big, big garden. But its not big because there is no place to keep the corn. And the problem, they say oh my god, this is my corn, its like I think it was 25lb, one bag, big. He take out pieces (shuck). One big bag she put inside. She tell me I don't know what to do. I don't have a machine I don't have nothing. Any time if I look at my corn, oh my god, so my heart, it feels bad, I say yes, it is a problem. You know everywhere things about the machine, they think about the machine.

Emma: Alisha and I have talked about a way to get a machine to grind corn. And talking to other big farmers in Vermont who have a lot of land to grow lots of corn because we don't, here the size of the field is as big as we can go because its inside of the Winooski valley park so we have to ask them permission to make it bigger. So if people wanted more space to grow lots of corn, we have to talk to other farmers who have lots of land to grow more. We have talked about it, but I will let her know that it will be a business venture as well

Fatuma: I tell you if they find the machine, she gonna find more people and big farm for corn. Because its going to be organic flour.

Lillian: There is the corn and the cassava they make flour too

Fatuma: You know if they find the machine they buy the cassava in the store and they make flour. Because Vermont, because cassava take more month you can't grow cassava. But I found some seeds for cassava that's six months. Not here, in Africa, we have some. But nobody can do because winter. But I try to tell some they put some seed from cassava, they send something for me to put like 3 seed in my pocket to be here. I was an idiot [unknown word] To put some, if it grow up I try to put here. Six month is like one too. They come looking and their like which one is the cassava.

Lillian: yeah and the cassava is good to eat, vegetables and leaves, it's a nice vegetable

Emma: Does it grow underground like a potato?

Fatuma: Yes, it grows like a tree but the cassava is a ground. You know cassava, they grow up, its not one tree. Sometimes you find three trees. You have to cut one, and this is still here and you put another place. Next year you have a big, big farm from one tree.

Emma: Does it grow every year or do you have to plant every year?

Fatuma: You plant every year, you plant this year and the time it grow up, it comes, you have to cut one and put another place. Next year you that one to and that one to. Become big, big farm. Almost you take one like this, six month after six month you take out and put new one. Its like sweet potato you have to take out and put a new one.

Appendix 5: Interview of Thoo Doe

Interviewer: Emma Tait

Interviewee: Thoo doe (and his wife and son)

September 9, 2016

Emma: How did you find out about the program New Farms?

Thoo doe: Everything is good for our family. We can plant whatever we want to eat. And then we can save money. Also we have a lot of land to plant.

Emma: Are there other community members who garden around you?

Thoo doe: Yes, we have altogether six families.

Emma: Your family members or just friends?

Thoo doe: Friends. They are all separate families. Different families

Emma: And did you hear about the program through Alisha or through a friend?

Thoo doe: Actually whoever interested in farming they ask before the season, when people can get the farm. Because of the works schedule they cannot do it but some they share with the other family.

Emma: What do you grow?

Thoo doe: We mainly grow Roselle, cabbage, tomatoes, eggplant, ladyfingers? spinach. And then the neighbors grow watercress, potatoes, corn, and beans

Emma: Do you grow purple eggplant?

Thoo doe: Yes, purple

Emma: Not the African eggplant?

Thoo doe: Oh no, just the purple one, we like the Africa too.

Emma: Do you eat most of the food right when you pick it or do you save some or sell some?

Thoo doe: Actually we eat most of them, some, like Roselle we keep frozen. But she has to mash it like boiling and then can keep it frozen for whole year, and can eat the whole year. But also she (his wife) can sell some to the other community, only the Burmese community outside of the state. Just for family [unknown word]

Emma: I know you mostly grow Roselle so maybe you can tell me some about the people around you. Have you learned anything about growing food in Vermont? If someone came and said “what do I need to know” what would you tell them?

Thoo doe: I don't think we need to tell them because some of them. They are farmers. They don't see much different. We only have to wait for the season. We only have to tell them the regulations

that is the main point. Because in Thailand or in our country Burma they just simply plant anywhere.

Emma: There no rules about who plants what and when and where?

Thoo doe: Whoever belongs the land than they can grow it. But the teach each other. But for us we simply grow a backyard garden not really commercial. This type of plantation is just for hobby or just for pleasure.

Emma: You can grow lots?

Thoo doe: Maybe we can but they don't want to invest. We don't want to communicate or involvement with the office. They are limited English.

Emma: Why is farming important to you and to your community that farms here?

Thoo doe: Because once a year we can get fresh food. That is the main importance. For everybody. We can keep Roselle but I think only my family. Some families also try to keep frozen for the whole year otherwise if we buy outside, like at the Asian market, we can get only a few things. Also cheaper than, now we make ourselves or even we sell to other people so it's cheaper than the Asian market. We cannot get it from the supermarket. Even the neighbor state they don't have, they cannot plant a lot. They don't have it they have to order from southern or other centers.

Emma: Is that just for Roselle or for other plants to?

Thoo doe: Other plants, yeah we plant other plants but other plants are just for fresh eating.

Emma: And you can get the seeds here?

Thoo doe: Some you can get here and others you can get from Asia, some from other states like most Burmese community lives in buffalo or Indiana, they can get some seeds.

Emma: What about this garden and the program is important to you. What about growing food and having the land and having the tools, what is the most important thing?

Thoo doe: The water, irrigation is important, but we don't need too much water here. Rains, also the soil is moist enough and then fertilizer, organic fertilizer, tools not much, we don't need too much tools. Because different tools we're using, usually we are using a grape hoe, the bigger one, they call grape hoes

Emma: Have you grown food in all of the places you've lived?

Thoo doe: Yes

Emma: And where have you lived?

Thoo doe: In Burma and Thailand, even Malaysia. But we cannot grown in those places because we left from Burma because we had trouble in our country. But when we lived with other people we cannot simply get the land also. We have to see sometimes you have to rent. But like Thailand they cannot rent, but they can plant like a backyard, small plot. Maybe around the VNA family plot, like five feet square.

Emma: What food did you grow in these plots?

Thoo doe: Different veggies, some veggies we cannot see here. You know gourds, how do you plant them. You see gourds right, but how do you plant here, do you see? In our place, we plant like, we have to put up a big rack, very long.

Emma: We call that a trellis, so that it grows up it?

Thoo doe: Yes and it goes on top, in our place, we grow that way and the people live down there (underneath the trellis) my son he goes up to the roof and very funny, and then we eat a lot. You can eat the leaves also, the leaves of the gourd. Not all the leaves, the very new, the fresh ones, when they are very new, because its always new, we take the top one, we usually take the top one and we coil it.

Emma: You said that there are things that you can't grow here that you grew there, what you can't grow.

Thoo doe: I don't know the name, did you see, because veggies, the smell is very strong, with the thorn. Some you can get from Asian market. Like the eggplant, the African eggplant, but we have another one, another very small eggplant. Some people like it. I ask her whether she knows the name or not because some of them have to grow over three months, over long time.

Emma: Who taught you how to grow food?

Thoo doe: Because our parents

Emma: Did you grow up having a big farm or garden?

Thoo doe: No, rice. We plant a lot of rice. My wife grew a lot of rice when she was young, but they didn't have their own land, they have to work for other people. But they grew a lot of rice but not a garden

Emma: So did you learn to grow vegetables when you moved to other place?

Thoo doe: No in Burma we had to grow a backyard plot, but not a very big one.

Emma: Will you teach your kids to grow food too?

Thoo Doe's Son: oh yeah, I do at my school

Thoo doe: Not at home, not here too. They don't like too much

Thoo Doe's Son: the only thing I want to plant is a tree

Thoo doe: You want to plant a tree but you are not interested. You have to be interested in the plant

Emma: Do you have any hopes or dreams for the future of your garden or growing food?

Thoo doe: We has but she says, it's fun, when you are harvesting and you can have fresh

Emma: Do you harvest with a bunch of people or is it just you

Thoo doe: Everyone pick the time, not like a season. But when we were in Burma we had to harvest, rice is like one season, so we had to work together. Or after we cut the rice patty and then we have to separate the rice from the plant. But normally they don't have the machine to grind the rice, with a cow to move it. For upper Burma they pound it. But it's so funny also they can get what they call shell of the seed, we can feed the animals, like pigs and cows, we can use everything. The rice patty from the stem to the seed to the skin, we can use everything you know. The harvesting is very interesting and very fun. And then by the time a lot of rats, the rats like rice, they like rice a lot they don't eat a lot they just keep inside their nest, some kids they know how to dig and get the rice. Sometimes they get a snake also, but the snake is not like a Vermont snake they are poisonous. Small or big they are all poisonous. Only rainy season also the snake are poisonous. In Burma even, there are waters snakes also that have some poison. Maybe they don't treat well or other infection.

Emma: Do you plan on continuing to grow food here or get bigger?

Thoo doe: She says, she cannot grow too much, it depends on our age, we cannot extend to much, only we have to teach our kids. This size is enough for us. Even this size, because when we started, she's not around and I only one who have to grow. And then we only can make two third of our plot and another one third we give a way to our neighbor, they just plant some potatoes and corn I think. But we like every year to plant the garden.

Emma: Do you do most of the gardening or both of us?

Thoo doe: Just the two of us. Only he (son) came down to the farm. But his sister, we have only two daughters but they never interest, but even he finds it kind of boring.

Appendix 6: Interview Rudra Subba

Interviewer: Emma Tait

Interviewee: Rudra Subba, Jit (Rudra's cousin)

September 10, 2016

Emma: Do you (Jit) have a garden here too?

Rudra: Yeah we are doing it together

Emma: How did you find out about the program to have a garden here?

Rudra: Through AALV

Emma: What do you grow?

Rudra: We grow like, beans, tomatoes, potatoes, radish, daikon, onion, cucumber, pumpkin, cabbage, cauliflower

Emma: Do you eat most of the food right away, fresh, or do you save some

Rudra: We use to eat fresh ones.

Emma: Did you know about any of the other programs here?

Rudra: No, we know only this one.

Emma: What is the most important thing about the farm?

Rudra: First, important is how to select the appropriate seedlings. Still all the new farmers, those coming from other countries, they don't have the idea for the selection of the seedlings. What I found, what plants can be grown and what crops can be grown in this area, they are very new and the only thing is the selection of seedlings, our crops.

Emma: That's what you would tell new farmers?

Rudra: Yes

Emma: Do you come to the garden just to grow food or to see other people?

Rudra: No we, do ourselves, we select our plants and crops and grow ourselves.

Emma: Why is growing food important to you?

Rudra: Food is the most important thing for us! But maintain our body healthy, strong. And fresh food for ourselves to keep our body strong. Especially the green vegetables we get from here. That is the main objectives of farming over here.

Emma: Have you always grown food in all of the places you've lived?

Rudra: Yeah we used to cultivate. We are from farming base. My father's a farmer and from there we have learned many things, how to grow, how to plant.

Emma: Does he come here?

Rudra: Not, here it's different Here the climate is different the plants are different, everything's different so it's a little difficult.

Emma: Are there things that you grew in your country that you also grow here?

Rudra: It's quite different, because here, because of the climate factor. Only the seasonal plants can be grown over here. But in our country we used to grow all over the year. So that is different.

Emma: So is it just the two of you that work in the garden?

Rudra: No all my families have plot over here and we grow. We are using the same types of crops and plants.

Emma: Did your whole family work in the garden always? Was it always all of you working?

Rudra: All of my family. We used to work in the farm. And in the field. We used to work in different fields. Even in the school also we had a garden in the school and we used to grow everything also over there. There were subjects when we were in the school to learn about agriculture. And how to grow, how to use the manual, like that. We have learned a few things.

Emma: So your parents taught you how to grow food?

Rudra: Yeah, my parents and my mom,

Emma: Will you teach your children?

Rudra: I hope to teach, because all the things which we eat will come from the field only, from agriculture only, so we should have basic knowledge and we have to share our knowledge to our coming generation too. If there is not production than we cannot consume this well. So we have to grow something.

Emma: Do you have whole plot?

Rudra: Yes, a bigger one

Emma: Is it smaller than what you were used to?

Rudra: No we used to have big, big field. For growing different crops

Emma: Did all of your food come from the field?

Rudra: No we totally depend on the land which we had there. And we never used to buy from the shop. But here we don't have land and the climate factor is not treatable over here. If we use plot also we can't afford to the family member because of the climate factor. It is too cold almost six month is snows continuously, so we cannot grow and we cannot produce sufficient for the family.

Emma: Has having a garden here helped with just living in Burlington.

Rudra: It helps almost for six months. We do not have to buy and then we are getting fresh plus it helps to save the money.

Emma: Is there anything else you'd like to ask me or anything else you'd like to say?

Rudra: The foremost thing, especially for new farmers, those who used to cultivate who use a plot over here. They should have at least the knowledge for the selection of the crops, the plants. And which is best, which is suitable for this climate and this soil. And that they are innocent, they don't have the knowledge of how to select, so if you give, if you can share this knowledge with them I think they will grow better.

Emma: Is there anything else that you would like to see on the farm or in the field that would be useful?

Rudra: I think it is better to guide them how to plant, the distance. This year I plant the tomatoes very close to each other and it is not so good actually. So if you can help them to share this knowledge, help to able to distinguish the types of plants the manure. What kind of manure to use. We are using a different kinds of manure. Of course we are using compost manure but from where should we buy, and what kind. All of these things.

Emma: How do you think is the best we to tell people those things?

Rudra: By gathering and sharing the knowledge that is better.

Emma: Will you have a garden next year?

Rudra: Yes

Emma: Will you get a bigger one or the same size?

Rudra: I think about it. I have to think because if I have free time I can do it. But I am very busy at work now, I have to work all six days almost continuously. I have no sleep. I already start my job at midnight, twelve, one, and I come back at nine and I have to play with my baby. No time to sleep. I sleep only two hours or three hours only. Every day. What to do. I have to survive. I have to pay rent. I have to pay for all the utilities.

Appendix 7: Interview Dan Cahill – Burlington Parks and Recreation

Burlington Parks and Recreation Interview

Interviewer: Emma Tait

Interviewee: Dan Cahill

November 8, 2016

Emma: What do you know about new farms and what they do?

Dan: So, I guess my understanding of new farms kind of starts in mid 2000s when AALV was starting up the initiative, when Josie Weldon was there. So partially I came to know about it because Josie was a friend of mine. And we did AmeriCorps together so I kind of knew her and then was tuned into the project a little bit and I was one of their first farm share CSA people. In their first round.

Emma: Right, because they did that to start out.

Dan: And so I was aware of the operation, kind of participating at that level, as a CSA holder and you know understood it to be a largely grant funded, some federal grants, almost like a work force economic mobility model of trying to train and create occupational opportunity for New Americans within agriculture through this project. It was a really cool idea. It felt like...it was very...it hit all of the right buttons in terms of like teaching people to take care of themselves and find a way to be American, be a farmer. So it was cool, and I feel really blessed to be in community with the program on a personal and professional level, just watching the evolution of it, so during the time that Josie was running the program I observed it to be full hands on deck, managing the grants managing the farms working with everybody, holding it together. Keeping it pointed in the right direction. My observation of it in a hindsight type reflection, is it seemed to be very much relationship based. It was like, Josie was an advocate, a champion and friend to all the farmers and it was almost just as much about supporting that leadership, as much as anything else. That's just again, my removed observation of it.

Before I was in the role of land steward, with Parks and Recreation, I was aware of the program and so what predated my direct involvement with the program, or with the community gardens was that my predecessor began to work with Josie as Josie had overflow—maybe elders who didn't fit into the farming model, or folks that just wanted more land on top of what they were already doing with New Farms. She would basically bring cash and forms to our office and that was an arrangement she set up with my predecessor. That like, just bring me a stack of forms, bring me a stack of cash with everybody you want in and we'll put them in: we'll put them in the program, we'll get them garden spots. I inherited that practice working with Josie for a couple years doing that. She'd bring me the forms, bring me the cash, put people in plots, check the box that our diversity is growing. Look at all the languages spoken in our gardens. Cool. We're awesome. And you know, none the wiser. It felt like a good thing you know. Cool look at us. And then Alisha, there's a transition, and I wasn't really aware of the transition fully. Now what I've come to recognize is that the time when the grant funding was changing and the first real evaluation was done. In a similar fashion to what you're doing. Under Josie it had been like, go, go, go, lets hustle, let's keep this thing going because we have

all these grants to fulfill and manage. We've got to spend the money and make it work. You know, it was like finally a pause and a reflection and an evaluation. And that was at the same time that Alisha was coming on and it became evident in that process that people didn't want to be farmers necessarily. Or at least in the way that we think of farmers. And that wasn't something that I understood right away because it wasn't really presented to me in that way right away.

Essentially in that first meeting with Alisha, which I'll always think back to that meeting with her as probably one of the more instrumental and important interactions in my life. At least to this date. You know there's nothing that earthshattering about it. But it was just like, Alisha met with me and in a very matter of fact and polite as you could imagine way basically was just like, tactfully – I don't know what her thoughts were going into this – but effectively was like, well the immediate effect was confusion on my part. But was just like I'm Alisha, I'm the new program coordinator for New Farms for New Americans, and not exactly in these words but the gist of it was, we can't manage and facilitate registration for you guys, we don't have the capacity to do that. And my job might not always exist and this program is changing. So the only thing that I heard, was we can't facilitate the registration and my program, my position might not exist. Like connecting those two. Because your position might not always exist, you can't continue to do the registration for us, so let's figure out how to save your job. That was my initial white, patriarchal response to the situation. How can I fix this? How can I keep intact this system that's working for me and that's working for the way that we've come to run government operations? But government operations are a human construct of how human individuals operating them choose to operate them. And so I was kind of confused and concerned. Alisha was very caring, in a very caring, thoughtful and giving way, gave her time and helped work through a transition. She's like why don't we do this this year, why don't we have a meeting together where we'll like bring everybody together and work on registration together. So we did that and it was great. It was good. And I think we kind of hafted it the way we really wanted to do it, but it I was a good first attempt at a transitional approach that was at least a little bit different than what they had been doing.

Then we just kept working on it and I don't know when the change actually occurred or when the realization came in that was like, we are essentially, we have programs where the participants, some of the participants that are participating in it don't even know that Parks and Recreation exists. They don't know what a community garden is and they're essentially being, not being supported within the construct of what we offer to someone who can pick up the phone and call you, or someone that speaks English fluently. So that's when we decided to turn it on its head a little bit and adapt our approach and recognize that we shouldn't be relying on partners and advocates to manage our registration process for us. Because essentially what we are doing is saying these relationships aren't important. The relationships with people who don't speak English as well as someone else aren't as important. And it's a hard one to wrap your brain around at first cause it's like no this is the way we do it. This is efficient and effective use of public resources. In a scary way what's behind that, well not necessarily what's behind it but what's really attached to that idea is like not a like, there's a critical mass of people as I'm sure you're well aware, that believe that people need to assimilate. People need to learn how the system works. You need to work within our system. So the idea of doing this, the idea of

putting resources towards adapting our protocols and our registration so that we could prioritize different and new relationships was problematic for some people. Some people had a real problem with that. They felt like these gardeners should be learning the ways that things work coming to us, we shouldn't be going to them. Which is just antithetical to the entire construct of community gardening itself. So we kind of started to do that work and its definitely through the capacity of AALV and NFNA and the work and the time that was put in over the years developing relationships, developing a program, working with people trying to understand the experience of people, providing and holding space for them that allowed the city to have the space to learn and adapt and think of this specific aspect of the collective city functioning in a new way.

I'd say we've probably reached a plateau, we've adapted some things we've learned some things, and its good. But we are also kind of like not necessarily resting on our laurels but kind of stuck again a little bit and it's just part of the construct of like, at the end of the day I can care about these issues as much as I want and get it, but at the end of the day if it's me and a bunch of other white men in the room making decisions, it doesn't matter how much it matters to me. It doesn't because there's power dynamics in play and cultural norming that occurs. True change, sustainable – at the risk of using a buzz word – sustainable change, things that last just doesn't happen until power shifts at every level. So it's just an interesting project to work on with in Burlington. You know I only know Burlington. I grew up in north central Pennsylvania and I came here for college and I don't really know anywhere else intimately. But I know Burlington has a very serious issue with white supremacy. It's very unique partially because of the forward thinking progressive veneer that exists in our town. It almost makes it more potent. It almost makes it more, because it's more invisible. And so our own identity is what stands in our way. And that idea is really just dangerous to so many people. Or it feels that way at least. It's hard. For me it like I go to work and theirs people flying confederate flags in our parking lot at work. It's like "what"? It's hard for me to separate these issues. Its hard for me to separate when I look at the way that we're connecting people on the ground level and then the way that we are making decisions at the higher levels and the way that those things are connected.

If we ever want to change the way we make decisions here we also have to create an environment and be really careful and thoughtful about the environment we're engaged in. Otherwise it's not a place where diverse peoples will be able to thrive. We're going to continue to get what we have if we continue doing it the same way. I think that, I see that the cities, through this lens and all this work, its helped me see how we're willing to address and attack issues on one level but not necessarily at another. And I think that I credit NFNA and AALV with a lot, at least in my personal professional journey in having a lot of the, creating the juxtaposition for me to be able to examine my own operations, my own choice, my own privileges and my own whiteness and seeing how that kind of connects with a lot of the work. At the end of the day, one of the things that is really critical – at least it feels like it is, and again I don't know this could be one of my assumptions – is that community gardening, or at least access to land is a really important part of giving people – not necessarily the opportunity to assimilate but the opportunity to exclusively practice their culture in a unique way and that, I think is really understated in the way that we think about refugees' experience. Most of the

energy is focused on celebrating them becoming citizens, which is great. Celebrating the ways that they resemble other, begin to resemble other Americans and show signs of what we consider success.

That's all fine, and I don't want to be completely Debbie downer about it all. I just see that for me it's something that seems important about access to land for people that because of some of the language barriers and communication gaps that exist between people like myself and people who are in the gardens. Some of this we don't really know. There's people like you that kind of act as a bridge at time that go in depth and try to understand more but the educated understanding that I can have at this point, and it's not remiss from any sort of interactions its grounded in times I've spent in peoples living rooms and relationships I've developed with people and having that experience. But it does seem that there's some aspects of being able to find a way of being that's at least in some form of rhythm, that's not completely something new. It is new, I mean you're growing food in a new climate, so there's obviously newness. Growing food in a community garden you have to do community work hours. Like what are community work hours. One of the ideas of community gardening is something that is very much, at least to my knowledge of community gardening, it's an American thing. It's a construct that's not necessarily, like if you come from a very rural place, say you come to UVM and you come from a town where there was no community gardens that existed, or maybe somehow you weave through without actually directly ever knowing about a community garden, learning about community gardens in about ten minutes you could probably figure it out and start to grasp it. And it feels like my experience has been or my observations have been that there's an expectation that refugees should be able to figure that out in about ten minutes also. As long as you can have an interpreter or translate it for them, they can write it down, they can read it or you can explain it to them and then they should understand. I think that's been a big part of the work to, how do you, and it's a powerful place to be if you can do this. How do you get to a place where you can change the way you measure success? And not by the quantifiable improvements, but by the among of failures that you've encountered. How do you do that effectively. You almost like can't' do it effectively. It's a long game to be able to see it that way

It's certainly been a gift for me to partner with AALV and NFNA and there's the white guilt that comes along with that, in every turn I'm still benefiting from this no matter what. Its enhancing my professional career because I'm gleaning from it this newfound perspective on how to engage more functionally in the world around me. I think that that's a little, I can talk to my therapist about that. I think it would be helpful for you to speak with Meghan O'Daniel who is the outreach and diversity coordinator at the gardens for Parks and Recreation. She was in AmeriCorps for a year and now she's a part time staff person. Her job is essentially to manage all of the relationships with community gardeners and help connect site leaders and the gardeners. You know it's a bit of a moving target because it's something that I used to do almost exclusively and we're kind of sharing it to a certain degree. We're in a transitional stage of trying to empower her position to be more of an authority around managing this stuff. So things are a little bit, murky has a negative connotation for it so I don't want to use that word. So in flux but its good. It's a good place to be. We're trying to strengthen and gain capacity. I would encourage you to speak with her also. I think she's going to have, she's not going to have

the long view—the specific ins and outs of AALV, NFNA, Parks and Rec kind of history. But she's going to have a more direct experience of what's it been like over the last year and a half helping manage the community gardens and develop relationships with refugee gardeners and a lot of the folks that do garden with us do farm with NFNA so there's a lot of overlap.

Emma: You have a variety of participants? Cause you have so many gardens?

Dan: There's 14 community gardens. 500 gardeners. And that's people, that's individual applications. Each plot usually has a handful of people working on it together or a family connected to it. So you know the actual numbers of people who are directly involved is probably more like 1200-1500. Then the actual people consuming the food produced in these gardens is much greater than that. So it has a really broad reach. That spans socio economic cultural, it's probably the most diverse program, just because it's just grounded in something that's a value that's held by all peoples of Burlington. I think that no matter what, there's probably something else that's more mundane. Like needing access to go to a grocery store but the thing that's most – which is still related to food – that's most common, the common denominator, the most common denominator, is people who are coming to Burlington, no matter who you are – if you're just moving here from Alabama or Ohio or your coming to UVM or you're a refugee coming from somewhere in Africa, there's a good chance the thing that is the most common denominator is that there is an interest in growing food in/and? a food system. That seems to be the most predominantly held cross landscape value. And I feel compelled by that concept mostly because we can't provide enough gardens in Burlington to meet the demand. Every time we bring another plot on – whether we're creating more plots at a site or opening up a new garden site, they're full.

Emma: Which has its measure of reassurance. It's nice to know that people want, there are always people that want to do that. Are there ways that you would like to partner with new farms that you haven't been able to? With the shifts of new farms away from marketing/jobs aspect to just supporting people who want to grow food that you'd like to see?

Dan: Whatever makes sense for how the organizations should be working together and the initiatives should be working together. Just working together is important maintaining communication, strategies. We go in and out, Alisha and I go in and out of having communication around things. Just being able to make sure we have touchstones to chart a course and bring Jacob and Jesse together if we need to. Really making sure were taking advantage of all of the opportunities out in front of us. We have 14 community garden sites in this city. Call it 10 acres of tillable lands. New farms is more than half of that at one site. So it's a different construct and it's a different type of gardening. It's more of, we're moving towards offering comparable gardening opportunities at Tommy Thompson's, so not for 2017 but for 2018 the plan is to have an additional acre of subsistence plots available. It's unfortunate the timing of that, that its taking us till 2018 to bring that land online.

Emma: The idea just being able to provide larger chunks of land for people to be able to grow food?

Dan: We want to make sure that we are supporting each other at the highest appropriate level. I'd like to king of figure that out. I think it's in the best interest of NFNA to continue to reach out. This current administration and our current outreach director are very, very supportive of

community gardening and I don't think we should take that for granted. At the same time, we've got to run things effectively. Nobody wants to like start throwing money at different things. But if there some work for us to do collaboratively we should work hard to figure that out. We don't want to force anything either. The city is very interested in helping forecast and plan the sustainability of the new farms program because at the end of the day, however its done and however we manage it those 5 acres that are in cultivation are critically important that they stay in cultivation and that they are managed effectively. So however that's done, that's really important for the capacity.

Emma: Was the Parks and Rec garden plot at the homestead there before Few Farms? [He misunderstood, thought I was asking if the NFNA field was a garden before NFNA came in]

Dan: No. it was just a hay field.

[indistinguishable]

Dan: The Winooski valley park district garden is the name of it, it's one of our 14 sites. That's the oldest site. That was started in 1976. Which is on the same land that was cleared by Ethan Allen. And who knows what it was used for before that. It was probably used for something important. It's probably cursed land now. Cleared of rocks and natives.

Emma: Did you see the transition of Ethan Allen homestead before new farms and then as they came in?

Dan: Not as intimately. No. not intimately because I was not in this position then. I was not working in the gardens when I first started.

Emma: Do you think it would drastically change the Ethan Allen space if NFNA left, assuming the land stayed under cultivation but the program was non-existent?

Dan: I haven't thought about it from the standpoint of a sense of place, I've only thought about it from the standpoint of supply and demand of gardens city wide. Invariably it would change. It would be different. I think it would just be different.

Emma: And demand of space would increase? You would have an influx of gardeners looking for land?

Dan: Right. My assumption is that people like being there and if all of a sudden new farms was like we're not going to manage this land any more. All of a sudden our demand would probably increase on the community garden side where there is already 100% capacity. Or 0% capacity. Any sort of change of that scale, if new farms were considering a different location, would take years to realize the flux. That's one thing I've noticed, once you garden in a spot and have a reasonably good experience, you don't want to move. Gardeners don't want to move.

Emma: Your comments about the nature of growing food are really interesting, that's something that's come up a lot with the interviews with farmers. They grow food because that's what they grew up doing, to get fresh food and to grow things that they can't get here. Those are the three main reasons.

Dan: Yeah, I get the sense that it's sort of pedestrian, it's just this like, yeah I'm growing food. You have these gardeners who are like "gardening is the most magical thing, I'm making my own

compost and no till". And it's like cool, that's cool, it's like their passion, their hobby. And I have these people who are like keeping themselves up at night because their like I want the refugees to understand, I want them to have this, I want them to be able to experience this too. I want them to find this joy that I find. I want them to know about these things, I want them to be able to do this. I want their gardens to look like mine. Cause somehow it's like an affirmation back to them somehow that what they are doing is important. It's benign, but it's not.

Emma: Right it's with good intention.

Dan: Yea, and I also am making some assumptions, maybe there are refugees that do want that. They look at that garden and are like why is it doing that. That's cool I wish I knew more about that. But it's a really interesting thing. Yeah well like, growing food is important for refugees but it might not be as important as you think it is or it might not be the same, it's just not the same as what you think it is. It's just different. And it's a hard thing for people to wrap their brains around, especially the older, it's so stereo typical though right, like the other the person your engaged with its so much harder for them. And I mean we're talking about community gardeners right so we're talking about the outer shine of Burlington's liberal veneer. Yet they're the ones that are the most, the lack of understanding is the most [indistinguishable] with them. It's such an understatement with who they are and their exterior, it's a morsel that's so far underneath all those things that the likely hood that they'll actually have the awareness to get it seems like very far-fetched.

Emma: I feel like gardening is valorized in such a way, it's held up on a pedestal. So for a lot of the refugees, it's like, this is just what we do. It's like talking to a dairy farmer of the novelty of having cows and they're like, yeah so? The idea I feel like. Its hugely important to them they love fresh food. Particularly the Africans, their entire plots are African corn because the most important, the most constant thing in their diet is cornmeal, but African corn cornmeal. It's just what they do, is not a hobby. It's not an ideal. It's just like, this is our garden and we grow food because we want fresh food. Which I think is different. And the lengths to which they go to do that. Like one of the people I interviewed he works six days a week, night shifts. He works two jobs, he works a night shift then sleeps for a couple of hours and then works a day shift and sleeps for a couple of hours. And yet he finds time to have an entire plot for his family. It's just amazing. I think the idea of community gardening is foreign for them. They go to their garden just to grow food. They have their community elsewhere I think is almost the idea.

Dan: Yeah, like we break our backs to figure out ways to develop community work days into the more direct consciousness of the refugee gardeners.

Emma: It's not in their radar really, the idea.

Dan: Part of me is just like yeah, who cares, if they do their work days or not, whatever it doesn't matter. Like that's how I feel but I have to kind of manage it somehow because equitably I can't be like it matters for some people and doesn't for others. You've got to work within the system we've excepted. And unless we are willing to change the system through more consensus and dialogue. But I think it probably takes floating some of those ideas more and being courageous about it and saying hey what do we think about community work days? How important are they. Is it important for us to be requiring it. What would happen if we didn't require it

anymore. What if it was just an option? It's almost like, for the people who are doing it would almost be better because they would get membership credit at city market. Most people who are community gardeners are probably interested in shopping at city market, nah that's not even true.

Emma: I wonder too about the work day idea because of the time commitment that they are. Like we, NFNA does like two work days or maybe even one and it's to try and get everyone to take all of their branches and trestles that they've built down pull up all of the reemee and plastic. And even that we have a hard time doing. I think it's just the time. These are people who are occupied so much of the time, they're working their...

Dan: Right so ok, I was thinking about that, so what do you do then. Instead of like going and doing it for them. What happens if you just don't do anything? It's just like, do you want to sign up again and like get in their commitment. Be like ok, well that's your land, like you pay for it again next year. Its already yours and like, if you want it tilled you get it out by this date and if you don't want it tilled then... but it's yours in the spring and just letting people just make their decisions on their own and let them figure it out. Like down at tommy Thompson. All the corn that's growing there now. All these people breaking their backs to get all the root balls out. Well, leave it in. just leave it in and don't till then. People are going to want their same plots back. The worst case scenario is like people don't want their plot back and we have to deal with it in the spring. But we know that that's not going to happen. We know that they want it back. it's almost like, they can be no till if they want.

Appendix 8: Interview Nick Werner and Lauren Chicote – Winooski Valley Park District

Winooski Valley Park District Interview

Interviewer: Emma Tait

Interviewees: Nick Warner, Lauren Chicote

November 10, 2016

Emma: Your program and how it relates to new farms in a general capacity since new farms has been here?

Nick: I guess first and foremost we love having them here. It's just a big part of our lives and we couldn't imagine them not being here so that's.

Lauren: they're pretty folded into how the fabric of this campus and park runs. So yeah, we really like having them around.

Emma: Is the park, it's not just here right? It stretches down a larger chunk of the valley? Is that right?

Nick: it's about 294 acres on this campus, we also have other, I mean we're a park district. Oh yeah look, we have a new map.

Lauren: so this is the map of the homestead. It's a little hard to see but like, we're up here and then this peninsula is what stretches out down behind us and that's like in here, and in here is where the farm is. and so our property does extend out that way, sort of where you came in. and connects to the interval property. And then we do have some property along the bike path and into the wetland that runs kind of like along the farm fields of the interval there. But we are part of the whole like interval project. Kind of its all like conservation area, that you know connects to their part

Nick: we're definitely a distinct organization. We're municipal park agency so we have member towns that pay into our model. Our main goal is managing the lands that we have. And you know theirs 18 different properties in 17 different towns so we're kind of spread out. But this is kind of the flagship, this and Colchester pond, are our two flagship properties.

Lauren: they're our two largest properties, this one is just under 300 acres, 280 something. What is it?

Nick: I think it's 294. It depends on which ????? you're looking at.

Lauren: so it's just under 300 acres park here at the homestead.

Nick: And you know there's a lot of community gardening and so forth that happens here. Just so you know we do have a land restriction. So this whole thing was bought with land and water conservation trust fund monies. So that allows for gardening and agriculture for educational purposes. But doesn't allow for market farming. So we could not, you know if a farmer came in and said I want to lease that whole field and I'm going to grow vegetables and sell them at the market, technically we're not supposed to do that. So it created kind of an interesting push and pull with the goals of new farms because it's, we understand it's evolved over time, and the original goal was to teach people how to create markets for their vegetables and it sort of evolved into something else, and Alisha kind of gave us that whole history. And its also evolved

because there was a pretty sizable grant that supported them for a while so they had a much larger footprint here. They used to have a classroom next door and they would process stuff indoors and so the actual level of lease income, and we do get lease income from this, has declined over time. Which is fine, it's just an evolution of who they are, what they are. But it's sort of a balance between our need to be entrepreneurial and bring funding in to support us with making sure it's affordable to them so that they can stay here. And you know just sort of philosophically I just wonder how that's going to evolve over time. It's going to be really interesting because as folks you know, evolve in their garden plots, you know they're going to want to market – and some of them do – but I'll be interested to see where this is all ten years from now when it becomes a lot more entrenched. We've already seen a couple of farmers from the refugee community looking for other more, larger parcels in order to really market their crops. But it's a great, I mean you come down here in the summer and it's just humming with activity. And we just love that, that something we want to preserve.

Emma: And so did new farms initially approach you to access that land down there, or the homestead, or Burlington parks and rec?

Nick: It was before my time.

Lauren: I would think so

Nick: I would think so

Lauren: it might have been some like collaborative approach. You know they might have been working with parks and rec or other places and organizations to find a large enough parcel of land to be able to do this so then they, kind of approached us this way. But I'm not a hundred percent sure on that.

Nick: it could have just been the informal network. Cause we all know each other, you know we all know jess, and we know Dan Cahill. We all swim in the same pond. And so there is good communication and I think there has been for a lot of years you know. Jim flint was, may have been involved in that conversation.

Lauren: Jonathan might have been, the former executive director to the park district might have been part of the conversation at some point but I'm not sure at what level.

Emma: I know that this is conservation land, the idea of it, and so you mentioned the market gardening as not being part of conservation but does other sort of agriculture fit into that? Like expanding this plot or, is there like a certain allotment of land.

Nick: if you actually look up land and water trust fund, they actually have a very – on their web page, they've got a list of what you can and can't do. What it is, is it is a fund that supports public recreation land. So it's less whether or not we deem it being part of the conservation ???? (8:58) cause frankly we have good partnerships with farmers on other parcels whereby we get a certain amount of lease income from them but they also provide a service by brush hogging the fields that have to remain brush hogged for us to remain in conservation easements. So there's sort of a, it's not like there's no clean line between one and the other. What LWCF – and that's short for that [Land and Water Conservation Fund]– says is that when you use that form of

federal money to purchase a property that it has to stay in public recreation forever. And part of their definition of public recreation is that it can't be a market agricultural thing. So it prevents entities from buying up farm fields using LWCF and then leasing it out to some farmer and being done with it. That's all it is. so that's a restriction, you know if we wanted to change that we would have to take the LWCF value and transfer it to another property. Which is a long and painful bureaucratic process. We have no intention of doing that. We actually see it as, it's a, basically all the lands we own either have a conservation easement, which is, you understand how that works. You know a third party holds the easement so that you're not in power to violate the easement unless you get permission. And usually that's the Vermont housing board or the Vermont land trust and so forth. Either that protects the land or LWCF protects the land or the physical condition of the property is so much in wetland it couldn't be developed anyhow.

Emma: right it couldn't be anything other than wetland.

Nick: Right so that's sort of the whole philosophy of this organization is that we don't own lands unless they have some kind of restriction that prevents future development. Here it just happens to be LWCF cause that's the money we used to buy this land. And the entire, all the buildings and everything are under that umbrella.

Emma: How do you feel that new farms and having new farms here benefits the park district specifically? And the people that come here in its park capacity versus its sort of garden capacity?

Nick: We're a public agency, so it's, my own personal bias is it's an incredibly important part of our community. You know the refugee resettlement has been going on here since the late seventies, this is nothing new. We just have a personal affinity and our board, you know, we have a board of trustees, one from each of our member towns that meets monthly and they're all incredibly supportive of this as being a, you know it's an economic, social and cultural benefit to a specific community that obviously is trying to acclimatize themselves to living in this country, it allows them to raise crops that are unique to their culture that would not be, can't be access elsewhere. So that's one value and it just has a certain cohesiveness and cultural.

Lauren: yeah it just adds to the community feel of the park here. And as we mentioned we are supported by seven member towns so we have kind of like a regional focus of conservation and even though a lot of the refugee's families are more concentrated in the Burlington old north end community I know some come from Winooski which is one of our member towns and Colchester I'm sure so it kind of just adds to that regional model and networking that we have this resource here that benefits people from the various communities that support us. And just sort of adds to the community feel of the place that there's different groups of people both use wise – you know gardeners versus dog walkers and runners and birders – but also culturally wise. We get a lot of people that come and get trail maps and then when you tell them about the farm they just think it's really cool to be able to see different cultural practices around agriculture and seeing different plants that they've never really seen grown here that are being grown and it just kind of sparks a conversation around that and with those people. It just kind of adds to that feel here.

Emma: Do you guys get questions about the farm down there often, either from people coming here or like your board about what's going on.

Lauren: um some. Not too much.

Nick: its been here for a while so I think a lot of the questions are already answered.

Lauren: yeah I'd be curious to hear like the visitors that come through the museum, if they question it. I'm not sure how many of those people, cause a lot of those people that come to see the Ethan Allen homestead museum are from out of state, but I'm not sure how many of those people then go, kind of explore the campus beyond just the museum, but I know that a few have asked about the different gardening things happening and then when they learn about the farming down in the lower field, cause it is a little separated from just what's happening up here, they're pretty interested by it. They just kind of think that it's a cool extension of the community garden movement and network.

Emma: Have you or even the sort of broader, your boards from your towns, have you guys learned anything particular from having new farms here?

Nick: I guess that there's, we do, we all have our biases so one has, if you're a white guy like me, you have a natural bias towards thinking that there's a homogeneity to all of this. I've learned so much from Alisha, she's telling me all the different factions and cultures and interests and sort of the, you know to us we see people show up and they do their thing and they leave, but I mean all the dynamics, all the social dynamics and cultural clashes and you know its, it's a bunch of folks coming from vastly different parts of the world even like within single countries, like the difference in language and culture and approaches, and the level to which she needs to manage all those different personalities and expectations is really striking. And I guess I had more of an assumption of more of a monolithic thing and you know their all in agreement about doing it. It's not that at all, it's very, I mean as you know it's very dynamic and active. Which I find reassuring, I mean its people trying to get by in difficult circumstances. And seeing how people manage that. Like I said what's going to be interesting to me is its going to become, you know, the success of what's happening down there is going to create more problems. You know every problem creates an opportunity and every opportunity creates a problem right so the problem if you're successful in doing this is you need more land to, you know market your wares if that's what your goal is. which we can't provide here. And, you know, funding its, what's happening here has been reliant on funding that comes from soft money. From philanthropy, from donations. And that's a structure that is tenuous and could, and you know we want to be part of that solution but if Alisha showed up and said we're out of money, I'm not sure what we would do. Would we become a direct leaser of the land and try to manage what Alisha's managing which is really substantial? So we're trying to be very supportive, you know, we helped with the irrigation system, we're talking about a greenhouse and my board has been remarkably supportive. You know, the greenhouse thing they're like sure let's look at it. I don't think there was any pushback at all. And they totally get what it is. so it's all very cool. We're very fortunate, knock on wood, but I've learned a lot just from Alisha on how, it's like herding a bunch of cats sometimes and how difficult it is. you know the whole thing around the green house in Winooski, you know we learned a lot about that and the dynamics around that and sort of the

cultural attitudes of the neighbors towards that facility. So it's been, every time we interact with what she does it's been an education.

Lauren: yeah, definitely from an organizational standpoint learning just like the functioning of how they operate. But from kind of a personal standpoint just like observing and interacting with the individuals that come and farm, just learning a new appreciation of the different cultures and kind of how they, what they bring to the community here. And a new appreciation of the hardships that they've gone through coming from their countries and being thrown into our culture here and being more sympathetic to that. And just really appreciating having that diverse mix of people here in my community where I live and work has been educational. I really appreciate it.

Nick: I'm aware of all of the issues around the organization itself and who should be a member. It's sort of analogous to what's going on in the native American community which is trying to define itself. And there are many different versions of how you define yourself as a native American. Well who should be a member of this group and if you're a member of that group what does that mean. You know it's really, it just, there's a tendency I think for sort of the white culture to want to group people and make certain assumptions and identify them in a certain way and it's just nice to learn more and realize that, and to reinforce your knowledge that no it isn't that way at all, I mean there's a lot of individuals trying to get by and they've created this organization around a single purpose and a single facility but that just creates even more problems and issues. I think Alisha's ability to navigate that has been pretty stunning. I'm sure you've seen that first hand.

Emma: It's certainly a lot of work for one person. But it's nice that your board is so supportive of this, from a sort of much further perspective of they don't have the direct interaction they don't have sort of feet on the ground perspective but they're still supporting it and understanding its value.

Nick: yeah, in the two years I've been here it's been just a complete universal support. There hasn't been a single blip on the screen.

Lauren: yeah, no. and I think some of it comes from the city of Burlington and the city of Winooski, like the cities themselves have such support for these sort of initiatives and AALV and the NFNA that, like, you know, we understand that we're part of that support and that community so it doesn't make sense to not support it. And they have just become so sort of ingrained into this campus and how we work. They understand that that it does just kind of go beyond us the park district and stuff, it kind of spills out into the community too.

Emma: Are there ways that you feel that new farms could better serve the park district?

Lauren: I don't think so, I think they do a great job just kind of, just being here. From a programming side, you know I'm the program director here, I can see just more interaction with the, to maybe do some more community outreach kind of collaborations because we do have the facilities to have sort of talks and that sort of stuff to get other people in the community to understand what's going on here. But they on their own do a great job with that. They do farm tours down there, which is just great to have that added activity happening here. I don't think that they could do much more to benefit us.

Nick: yeah, I mean it's just been fine, there's always the logistical issues of leaving the gate unlocked or having a car down there we're not sure who it is, but I mean all that stuff is totally workable and it's never.

Lauren: yeah they do a good job of organization and governing and policing themselves to like follow our regulations here.

Emma: I interviewed one of the farmers and one of the questions I asked them was like if there was someone new coming to the farm what is the thing that you would tell them. What is the most important thing to know for them? And there was a variety of responses but one of them was the regulations. Like what is allowed and what is not. Which I thought was interesting that that was different. Cause he was saying that "where I'm from when you're on the land than it's yours and you farm and that's fine?"

Nick: yes, yeah the whole concept of government and land ownership, I mean like the fiddlehead thing. You know there's people in that community that harvest fiddlehead, which we don't allow collecting on our property. But basically we just get clear-cut and this year we're going to try to be a little more proactive.

Lauren: vigilant yeah,

Nick: but I mean part of it is cultural, I mean if you've been here for five generations you know you can't just show up on people's land and start cutting but for them that's not a point of reference. It's like if you can get on the land you can get the fiddle heads, their yours. So it's kind of different perception of how things work.

Lauren: but they've been pretty receptive to discussing those sorts of things and being educated and then educating us on their perspective too which is, you know, adds, with the fiddle heads we have come across individuals out there and we have had a conversation with them and it wasn't like a big heated thing. They just didn't realize what was ok and what was not ok. And as soon as we told them. Just adding to the communication which is an always building process, you know.

Emma: I think that's very key, just, this is not in their paradigm until you introduce it. Like we're all ingrained that private property is the most important thing in a lot of senses and that's just not. And the communication thing too I think is important. I think the impression is that you won't be able to communicate with them often, that like because English isn't their first language that the communication with them will be very difficult. But I've found them hugely receptive and willing to try which I think is really cool, that they are will to try and have that conversation. Do you have ideas about partnerships you might have with new farms or collaborations in the future? I know you were talking about how the dynamic might shift as it becomes more of a set in organization.

Nick: that's going to be interesting, I'm not sure how that's going to sugar out. You know it's got a really good balance right now, I'm concerned about the funding, I'm concerned about what the expectations are in the future. But we're just basically, as time goes on, trying to you know be a good host which is a lot of what we do here, frankly is be a host. So the greenhouse could be a big deal. I just actually got a message from Alisha that I need to answer. But you know she's struggling with capacity and time and being able to manage things and that's the problem with

the greenhouse, she's going to have one over at the interval site as well so she's trying to figure out how I'm going to manage these things. So you know she's been, she's eminently practical, so it's really easy to work with her. You know I really kind of enjoyed this whole irrigation thing because she got it... and we played a role in terms of getting the permitting and the contractors and so forth and we see that all as a win-win cause we're a public agency so...

Emma: serving the public good

Nick: yeah, I mean it's, that's part of what makes it fun but its, you know anything that relies on soft money, you know is tough so if that money dries up, especially with our reality that we have the last couple of days, you know we're all concerned about what's going to happen and how's that going to trickle down to the local level. And programs that are reliant of federal money right now are particularly vulnerable. So I'm, don't know what her funding mix is or how that works but I mean the good thing is in Burlington there is a very supportive philanthropic community of folks that I think would be supportive and then understand that it's not refugees its people just trying to get by. You know to me that's a whole different thing, you know I don't think of these folks as refugees I think well ok they're from a different place but they're just trying to get by and they have, they you know, cultural identity and a culinary identity that is supported by what we do here and fortunately we've got a board that is very supportive of that. But we'll have to make, you know they'll be decisions we have to make in terms, if she runs out of money, if there's more pressure to make it market based, if there's more flooding – I mean cause it is a flood plain. Cause if we get another 2011 they'll lose everything.

Emma: Are there restrictions on making, say there was an increase, not of people particularly to market but just an increase of people wanting land, are you allowed to expand that?

Nick: Yes, it's a balance because we are also a recreational facility. there's also a farmer who actually has a great relationship and these guys down here. He's been wonderful. And he farms hey down there and he provides a great service because we have to keep it brush hogged and he also helps with tilling their land so there's that interaction. If, and we've already expanded that plot I think a couple times. If there's more of an encroachment than it becomes less cost effective for him to haul his equipment all the way down here and he pays us a little bit but not much, it's a few hundred bucks a year, I mean we're not talking big money here. But everything, that one thing I've learned in this job, is everything's a balance between keeping it accessible for recreation, supporting various programs, be a good host and also keeping the farmers happy so the answer is I don't know. We'd sit down with everyone and say how's this work and go from there. But you now we're always open to an increase in activity here that makes sense. And you know it's we all think it's a great activity. Plus, I just think it's a great kind of karmic thing when you've got the new American community you know doing this in the shadow of the father of Vermont, which to me is kind of an interesting you know his last home. I mean that's sort of an interesting dynamic and you know there has been in the past, people on the board on the museum side who have not been particularly enamored with that, but I think those people are gone.

Lauren: and they get it too

Nick: yeah, yeah. But it's just a really, it makes it a really amazing site when you come in here you get people going to the museum, you get people using the picnic shelter you've got the new farms for new Americans activities then you've got the VNA teaching garden and the VCGN gardens and the community gardens all kind of, there are days down here where all of that is happening at the same time and it's just an astonishingly positive thing when that's all happening.

Emma: Do you see a lot of interaction between the groups or are they all sort of operate in semi bubbles?

Lauren: definitely the garden groups like interact a lot. The community garden people and the NFNA people and the teaching garden they all like intermingle a lot cause some of the people who have plots down there also have plots up here or like know people that have plots up here. A lot of the new Americans are part of the VNA, like they come to the family room gatherings here and then the teaching garden does potlucks during the year that invites members from all the different gardening communities to come so those I definitely see interacting. The other park users that just come to use the park on a regular basis probably not as much but they interact in the sense that they enjoy having, like seeing the gardens here and seeing them grow through the year and the different plants that are being grown. And that sort of interaction with the museum coming in I think it's that sort of, that's the interaction too, it that oh its cool that this is happening around here.

Appendix 9: Interview Jess Hyman – Vermont Community Garden Network

Interviewer: Emma Tait

Interviewee: Jess Hyman

November 9, 2016

Emma: What is your program and how does it relate to new farms?

Jess: The Vermont community garden network has been around for about 15 years we started out our life as a very Burlington focused organization, called friends of Burlington gardens. That was working to increase access to space to grow food for all communities, all different populations in Burlington. It grew out of the evolution of the community garden movement in Burlington and the city and then branched off into its own nonprofit to further support youth gardening and neighborhood gardening and gardening activities that didn't necessarily fall into the city's parks and rec program. One of its first hands on programs was the teaching garden, a community teaching garden which is at Ethan Allen homestead and then since then we've added a second site at Tommy Thompson which is a hands on beginning organic gardening program for adults that runs all season long. So that's been at Ethan Allen homestead since 2003 I believe. And as our organization grew we expanded outside of Burlington to become a statewide organization so a big piece of what we do is supporting community and school garden groups so by providing technical assistance and support for local groups who want to start up garden projects whether they're in neighborhoods or schools or churches or food shelves or workplaces or prisons, wherever people are wanting to grow food together we are supporting the people who are doing that organizing. Offering small grants and training for garden leaders and connecting all these different garden groups and leaders to each other. And then we also do hands on garden education for kids and adults and families and so most of our hands on – kind of hands in the dirt – work is still around the Burlington area with the exception of one program which is called gardens for learning which works with kids at risk for summertime hunger at different sites around the state. And so in our work with all these different types of garden groups we've had the opportunity to work with Alisha in sort of structured and semi-structured ways there's an overall- as you know in Burlington there are a lot of organization doing connected work, and we tend to work pretty well together and we tend to collaborated as much as we can and really support each other because it's all such amazing work. And so with new farms, I think, being a neighbor of the homestead was one of the first ways that we connected with them and then a few years ago, four years ago?, three years ago?, I can't remember exactly when, Alisha was transitioning the program from more market based support for the farmers to more community garden model we provided some support for her to help change the model of the land down by the river to make it more community garden focused. That was probably the most formal partnership we've had with her, with the program. Otherwise we do a lot of partnership events. So when we have harvest parties and festivals at the homestead, those are really partnerships between us, parks and rec, the VNA family room and new farms and the folks at the Winooski valley park district. And so What's really been wonderful is being able to connect all these different communities of gardeners to each other. Because, I mean, as you know, that's where the biggest growth and change and connections come in our community is when we actually talk to each other and learn from each other. And over the past couple years there's been a –

especially in the last two years - there's been a lot of effort by the city and I don't know whether, is Dan Cahill or Meghan O'Daniel on your list.

Emma: yeah I just talked to him yesterday

Jess: Ok perfect, so I'm sure he talked to you about how they've been very intentionally making sure that the city programs are accessible to everyone who lives in the city, no matter what their background or their language skills or abilities and the city's efforts have made a big difference in making a lot of the community garden areas accessible to all sorts of new Americans. And there's been a nice, I think a stronger relationship between the city and new farms too because, you know, I mean as you know Alisha helps sign up gardeners for plots in the city as well as through the new farms land so I think that's been huge.

Jess: Oh and the other thing just for general relationship. Now this isn't directly related to new farms but we work pretty closely, really closely with the VNA family room and their garden program which is also at Ethan Allen homestead right next to our teaching garden. And so we do twice weekly garden education cooking, kids activity programming there. And a lot of the families who are part of the family room are new Americans and some of them also have additional plots through Alisha or through the city as well.

Emma: Yeah, I've done interviews with five of our farmers already and I believe one of them, I know that one of them started with the family room. Cause she had a small child and that was sort of her way in. Do you have overlap with your participants for the teaching garden with new farms?

Jess: Not with the teaching garden. The teaching garden is really designed for beginning gardeners. A lot of the New Americans have tons of agricultural experience. And what they need help learning is how to grow in this climate, not how to grow food. And so we don't, we really haven't gotten many, I don't think we've gotten any applications from new Americans for our teaching garden program. But I think that's for a couple different reasons. One because it's just a basic beginning gardening program also it through the program it's a very small garden so each student has a kitchen garden size plot and shared space which can produce a lot of food but not at the scale that a lot of people are looking for. And so I think that's the main reason that we haven't had much interest in our teaching garden class and the other reason too is one of the reasons that our teaching garden can be difficult for some people to participate in is that it's a big time commitment. so Its twice a week for 22 weeks at both sites. As we know there's no public transportation to Ethan Allen or to the Tommy Thompson and so that can be big barrier. You know we provide scholarships and make sure that anyone who wants to participate and can't afford it can attend, but there's some other structural barriers that would make it difficult for some of the new Americans to participate. But at the same time it's not a program that they want to participate in because of the level of instruction that's given too. There's more overlap in our work with the family room and also some of our other programs. Particularly our senior gardening programs.

Emma: Do you get questions or curiosity from your participants about new farms or the new Americans?

Jess: Definitely. And we always include visits to different garden sites. That's a big piece of the teaching garden program is we want to make sure that people gain the basic skills and information they

need to grow their own food but also to understand how to use those skills within the greater community and understand what's out there so they always learn about all the different garden partners in the area and different ways of growing things, different – you know all the, we don't want people to be learning in their little tunnel vision.

Emma: What kind of questions do you get?

Jess: Hmm that's a good question. That would be a better question for Carolina, our instructor, she's actually away this week but from my experience – yeah its Carolina Lucac –

Emma: I may have met her

Jess: I'm sure you've met her. She's actually visiting family in Mexico right now. Just from what I've heard, and I have less direct contact with the teaching garden students than she does, its more about types of foods and things that are being grown. So questions about like, looking at an African eggplant for example and wondering what it is, and how you use it. Like I think there's this really, one thing that's really wonderful about the teaching garden class is people are really eager to learn and to see what other people are doing and so they want to know what things are but also how do you use it. What does it taste like? So those types of questions come up a lot.

Emma: I ate an African eggplant for the first time this summer. I was very surprised, it's like, it tastes like a vegetable, like kind of like a green bean, crossed with a pepper. And I was like oh ok.

Jess: Not like eggplant at all

Emma: not like eggplant at all. Same family but...

Jess: The other question that's come up from teaching garden students, not so much at Ethan Allen but at Tommy Thompson, is you know, as they're learning gardening practices in a certain style and then they are seeing a little bit more mono cropping, you know particularly for the corn, you know they ask a lot of questions about well why are people growing things differently. And that's something that we try and show too you know, that you can have a community garden where there's a hundred different plots and everyone could be growing similar things or different things but every plot's going to look different because people plant differently so seeing you know the large stands of corn in contrast with interplanting or crop rotation, you know they ask about that and it's a really good learning opportunity for them to understand different reasons for different planting techniques you know, different yields, different strategies and also cultural preferences too which I think is really important for everyone to understand that, and I think, well this is a little bit of a tangent, but I think that there's a little bit of, and sometimes a lot of cultural bias in the community garden system where people say, oh yes this is all a community everyone is different but you're different isn't right. And so we try and dispel that if it ever comes up in our programs.

Jess: Yeah I think that the cultural piece is really interesting too cause obviously the new farms field is vastly different, especially, you can almost tell the cultural differences just by looking cause they tend to be grouped. One of my interviewees was Burundian and she was talking about the Africans and African corn, and how African corn, and African corn cornmeal is the most important thing in their diet and so they all grow their entire plot full of corn and they'll like plant some things

underneath it but corn is like, that's the most important thing culturally and in their diet, which I thought was really interesting.

Emma: so you talked about some of the ways you've partnered with new farms in the past, do you have ideas about how you want to partner with them in the future?

Jess: That's a good question. I think it would really depend on the need. You know what the farmers need and what new farms need. One of the main things we do, as I mentioned before, is supporting garden leadership and garden groups. So say if a group of farmers wanted to start their own community garden, you know, we could provide some support on that. We really, our main area is community based gardening so we don't work with people who are trying to start farms or home gardens. Our niche is places where people are growing food together. And it's a very western concept, the notion of community garden and it works well in some situations and doesn't work well in others. In a situation where people want to have a space to grow food, grow their own food, take it home and not necessarily interact with their neighbors, of whatever culture, that's very different from a community garden setting where people are expected to come together as a group regularly. So it all depends on the needs and desires of the group. So in terms of how we could work together I think there's a lot more learning that can happen in both directions. You know there's some of the growing practices that the farmers are using that are fantastic, that are producing incredible yields of food that we'd love to learn about. You know the different varieties the different techniques I think that it would be really good for the teaching gardens students to learn more about that. So I think that would be one way that we could partner. We have some of our teaching garden students come back for a second year, even a third year. But if they could have a more dedicated project where they would maybe work with a farmer to find out something new that they are sharing with the group. This is just of the top of my head. I think there are, the short answer to your question is I think there would be opportunities to have more cross cultural learning between our programs and the new farmers. You know language is always an issue but as long as there is some sort of interpretation, even if it's just a little tiny bit, it can make it a lot easier.

Emma: Are there ways that you feel that new farms could, I guess the cross cultural communication is one way, but could better serve the community garden network?

Jess: That's a good question. I'm not sure. I mean I think there could definitely, related to the learning opportunities, wouldn't it be great if there was a workshop on what to do with the corn. How do you dry it? How do you grind it? What is it used for? I think anything that helps people see how, whatever produce can actually be used and integrated into their own diet, that can get them excited about growing it or even thinking more broadly in general. So I think that would be good. And I think just more partnership events. You know the potlucks and harvest parties where all gardeners and farmers are coming together is really good just to increase cultural awareness and build community among all of the different gardening populations.

Emma: You've talked a little bit about this already, so I'm going to touch a little bit on the same things. Do you feel that having new farms at the homestead has particularly benefitted the teaching garden?

Jess: I think indirectly. Just having that exposure and awareness is really good.

Emma: Were you there before new farms came to the homestead?

Jess: I think so, yea well our program was. I've been the director here for just a little over five years. Yes I think that it was maybe four years ago that new farms came to the homestead. But I'm not entirely sure.

Emma: Did you, I'm not sure if you can speak to this and if not that's fine, was there a noticeable change in the dynamics of the space or the people?

Jess: Not too much, I mean there have always been a lot of new Americans gardening in the community garden spots in the homestead. I think that in the past couple years there have been a lot more new Americans gardening in the community gardening program because of the increase in access and because of new farms helping direct folks who don't necessarily want to be part of the farming program but want to do more smaller scale community gardening. So there's definitely been an increase but there've always been immigrant and refugee families gardening at the homestead and that's always been a big part of it.

Emma: right, just through the other organizations

Jess: Yeah.

Emma: How do you think, if new farms was not at the homestead or left the homestead, how would it change. Both impact the teaching garden – which maybe not so much – but more the dynamic there or the influx of farmers.

Jess: I think if the ne farms program wasn't at the lower field by the river. It wouldn't change the homestead too, too much – I mean it would be a reduction in traffic – but there would still be so many new American gardeners in the main community garden area that it probably wouldn't make that much of a difference. Cause there's definitely a, not so much a split, but the farmers who are going down by the river don't spend a lot of time in the main garden area because they're just driving up, parking and walking down. So I think there wouldn't, I don't think there'd be a huge impact other than there'd be fewer people growing food on that land and slightly less diversity in terms of the people who are coming and going.

Emma: What do you feel is the benefit of new farms to the community. Why is it important as a program?

Jess: Oh I think it's a huge benefit because its providing space and resources for people to grow their own food and to grow culturally appropriate food that isn't necessarily available in the local stores. It also gives a lot of, especially the older generations, something active to do. You know I think a lot of the first generation arrivals are, can get really isolated, and to have, to be doing something that can, help connect them to each other within the community, but also just to be doing something that isn't' depending on being in a community where nobody speaks your language and you can't understand them. So I think that's a huge benefit. I think it's a huge benefit for the greater community to understand how other cultures live and what's important and what their realities are like. So I think that's incredibly valuable too. And then the connections that can be made between, among gardeners of all different types is very important. Plus, its absolutely wonderful to have group events and to taste the delicious food.

Emma: Do you think that there are ways that new farms could better serve the community? Or could it improve or adjust to have a broader impact?

Jess: Better serve the immigrant or refugee community? Or the broader community?

Emma: Both. Right cause, I know that new farms changed from pushing the marketing to a more, “we’re going to provide you the space and the infrastructure and then you can do whatever want with your plot” model. I think largely just because of the time and the investment of one person running the program that that makes a lot more sense. But are there ways that you see – you have sort of a broader perspective on the community gardening scene in certainly Burlington and larger Vermont – are there ways that, gaps that it could fill, either in its current model or with slight adjustments to both the refugees and the broader Burlington community?

Jess: In terms of gaps it could fill for refugees, there’s already a decent amount of this happening between the few farmers who are growing commercially and the fact that a lot of the growers are sharing within their family or larger networks, sharing food – but I know there still is a great demand for culturally appropriate food from people who have no interest in growing it and – like for example we did a workshop a week or two ago at the Champlain senior center and there were a group of Bhutanese seniors there, most of whom weren’t involved in any gardening or farming program and they were amazed and thrilled by the fact that tulsi basil grows here. They had no idea you could even grow it in Vermont. And so it was just his eye opening experience for them. Like here’s something that’s very important to them culturally and that they had no idea that they could even find here, and so I think there’s some, probably some greater connections that could be made between the farming and gardening new American community and the broader new American community that might not be as connected to that. And I think that there, I mean this goes back to the market based, there could be a greater opportunity for more market opportunity. Opportunities, opportunities. A more, there’s a market in our community for a lot of these foods and even though the change of the new farms program, I think was the right, it was really the right thing to do, there might, it would be nice if there was some way to encourage a little more of that product to be out in the community because I think there are a lot of people who could benefit from, of all cultures, who could benefit from being able to purchase some of those products which they would be able to. Even all the little stores in our neighborhood. You know between the two African markets and the poly market and the Vietnamese market, they’re full of produce. Most of it comes from Boston or Montreal. Virtually none of the produce that’s sold in any of our neighborhood stores comes from, comes locally. So you know, there’s a market for it and if there was a way that new farms could make it work to support farmers to grow it who actually want to sell commercially. Or maybe it’s more a of a mentoring program for other farmers. So there are a lot of farmers who, probably would love to grow some of these other crops if they knew there was a market for it. Or if they knew how to grow it so maybe some of the new American farmers could mentor some of the Vermont farmers on how to grow some of these culturally appropriate crops which I think would be a really nice turnaround because you know sadly our culture has the attitude of “we know best and we’re going to teach you what to do” as opposed to let’s learn from your experience and culture and knowledge to do what we do better.

Emma: I think that’s a really interesting approach. Like I know that many of the new American farmers have very little time and they sort of give extra when they have extra. When their garden explodes

and they're like "oh my gosh" "here have some things" but I wonder, the sort of teaching. You know that there is at least some demand and teaching farmers that have the space and the time or are already commercially selling. I think that's a really interesting idea. And I like the idea too of the learning, the cross cultural learning too, just at the farm. Creating a greater awareness of what these foods are. Cause I recall that some of the farmers were selling to a restaurant in the north end that was trying to feature non-western foods.

Jess: Yep I think butch and babes. And bluebird barbeque used to buy, I think they still do, buy some produce.

Emma: But I imagine that many people seeing those things on a menu don't know. And so changing that dynamic.

Jess: And the two other things too. One would be some support for some of the local store owners. So in the same way that the department of health with some success tried to make it easier for convenience store owners to have healthy options and local foods. But maybe there could be some support that new farms could offer to Anthony at Thai phat or prince at the African market on ways that they can source more locally. And then I bet, you know that's obviously something that takes resources from new farms, you'd have to have the staffing to do it, and the other thing too would be more public workshops. Like I see there would be a great demand for an in garden workshop on growing African eggplant or processing corn. And that's something that people from the community would probably pay a bit for. You know maybe something in partnership with city market's educational programs. You know that could be a way to get more awareness in the greater community and you know very small source of income too.

Emma: A little buffer.

Jess: To cover the cost of doing it anyway.

Emma: Do you do any work with, your just community gardening focused, so you don't connect necessarily to broader farmers?

Jess: Not as much. I mean we're part of, in our statewide work we're part of the farm to plate initiative and general food systems and food access work and so we have a lot of connections with farmers. But our work is community based. Community food based.

Emma: I worked on a fairly largescale farm for many summers and the farmer that I worked for and I took him around the garden at new farms and he was completely astonished at what they are growing and how they're growing it. That they're doing it all by hand. Even on a smaller scale than he's used to but on a much larger scale than sort of your average community garden plot. And he's someone that's very with the political atmosphere and all those sort of things and he had no idea. And I thought that that was really interesting. How it might change the dynamics of either community farms or either new Americans to have greater awareness within the greater farming community, or commercial farming community.

Jess: I'm trying to remember for the last few NOFA, NOFA Vermont does a winter conference each year, and I don't know if there's ever been a workshop on growing practices, different growing practices. That might be a fun way to share some of that learning. But also when you think about things like

that its taking this very westernized 'here's how we teach things" we put a whole bunch of people in a room and we do a presentation with pictures. You know that's not always going to be how everyone wants to teach or learn.

Emma: Its not really how most people want to learn.

Jess: Not at all

Emma: But we've institutionalized it as the "right way".

Emma: Are there things that you, or your participants or your organization has learned or gleaned just from having new farms or working with new farms?

Jess: Yes. We've probably learned more working with the new American gardeners with the family room just because we have more direct contact. But definitely learned new ideas for cooking practices. You know, changed a little bit how we do our garden education.

Emma: How so?

Jess: This again would be a better question for Carolina, but in thinking about the types of activities that work in a large group of people, especially with a lot of kids from different cultures. It's you know it's a different way of doing garden education, then, not so much a different way but just learning new activities and strategies that work. You know with some of the new American families have a different approach to child care than other groups have. And sometimes, I know that especially for some of our interns, our garden education interns, who have their experience with environment education or working with kids has been in a very western structured environment. And to be in an environment where there are twenty kids just running and given a lot of freedom and the ability to explore and play. It sometimes can be really challenging for them when they are used to telling kids to all line up and everyone is going to sit in a circle and having helicopter mom over here making sure that the kids do that. So I think it's really, it's a really great experience, especially for our interns, for understanding how there are many different ways to engage and educate kids. So I think that's something that we've really learned. I think just general increasing our cultural awareness and you know drawing more attention to all of our cultural biases that are there no matter what and that we might not always be aware of or deny exist. Any exposure to different cultures and different ways of doing things helps us understand that. So that's important too.

Emma: Those are all of my questions. Are there any questions that you have for me?

Jess: Your interviewing a wide spectrum of people and you're going to be compiling all this information and giving some recommendations to Alisha you know based on what you've heard so far, what do you think the next phase or step is for new farms?

Emma: I think so far, certainly one of the big things, largely for the Africans is access to a mill to make cornmeal. And I think that that's really interesting. And some of the, one of the farmers that I interviewed was very very much like people will pay for this. And everyone will want to grow corn. If this is available you will have many, many, many more people who want to engage in farming to do this, which is interesting and something that Alisha has had on her radar but this has sort of affirmed. And it was interesting to know that people, this farmer was very clear that people would be happy to pay for this if it was available because I think that alleviates a little bit of the stress for

Alisha. Cause then there's the maintenance for all of those things. And I think it's also an interesting space in which there is potential for collaboration. If someone has a mill or if there are bigger farmers who can offer space for them to grow corn. I think it's an interesting opening for sort of future and potential collaboration between many organizations. And I have only talked to you and Dan Cahill with Burlington parks and rec in terms of the community organizations. And I think that new farms has an impact greater than Alisha sort of sees just in them existing and them being there and people being aware of it. And the work that they are trying to do. Which is excellent. I think that New Farms, I think that something that Alisha is trying to do is make it as self-sufficient as possible. Which make a lot of sense. And I think that, I'm not exactly sure how that might work, but that would free up a lot of available time to expand into translating from the farm, the field and people's homes into sort of a broader community and network and I think that would be good for the program as well and making those connections. And I think making available year round growing would be huge.

Jess: Yeah and I know that's something that Alisha's been trying to figure out in a way that makes sense finically and without having new farms managing a bunch of greenhouses and that can be a challenge. In your interviews, so you know your, obviously in talking with Dan or talking with me or talking with Carolina, probably someone from the family room, interval center. You're going to be talking to people who are directly connected to new farms work or very aware of what's going on. Do you have any interviewees on your list who aren't directly connected who could give you some perspective on the impact on the greater community from someone who isn't already in the know?

Emma: Not at the moment. Partially because I was particularly interested in the homestead. And I think that that is somewhere that this research could go. I think that that a really prime, its one of those things that's on my flagged for later list.

Jess: Right your suggestions for future research.

Emma: It's one of my biggest struggles in research. But generally its being like that would be really cool to look at too.

Jess: Yes but you can't do it all

Emma: You can't do it all.

Jess: Are you talking to anyone at the homestead museum? Cause that's an example of a group that's right there geographically but has tended to be pretty separate.

Emma: I haven't connected with them yet but they are on my list of people to reach out to. Maybe after the initial set of interviewees. Because I think that would be really interesting as people not involved directly in the community gardening process but who are directly involved with the space. And I do think that the sort of zooming out would be really interesting as well. but I think it would also be much more intensive project to sort of garner that amount of responses and sort of a wide variety of knowledge and sample and all of those things. But I do think that that would be really interesting just to see.

Jess: My other question for you is, well maybe once you are done the interviews it'd be more appropriate to ask, but I would love to know at the end of the is process how you think that the

VCGN can do more. Like are there any gaps that we can help fill. Is there anything that we could or should be doing differently. I would love to know that too.