

Growing Together: Service Providers Cooperatively Supporting New
American Farmers and Gardeners in Chittenden County, Vermont

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Abstract

The state of Vermont serves as an active refugee resettlement site, yet it poses unique challenges for New Americans settling there. New Americans in Chittenden County, Vermont are choosing to reconnect to agrarian pasts by farming and gardening, many with the assistance of local service providers. This study uses a case study methodology with Chittenden County as the unit of analysis, to highlight four primary service providers who, along with a number of secondary organizations, support New American growers in the area. This study finds that an informal, emergent, and self-governed network is in place among these primary organizations, and is supported by the secondary organizations. As the popularity and importance of these programs continues to grow, these organizations may want to consider increased or formalized collaborative efforts to more efficiently and effectively meet the demand.

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Definitions

Farm/Farmer: The USDA defines a farm as “any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year” (USDA 2019). Typically, “a farm produces food for others,” with the goal of making a profit (Crawford 2014). Throughout this study, the terms “farm” and “farmer” are used when referring to the operations of New Farms for New Americans and the commercial goat and chicken operations at Pine Island Community Farm, because those are the terms used by those organizations to refer to their work.

Garden/Gardener: “A garden produces food for private use,” not for the goal of profiting (Crawford 2014). Throughout this study, the terms “garden” and “gardener” are used when referring to the operations of Burlington Area Community Gardens, The Janet S. Munt Family Room’s garden program, as well as to community gardens at Pine Island Community Farm, because those are the terms used by those organizations to refer to their work.

Refugee: “Someone who has been forced to flee his or her home because of war, violence, or persecution, often without warning. They are unable to return home unless and until conditions in their native lands are safe for them again...Those who obtain refugee status are given protections under international laws and conventions and lifesaving support from aid agencies...Refugees in the U.S. also have the opportunity to become lawful permanent residents and eventually citizens” (International Rescue Committee 2018).

Immigrant: “Someone who makes a conscious decision to leave his or her home and move to a foreign country with the intention of settling there.” They “often go through a lengthy vetting process to immigrate to a new country. Many become lawful permanent residents and eventually citizens...They are free to return home whenever they choose” (International Rescue Committee 2018).

Migrant: “Someone who is moving from place to place (within his or her country or across borders), usually for economic reasons such as seasonal work...They were not forced to leave their native countries because of persecution or violence, but rather are seeking better opportunities” (International Rescue Committee 2018).

New American: “Any foreign-born person who is currently living in the United States regardless of their legal status” (Maleku et al. 2018). This is typically used as a more welcoming, umbrella term encompassing all refugees and immigrants, who may or may not be U.S. citizens. This is the term most frequently used by Chittenden County, Vermont service providers to refer to this population, and therefore is the term used in this study.

List of Acronyms

AALV: Association of Africans Living in Vermont

BACG: Burlington Area Community Gardens

BPRW: Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront

DCF: Department of Children and Families

NAFP: New American Farmer Project

NFNA: New Farms for New Americans

NOFA-VT: Northeast Organic Farming Association, Vermont

NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service

RAPP: Refugee Agricultural Partnership Project

USCRI: U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

UVM: University of Vermont

VCGN: Vermont Community Garden Network

VLT: Vermont Land Trust

WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

WVPD: Winooski Valley Park District

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1. Introduction

The United States refugee admissions program was established in 1980, originally with an annual allowance of 230,000 refugees into the country (Suozzo 2019). With the Trump administration came policy changes resulting in unprecedented lows in the annual refugee admissions cap, dropping to 30,000 in 2019 and 18,000 predicted for fiscal year 2020 (Suozzo 2019).

The state of Vermont serves as one of the most active refugee resettlement locations in the United States as a percentage of the state's overall population (Bose 2013, 84). Whereas the population of Vermont accounts for 0.2% of the U.S. population, in 2011 and 2012, the state accepted 0.6% of resettled refugees (Suozzo 2019). Since the 1980s, Vermont has experienced multiple waves of refugee resettlement, beginning with refugee groups from Southeast Asia in the 1980s, Central Europe in the 1990s and Africa from 2000 on (Bose 2015, 51). More specifically, the majority of refugees in the 1990s came from Vietnam and Bosnia, and the past ten years have mainly seen refugees from Somalia, Bhutan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Suozzo 2019). Almost 8,000 refugees have settled in Vermont since 1988, and that number continues to increase (University of Vermont & State Agricultural College n.d.; Suozzo 2019). Figure 1 provides a comparison of annual refugee resettlement totals in the U.S. and Vermont from fiscal year 1989 to 2019.

The vast majority of Vermont's resettled refugees are concentrated in Chittenden County, and specifically, the cities of Burlington, Winooski, and Colchester (University of Vermont & State Agricultural College n.d.; Bose 2013, 83). Chittenden County, home to approximately 165,000 people, is the most

populous county in the state, with 9% of the population being foreign-born, by far the state’s highest percentage by county (United States Census Bureau n.d.a). This is in comparison to a 4.6% foreign-born population statewide (United States Census Bureau n.d.b). In Burlington alone, New Americans¹ make up 13% of the

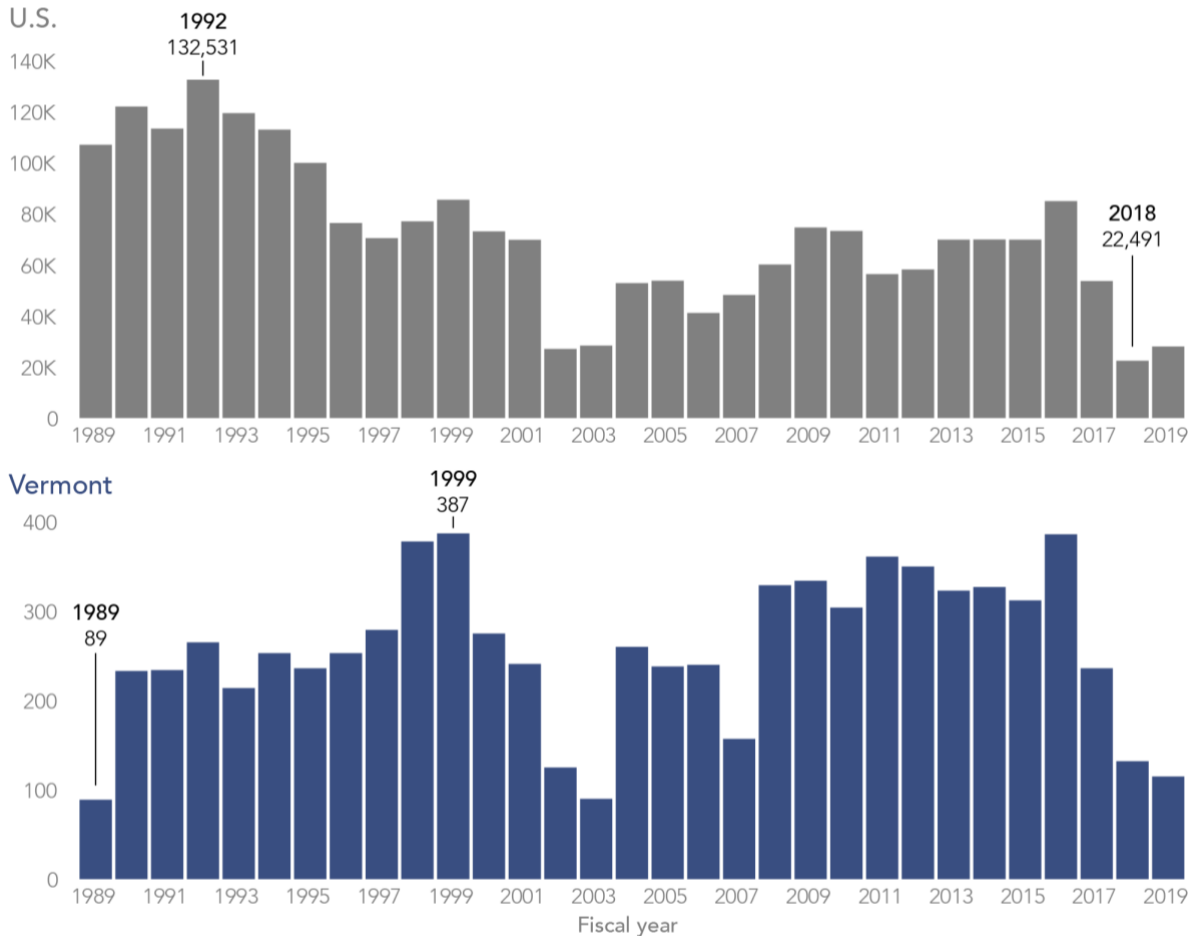


Figure 1: Refugee Resettlement in the U.S. and Vermont

¹ The umbrella term “New American” is the term most commonly used by service providers in Vermont to refer to the refugee and immigrant communities, who may or may not be U.S. citizens, in a more all-encompassing and welcoming manner. “New American” refers to “any foreign-born person who is currently living in the United States regardless of their legal status” (Maleku et al. 2018). Therefore, I have chosen to use the term “New American” to refer to this community throughout this study.

city's population (Jickling 2019).

New Americans arriving in Vermont face unique challenges due to the demographics, climate, and other characteristics of the state that may differ from those of many traditional immigrant destinations (Bose 2013, 83). Over 96% of Vermont's population is white, making it the second-whitest state in the country (Bose 2013, 83). It also is the second-smallest state in terms of population (Bose 2013, 83). In addition to being fairly homogenous in terms of culture and race, Vermont is known for being mostly rural with a low population density and lacks major industries that would typically provide significant employment opportunities (Bose 2013, 83; Bose 2015, 51, 53).

Many of Vermont's New Americans, like those nationwide, come from agrarian backgrounds and bring with them a deep farming knowledge (AALV Inc. 2017; Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 135; Alkon and Mares 2012, 356). Consequently, farming holds strong cultural meaning for many New Americans resettling in Vermont (University of Vermont & State Agricultural College n.d.). The benefits of farming for New Americans are plentiful, including providing an opportunity for autonomy and control over their livelihoods (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 637; Calo and De Master 2016, 111; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 4). Additionally, farming serves as a way of socializing, building community and fostering belonging (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 23).

However, New Americans face a number of common barriers in their pursuit of farming and gardening in the United States which can prevent them from reaping these benefits (Alkon and Mares 2012, 356; Calo and De Master

2016, 111). One of the main challenges is access to suitable and affordable land, as well as the capital necessary to buy or rent land (Calo and De Master 2016, 111-12, 117; Imbruce 2007, 44; Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 634). New American farmers often have difficulty accessing financial assistance and support programs, for instance, those provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), due to factors such as language barriers, distrust of governmental institutions, fear of persecution based on legal status, or lack of awareness of the resources available to them (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 134; Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 632, 634, 639-40; Calo and De Master 2016, 121-23; Alkon and Mares 2012, 356). Vermont's New American community is not immune to these challenges: a lack of resources and difficulties in accessing land or acquiring tenure may prevent them from easily continuing their agrarian traditions (AALV Inc. 2017). Additionally, Vermont's climate may be starkly different than what many New Americans are accustomed to (AALV Inc. 2017). Winters are lengthy and harsh, making for a short growing season (Bose 2015, 51).

In response to these barriers and challenges, a number of service providers exist in Chittenden County, Vermont who support New Americans in their farming and gardening endeavors. Four primary service providers in the area have a specific focus on serving New American farmers and gardeners: Burlington Area Community Gardens, New Farms for New Americans, Pine Island Community Farm, and The Janet S. Munt Family Room. A handful of other "secondary" organizations and programs serve them indirectly or provide support

to the primary service providers. This is seemingly a high number of organizations providing niche, related services to a specific population in a relatively small geographic area.

In this thesis, I explore the history of these four primary organizations and describe the services that these organizations offer, which provides important context for addressing my primary research question:

How do these four primary organizations coordinate when it comes to supporting Chittenden County, Vermont's New American farmers and gardeners?

My study begins with a review of the existing, relevant literature, first on the New American growing experience, including the benefits and challenges of farming and gardening for New Americans. I then explore the literature on organizational collaboration, including the benefits and challenges of collaboration, different types of collaboration, and requirements for successful collaboration. Next, I explain the methodology I used which was case studies on each of the four primary organizations/programs mentioned above, informed by interviews with organizational staff members and available gray literature.

Each case study explores how these organizations and programs came about, what services they currently provide, how they conduct outreach to the New American community, and how they collaborate or partner with other organizations and programs, all within the unit of analysis of Chittenden County. I also provide overviews of each of the secondary supporting organizations I have identified through my research, including the work they do and how they collaborate with other organizations and programs. These include the Intervale

Center, Vermont Community Garden Network, City Market, Winooski Valley Park District, The Center for Sustainable Agriculture's New American Farmer Project through the University of Vermont Extension, and the Huertas Project.

I then present my main findings in regards to my research question, which identify that an informal, emergent and self-governed network exists between the primary organizations in my study. I also find that these organizations are significantly supported by a number of secondary organizations, and are currently operating at or near capacity, which may limit their ability to further collaborate with one another. I discuss the implications of these findings and connect them to the relevant literature and overall themes of my study. Lastly, I offer conclusions and recommendations, both for the organizations moving forward as well as for future research.

2. Literature Review

I begin my literature review by exploring the benefits and challenges associated with the New American growing experience, including both farming and gardening. This section aims to highlight the value of farming and gardening for the New American community, including helping them to continue familiar agrarian practices, grow culturally-relevant foods, feed their families healthy and fresh food, save money on groceries, earn a small profit, socialize, and establish roots in a new country. There are also a number of challenges associated with the New American growing experience, such as access to land on which to farm or garden, access to capital and resources, a distrust of governmental programs, and a lack of knowledge around farming in a potentially different climate. The

purpose of this section is to express the importance of and need for the work being done by the organizations and programs I studied to support Chittenden County's New American community in their pursuit of farming and gardening.

The second section of my literature review looks at different forms that organizational collaboration can take. The purpose of this section is to present background information on the various ways and degrees to which organizations work together, and to help classify and support my later findings and discussion both in regards to how Chittenden County, Vermont service providers currently collaborate to provide services to New American farmers and gardeners and how they might further collaborate in the future.

a. The New American Growing Experience

Benefits of Growing

The number of New American food growers—both farmers and gardeners—in the United States is quickly increasing (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 135). While it may be easy to envision New Americans as “transplants” who have been relocated and passively learned to assimilate, writer Patricia Klindienst thinks the term “gardeners” may paint a more accurate metaphorical picture. Klindienst sees a gardener as “a person who shapes the whole rather than simply being shaped by it” (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 135; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 5). New Americans, by choice or not, leave behind their old lives and start over entirely, demonstrating a certain degree of purpose and agency after suffering trials and tribulations (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 5, 10). Gardening can serve as one method of moving past these hardships and challenging the ways in which

they are disadvantaged in American society (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 123-4; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 6).

Farming and gardening in the United States provide New Americans with many positive benefits. Farming serves as an opportunity for New Americans to have autonomy and control over their work and lives, especially for those transitioning from farmworker to farmer within the United States (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 637; Calo and De Master 2016, 111; Klindienst 2006, 193; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 4). New American farmers, when characterized generally by numerous studies, have been described as passionate, highly skilled, motivated, knowledgeable, and experienced when it comes to agriculture, thanks to their backgrounds (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014b, 208; Calo and De Master 2016, 111-112; Brown and Brush 2018, 84-5; Alkon and Mares 2012, 357-58; Imbruce 2007, 41; Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 124). Farming may be a source of income and/or economic savings for New American farmers, and a way to support their families and future generations (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 124-25; Calo and De Master 2016, 118; Imbruce 2007, 45; Brown and Brush 2018, 96; Klindienst 2006, 206, 208).

A main commonality for many New American growers across the country is that farming and gardening are viewed as ways to simultaneously connect back to the physical land itself and to their homeland, while putting down roots in a new place and building a new life (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 135; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 5; Alkon and Mares 2012, 358; Klindienst 2006, 195). Many New Americans gardened and farmed back home prior to coming to the United States

(Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 135; Alkon and Mares 2012, 356; Brown and Brush 2018, 84-5; Imbruce 2007, 41). Growing specific, culturally-relevant crops or plants can serve as a way for them to cultivate comforting and familiar reminders of home (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 5; Brown and Brush 2018, 84-5; Klindienst 2006, 198).

Farms and gardens—community gardens, in particular—serve as places of congregation, present opportunities for socialization, foster belonging and community-building, and create space for healing (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 124-25; Klindienst 2006, 201; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 23; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014b, 194-95). They also have the ability to strengthen a sense of cultural identity and serve as safe spaces where people are free to be themselves (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 124; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 23; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014b, 194). Urban agricultural spaces such as community gardens and the act of selling produce to local markets also have the ability to bring together longtime residents and New Americans (Imbruce 2007, 51-2; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014b, 195).

New American communities may derive restoration and a sense of serenity from gardens (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 4; Klindienst 2006, 195, 205). These spaces can also allow for creative expression, pleasure, and beauty (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 4-5). Additionally, growing encourages New Americans to remain positive and forward-thinking, and provides them with an opportunity to invest in their futures while passing on meaningful traditions to the next generations (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014a, 10; Klindienst 2006, 205).

Challenges of Growing

New Americans face a number of common barriers in their pursuit of farming and/or gardening in the United States which can impede their ability to fully benefit from their agricultural undertakings (Alkon and Mares 2012, 356; Calo and De Master 2016, 111). Perhaps one of the most common barriers is access to land, in terms of availability of suitable land, access to capital, and affordability—or lack thereof—of farmland or space for growing (Calo and De Master 2016, 111-12, 117; Imbruce 2007, 44; Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 634). In some areas, large-scale agricultural operations are often given priority and preference when it comes to accessing farmland and securing tenure, as it is easier for landowners to rent larger parcels of land to just one owner, and inheriting land is uncommon for beginning farmers (Calo and De Master 2016, 113-14, 120). Small-scale and/or organic farming operations are often relegated to lesser quality land that may have poorer natural conditions, a lack of necessary resources such as water, or that is farther from markets (Calo and De Master 2016, 121). In urban areas, high property costs are also a barrier when attempting to establish community gardens or urban farms (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014b, 213-14).

The barrier of land access for New American farmworkers hoping to transition to autonomous farming also includes sociocultural and relational factors such as landowner-tenant relationships, lease arrangements, ethnicity, cultural identity, and race relations (Calo and De Master 2016, 111, 113). Leasing is common for New American farmers, who are often forced to settle for insecure tenure in the form of informal lease arrangements (Imbruce 2007, 47; Calo and

De Master 2016, 120). Additionally, many land deals are conducted “under the table” or through social networks from which New American farmers are often excluded or are unaware of entirely (Calo and De Master 2016, 120-21).

There is also a great deal of uncertainty and risk associated with insecure tenure of land for New American farmers. These farmers are unable to reliably invest in infrastructure or the production of certain crops without risking significant economic loss (Imbruce 2007, 47; Calo and De Master 2016, 120). Land owners and New American tenant farmers may have drastically different plans and goals for the land. As a result, New American farmers leasing land may not be free to farm as they would choose (Imbruce 2007, 47; Calo and De Master 2016, 121-22). Race and cultural identity are closely tied to perceived credibility of New American farmers, which may help to explain why as of 2016, white landowners accounted for 92% of California farmland rented to partners or individuals (Calo and De Master 2016, 122).

It is difficult for New American farmers to establish or prove their farming credibility, especially in order to acquire loans, when they are not always able to refer back to a responsible farming history in this country, may not have a line of credit, or may be financially unstable (Calo and De Master 2016, 121-22). However, by not owning land, these farmers are not building equity and are unable to save for their future (Imbruce 2007, 47). Furthermore, farming or gardening is not always profitable for New American communities, and oftentimes these populations will need to have other work on the side to support

themselves and their families (Calo and De Master 2016, 112; Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 637; Alkon and Mares 2012, 355).

The main state institution providing financial assistance such as crop insurance, grants, and loans for farmers and rural communities in the United States is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 631-32, 641). A number of barriers often impede New American farmers from accessing USDA resources or participating in USDA programs. USDA programs and grant applications are bureaucratic and tend to have strict requirements and require standardization from participating farmers (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 632, 634, 639). Many of the practices of New American farmers, including planting and cultivation schedules, are incompatible with and/or contradictory to USDA programs and requirements which tend to be tailored to dominant models of industrial agriculture in the United States (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 632, 641).

Often, New American farmers are either unaware of these programs or other forms of assistance, do not know how to get involved, or purposefully stay away (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 134; Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 632, 639-40; Alkon and Mares 2012, 356). They may stay away out of fear of persecution based on legal status, distrust of governmental institutions, or intimidation based on low levels of literacy, education, and English language skills (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 134; Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 632, 634, 639-40; Calo and De Master 2016, 121-23). This is true despite the fact that the USDA claims to target historically marginalized populations (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 632).

When receiving financial assistance from the USDA, extensive paperwork is required throughout the duration of the process (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 639). Additionally, many USDA offices may not have multilingual staff or translation services readily available to serve New American farmers and technical assistance is often lacking (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 639-41; Gottlieb and Joshi 2010, 134). Overall, New American farmers may tend to view USDA application processes as daunting, time-consuming, frustrating, and burdensome, and therefore stay away (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 640).

There are a number of nonprofit organizations and businesses also looking to serve the New American farming and gardening community, many of which receive funding through USDA grants (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 641-42). However, these organizations face their own set of challenges, often operating on very tight budgets, with limited access to resources (Minkoff-Zern and Sloat 2017, 641). Cultural divides between New Americans and longtime residents in an area may further exclude New American farmers and gardeners from participating in social groups such as local growers' organizations, which in turn, further marginalizes these communities (Imbruce 2007, 43).

Conclusions

Farming and gardening may come naturally for many New Americans with agrarian backgrounds, but they do not always come easy in a new location. Vital resources, such as access to land and capital, may be lacking, and a new country often presents fresh challenges including cultural and social barriers and a

different climate to grow in. Service providers, such as those I researched in this study, help New American farmers and gardeners to overcome many of the challenges they face, so that they can reap the many benefits of farming and gardening in a new place. When these service providers are able to collaborate in various ways, they are often able to provide a greater breadth or depth of services, and therefore greater benefits to New American farmers and gardeners.

b. Organizational Collaboration

Reasons to Collaborate

There are many reasons why organizations would want to collaborate with one another rather than working entirely independently. Organizational collaboration is becoming increasingly common in today's environment, yet there remains far greater potential for collaboration than what currently exists (Sowa 2008, 299; Bardach 1998, 163, 306). Nongovernmental organizations are responsible for delivering approximately 50% of human and social services in the United States, and better coordination could help reduce unnecessary duplication and fragmentation which lead to inefficiencies (Sowa 2008, 298). Typically, organizations choose to collaborate because they desire to achieve an outcome beyond what they would be capable of achieving independently (Popp et al. 2014, 20; Briggs 2003, 3; Bardach 1998, 306; Huxham 2005, 3; Milward and Provan 2006, 8).

The act of collaborating should ideally be forming mutually beneficial strategic alliances for all parties involved (Briggs 2003, 3; Briggs 2003, 10). Organizations working together are able to provide a wider and more holistic

array of services to clients, addressing many needs simultaneously (Provan and Milward 2001, 415, 418). Furthermore, the services being provided are able to be delivered in an integrated manner and the quality of the resources is likely to improve (Provan and Milward 2001, 420; Hasse and Austin 1997, 13; Popp et al. 2014, 21; Sowa 2008, 313). Integrated service provision is often more efficient and effective than individualized service provision by a single organization, partially because it seeks to eliminate unnecessary duplication, which in turn can lead to cost savings (Provan and Milward 2001, 420; Hasse and Austin 1997, 13; Bardach 1998, 306). In order to address larger and more complex societal issues, it may be necessary for organizations to work collaboratively in order to have any significant or meaningful impact (Kania and Kramer 2011, 38; Hasse and Austin 1997, 3; Briggs 2003, 5).

Beyond coordinated service delivery, organizations working with one another in a collaborative manner also bring a variety of tools, resources, and knowledge to the partnership, which are then shared and made accessible to all involved parties (Huxham 2005, 3; Popp et al. 2014, 11). Participating organizations may bring tangible assets such as funding, clients, data, staff, specializations, equipment, and facilities to the collaboration, as well as more intangible benefits including reputation, legitimacy, connections, and political will (Sowa 2008, 307; Briggs 2003, 2, 5, 8-9; Provan and Milward 2001, 418). Individuals within organizations can contribute to the collaboration as well, via their own expertise, time, dedication, creativity, and enthusiasm (Bardach 1998, 164). Organizational capacity is increased as a result of these pooled resources

(Popp et al. 2014, 19). Research has shown that the relationship between collaborating organizations can be strengthened by increased reciprocity, which in turn increases the value they are able to produce together (Sowa 2008, 318).

Organizational risk can be reduced through collaboration, as risk then becomes shared among participating organizations rather than individualized (Briggs 2003, 5; Popp et al. 2014, 10). Shared risk allows organizations to be more innovative, flexible, responsive, and capable of change than if they were operating alone, while ensuring that accountability is also shared (Popp et al. 2014, 10, 21; Provan and Milward 2001, 417). Another benefit of organizational collaboration is that the rewards produced as a result are shared among the participating organizations (Sowa 2008, 307). The reward may take the form of direct benefits for the organizations and/or public value that will benefit and strengthen the larger community (Sowa 2008 302, 308; Bardach 1998, 184; Hasse and Austin 1997, 27-8; Provan and Milward 2001, 416-17). Results or rewards produced communally are likely to be more beneficial to all involved parties than the outcomes produced if those parties were operating independently and in competition with one another (Provan and Milward 2001, 415). In the nonprofit or public sectors, where profit is typically not a driving motive and the competition factor is not as strong, organizational cooperation may be more common and effective (Provan and Milward 2001, 415).

Collaboration Challenges

Organizations face a number of challenges when it comes to collaboration. Getting organizations to work together is difficult and requires extensive time and effort, both in terms of forming the partnership or collaboration and maintaining it long-term (Popp et al. 2014, 26; Kania and Kramer 2011, 41; Milward and Provan 2006, 25; Sowa 2008, 307; Bardach 1998, 306). Integrating processes and staff during the formation phase is time- and energy-intensive, and an investment, financial or otherwise (Hasse and Austin 1997, 27; Kania and Kramer 2011, 41; Provan and Milward 2001, 417-18; Briggs 2003, 9; Bardach 1998, 162). Funders, who are often focused on short-term benefits, may struggle to realize the value in long-term collaboration (Kania and Kramer 2011, 41; Milward and Provan 2006, 7). Often, nonprofit organizations are also forced to focus on short-term operating needs rather than long-term visions or systems-level thinking (Sowa 2008, 319-20).

Building stronger relationships and developing trust between members of organizations also takes time and energy, regardless of how formalized these relationships may be, and a transition period must be accounted for (Popp et al. 2014, 10; Provan and Milward 2001, 418). With the amount of capacity and investment collaboration requires, the opportunity cost is something organizations should consider: perhaps these investments would prove more fruitful if redirected to other efforts (Briggs 2003, 9-10). Additionally, these resources, including time, money, and staff, are often scarce to begin with (Bardach 1998, 307).

Many organizations may be hesitant to collaborate due to fear of losing autonomy and control over their own operations (Provan and Milward 2001, 415; Bardach 1998, 164; Popp et al. 2014, 10). The act of collaborating necessarily involves forfeiting some degree of control (Sowa 2008, 310). While some risks are reduced when shared, new risks are also created through collaboration, as organizations share resources and are dependent on one another (Provan and Milward 2001, 415; Briggs 2003, 10).

Some forms of organizational collaboration may necessitate shifting, redefining, or eliminating professional roles, or retraining staff during this process (Hasse and Austin 1997, 14-15; Bardach 1998, 174). The reputation of organizations could be negatively affected as a result of the collaboration, and competition could be intense and hard to move past (Briggs 2003, 10; Hasse and Austin 1997, 16). Some participating organizations may be willing to contribute different levels of resources or commitment to the collaboration, or demand different levels of resources in return (Milward and Provan 2006, 7; Bardach 1998, 163). Ensuring organizational accountability may prove challenging (Popp et al. 2014, 24-5; Bardach 1998, 116). Additionally, the collaboration may benefit some participating organizations more than others (Milward and Provan 2006, 7).

Another issue is that organizational and network needs may conflict (Popp et al. 2014, 11; Milward and Provan 2006, 7). Through organizational collaboration, there is an attempt to balance organizational needs, network needs, and client/community needs: not all of these needs can be successfully met without compromising each other (Provan and Milward 2001, 421; Popp et al.

2014, 11). There is also the possibility that values and visions—personal, professional, organizational, or otherwise—may conflict, and compromises and sacrifices may have to be made (Bardach 1998, 170; 306-7; Hasse and Austin 1997, 13; Popp et al. 2014, 10).

For these reasons, organizational collaborations are not always the answer, and may actually prove more detrimental than if the organizations continued to operate independently (Briggs 2003, 10, 19; Popp et al. 2014, 22; Kania and Kramer 2011, 39; Milward and Provan 2006, 25). Collaborations require substantial inputs, and over time, organizations may experience “coordination fatigue” (Popp et al. 2014, 10). Ineffective collaborations can also stem from the collaboration process being too rushed or continued past its point of usefulness, or from participants not contributing enough to the collaboration to sustain it or allow it to reach its full potential (Briggs 2003, 9).

Types of Collaboration

The existing literature on organizational collaboration uses a wide variety of terms, classifications, and scales to describe the many different ways in which organizations collaborate. “Interagency collaborative capacity” is used to describe the collaborative potential of organizations, which requires an opportunity, a purpose, inputs of resources, skilled workers, protections against threats, and iteration (Bardach 1998, 49).

Three methods of delivering services and value to the public have been described: making, buying, and partnering (Briggs 2003, 4). “Making” refers to

in-house production, which allows an organization to maintain control, whereas “buying” refers to outsourcing or contracting and allows for greater flexibility (Briggs 2003, 4). “Partnering” is when two or more organizations decide to work together to provide greater services more efficiently, while understanding this collaboration necessitates giving up some degree of autonomy and control (Briggs 2003, 4). Some partnerships are voluntary, while others are not (Briggs 2003, 6). Similarly, collaborative networks can be either emergent or mandated:

“emergent” refers to a voluntary collaboration that naturally emerges, and “mandated” means being formally required (Popp et al. 2014, 10). Partnerships can occur across sectors—for instance, public-nonprofit partnerships—and even within sectors between very different types of institutions, such as universities and community advocacy groups within the nonprofit sector (Briggs 2003, 5).

“Service integration” is a term that has been used to describe any effort to lessen or remove divisions between the provision of related services (Hasse and Austin 1997, 9-10). Service integration can be understood as either a means towards more comprehensive or more efficiently delivered services, and can occur within or among organizations (Hasse and Austin 1997, 10, 13). Service integration can occur at different levels, including “communication,” “coordination,” and “collaboration” (Hasse and Austin 1997, 9-10).

Communication involves helpful yet informal information-sharing and personal relationships but no further shared activities between organizations (Hasse and Austin 1997, 16; Sowa 2008, 302; Briggs 2003, 13). Coordination takes things a step further, with greater shared activities between organizations, but individual

organizations still maintain a sense of autonomy and unique goals (Hasse and Austin 1997, 16; Sowa 2008, 302; Briggs 2003, 13). Collaboration involves all of the above, plus shared staff, resources, and rewards, and the creation of shared goals and accountability between the organizations involved (Hasse and Austin 1997, 16; Sowa 2008, 302; Briggs 2003, 13).

It may prove most effective for organizations to move through this trajectory (communication to coordination to collaboration) rather than jumping directly into collaboration without first establishing a solid base, or, for some organizations, communication or coordination meet their needs and they have no reason to move beyond those forms of service integration (Hasse and Austin 1997, 16). Some extend this continuum by including complete service integration, where a new set of services are mutually provided by a group of collaborating organizations in a more formalized manner, and both the changes required and rewards are greater (Sowa 2008, 301-2; Briggs 2003, 13). The most intense form of service integration would be merging, wherein multiple organizations actually join together to become a single organization, a method much more common in the private sector (Briggs 2003, 13).

Collaboration types can also be defined by the level of commitment of the organizations involved, ranging from shallow to deep (Sowa 2008, 308). Shallow commitment in collaborations can be considered “collaborative contracts,” where participating organizations mainly share financial resources and do not interact in other ways: collaborating may even be an involuntary condition of them receiving funding (Sowa 2008, 308; Briggs 2003, 6). In collaborations of medium

commitment, known as “capacity-building collaborations,” organizations share resources like knowledge and staff, and rewards produced are shared (Sowa 2008, 311). Deep commitment collaborations, or “community-building collaborations,” build on that by producing rewards that will not only benefit the organizations, but the greater community as well (Sowa 2008, 314).

Organizations may also interact via inter-organizational networks: these can include governance, policy, and collaborative networks (Popp et al. 2014, 16). Networks are made up of organizations and the relationships and linkages between them (Popp et al. 2014, 10). Typically, three or more organizations comprise a collaborative inter-organizational network, with all involved organizations working towards a shared purpose and providing a service that could not be as effectively delivered to the public were the organizations operating independently (Popp et al. 2014, 16, 18). Most often, the nonprofit and public sectors utilize these types of networks (Popp et al. 2014, 16).

Categories of public management networks can also be differentiated based on the purpose they are serving, which is usually tied to a problem they are attempting to help mitigate (Milward and Provan 2006, 6). Common types of these networks include problem-solving networks, information diffusion networks, service implementation networks, and community capacity-building networks, however, network purposes are not always singular (Milward and Provan 2006, 6, 10). These networks are still composed of a number of participating organizations, the programs they encompass, the people supporting them, and the resources each organization contributes (Milward and Provan 2006,

10). Sometimes, only particular programs within an organization may be involved in a given network (Milward and Provan 2006, 24).

“Collective impact” has emerged as an alternative way to conceptualize collaboration. The idea of collective impact is that a number of organizational actors from a variety of different sectors make a long-term commitment to work together with a common agenda to tackle a particular public issue, through open communication and mutual support (Kania and Kramer 2011, 36, 39). These actors would represent a wide variety of sectors including education, local government, private foundations, community and environmental groups, nonprofits, small businesses and citizens (Kania and Kramer 2011, 36, 38). Nonprofit organizations in particular tend to operate very independently, through “isolated” rather than “collective” impact, often because this is what funders are most interested in seeing: this often leads to competition and inefficiencies within the nonprofit sector (Kania and Kramer 2011, 38). One main argument in support of “collective impact” is that the issues facing today’s world are so complex and large-scale that they cannot be solved by individual organizations operating independently, and will require cross-sector collaborations (Kania and Kramer 2011, 38-9).

Requirements for Successful Collaboration

There are a number of factors that have proven to be beneficial and perhaps even necessary when it comes to any form of organizational collaboration. Any collaborating organizations need to agree upon the shared

purpose and mission of the collaboration (Hasse and Austin 1997, 12-13; Popp et al. 2014, 19; Bardach 1998, 199). Organizations should set clear mutual goals that are realistic, well-defined, and uniformly measured (Hasse and Austin 1997, 12-13; Kania and Kramer 2011, 36, 40; Briggs 2003, 19; Bardach 1998, 199).

Thinking long-term is also important (Hasse and Austin 1997, 12-13, 27).

Open communication and consensus-building are key (Hasse and Austin 1997, 12-13; Kania and Kramer 2011, 40; Bardach 1998, 18). Developing trust and reciprocity, between and among organizations and outside stakeholders such as community members, will help increase effectiveness of the collaboration, especially long-term, and this requires significant time and investment (Popp et al. 2014, 10; Kania and Kramer 2011, 40; Milward and Provan 2006, 10; Briggs 2003, 10). Collaborating organizations should also ensure they have systems in place for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of their effectiveness and progress, which will hold them accountable and help identify any weak spots or issues (Popp et al. 2014, 23; Kania and Kramer 2011, 40; Milward and Provan 2006, 7). Systems to ensure that conflict is managed must be in place (Milward and Provan 2006, 7). It is also important for organizations to recognize that collaboration will necessitate some tradeoffs (Bardach 1998, 18).

Similarities between organizations including culture, reputation, values, size, and proximity may prove beneficial when it comes to successful collaboration (Popp et al. 2014, 26, 28; Bardach 1998, 18). However, collaboration is also useful when organizations have unique resources, information, or perspectives to contribute to the collaboration, known as

“mutually- reinforcing activities” (Popp et al. 2014, 26, 28; Kania and Kramer 2011, 40; Briggs 2003, 19). If the organizations involved and the staff within them already have mutual trust or existing relationships, or at least time in order to develop them, that could greatly benefit the effectiveness of the collaboration (Popp et al. 2014, 26, 28; Provan and Milward 2001, 418; Bardach 1998, 268). Additionally, the more ways in which organizations are connected, the stronger their relationship will be (Provan and Milward 2001, 419).

The number of organizations involved in a collaboration can be an important factor. The more organizations involved in a collaboration or network, the wider the potential range of services provided may be, and the greater the political clout (Provan and Milward 2001, 418). However, the efficiency of a network may start to decrease after a certain number of organizations have joined, coordination costs will be higher, and services provided could be duplicative and superfluous (Provan and Milward 2001, 418). Only organizations who possess the capacity to actively participate in and contribute to the network should be included (Briggs 2003, 19).

The more established an organizational network becomes, the more likely it will be to attract other peripheral organizations who are interested in connecting to the network (Provan and Milward 2001, 418). Effective networks may interact with these peripheral organizations informally, but the strongest and most effective networks will be strict when it comes to maintaining a critical core of organizations, especially when first starting out (Provan and Milward 2001, 418). However, a network cannot function completely autonomously; it always relies

on outside support from other groups and stakeholders in order to be successful (Milward and Provan 2006, 10).

Leadership and Governance

Having a management or leadership system in place for an organizational collaboration or network may also help with its effectiveness: in fact, without it, the collaboration is more likely to fail (Kania and Kramer 2011, 40; Milward and Provan 2006, 7; Bardach 1998, 308). There are different forms this management could take: shared/self-governance, where all involved organizations participate to equally govern the network together through consensus; governance by a chosen lead organization within the network; or governance by a separate “network administration organization” or “NAO” (Popp et al. 2014, 11; Milward and Provan 2006, 7, 22-3; Briggs 2003, 16; Bardach 1998, 308). Because participating organizations often have limited capacity, having a “backbone support organization” or NAO responsible for leading and supporting the collaborative initiative may prove beneficial, especially in more formalized networks (Kania and Kramer 2011, 40; Provan and Milward 2001, 418). Participating organizations could be represented in the NAO through holding various leadership roles, including seats on the board (Briggs 2003, 16).

Unequal power dynamics will necessarily be a side effect of having a NAO, yet the NAO will also help foster collaboration, ensure funds and resources are evenly distributed, and that the best interests of the community and the network are put first, even ahead of the interests of individual participating

organizations (Provan and Milward 2001, 419). The larger a network, the more necessary a NAO may be. Smaller and more informal networks or collaborations may be able to function successfully through shared governance, especially at the outset, although this will mean that greater responsibilities fall on each individual organization, and may not be successful long-term (Provan and Milward 2001, 419; Milward and Provan 2006, 7; Bardach 1998, 308). Alternative and more informal types of network governance include an interorganizational committee, working group, task force, coordinating council, or discussion group (Briggs 2003, 16; Bardach 1998, 308; Hasse and Austin 1997, 16-7). A network governance structure is not permanent: as networks evolve, they should be prepared to shift governance forms as necessary (Milward and Provan 2006, 22).

Conclusions

There are many benefits that organizations can gain from working together. Collaborations can result in more efficient and effective service provision, and can lead to a greater overall impact. Organizations working collaboratively may be able to provide a higher quality and wider array of services. Cost savings may occur as duplicative services are eliminated. Organizations are able to share their resources and expertise, as well as risks and rewards. There are also many challenges posed by organizational collaboration, including the significant time, effort, and resources required. There is often a transitional period and upfront barriers to overcome. Conflicting values and visions between organizations may arise, new risks may be introduced, and

benefits may not be evenly distributed. Organizations must also be willing to sacrifice some degree of control and independence in order to collaborate.

Various types of organizational collaboration exist, including networks and partnerships. Organizations can work together at various levels, ranging from communication to coordination to collaboration. The level of commitment from participating organizations can span from shallow to deep. Collaborations may be emergent—naturally occurring—or mandatory.

Successful collaborations at the organizational level require the determination of a shared purpose, values, and goals. Communication, trust, and reciprocity between organizations are essential. The size of the collaboration or network is important—being either too small or too large can both pose challenges and lead to failure. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation measures within the collaboration should be in place. Various options exist for network leadership and governance, depending on the level and type of collaboration.

3. Methodology

I used a case study methodology to conduct research on each of the four primary organizations and programs I identified. These are the Chittenden County organizations or programs that directly serve New American farmers and gardeners, who interact with the New American community frequently (on a daily to weekly basis), and who conduct outreach specifically to New Americans. These organizations are Burlington Area Community Gardens, New Farms for New Americans, Pine Island Community Farm, and The Janet S. Munt Family Room.

As my unit of analysis was Chittenden County, Vermont, I began the research process by researching organizations or programs in within the county that provide agricultural services. In particular, I attempted to focus on those that were, at least in part, focused on serving New American farmers and gardeners specifically. Through organizational websites, I identified the staff members who appeared to be the main contact for the particular program I was interested in, and I reached out to them via email. In the email, I introduced myself and my research topic, and asked if they were the person best suited to speak to me within their organization. Once the appropriate person was identified, I requested an in-person or phone interview. Through this outreach process, I was able to connect with at least one representative from each of the organizations I was interested in studying.

Each of my case studies were informed by interviews, organizational websites, and grey literature. I conducted a total of nine interviews, both in-person and over the phone. In-person interviews were conducted at the interviewee's office or at a café, all in Burlington, Vermont. I used some snowball sampling, with some of the interviewees directing me to other people or organizations they recommended contacting. Some people made those introductions on my behalf. Interviews lasted anywhere between 30 minutes and 90 minutes, typically 60 minutes on average. Each interview was audio-recorded for research and reference purposes with the interviewee's permission. Questions mainly focused on the historical background of the organization, the interviewee's role at the organization, the services the organization provides, how the organization is

currently serving New Americans, how the organization conducts outreach, and how the organization partners or coordinates with other local organizations and programs, particularly those I chose to study. The complete list of who I interviewed can be found in Table 1. A list of my interview questions can be found in the Appendix.

In addition to representatives from each of the four primary organizations, I interviewed a number of staff members from “secondary organizations,” meaning that their organization or program does not regularly or directly serve Chittenden County’s New American community and does not typically conduct outreach specifically to New Americans. These organizations and programs include the Intervale Center, Vermont Community Garden Network, City Market, Winooski Valley Park District, and the Huertas Project. I also included the New American Farmer Project through the University of Vermont Extension’s Center for Sustainable Agriculture, which would have been considered a primary program, but as of recently, this program has been indefinitely suspended. These secondary organizations often support the primary organizations in their work with the New American community and provide additional resources.

Through each case study, I provide information on the organization’s historical background, current program offerings, outreach, and partnerships. I closely reviewed all of my interview transcripts and background information I had collected on each organization. Through qualitative data analysis, I looked for patterns, commonalities, and contradictions in the research I had collected in relation to my research question. My analysis was centered around key themes I

had identified from the literature, including capacity, reciprocity, outreach, collaboration, communication, relationships, networks, and governance.

Table 1: Interviews Conducted

Name	Title	Program/Project of Focus	Organization	Medium
Alisha Laramee	Program Specialist	New Farms for New Americans	Association of Africans Living in Vermont	In Person
Meghan O’Daniel	Community Garden Coordinator	Burlington Area Community Gardens	Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront	In Person
Ben Waterman	Lands Director; Coordinator (former)	Pine Island Community Farm; New American Farmer Project (former)	Vermont Land Trust; UVM Extension’s Center for Sustainable Agriculture (former)	In Person
Stacy Burnstein and Nikki Lennart	Land Access Specialist; Farm Business Specialist	Pine Island Community Farm	Intervale Center	In Person
Sarah Sinnott		Garden, Nature, and Family Play	The Janet S. Munt Family Room	Phone
Teresa Mares	Co-Director	The Huertas Project	University of Vermont	In Person
Libby Weiland	Statewide Network Coordinator		Vermont Community Garden Network	In Person
Lauren Chicote	Programs Director		Winooski Valley Park District	Phone
Mae Quilty	Assistant Director of Community Engagement		City Market	Phone

I was particularly interested in challenges organizations faced when it came to serving the New American farming and gardening community as well as things that were working well, how they conducted outreach to this population, and the ways in which they worked with the other primary and secondary organizations in this study. I was also interested in any collaboration challenges

the organizations faced, and the benefits they gained from current collaborations. Additionally, I wanted to know how each organization or program was established, their history, how they've changed over time, and how they operate today.

From this qualitative analysis of my results, I identified four main findings, and then discussed how these findings relate to the literature and overall themes present throughout my study. Finally, I drew conclusions and presented recommendations for the organizations moving forward and for future research.

4. Results

a. Case Studies

I conducted four case studies on Chittenden County, Vermont organizations or programs that directly serve New American farmers and gardeners, interact with the New American community frequently (on a daily to weekly basis), and conduct outreach specifically to New Americans. These organizations are Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG), New Farms for New Americans (NFNA), Pine Island Community Farm ("Pine Island"), and The Janet S. Munt Family Room ("The Family Room"). An overview of each of these organizations can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Primary Organizations Overview

Program/Project of	Dedicated Staff	Location	Organization	Total Staff	Services Provided	Number Served	% New American	# of Plots	Size of Plots	
Burlington Area Community Gardens	1+	Burlington, VT	Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront	50	Community garden plots	1,400	500 families	~10+%	700-750	90-750 ft ²
New Farms for New Americans	1	Burlington, VT	Association of Africans Living in Vermont	7	Community garden plots	250	200	100%	80 at Ethan Allen; 3 at Intervale	1/16-acre at Ethan Allen (5 acres total); 1-acre plots at Intervale (3 acres total)
Pine Island Community Farm	2+	Colchester, VT	Vermont Land Trust	52	Community garden plots; goat, chicken, and compost businesses		60 families	100%	~60	1/8-acre each (7 acres total)
Garden, Nature, and Family Play	<1	Burlington, VT	The Janet S. Munt Family Room	11	Garden plots; Transportation		~65 families	45-50%	65 + communal space	“Kitchen-sized”

i. Burlington Area Community Gardens

All information in this case study comes from an interview with Meghan O’Daniel of Burlington Area Community Gardens (O’Daniel 2020), unless otherwise noted.

History

Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG) is a program of the City of Burlington’s Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department (BPRW) (City of Burlington n.d.a). The mission of the BACG program is “to provide community garden sites and programs that are accessible, safe and healthy for people of diverse ages, experiences, backgrounds and abilities” (City of Burlington n.d.a). The program was initially started by the Garden Way Company in 1972, who established more than 20 community gardens sites around Burlington through means of private funding (City of Burlington n.d.a). Over time, Garden Way struggled with its funding and leadership models, and by the early 1980’s, made the decision to transition the gardens to Burlington residents. Burlington Area Community Gardens, a grassroots nonprofit organization at the time, was created in its place (City of Burlington n.d.a). Within a few years, the organization was struggling financially, and turned to Burlington’s mayor, Bernie Sanders, for help. Sanders decided to make BACG a program of the City of Burlington’s Parks and Recreation Department (now the “Parks, Recreation and Waterfront” Department), where it has lived ever since (City of Burlington n.d.a).

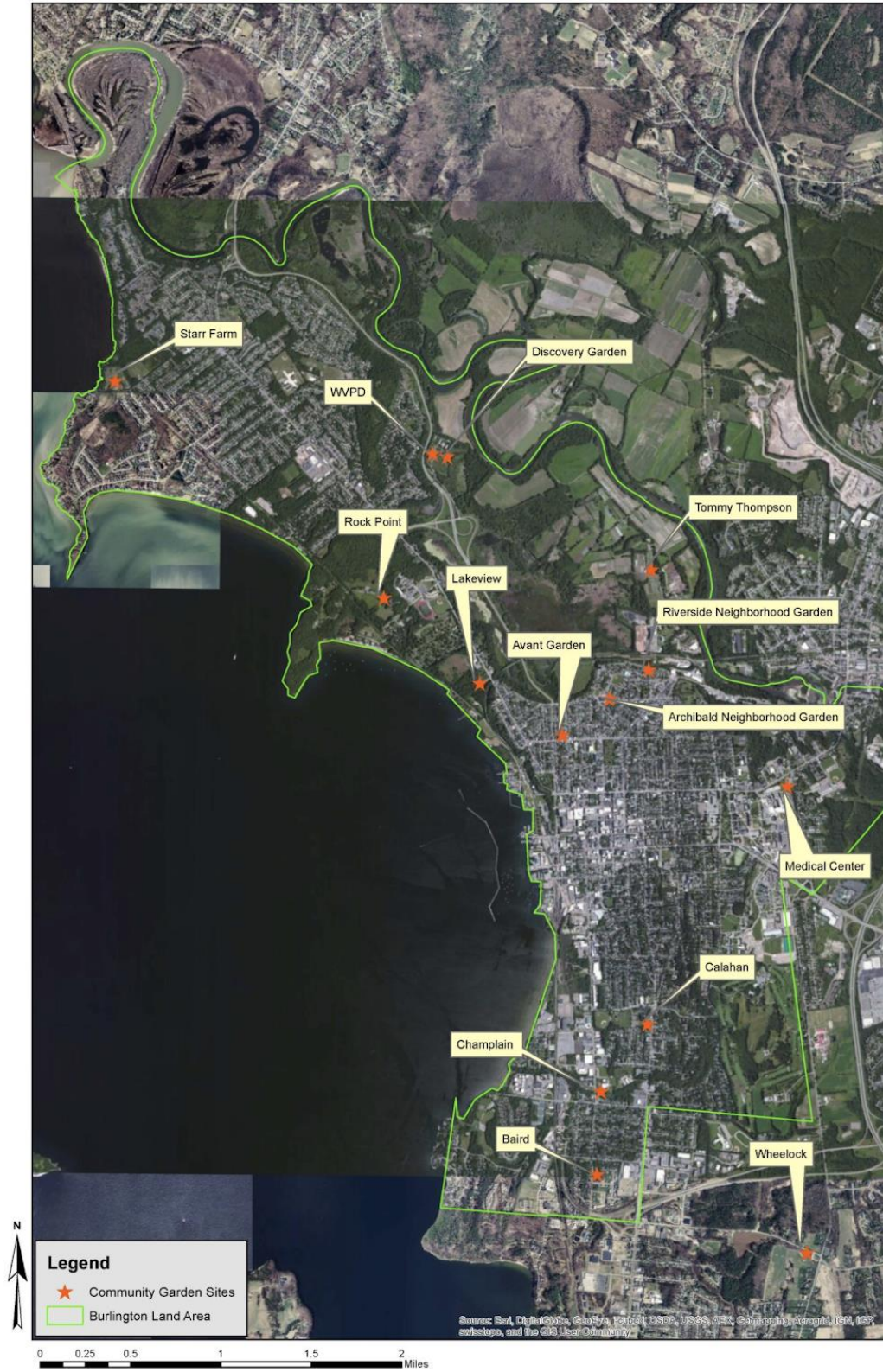


Figure 2: Burlington Area Community Garden sites

Current Program

BACG is currently serving 1,400 people at 14 community garden sites located in the greater Burlington, Vermont area (City of Burlington n.d.a). See Figure 2 for a map of the sites. BACG's 14 community gardens consist of 700-750 total garden plots tended by approximately 500 unique gardeners: some gardeners have more than one plot. BACG gardeners have all different levels of experience: some are brand new, while others have had the same plot for over 25 years. The gardens themselves range in size from a few small plots to multiple acres (City of Burlington n.d.a). Five of the 14 community gardens are located on property owned by the City of Burlington (City of Burlington 2015, 51). The remaining gardens are hosted by various partner institutions, including the University of Vermont, the Intervale Center, and Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD) at the Ethan Allen Homestead.

Traditional BACG annual garden plot fees are as follows: \$75 for a full plot (750 square feet), \$45 for a half plot (250-250 square feet), \$35 for a quarter plot (100-200 square feet), and \$25 for a kitchen plot (under 90 square feet) (City of Burlington n.d.b). Non-Burlington residents charged an additional \$10; however, no one is turned away for financial reasons and scholarship options which reduce the plot fees by 50% are available by request (City of Burlington n.d.c; City of Burlington n.d.b).

Each garden site is equipped with tools for shared use, access to water, and some form of parking (City of Burlington n.d.b). Both tilled and non-tilled plots are available, and only organic materials may be used in the gardens (City of

Burlington n.d.b). All BACG gardeners must comply with the program's Garden Maintenance Policy, as well as commit to providing a total of four hours of volunteer work at their garden site or a BACG event each year (City of Burlington n.d.a). Each location has at least one Site Leader, a volunteer who helps to keep things running smoothly at the garden, is available as a resource, and serves as the primary liaison between BACG and the gardeners (City of Burlington n.d.b). Currently, there are 25 BACG Site Leaders.

New American Focus

Within the last decade, BACG has made it a priority to focus on outreach to and engagement of Burlington's New American community. Originally, a temporary AmeriCorps position with annual turnover was created within the program to specifically work with the New American gardening community. Five years ago, BACG's current Community Gardens Coordinator, Meghan O'Daniel, came on board in the BACG AmeriCorps role. When she first started, her manager, Dan Cahill, Land Steward at BPRW, who had previously worked with Burlington's New American gardeners, accompanied her on house visits to make in-person introductions. After serving in this position, she recognized the importance of building trust and establishing long-term relationships, and felt that more continuous attention was needed, so asked to stay on in a full-time role. Meghan has been working with the program in her permanent position ever since.

Meghan serves as the Site Leader for all of BACG's New American gardeners. Because she does not speak their native languages, she has a point

person within each cultural community who speaks both English and their native language and is easy to reach. This model prevents BACG from having to hire outside interpreters, and benefits the New American gardeners in that they are able to have a known and fellow community member contacting them. Usually the point people prefer to get free garden plots in exchange for their services, rather than monetary compensation. The BACG scholarship for plot fees is automatically applied to all New American gardeners. The purpose of this policy is to make gardening more accessible to everyone, to increase food access, and to support those in need who might not feel comfortable asking for help.

Burundi and Somali are the two main cultural groups represented within BACG's New American gardening community. The Burundi community consists of 10-12 families who are part of a tight-knit community—they all live near each other and even co-garden some of their plots together. The Somali community is much larger, made up of 30-40 households, and yet they will still weed each other's plots. There is a third group of Eastern Europeans who are more established as they have been living in the Burlington area for much longer. This group is very self-sufficient; Meghan will check in with them via phone from time to time but is mostly pretty hands-off, as they know how to reach her if needed. Many of their children are fluent in English, so Meghan often communicates with the children directly.

BACG's New American gardeners primarily have plots at the larger garden sites—Tommy Thompson, Starr Farm, and Winooski Valley Park District—because they want tilled space. There are a variety of cultures

represented throughout all of BACG's 14 garden sites. In addition to Burundi, Somali, and Eastern European, there are also Nepalese, Bhutanese, and Vietnamese gardeners in the BACG program.

Outreach

There are two main reasons why outreach to the New American community is not a main focus of BACG at this time. One is that their garden space is pretty much at capacity, so they are not actively seeking new gardeners. The other reason is that the outreach occurs naturally in-house for the New American gardeners, through word of mouth within their own communities. The majority of communication stems from BACG's point people within each New American community, mainly Burundi and Somali. Those contacts speak in person or use WhatsApp messenger to contact the gardeners in their native language and share information from BACG. When BACG does conduct active outreach, it is typically done via house visits or tabling at various partner organizations. They use their own website or online social networks such as Front Porch Forum, personal phone calls, or brochures to disseminate information. The majority of outreach that BACG conducts is for the purposes of gardener registration.

Reimagining the Registration Process

Collecting plot fees from the New American community in a timely manner was a main challenge each year. Because of this, Meghan decided to

create a special registration period for the New American community which takes place in mid-January to early-February, later than regular registration.

Additionally, she consolidated the registration process for them, and now holds an open meeting at a community room in the housing complex where many of the gardeners live. She sets a time range, and people can stop by during that window to sign up for a plot. If they are unable to make it, a friend can drop off their registration fee, or they can set up an alternative time to meet with Meghan. She also tables at The Family Room, a family services center that many of BACG's New American gardeners frequent.

Her only rule is that any new gardener come meet her in person, in order to establish that important relationship. Because the regular returning gardener registration process begins in early October and runs until early December, Meghan estimates how much space she will need to set aside each year for the New American gardeners prior to their registration period. The trust that has developed between Meghan and the gardeners is very important, as the gardeners trust her not to give their plots away. Their connection to the land is meaningful to them and many gardeners request the same plots year after year. 2020 will be the third year with this new process, and it seems to be working well.

Partnerships

When Meghan was first getting acclimated to her role at BACG, she was in touch with Alisha Laramée, New Farms for New Americans (NFNA) Program Specialist, for general advice, and knows that Alisha is always there to answer

any questions. BACG and NFNA share a fair amount of Burundi gardeners as well as a few Somali gardeners. NFNA offers a larger plot size, so the Somali gardeners in particular like to split up which crops they plant where—they will plant eggplants at their NFNA plot(s) and beans and corn at their BACG plot(s). Occasionally, when BACG needs an interpreter, they will use the Association of Africans Living in Vermont's (AALV, the parent organization of NFNA) interpreter services. In years past, BACG and NFNA have had an end-of-year celebration together, and are working to bring this back. Both programs have gardens at the Intervale Center and Ethan Allen Homestead sites.

BACG works fairly closely with Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN). In the spring, VCGN helps to facilitate BACG's Site Leader kick-off gathering, and the two groups share advice, ideas, and resources, and will meet on occasion. VCGN provides programming within BACG gardens, specifically at the Ethan Allen Homestead site.

BACG and The Family Room both have gardens at the Ethan Allen Homestead. A small number of The Family Room's gardeners work their way up to a bigger plot with BACG. BACG tables a couple days a week at The Family Room prior to each growing season, since there are a large number of New Americans who are easiest to reach there, and it is a good way to attract new gardeners. Meghan works closely with Sarah Sinnott at The Family Room, who is pivotal in assisting with outreach.

BACG is also one of City Market’s outreach partners. City Market members can receive Member Worker credit through BACG (City of Burlington n.d.b).

ii. New Farms for New Americans

All information in this case study comes from an interview with Alisha Laramee of the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (Laramee 2020), unless otherwise noted.

History

New Farms for New Americans (NFNA) is a community-based gardening and agriculture program specifically designed for Vermont’s immigrant and refugee communities (AALV Inc. 2017). NFNA is an initiative of the refugee-focused nonprofit organization Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) (AALV Inc. 2017). The mission of the NFNA program is to provide “education and training for farmers who are new to the U.S. and may be unaccustomed to Vermont’s climate” (AALV Inc. 2017). NFNA began in 2007-2008 as a small agricultural organization for women with children, many of whom had farmed previously and were experiencing social isolation. NFNA got off the ground thanks to grant funding, particularly the Office of Refugee Resettlement’s Refugee Agricultural Partnership Project (RAPP) grant, which they have received three times now.

Over time, the demographics as well as the focus of the program have shifted. Initially, the focus of most of the grants NFNA received was entrepreneurship and developing small-scale farmers. When Alisha Laramee,

current NFNA Program Specialist, started in her current role, she made some changes to the focus of the program based on farmer feedback. It became evident that NFNA farmers were more interested in growing food for their families than starting a farm business (Panopoulos 2013). This may have been due in part to the fact that Vermont is a competitive place to be a small-scale farmer: many native Vermont farmers have college degrees and greater access to capital, putting them in an entirely different category than Vermont's New American farming community. Additionally, the growing season in Vermont is very short.

NFNA's farmers enjoy the benefits of saving money by growing their own produce, as well as the opportunity to be outdoors and spend time with their families. For many, the act of farming feels recognizable and therapeutic. Alisha and NFNA also realized that they could serve more people by transitioning from an entrepreneurship model to a community garden model, which is able to serve all ages and all education levels, beyond just new or young farmers, or those on the business track. Farmers can bring their children with them, and the older generation is welcome.

Current Program

AALV is not involved with the initial resettlement process, but gets involved after one year. The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) is funded to work with New Americans for up to one year. Once these folks have found employment, their status changes and they are eligible for a green card. At that point, USCRI's goals have been met, and AALV gets involved

and can assist people with applying for citizenship. AALV provides support in a variety of areas, ranging from housing, employment, education and training to citizenship, agriculture, youth development and behavioral health. Additionally, AALV provides interpreter services that are utilized by many local organizations.

NFNA partners with other AALV programs on certain initiatives. For instance, there are a new group of Congolese women who are part of AALV's behavioral health program and are survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. This year, they have been given free garden plots through NFNA, and AALV is providing transportation services for this particular group from their homes to the garden sites.

The NFNA program specifically provides an opportunity for New Americans to grow fresh and culturally-significant food to feed their families, while simultaneously addressing food and economic security (AALV Inc. 2017). Growing their own food may save NFNA participants up to \$3,000 annually (AALV Inc. 2017). African eggplants, mustard greens, daikon, and snake gourd are just some of the culturally-significant crops grown at NFNA gardens (AALV Inc. 2017). Many NFNA participants come from agrarian backgrounds with expertise and experience in growing organically, saving seeds, and preserving food (AALV Inc. 2017). NFNA has two community garden sites—one three-acre site located at the Intervale Center, and a five-acre site located at the Ethan Allen Homestead, on land owned by the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD). NFNA currently has 200 farmers total at their two locations, feeding a total of 250 people, including the farmers themselves as well as additional family members

such as children or grandparents. At the Intervale, there are three total plots that are 1-acre each. Some participants have been gardening there for over 10 years. NFNA has 80 plots at the Ethan Allen Homestead, where each plot is 1/16 of an acre. Additionally, NFNA serves 30 households through their community greenhouse.

Many people return each year to continue growing food with NFNA (AALV Inc. 2017). Much of NFNA's attention goes into education on topics such as greenhouse usage, row cover, and freezing and preserving food. Due to some recent funding restraints, the educational components of the NFNA program are currently on hold until they can afford to have classes again. NFNA participants also possess a great deal of valuable knowledge they can share with the Vermont community (AALV Inc. 2017). Transportation has proven to be a main issue for NFNA, as their garden sites are not the most accessible. Public transportation serving the area is subpar, and the bike path is only a solution for some.

Outreach

Because NFNA falls under the umbrella of AALV, they have no problem with outreach. AALV works very closely with the New American community and has case managers who are representative of all the major New American groups in the Burlington area. The language barrier is largely solved by AALV's case managers who are hired in-house.

The Family Room is located in the same building as AALV, so the organizations are able to help direct New Americans to one another. NFNA has

been able to fill their garden space every year, yet has never had to turn anyone away. There has been significant turnover over the years, which has allowed new farmers to enter the program.

Partnerships

With the last RAPP grant NFNA received, the New American Farmer Project (NAFP) was contracted through the University of Vermont (UVM) Extension to work with NFNA. The two programs partnered on outreach and recruitment, were in frequent communication, and reached out to each other for help or with questions. They also worked together on an informational outreach video about how New Americans can access community garden space in Vermont. This RAPP grant ended in 2019, and therefore this partnership has changed, as NFNA no longer has the funding to contract UVM Extension employees at this point in time.

NFNA and Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG) will refer people to one another and help ensure they are signing up for the program that best fits their needs and is most convenient for them. BACG, like NFNA, has garden sites at the Ethan Allen Homestead. There is overlap between the New American communities served by BACG and by NFNA, mainly with Burundian farmers, who prefer different-sized plots for growing particular types of produce. Together, BACG and NFNA are able to help meet those varied needs.

City Market gets produce deliveries from NFNA to sell to the community, and NFNA works with City Market volunteers (Morrison 2016). NFNA prefers

for their farmers to see familiar faces and build trust and relationships, so they try to work with a small number of repeat volunteers.

The Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN)'s Community Teaching Garden, as well as The Family Room's garden, are located at the Ethan Allen Homestead, where one of NFNA's garden sites is also located. Alisha will meet occasionally with the Land Manager at the Intervale Center to check in, as one of NFNA's garden sites is located there. NFNA also frequently works with UVM: currently, they are part of three or four grants through UVM, host UVM interns, and work with PhD students conducting research. They also continue to work with other UVM departments, besides the UVM Extension, on various research projects.

iii. Pine Island Community Farm

All information in the "History" and "Current Program" sections of this case study comes from an interview with Stacy Burnstein and Nikki Lennart of the Intervale Center (Burnstein and Lennart 2020), unless otherwise noted. All information in the "Outreach" and "Partnerships" sections of this case study comes from an interview with Ben Waterman of Vermont Land Trust (Waterman 2020), unless otherwise noted.

History

Pine Island Community Farm ("Pine Island") was founded in 2013 after the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) purchased the Colchester, Vermont former dairy farm at a 2012 auction and conserved it for agricultural use (Vermont Land Trust

2017; Egan 2016). Karen Freudenberger, a well-renowned advocate for Chittenden County's New American population, established Pine Island and did much of the initial outreach and networking to get it up and running. VLT ownership of the land and farm provides a unique safety net for its residents, farmers, and gardeners in that the land tenure is secure. Pine Island was created to be a space where New Americans, many from agrarian backgrounds, could return to the land, experience the familiarity of farming while in a new place, and grow or purchase culturally-relevant foods (Vermont Land Trust 2017).

Simultaneously, VLT was able to protect the land through the purchase of this farm, as well as the portion of the Winooski River that runs through the site, while returning the land to the community for their use and benefit (Vermont Land Trust 2017). As a result of this acquisition, VLT has been able to update much of the infrastructure and buildings, while promoting responsible farming practices and the ecological health of the area (Vermont Land Trust 2017).

In 2016, Karen Freudenberger unexpectedly passed away, and the Intervale Center got involved shortly thereafter, in 2017, to help oversee management of the farm and support the farmers. Even though VLT was the land owner, they were not involved in the day-to-day management of the farm. The Intervale Center is currently under contract with Pine Island to help manage operations on the farm, however, these responsibilities are in the process of transitioning to VLT which will take place over the course of 2020.

Current Program

As of today, there are three independent farm businesses as well as community gardens at Pine Island (Vermont Land Trust 2017). All of the farm's initiatives share common resources such as infrastructure, equipment, and land (Vermont Land Trust 2017). The first business at the farm was born when a community organizer recognized the demand for goat meat within the local New American community (Vermont Land Trust 2017). Goat meat is a traditional staple for many New American cultures, yet it was very difficult to obtain in Vermont, especially fresh (Vermont Land Trust 2017). The Bhutanese enjoy roasted goat meat during celebratory occasions or more frequently in everyday curries and stews (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). Many of Vermont's New American families used to rely on frozen, imported goat meat from New Zealand, or would drive to Boston to obtain fresh goat meat (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). As a result of this need, a goat business was born at Pine Island in 2013 (Vermont Land Trust 2019a).

Currently, there are 400 meat goats at the farm, raised by Chuda and Gita Dhaurali, originally of Bhutan, who live on the farm along with their two children (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). Chuda and Gita resettled in Burlington, Vermont in 2009, after spending nearly 20 years in a Nepalese refugee camp (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). The goats at Pine Island are young bucklings (baby male goats) who are sourced from local dairy farms that have no use for them. Customers of the goat business are able to choose their goat which is then slaughtered at a facility at Pine Island (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). The goat business has been so successful that they are looking at expanding production and other local

businesses have expressed interest in using their slaughter facility. The second farm business is compost: in addition to his goat business, Chuda also sells compost at the farm (Vermont Land Trust 2019a).

Pine Island's third farm business began in 2015 and is run by Theogene and Hyacinthe Mahoro, who were resettled to Vermont from Rwanda in 2004 (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). They too live on the farm along with their children (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). Theogene and Hyacinthe raise over 3,000 chickens at any given time, which are a staple of the Rwandan diet (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). As with the goat business, customers at Pine Island are able to select their chickens, after which the birds are processed on the farm (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). Additionally, Hyacinthe grows vegetables on a large commercial plot almost an acre in size within Pine Island's community gardens which she sells around the Burlington area to various restaurants and markets (Vermont Land Trust 2019a).

In addition to these businesses, Pine Island is home to seven acres of community garden space, tended by 60 families representing 10 different countries, with each family maintaining a 1/8-acre plot (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). Bhutanese and Somali Bantu gardeners are well-represented at Pine Island (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). In order to reduce language barriers and create space for collaboration and community, the garden plots are organized according to language or nationality (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). The community gardens provide socialization opportunities and help reduce food costs for participating families (Vermont Land Trust 2019a). The garden plots are used

to grow a variety of culturally-significant crops, which range from bitter melon and amaranth to African corn and hot peppers (Vermont Land Trust 2019a).

The Intervale Center has worked with Pine Island's farmers in recent years to survey the current conditions at the farm, identify needs, and assist with financial planning, as well as understand the farmers' goals and visions. Intervale helped the farmers develop a strategic plan and farm viability model.

Infrastructural improvement projects at the farm have included the addition of a second well to get running water in the barn, additional goat housing, a second, winterized slaughter facility, another well for the community gardens, two new mobile chicken coops, and a superstructure that can hold 200-300 goats. The University of Vermont (UVM) Extension also supported these efforts and applied for a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) grant to get a high tunnel installed at the farm (Waterman 2020). A few specialists from UVM Extension visit the farm on a regular basis (Waterman 2020).

VLT will now be taking over the maintenance and management responsibilities at the farm from the Intervale Center. This will include infrastructure repairs and enterprise support, as well as helping farmers feel confident navigating local systems and knowing how to access the resources available to them (Waterman 2020). Overall, Pine Island's farmers have seemed very appreciative and receptive of the assistance of these organizations, as they have helped them develop concrete steps they can take to establish more control and ownership over their enterprises. Intervale Center staff noted how unique the

Pine Island model is, and how it would be great to be able to replicate it at other properties in Vermont or elsewhere.

Outreach

Pine Island's community gardens are already at maximum capacity, so outreach to new gardeners is not currently a main focus. The current community gardeners at Pine Island tend to return year after year. Considering expanding the amount of space available at Pine Island for community gardens would be a bigger conversation with the stakeholders involved, and there are restrictions given the ecological sensitivity of the area.

Most of Pine Island's business transactions happen on-site at the farm. The farmers at Pine Island have regular customers and maintain those relationships. Pine Island will occasionally host community events to encourage the general public to come out to the farm. After the 2019 holiday season, Pine Island hosted a community Christmas tree recycling event, which was attended by over 500 people. There are also outdoor recreation opportunities at the farm, such as cross-country skiing. VLT would like to help the community better understand the opportunities that are available to them at Pine Island. There is also a great deal of volunteer activity at Pine Island which attracts people to the farm. VLT uses their website and the app HopeSocial to manage volunteer sign-up and advertise various volunteer opportunities. Work at Pine Island is heavily subsidized by volunteer hours, and consequently, Pine Island provides an opportunity for the

general public to interact with the New American farming and gardening community (Laramée 2020).

Partnerships

City Market provides Pine Island with volunteers through their Member Worker Program (Vermont Land Trust 2019b). Hyacinthe, Pine Island's resident vegetable farmer, recently secured an account with City Market, and now sells her produce there (Burnstein and Lennart 2020).

VLT owns the Pine Island farm and land, and therefore VLT staff are very involved at Pine Island (Vermont Land Trust 2017). They help to coordinate and staff events at the farm, such as public tours and the annual Harvest Celebration. As of 2020, VLT will be taking over primary management of Pine Island from the Intervale Center. The Intervale Center was contracted by VLT to manage Pine Island beginning in 2017. They coordinated the logistics of the community gardens, supported the farm enterprises, and managed infrastructural needs. The Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) works with Pine Island on a fee-for-service basis, providing interpreter services as needed. UVM Extension, particularly in the past through their New American Farmer Project, would run workshops at Pine Island and provide technical assistance.

iv. The Janet S. Munt Family Room

All information in this case study comes from an interview with Sarah Sinnott of The Janet S. Munt Family Room (Sinnott 2020), unless otherwise noted.

History

The Janet S. Munt Family Room (“The Family Room”), a parent-child center in Burlington, Vermont, was founded in 1988 as a program of the Visiting Nurses Association and became an independent nonprofit organization in 2017 (The Family Room 2018a; Winooski Valley Park District n.d.b). The organization’s mission is to be “a place that builds healthy, connected communities by supporting families and young children” (The Family Room n.d.c). Janet S. Munt, The Family Room’s honorary namesake, was a Vermont senator, social worker, and champion for women, children, and low-income families (The Family Room n.d.c).

Families come from across Chittenden County to The Family Room: 60% of families are from Burlington, and many from Winooski, Colchester, South Burlington, Essex Junction, and Shelburne (The Family Room 2018b). The organization has been serving some families for two or three generations (The Family Room 2018a). As of 2018, The Family Room serves 426 families annually, 45-50% of which are New Americans (The Family Room 2018a). Over 25 different languages are spoken by The Family Room families (The Family Room 2018b). As Burlington has seen a greater influx of New Americans, especially beginning in 2006, The Family Room has become a second home for many New American families in the area (The Family Room 2018b).

The organization aims to continue expanding its programs and services as the community need continues to grow, however, they have seen significant reductions in full-time staff in the last 15 years, going from 13 full-time

employees in 2006 to five full-time staff in 2018, and financial support is an ongoing challenge (The Family Room 2018a). Despite this, The Family Room is serving more than double the number of families today than they were in 2006 (The Family Room 2018a). The Family Room relies heavily on volunteer support and AmeriCorps service members, with approximately 65 volunteers in rotation at any one time (The Family Room 2018a).

Current Programs

The Family Room provides a wide variety of weekly services for local families, including programs for fathers and kids, drop-in family free play, time for new parents and babies, and toddler-specific programming (The Family Room n.d.b). They offer three different levels of English classes and are the only organization in Burlington that provides childcare during the classes. They have a commercial kitchen that can be rented out or used for events. Additionally, they have a home visiting program, community preschool, fatherhood support group, a health and nutrition program through a partnership with the University of Vermont Extension, and offer individualized case management (The Family Room n.d.b; The Family Room 2018a).

Community Garden Program

Since 1999, The Family Room has led a community gardening program for parents and children at the Ethan Allen Homestead site on land owned and managed by the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD) (Winooski Valley Park

District n.d.b). The garden program started in 1992, and has been located at a few different sites, including at the Tommy Thompson gardens at the Intervale Center, the H.O. Wheeler School, and the Burlington College. The program is formally called “Garden, Nature, and Family Play,” but colloquially is referred to as the “garden program.” Some families only interact with The Family Room because of their garden program.

The Family Room offers free, small plots to families along with the opportunity to expand their gardening knowledge (The Family Room 2018b). There are 65 “kitchen-sized” garden plots available, as well as space for communal gardening and a small shared herb garden. Many families return to tend the same plots year after year. The Family Room garden is completely organic, and participants receive free resources such as hay, straw, and compost.

45-50% of participants in The Family Room’s garden program are New Americans. Families of Somali, Somali Bantu, Bhutanese Nepali, Congolese, Burundian, and Burmese heritage are among the most common at The Family Room, but there are many other cultures represented.

Because the plots are so small, gardeners will often start with a Family Room plot before eventually scaling up to a larger plot with Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG), New Farms for New Americans (NFNA), or, occasionally, Pine Island Community Farm. Some New American gardeners will maintain plots with one or more programs at a time, with each plot serving a different purpose in their lives.

During the summertime, garden program participants meet at the Ethan Allen Homestead site on Tuesdays and Thursdays. People also go to the garden in their own time, and many families can be found there on summer evenings tending their plots. For many families, the garden provides outdoor and nature-based time they might not otherwise get, and provides both physical and mental health benefits. People often take nature walks around the site, and the space itself is very family-friendly, with picnic tables, a sandbox, a teepee, a sunflower house, and a digging garden. There is a shade structure at the site which provides a designated space for babies and their caregivers.

Two of The Family Room's three English classes integrate class time at the garden site, and occasionally, the fathers' program will also spend time at the garden. During the summer months, The Family Room will bring some of their older daycare participants out to the garden. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are provided at the garden, along with cooking and wellness activities.

Many families bring extensive prior farming experience to the garden, but may struggle with how to grow in Vermont's climate. The Family Room's garden is an opportunity for people with different skills, experience levels, and backgrounds to grow and build community together as they share their techniques and harvest. Gardening with The Family Room provides an opportunity to feel rooted and connected to a place and to the land, and growing culturally-significant foods can have a positive impact on mental and spiritual health.

A wide variety of produce is grown in the gardens, but tends to be what is difficult to find or expensive in stores, and seed savings is widely practiced.

People choose to grow a lot of cilantro, okra, tomatoes, beans, and cucumbers, along with hot peppers, lemon grass, African spinach, amaranth, bitter melon, and much more. The Family Room does not have the capacity to have a staff member solely dedicated to the community garden program, but Sarah Sinnott, a Family Room staff member, helps to manage the registration process for the community garden plots, and volunteer support is crucial.

Transportation

A unique resource The Family Room provides for its gardeners is transportation to and from the garden site. Many participants do not own or have access to a vehicle. Since there is no public transportation to the site, the organization rents a bus every Tuesday and Thursday, which costs them over \$200 a day. The cost of the bus prohibits The Family Room from visiting the garden site more often. Given budget challenges, offering this service has sometimes proved difficult, but the organization is committed to remaining accessible to all.

The bus leaves from The Family Room's center and brings people to the Ethan Allen Homestead site where the garden is located. Currently, the bus makes two trips each way per day and does not make any other stops. In the past and as recently as last year, the bus would stop at Franklin Square Apartments, an affordable housing property managed by the Burlington Housing Authority in the New North End, where many of The Family Room's families live, but they have since stopped picking up there for a variety of reasons, including people moving

elsewhere or acquiring cars. The Family Room would consider adding additional stops, wherever their families are most concentrated.

In the past, The Family Room has attempted to collaborate with other groups who could take advantage of the bus, particularly NFNA gardeners also trying to get to the Ethan Allen Homestead site, and people at the Senior Center located in the same building as them who might like to visit the garden. They ran into some issues with the timing of the bus, as NFNA participants often wanted to leave the gardens at different times than The Family Room participants. The Ethan Allen Homestead site is also a popular recreation destination and is home to various children's camps as well as outdoor workshops. Transportation to the site has proven to be an issue for these groups as well, and some have had to move locations as a result.

The Family Room has also made two significant attempts in the past to get public buses to run to the Ethan Allen Homestead, both of which have failed. The most recent attempt was approximately six years ago, and the prior attempt six years before that. The organization met with the local public transportation authority—then Chittenden County Transportation Authority, now Green Mountain Transit—and Good News Garage, a vehicle donation nonprofit, to try and extend public transit to the site, but attempts were unsuccessful.

Outreach

The Family Room used to do a lot more outreach, but now most people in the community know about them and their services. Most outreach is done via

word of mouth. They publish a monthly calendar of all their programming and send it out to doctor's offices. The Family Room does not have trouble reaching families, and are usually at or above their capacity. They are part of Vermont's network of 15 parent-child centers throughout the state, and are well-established in the community. Outreach and promotion are also conducted by The Family Room's partner programs and organizations, including the City of Burlington, local schools, doctor's offices, Department of Children and Families (DCF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV), and the other organizations in their building.

Partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships with other organizations have helped The Family Room to thrive and to continue providing high-quality, diverse services to families despite limited resources (The Family Room 2018b). Overall, The Family Room partners with approximately 50 different organizations, including LegalAid, the Vermont Family Network, DCF, and Vermont Adult Learning (The Family Room 2018b). The building in which The Family Room is located serves as a type of informal community center, as it is home to many other community partners, including AALV. The Family Room's garden program specifically involves collaboration with about 10 other organizations or programs. They receive donations of plant starts, seeds, tools, and compost from a variety of local organizations including organic nurseries and garden supply stores.

NFNA has had a long-standing partnership with The Family Room. Both organizations have garden sites at the Ethan Allen Homestead. NFNA will often send interested families to The Family Room's garden program, depending on their needs. The Family Room plots are more family-oriented whereas NFNA plots tend to be utilized for the purposes of growing produce to store or sell. Over 50% of The Family Room's New American families also receive support from the AALV, NFNA's parent organization (The Family Room 2018b).

The Family Room works closely with BACG, especially since they both have gardens at the Ethan Allen Homestead site. Technically, BACG loans The Family Room their garden space at the site. Sarah Sinnott of The Family Room coordinates frequently with Meghan O'Daniel, Community Garden Coordinator, at BACG. Meghan typically tables weekly at The Family Room leading up to the growing season to help people sign up for BACG garden plots, and Sarah assists since she is closer with many Family Room families. The Family Room and BACG will often direct their participants to each other's garden programs, depending on their needs. Additionally, Sarah serves as one of the coordinators of the BACG garden plots located at the Ethan Allen Homestead site.

The Family Room has had a longtime collaboration with the Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN). VCGN's Community Teaching Garden is located next to The Family Room's garden at the Ethan Allen Homestead. VCGN has a long history of providing programming at The Family Room's garden site. Currently, The Family Room contracts with VCGN to run programming and workshops for children and parents at their gardens one day per week in the

summer months. At the beginning of each growing season, typically in late April, VCGN holds an event called “Day in the Dirt,” in which volunteers come to work at the garden and help prepare for the summer growing season. VCGN also assists with seed starting prior to each growing season, and donates seeds to the program. VCGN shares a shade shelter at the garden site with The Family Room, and the organizations collaborated to determine how the space could be most beneficial for both groups.

The Family Room’s gardens are located on land at the Ethan Allen Homestead owned by WVPD. WVPD provides a lot of in-kind support including site maintenance and mowing, and helped with the recent shelter that was built at the site. Since the Ethan Allen Homestead is a historical site, The Family Room needed WVPD’s board approval to build there. City Market helped to fund the shelter, and provides volunteers to The Family Room through their Member Worker program. The Vermont FoodBank brings food and recipes out to the garden for people to try, and also donates food to The Family Room.

b. Secondary Organizations and Programs

In addition to the four primary organizations and programs I chose to focus on, I interviewed a number of staff members from “secondary organizations” or programs who often support the primary organizations in their work with the Chittenden County New American community, but do not regularly or directly serve the community and do not typically conduct outreach specifically to the community. These organizations and programs include the Intervale Center, Vermont Community Garden Network, City Market, Winooski Valley Park

District, The Center for Sustainable Agriculture’s New American Farmer Project, and the Huertas Project.

Intervale Center

The Intervale Center is a nonprofit organization founded in 1988 and based in Burlington, Vermont, whose mission is to “strengthen community food systems” (Intervale Center n.d.). The Intervale Center is located along the Winooski River on 360 acres of land, which it manages, consisting of open space, farmland, and recreation trails (Intervale Center n.d.). The organization runs a Food Hub, a Conservation Nursery, a gleaning program, Intervale Community Farm (a consumer supported agriculture—CSA—farm) and holds community events throughout the year (Burnstein and Lennart 2020). Currently, there are 8-9 independent farm enterprises operating at and leasing land from the Intervale Center (Burnstein and Lennart 2020). The Intervale Center used to run a farm business incubation program, but phased out of that in 2018 (Intervale Center n.d.). The organization is now very focused on their free statewide support services for beginning commercial farmers, which include assistance with business planning, land tenure, pursuing loans, and grant applications (Intervale Center n.d.; Burnstein and Lennart 2020). They also manage Vermont Land Link, a website that helps to match property owners with new farmers in search of land (Burnstein and Lennart 2020). As of now, Chittenden County’s New American community does not really utilize the Intervale Center’s new farmer services, as they tend to be more interested in small-scale farming and growing for their own



Figure 3: Map of the Intervale Center

families (Burnstein and Lennart 2020). Intervale Center staff agree that New

Americans in the area may also not be aware of the services and resources they offer (Burnstein and Lennart 2020).

New Farms for New Americans (NFNA) is leases land at the Intervale (Burnstein and Lennart 2020). Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG)'s Tommy Thompson community garden is also located at the Intervale, which with 150 plots is Burlington's largest community garden (Intervale Center n.d.). See Figure 3 for a map of the Intervale Center. Since 2017, the Intervale Center has been helping to manage Pine Island Community Farm ("Pine Island"), but is currently in the process of transitioning these responsibilities to the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) over the next year (Burnstein and Lennart 2020). Pine Island is one of two VLT properties that the Intervale Center has been contracted to help manage and develop agriculturally (Burnstein and Lennart 2020).

Vermont Community Garden Network

The Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2001 and based in Burlington, Vermont (Vermont Community Garden Network 2020a). VCGN works to provide support, education, and connection to Vermont's network of 500 school and community gardens, while working to continue expanding the network, even to include backyard gardens soon (Vermont Community Garden Network 2020a; Weiland 2020). The organization provides technical assistance, training, resources, and funding to garden leaders statewide, and hands-on garden education to Burlington residents of all ages (Vermont Community Garden Network 2020b; Vermont Community Garden Network 2020a).

VCGN runs one garden themselves, the Community Teaching Garden located at the Ethan Allen Homestead, which charges fees for programming (Weiland 2020). VCGN provides a lot of programming for The Family Room's garden program and runs the training for BACG's Site Leaders each spring (Weiland 2020). BACG and The Family Room have garden sites located at Ethan Allen Homestead as well (Weiland 2020). BACG and VCGN meet regularly, and VCGN helped BACG transition their Tommy Thompson garden into a different type of garden model, which will be piloted this year (Weiland 2020). Weekly or biweekly workshops are held by VCGN at The Family Room's garden (Weiland 2020).

VCGN has worked with NFNA in the past, and helped them transition their garden site at the Ethan Allen Homestead from a subsistence, business model to more of a community garden model (Weiland 2020). Because VCGN's Community Teaching Garden is located on land owned by Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD), they will sometimes collaborate with them on various projects or initiatives (Weiland 2020). The Community Teaching Garden used to be located at the Intervale Center, so that connection used to be a bit stronger, but VCGN does hold their annual Day in the Dirt celebration at the Intervale Center (Weiland 2020).

City Market

City Market is a community-owned food cooperative and grocery store, with two locations in Burlington, Vermont and 12,000 Members/Owners (City

Market, Onion River Co-op n.d.a; City Market, Onion River Co-op n.d.c). The store has a strong local focus, with 40% of annual sales being local and made-in-Vermont items on average (Quilty 2020).

City Market is an important market for local vendors to sell their produce. The store allows any local farmer to be a vendor with them, regardless of scale or delivery frequencies (Quilty 2020). Currently, the Burundian Farmers Co-op, affiliated with NFNA, sells with City Market, and in the past, City Market has purchased produce from the community gardens at Pine Island (Quilty 2020).

City Market has a Community Outreach program consisting of 24 partner nonprofit organizations and schools who are working to strengthen local food systems or alleviate hunger (Quilty 2020). BACG, NFNA, VCGN, Pine Island, The Janet S. Munt Family Room (“The Family Room”), and the Intervale Center are all community partners (City Market, Onion River Co-op n.d.b).

Organizations must apply to become a community outreach partner, and if chosen, City Market supplies them with a steady flow of volunteers as well as financial support (Quilty 2020). Volunteering takes place through City Market’s Member Worker Program: Member Workers can volunteer at any of the community partner organizations in exchange for an in-store discount (City Market, Onion River Co-op n.d.d). In 2019, Member Workers volunteered over 17,000 hours (Quilty 2020).

Financial support occurs through City Market’s Rally for Change program, where customers are given the chance to “round up” to the nearest dollar at checkout, and each month, the proceeds are split between three partner

organizations (City Market, Onion River Co-op n.d.e). Partner organizations are automatically rotated through the Rally for Change program, and other organizations can apply to participate, although there is currently a five-year wait list (Quilty 2020; City Market, Onion River Co-op n.d.e). Partner organizations can earn up to \$10,000 per year through the Rally for Change program, in which NFNA, VCGN, the Intervale Center, U.S. Committee on Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), UVM Extension, and The Family Room have participated (Quilty 2020; City Market, Onion River Co-op n.d.e). Partner organizations are also able to table in the City Market stores to conduct outreach and raise awareness (Quilty 2020).

City Market runs a grant program that distributes funding to projects focused on strengthening local food systems (Quilty 2020). They provided grant funding to Pine Island in 2014 to help them establish their chicken cooperative (Quilty 2020). City Market has also supported NFNA projects through their grant program, as well as many garden education projects with The Family Room (Quilty 2020). There is a community teaching kitchen at City Market, where popular monthly cooking classes run by New Americans are held in partnership with USCRI (Quilty 2020). City Market has partnered with NFNA and the UVM Extension's New American Farmer Project to develop educational videos about how to market farm products, presented in various languages (Quilty 2020).

Winooski Valley Park District

Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and Vermont Municipality founded in 1972 focused on conservation and preservation of lands and waters in the Winooski River Valley (Chicote 2020). The District is governed by and serves the seven member communities of Burlington, South Burlington, Winooski, Colchester, Williston, Essex, and Jericho (Winooski Valley Park District n.d.a; Chicote 2020). Currently, 18 parks and natural areas and over 1,750 acres of conserved land are managed by WVPD, who also provides environmental programming, education, and recreational opportunities (Winooski Valley Park District n.d.a). The public is welcome to access WVPD parks year-round, for free (Winooski Valley Park District n.d.a).

One of WVPD's parks is the Ethan Allen Homestead, home to Ethan Allen's historic home and museum, along with recreation trails and open space—see Figure 4 for a map of the grounds (Winooski Valley Park District n.d.c). The Ethan Allen Homestead is also home to VCGN's Community Teaching Garden, The Family Room's garden, two BACG gardens, and NFNA gardens (Winooski Valley Park District n.d.b).

WVPD serves as a host site for the community gardens at the Ethan Allen Homestead (Chicote 2020). The land is owned by WVPD, who then has commemorative Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with each organization (Chicote 2020). For the most part, WVPD does not charge these organizations to host their gardens; they do however have a contract with BACG, and NFNA pays a small annual fee that helps cover maintenance costs (Chicote

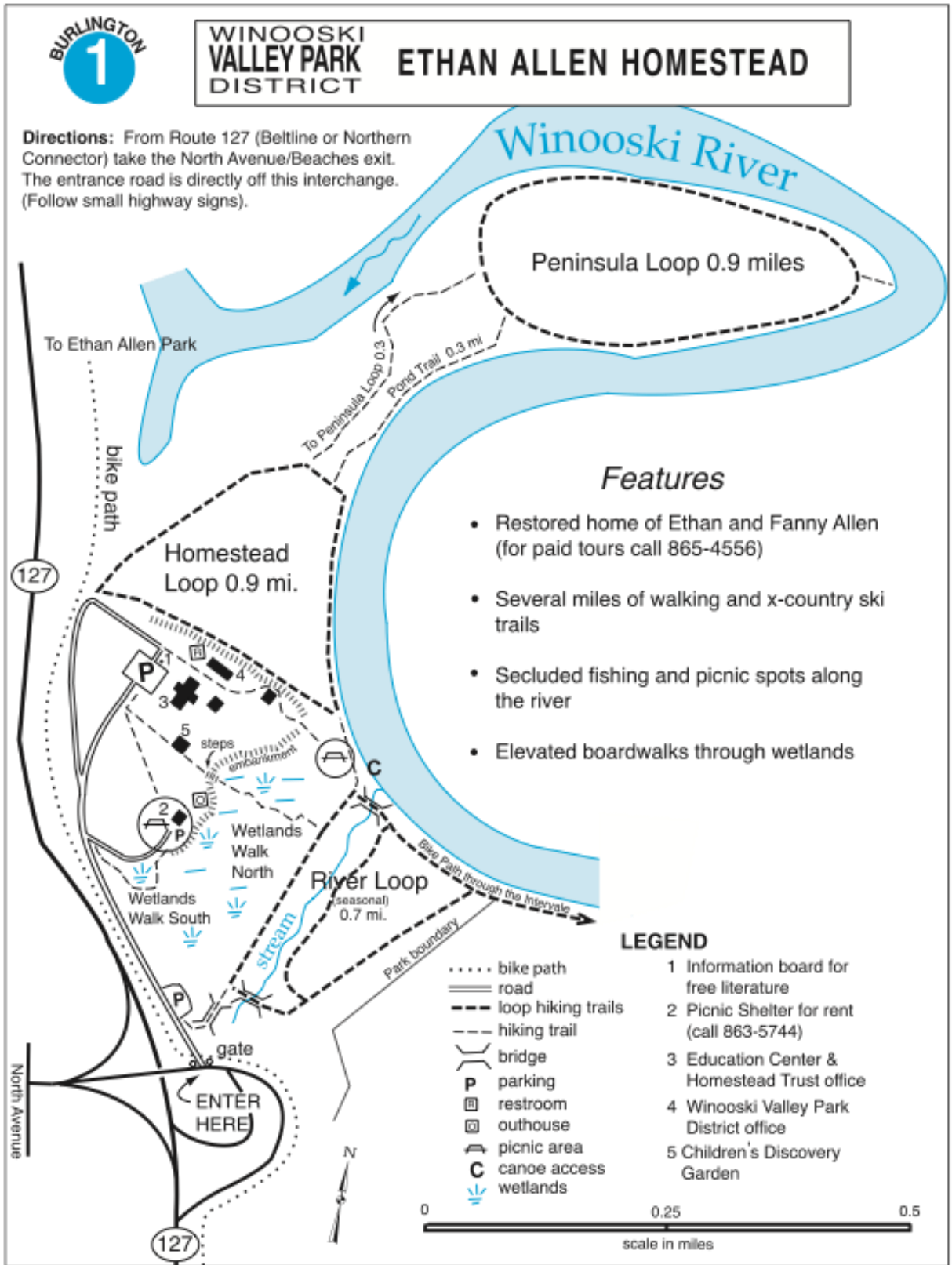


Figure 4: Map of the Ethan Allen Homestead

2020). WVPD mows around the gardens and performs general land and park

infrastructure maintenance, and gets reimbursed for that work at the end of each growing season (Chicote 2020).

WVPD holds an annual partners meeting, which includes representatives from each of the community garden organizations, and provides a space to maintain relationships, explore further partnerships, and openly discuss any issues or conflicts (Chicote 2020). WVPD will help advertise upcoming events or classes hosted by the community garden organizations by posting on their website or on the information board located at the site (Chicote 2020).

During the growing season, WVPD maintains contact with the community garden organizations on a weekly basis, and is always available for questions or to check in (Chicote 2020). WVPD has an open-air picnic pavilion at the site that the organizations will utilize for various events, classes, and gatherings (Chicote 2020). WVPD helped The Family Room erect a timber beam shade structure, which is open for use by any of the organizations (Chicote 2020).

The Center for Sustainable Agriculture's New American Farmer Project

The Center for Sustainable Agriculture, part of the University of Vermont (UVM) Extension, was founded in 1994, and is focused on conducting research and outreach related to sustainable agriculture (UVM Extension 2020a). The New American Farmer Project (NAFP) was an initiative of The Center for Sustainable Agriculture centered around food security, cultural awareness, and enterprise development for New American farmers (UVM Extension 2020b). Currently, the

project is on hold indefinitely due to grant terms ending and a consequent lack of funding (Waterman 2020).

NAFP led hands-on workshops and trainings, developed curricula and educational materials, and created video series on marketing products, understanding USDA programs, and more (UVM Extension 2020b). NAFP also provided individualized technical on-site support, helped farmers establish relationships with buyers, diagnosed various issues in the field such as soil health, and served as a link to additional supports (Waterman 2020). In the past, NAFP worked closely with NFNA, BACG, Pine Island, and VLT (UVM Extension 2020b).

Huertas Project

The Huertas Project (“Huertas”) is a community-based food access project that was born in 2011 out of the Bridges to Health Program at the UVM Extension (UVM Extension 2020c; Mares 2020). The project is run by two UVM faculty/staff members and a team of annual interns (Mares 2020). Huertas is focused on supporting Latino/a migrant farmworkers—mostly Mexican and some Guatemalan—on dairy farms in rural Northern Vermont by helping them establish “kitchen” gardens in which they can grow culturally-relevant and healthy foods for their own families where they are living, and save some money on groceries while doing so (UVM Extension 2020c; Mares 2020). Each garden is a unique arrangement: some are managed by a single family, while others share

management among many farmworkers (Mares 2020). The gardens vary in size, ranging from small to up to an acre (Mares 2020).

Huertas builds approximately 25 to 30 gardens per year, each at a unique dairy farm, and provides seeds and plant starts to the farmworkers (UVM Extension 2020c; Mares 2020). It costs \$5 per adult to participate in the program (Mares 2020). Huertas provides education about how to grow in Vermont's climate, and serve as the intermediaries between farm owners and farmworkers, in helping to ensure the gardens are set up in a way that is satisfactory for both parties (Mares 2020).

Although Huertas is not working in Chittenden County, and is therefore not directly applicable to my study, I wanted to include mention of it since it is doing relevant work and is based out of UVM which is located in Burlington. Because of where their work is based, they do not tend to collaborate with the other organizations included in this study, although they do maintain positive working relationships with many (Mares 2020).

c. Main Findings

Based on my research, I have four main findings in regards my research question: *How do these four primary organizations—Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG), New Farms for New Americans (NFNA), Pine Island Community Farm (“Pine Island”), and The Janet S. Munt Family Room (“The Family Room”)—coordinate when it comes to supporting Chittenden County, Vermont’s New American farmers and gardeners?*

These findings are as follows:

1. These organizations appear to be currently operating at capacity.

The main organizations I studied all have very small staff sizes, particularly when it comes to the specific programs I focused on within each organization. Many expressed they already have enough on their plates, which may make it difficult to further any existing coordination efforts with the other organizations, beyond the systems and practices that are already in place. Due to the nature of the programs being agricultural and therefore requiring physical land and space in which to farm and garden, many organizations claim to be at capacity in terms of physical land available to participants. Acquiring more space, especially in the city of Burlington or in ecologically-sensitive areas, is no small feat. The organizations have no issue filling garden and farm plots each year. Funding is a common challenge for these organizations and another barrier limiting their capacity to expand or further coordinate efforts.

For all of these reasons, these organizations are conducting limited outreach efforts, as they cannot currently accommodate many new participants. Many gardeners continue returning to their plots year after year. Despite this, these organizations state they do not yet have to turn away interested parties. However, I think that accurately measuring the demand that may exist for these programs is very difficult. Many of Chittenden County's New Americans may not even be aware that these programs and resources are available to them, or know how to access them, and if they were, they might certainly be interested in participating. Therefore, claiming that the current level of demand is being met may be inaccurate and an overstatement. I think these organizations could devote

further attention to better understanding the unmet need that may exist in the area and determining how they could work towards addressing that need.

2. *An informal, emergent network currently exists between these organizations.*

With this small number of organizations providing related niche services in close proximity, an informal network has naturally emerged over time. These four organizations collaborate in a variety of ways and each brings unique services and expertise to the network. These organizations offer slightly different services and programs from one another. For instance, the organizations offer plots of different sizes which are better suited for different types of crops and levels of production. Organizations have both shared and separate garden sites, which can accommodate a wide range of clients throughout Chittenden County. BACG plots are scattered throughout the city. Pine Island is located in Colchester, so serves a mostly separate community from the Burlington-based organizations. The Ethan Allen Homestead site on land owned by Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD) is home to BACG, NFNA, The Family Room, and Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN) garden plots. BACG and NFNA both have plots located at the Intervale Center. As a result, these two sites are prime locations for collaborations to take place, and they do, in the form of resource-sharing, education, workshops, tutorials, and more. The two sites, shown in Figure 5, are located 2.9 miles apart.

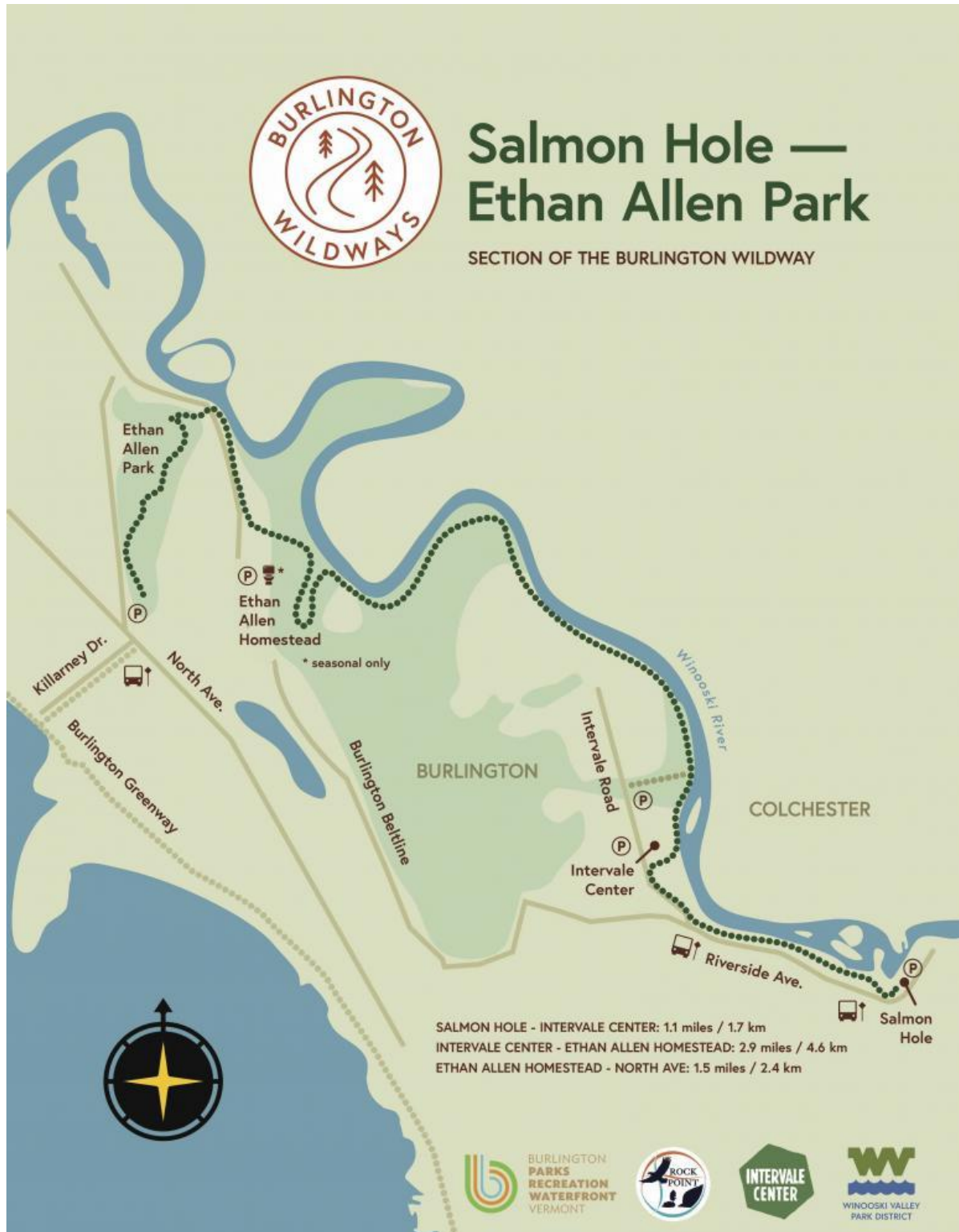


Figure 5: Two Main Garden Sites

Referrals between organizations are common. The Family Room, BACG, and NFNA in particular spoke about referring clients to each other depending on

their needs and level of experience with farming and gardening. Often, clients will move through the organizations as they gain experience, starting small with a Family Room plot, and eventually moving up to BACG or even NFNA for a larger plot. Since there are small staffs at each organization, with often just one or two people in charge of each program I focused on, strong relationships and mutual trust have developed between them. The representatives I spoke to from each of these organizations were all very familiar with one another. Lines of communication between organizations are very open, and information- and knowledge-sharing are common. Staff from these organizations often reach out to one another with questions or to seek advice. Many of these organizations, such as BACG and NFNA, also share clients, as some clients choose to have plots with more than one organization in order to fit different needs.

3. *A self-governance system is in place within this network.*

There is no formal governance system in place within this emergent network. Currently, there is no defined hierarchy within the network: all involved organizations operate on equal standing, and none has authority or control over another. These organizations cooperatively govern the network, and even that governance is fairly minimal, because the network itself remains informal. Currently, these organizations do not have formal guidelines for how the network is managed, and the organizations do not all meet together on any kind of regular basis. The organizations with plots at the Ethan Allen Homestead (BACG, NFNA, VCGN, The Family Room) do convene annually with WVPD to discuss

happenings at the site. Organizations within this network keep in contact informally throughout the year via phone, email, and in-person meetings with one another.

4. A number of secondary organizations support this network in various ways.

Beyond the four primary organizations within this network that I have identified, there are a number of other organizations in Chittenden County who support the network in various ways, despite the fact that their work may not be directly or solely focused on supporting New American farmers and gardeners. This network would not be able to function at the level it currently does and provide the same quantity and quality of resources were it not for these secondary supporting organizations.

City Market's Member Worker program provides NFNA, BACG, The Family Room, and Pine Island, as well as VCGN and the Intervale Center, with volunteers. City Market also allows these organizations to conduct promotion and outreach by tabling in their stores, and they collect donations for these organizations through their Rally for Change program. Additionally, City Market is a market for New American growers to sell their produce, and City Market funds various projects at The Family Room, NFNA, and Pine Island through their grant program.

VCGN hosts workshops in BACG, NFNA, and The Family Room's gardens, and welcomes New American gardeners to their Community Teaching

Garden. The Intervale Center has helped to manage operations at Pine Island for years, and is working with the Vermont Land Trust now to transition these responsibilities. The Intervale Center also oversees and manages the Tommy Thompson site where NFNA and BACG have gardens, and WVPD oversees the Ethan Allen Homestead site, where many of these organizations have garden plots. The New American Farmer Project through UVM Extension's Center for Sustainable Agriculture, when running, provided many supporting services to these organizations through training, education, and workshops. Organizations like Intervale and NOFA-VT partner with these organizations when it comes to including them and their clients in conferences and events.

5. Discussion

Through my interviews, the importance of farming and gardening for Chittenden County's New American community was continually underscored. Many of the themes I found in the literature regarding the benefits of farming and gardening for New American populations were addressed by the organizational staff members I interviewed, including the opportunity to return to agrarian pasts, socialize, spend time outdoors with their family, grow healthy food to provide to their family or to sell, save money on groceries, and put down roots in a new place. Many of the challenges of farming and gardening for the New American community were also addressed, particularly in regards to land access and transportation. These findings highlight the value of the services being provided by both the primary and secondary organizations I studied.

The services, resources, and support these organizations provide are invaluable to New American growers in Chittenden County. They provide education and training for how to grow in Vermont's unique climate and make the most of a short growing season; they provide space and land for farming and gardening; they provide free, reduced, or affordable services; they serve as intermediaries between the growers and governmental institutions, grant providers, markets, and farm owners; they enable opportunities for economic savings and empowerment; they refer growers to other organizations to help them receive the best support for their individual needs; they serve as translators; they provide transportation to garden sites; and they foster spaces for belonging, socialization, and community-building in a homogenous and rural state.

Because these four primary organizations are providing related niche services in a small geographical area, often at the same location, to similar and oftentimes overlapping populations, it seems natural that an informal and self-governing network might emerge. All of these organizations or programs are relatively small, of a similar size, and are part of the nonprofit or public sectors. The missions, goals, and values of these organizations are closely aligned. Additionally, close relationships built on communication, trust, and reciprocity have developed among these organizations over the years, so they have a strong base from which to grow. They each provide similar yet unique resources that make coordination through the network mutually beneficial for those involved.

These organizations are currently coordinating in a variety of ways, as outlined above in my findings, and secondary organizations play a vital role in

filling gaps in service, providing additional resources, and forging connections. Because, according to these organizations, they are already operating at or above capacity, they may not be able to devote the time or resources to deepening collaborations. However, increasing collaboration within the network may help reduce duplication, increase efficiency, and lead to cost savings, after some of the initial hurdles are overcome. Continuing to strengthen the informal network that is in place might allow these organizations to increase the number of New American growers in Chittenden County they are able to serve, and increase the quality and quantity of the resources they provide, therefore having a greater impact. Further coordination may also increase political clout, enable organizations to think more long-term, and would allow risks and accountability to be shared.

However, these organizations should be cautious when it comes to how many organizations they choose to partner with or allow into their network, especially if it were to become more formalized. The literature has shown that having too much organizations involved may start to tip the scale and create more duplications and inefficiencies, and increase coordination costs.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

An informal, emergent, and self-governing network currently exists between Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG), New Farms for New Americans (NFNA), Pine Island Community Farm (“Pine Island”), and The Janet S. Munt Family Room (“The Family Room”), all organizations or programs focused on supporting New American farmers and gardeners in Chittenden County, Vermont. Given these four organizations' small size, proximity to one

another, strong relationships, and provision of related niche services to a similar population, the informality and self-governance of this network seems to be functioning effectively for these organizations thus far. These organizations claim to be operating at or near capacity and meeting the current level of demand. However, there may very well be unmet need that has yet to be identified. It may be necessary for these organizations to reassess their current operations and offerings, discover new methods of more accurately measuring demand, and find creative ways to expand their offerings so that more people can be served.

Due to strong and growing interest in the offerings of these programs and organizations, a more formalized network and governance system—such as a lead organization—may be necessary in the future. In the meantime, I think that a committee or council focused on Chittenden County New American farmers and gardeners and consisting of representatives from each primary organization (NFNA, BACG, Pine Island, and The Family Room) as well as their clients and community representatives that meets on a regular basis—perhaps monthly—could be very beneficial. As of now, collaboration between programs and organizations takes place very irregularly and casually. The committee could provide a more formal space and time for collaboration, to address any shared or common issues or challenges such as transportation, and to stay updated on the work everyone is doing. It could also be an opportunity to amplify the farmer and gardener voices from within the New American community which currently may not have a formalized space in which to be heard. Representatives from the secondary supporting organizations, including Vermont Community Garden

Network, Intervale Center, City Market, University of Vermont (UVM) Extension, and Winooski Valley Park District, could also be included in the committee.

I also recommend that collaboration with the UVM Extension be deepened. UVM has a strong presence in Chittenden County and the resources to support these organizations and programs to a greater extent, many of whom are struggling in terms of capacity, financial and otherwise. As Vermont's land-grant university, greater funding and support through the UVM Extension must be sought. Programs such as the New American Farmer Project should continue to be funded. As a landmark institution within the community, deepening these collaborations would provide many co-benefits to both the organizations and UVM.

I would like to acknowledge the limitations of this study, and recommend potential related opportunities for future research. I think that further monitoring and evaluation within the network could prove beneficial, in terms of assessing the collective resources provided by the network, measuring the network's impact, and identifying gaps and needs. I did not have the capacity to speak directly with members of Chittenden County's New American farming and gardening community during this study. I think conducting surveys or interviews with this population to learn how they feel they are being served by these organizations, and what needs are and are not being met, could be incredibly beneficial as they are the "clients" in this scenario and therefore the most important voice.

Appendix: Sample Interview Questions
Chittenden County, Vermont Service Provider

Your Role

- What is your role and responsibilities within the organization?
- How long have you been with the organization?

Organizational Background

- Who founded the organization?
- Why was the organization founded?
- Who does the organization serve?
 - How many people has your organization served/is currently serving?
 - Do you have a demographic breakdown of those served?
 - What are your organization's selection criteria for determining who you serve?
 - How is legal status factored in?
- What is your understanding of the term "New American"?
 - Is this your preferred term to refer to this population?
- What programs and services does the organization provide?
- Do people phase out of your programs or services?
 - For how long are they able to be supported by your organization?
- Has the organization evolved over time in response to any particular events?
 - Has the organization grown in number of employees?
 - Have the organization's programs or offerings changed at all over time?
 - Has there been any change in mission since the organization was founded?
- What are the organization's sources of funding?
 - Does your organization receive any funding from the federal or state level?
 - How do the sources of funding influence the organization's work?
- Who owns the farmland or garden space utilized by your organization?
 - Is there a lease arrangement in place?
 - How many acres of land are being farmed/gardened by your organization?
- How has the community reacted to the programs and services your organization offers?
 - Have any concerns been raised?
 - Have you experienced any opposition?
- Are there any organizational reports, publications, or other materials you could share with me to better inform my work?

Outreach and Coordination

- How does your organization conduct outreach?
- What role do referrals play in attracting people to your organization and/or bringing awareness to your organization?
- Do you coordinate with other local organizations? In what ways?
 - Do you coordinate on outreach?
 - Do you share contact lists?
 - Do you collaborate on events?
 - Do you share translators?
 - Have any best practices been shared?
- Are there similarities or overlap between the services you provide and the services provided by other similar local organizations?
 - Are there unique services that your organization provides that other similar local organizations do not?
 - Do you cover the same jurisdictions/neighborhoods as other similar local organizations?
- What challenges does your organization face when it comes to outreach?
 - Do language or cultural barriers impact how outreach is conducted?
- How successful has your outreach model been?
 - What has farmer/gardener feedback been like?
 - What has community feedback been like?
 - What kind of media coverage has your organization received?

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