Exploring the Impact of Urban Gardens on Food Insecurity and Health among Low Income Californians: A Community-Research Partnership

Food insecurity affects almost 4 million low-income families in California and contributes to poor health outcomes in both adults and children. Urban agriculture is a promising strategy used to sustainably address food insecurity and malnutrition among low-income urban and semi-urban communities in California by increasing access to fresh, nutritious food and providing financial savings or income.

However, little is known about how urban agricultural approaches directly affect the food security, diet quality, nutritional knowledge, and health of individuals and families participating in urban garden activities. In response, University of California researchers and Valley Verde, a non-profit organization providing home gardens to low-income, primarily immigrant and Spanish-speaking residents of Santa Clara County, established a partnership to develop a body of evidence on the impacts of urban home gardens.

The goal is for this knowledge base to inform food security policy, as well as programmatic approaches to urban agriculture in similar communities in California. This partnership is grounded in principles of community-based participatory research, an approach intended to enhance community involvement in research and foster community strengths and problem-solving abilities with the goal of taking action.

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