



THE FOOD PROJECT'S

ALUMNI STUDY

2020-2021

EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMATIC IMPACT ON ALUMNI

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The Food Project



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its 30 years of operation, The Food Project (TFP) has employed over 1,800 youth in its programs. Through participation, we believe that youth become empowered leaders capable of leading and engaging others in creating personal and social change. The goal of this study was to measure this ultimate outcome amongst The Food Project's alumni and to understand if and how TFP influenced their engagement. We used a mixed methods study design to get a snapshot of the lives of our alumni as well as understand how their TFP experience supported their accomplishments.

We focused on alumni over the age of 23 to ensure that they had at least five years of life experience since working at The Food Project. After initial efforts to collect updated contact information, we chose to also limit our base population to those who had participated at The Food Project more than once to ensure a higher response rate.

We distributed our quantitative survey to the 573 alumni in our base population. We received 102 completed surveys, hearing from roughly 18% of eligible alumni. From those who completed the survey, we selected a convenience sample of 20 alumni who represented the demographics of the base population with whom to conduct in-depth interviews. Despite their nonrandom selection into the sample and the slight overrepresentation from white alumni, both samples represent the diversity of identities amongst The Food Project's alumni.

RESULTS

Through our survey, we wanted to learn: What percentage of our alumni are leading social change in their communities? To measure participation in social change, we asked about alumni's careers, their participation in organizations outside of work, as well as their participation in a list of social change actions.

Using these parameters, we found that 72% of respondents were formally involved in social change through their careers or community participation. As evidence of this, the most common career industries among TFP alumni, like social services, non-profit, and food/agriculture, are unique relative to popular careers among the general population. Additionally, almost 40% of our alumni reported that they are involved in at least one community group outside of work. By conducting the in-depth interviews, we learned that, not only are alumni involved in formal social change through their careers and community engagement, their involvement was motivated by their experiences at The Food Project.

On average, our alumni reported participating in 6.3 of the 9 kinds of civic engagement we used to measure informal participation in social action. Among the options for civic engagement, "voting" and "consciously purchasing goods" were the actions performed most often by our alumni.

Results from our survey and interviews also provide a clear picture of how The Food Project prepares its alumni to be social change agents in their careers and communities:

Our alumni are prepared to apply for and maintain a job. During the interviews alumni expressed how working at TFP taught them how to apply to jobs, as well as about basic workplace behaviors. As evidence of this, all alumni who responded to our survey reported having graduated from high school and 88% reported having at least a Bachelor's Degree. Additionally, 96% of our alumni reported that they were currently employed or in school at the time of the survey.

Our alumni are prepared to lead. Through the interviews, we learned that The Food Project encouraged alumni to embrace their leadership styles and find their voice as leaders. Three kinds of opportunities to build leadership skills stood out amongst alumni's responses: receiving feedback on leadership, holding roles of responsibility, and presenting as experts.

Our alumni are prepared to make a difference. Eighty-five percent of alumni interviewed expressed the value of The Food Project's workshops in increasing their awareness about issues affecting their communities. Their newfound awareness motivated them to make a difference or gave them the confidence to speak up as adults. Sixty percent of the alumni talked about how opportunities to get involved in change-making at TFP, particularly advocacy projects, influenced their participation in social action as adults.

Our alumni are prepared to work on diverse teams. Ninety percent of alumni talked about the value of being exposed to people from diverse experiences. Seventy-five percent of alumni discussed using their training in having conversations across differences in their adult lives.

As evidence of this, in the survey, over 90% of alumni expressed that they felt they were more able to build relationships with people who are different from them as a result of participating in The Food Project.

Our alumni are prepared as consumers. Sixty percent of alumni interviewed expressed that their TFP experience increased their awareness of where their food comes from. Many talked about how they grow their own food or have tried to in the past. As a result of learning about the food system, alumni reported eating more vegetables and less "junk" food. Similarly, in the survey, 78% of respondents reported an increase in vegetable consumption as a result of The Food Project. Beyond eating healthier, alumni interviewed talked about being more conscious of their choices as consumers as a result of participation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of our survey and interviews, it is clear that alumni who participate more than once at The Food Project go on to be leaders of social change because of their experience at The Food Project. The Food Project prepares our alumni to lead and engage in social change, to work on diverse teams, to apply for and maintain jobs, and to make good choices as consumers. Different parts of the experience seem to have more of an impact for different groups of alumni. These findings align well with the results from the quantitative survey that indicate that participation prepares alumni to work across differences and increases alumni's vegetable consumption.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1991, The Food Project has gathered youth from diverse backgrounds on our farms to grow together—growing food and growing as people. To date, 1,848 individuals have participated in its various youth programs. The goal of this project was to get back in touch with our alumni and hear from them about how The Food Project impacted who they are and what they are doing today.

To identify our research question, we turned toward The Food Project's theory of change logic model, a framework that maps how The Food Project's youth programs impact their participants and create change in the world. Through participation in The Food Project's youth programs we believe youth become empowered leaders capable of leading and engaging others in creating personal and social change. By asking alumni about the impact of their experience at The Food Project on their lives as adults, we hoped to learn if and how our alumni are engaged in social change in their communities.

The last study of this kind was released in 2008 by Brigham Nahas Research Associates. With almost fifteen additional years of programmatic experiences and alumni to evaluate, we looked forward to building on their findings. We chose a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. By using a mixed methods approach, we could get a snapshot of the lives of our population as well as understand how their TFP experience supported their accomplishments. For the remainder of the report, we will describe our methods chronologically, starting first with updating alumni contact information.

UPDATING ALUMNI CONTACT INFORMATION

As we began this process, we realized it had been years since The Food Project was in touch with some of its alumni. Therefore, we made it our first step to reach out to alumni to gather updated contact information. We focused on alumni over the age of 23 to ensure that alumni who would later participate in the survey had at least five years since working at The Food Project to pursue an education, develop their career, and become further acquainted with their communities. We also excluded individuals who had their employment at The Food Project terminated.

We built a custom contact form in our youth database, Linseed, and distributed it to the alumni who met our inclusion criteria through various avenues of communication, including texting, e-mailing, phone calls, and postal mail. Updates to contact information were then stored in youth profiles in Linseed.

After months of attempting to contact alumni, we reached a total of 197 alumni or less than 17% of our base population. Unsurprisingly, 83.2% percent of those who did update their contact information had participated at The Food Project more than once. This is likely due to the fact that they had more time at The Food Project and had forged a stronger bond to the organization and its mission.

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

METHODS

After the low response rate to the contact form, we changed our base population for the quantitative survey by adding “participated more than once” to our inclusion criteria. After omitting individuals under the age of 23, individuals who had been terminated from The Food Project, and individuals who only participated in Seed Crew or SYP, we were left with a base population of 573 alumni.

To ensure representativeness, we had hoped to receive enough responses to the contact form that we could recruit a large, random sample from our base population to participate in the quantitative survey. However, given the challenge of reaching alumni, we sent the survey to all alumni in the base population. We expected to mostly hear back from those who completed the contact form. Alumni were texted, emailed, and called to remind them to complete the survey. The survey data was collected via the survey software, Typeform, and was stored in Linseed.

Using our original research question as our base, we set out to answer the following question through a quantitative survey: What percentage of our alumni are leading social change in their communities?

To answer this question, we first had to define what “leading social change” meant to us. We came up with a two part definition:

- Formally leading social change: Employment in the public or social sector (teacher, doctor, social worker, etc.) or identifies as a leader in a community organization (volunteering, etc.)
- Informally leading social change: Demonstrates a commitment to social change through their interpersonal relationships or their personal choices; They may not have chosen a career that keeps them at the forefront of social change, but they are doing their part from their position to influence the people and systems around them.

As additional outcomes of participation, we also hoped to learn:

1. What percentage of our alumni graduate from college?
2. What percentage of our alumni are currently employed?
3. What was the impact of participation on eating habits?
4. What was the impact of participation on comfort in working across differences?

To measure participation in formal social change, we asked about alumni’s careers and their participation in organizations outside of work. We measured informal social change by asking questions about participation in a list of civic engagement actions (ex. Do you vote?). Additionally, we asked participants questions about their demographics, education, eating habits, etc. Individuals provided consent to participate and were incentivized to complete the survey with an entry to a raffle to win one of five VISA gift cards.

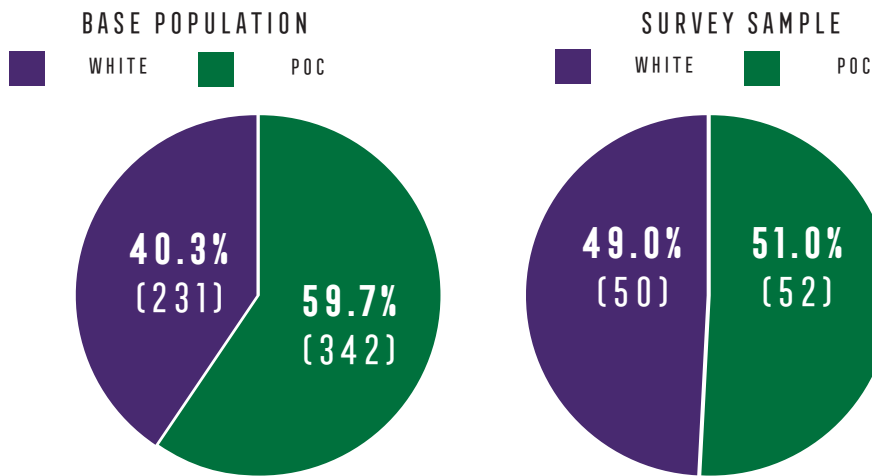
RESULTS

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

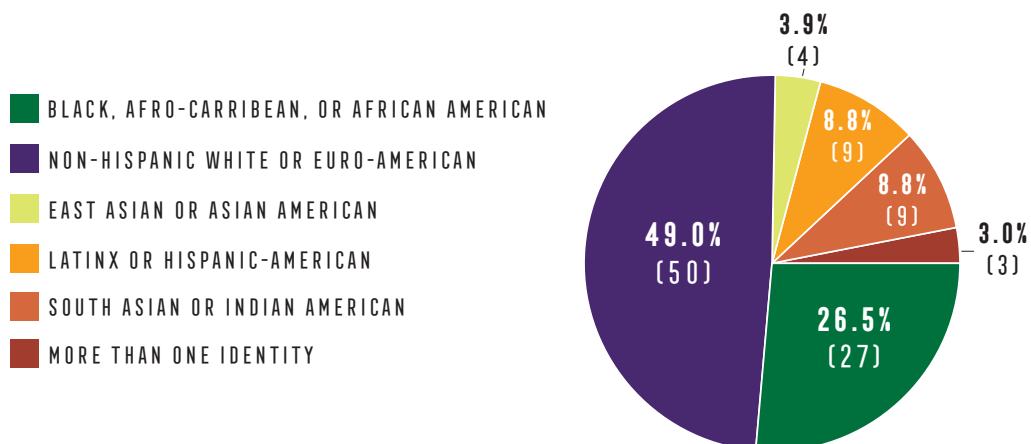
To ensure a large enough sample to represent the characteristics of the base population, we aimed for a response rate over 20%. We received 102 completed surveys, hearing from roughly 18% of eligible alumni. Given how difficult it was to reach alumni, we are satisfied with this response rate. Even so,

the nonrandomness of our sample brings representativeness into question. The table below shows the demographic breakdown of our base population and survey sample.

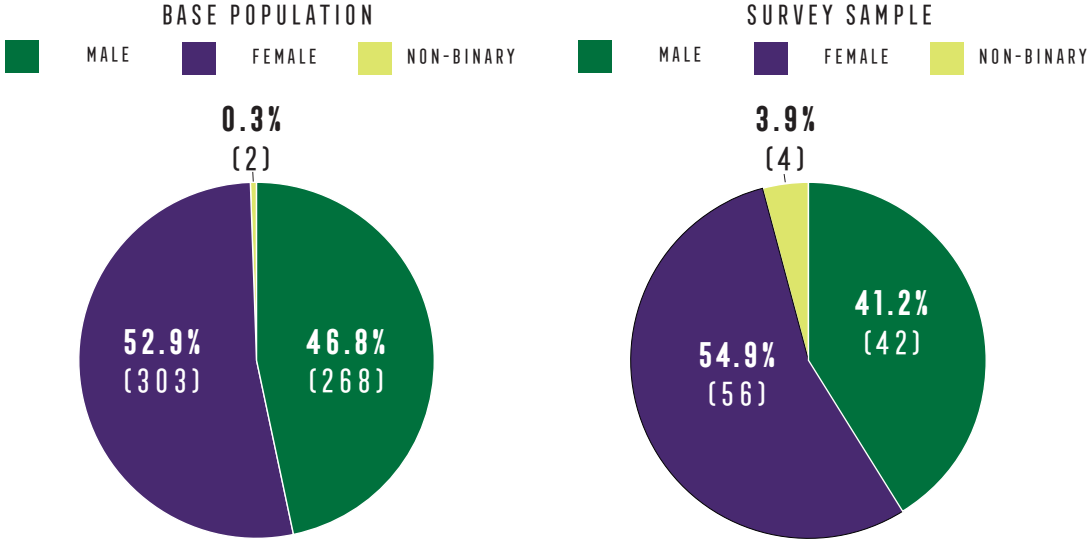
BASE POPULATION 573				SURVEY SAMPLE 102			
RACE	POC	342	56.69%	POC	52	50.98%	
	WHITE	231	40.31%	WHITE	50	49.02%	
GENDER	FEMALE	303	52.88%	FEMALE	56	54.90%	
	MALE	268	46.77%	MALE	42	41.18%	
	NB	2	0.35%	NB	4	3.92%	
COHORT	A	89	15.53%	A	15	14.71%	
	B	340	59.33%	B	54	52.94%	
	CX	144	25.13%	CX	33	32.35%	



RACIAL BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY SAMPLE

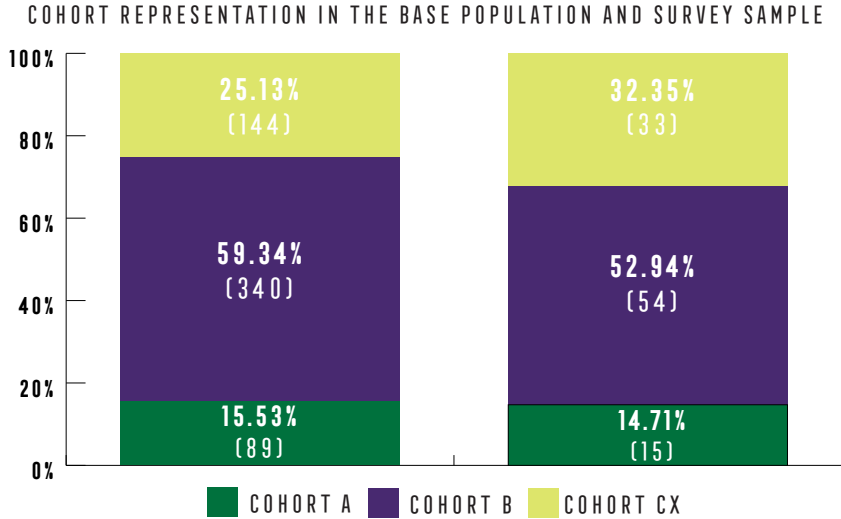


The Food Project intentionally hires a diverse cross-section of individuals into its youth programs. Our goal was to represent the same diversity in our survey sample to, once again, ensure representativeness. Despite our efforts, our survey sample overrepresented white participants by 10% compared to the base population.



Male-identified respondents were slightly underrepresented in the survey sample. Meanwhile, there is a greater count of individuals in the survey sample who identify as non-binary than in the base population. Given that gender is a social construct and can change, our records of our alumni’s reported gender identity in the base population were likely outdated.

To acknowledge the value of the timing of an individual’s experience at The Food Project, we broke down our population into three subsections called “cohorts”. Each cohort signifies the decade in which a young person began their experience with The Food Project. Cohort A consists of individuals who began their employment at The Food Project in the 1990s. Cohort B consists of individuals who began their employment at The Food Project in the 2000s. Cohort CX consists of individuals who began their employment at The Food Project in the 2010s.



Comparing the base population to the survey sample by cohort, we can see that our sample has a similar level of individuals from Cohort A. Cohort CX is overrepresented by about 7.2% in the survey sample. This could be the result of younger alumni having a more recent TFP experience; therefore they feel a stronger connection to the organization. The stronger connection could also be a result of more engagement from younger alumni in our outreach efforts through social media content. For more information about the demographic breakdown of each cohort, see appendix A.

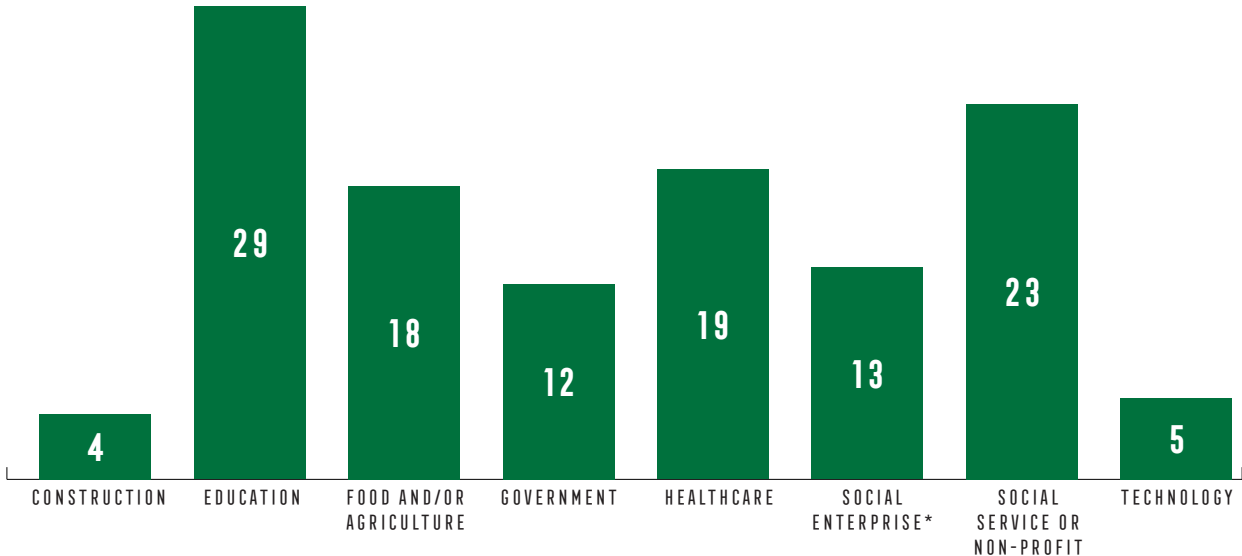
FORMAL SOCIAL CHANGE

Alumni were considered to be formally leading social change if they said they participated in a community organization or responded that their career was in one of the following industries:

1. Education
2. Food /agriculture
3. Non-profit or social service
4. Healthcare
5. Government
6. Social enterprise: for-profit business that seeks to address a social or environmental issue

Using these parameters, we found that 72% of respondents were leading formal social change. However, in some cases, it was hard to identify whether a person’s career was in a social change industry. We would recommend pursuing an alternative method for measuring participation in formal social change in the future.

MOST COMMON CAREER INDUSTRY AMONG ALUMNI



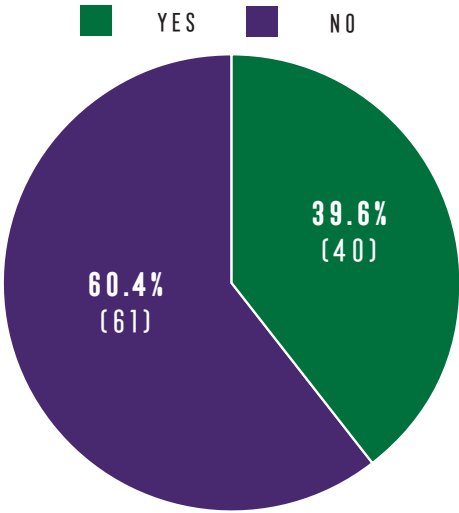
*SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IS DEFINED AS "A FOR-PROFIT BUSINESS THAT SEEKS TO ADDRESS A SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM"

Despite the limitations of the formal social change measure, it is clear that our alumni are engaged in important work. The most common industries for alumni to currently work in were: education, social services /non-profit, healthcare, and food /agriculture. Comparatively, September 2020 data from The Bureau of Labor Statistics highlights professional and business services, healthcare, state and local government, leisure and hospitality, and retail trade as the industries with the most jobs.¹ As a

reminder, the ages of the alumni within the sample range from 23 to 45. Therefore, individuals have had varied amounts of time to develop their careers.

Ninety-six percent of our alumni reported that they were currently employed or in school at the time of the survey. The unemployment rate among our alumni was lower than the national average at that time, 6.3%.² Considering our survey was conducted at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems our alumni fared better in terms of employment than the general population.

DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS OUTSIDE OF WORK?



Almost 40% of our alumni reported that they are involved in at least one community group outside of work. A 2017 survey from the Pew Research Center suggests that 57% of Americans participate in some sort of community organization.³ We hypothesize that the disparity between the national average and our alumni participation rate is a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Groups in which alumni participated ranged from local groups to national organizations as well as a variety of schools, churches, political campaigns, and townships. Beyond just participating, some alumni reported serving in leadership roles such as treasurers, board members, etc. The word cloud shows the litany of groups with which our alumni reported being engaged.



INFORMAL SOCIAL CHANGE

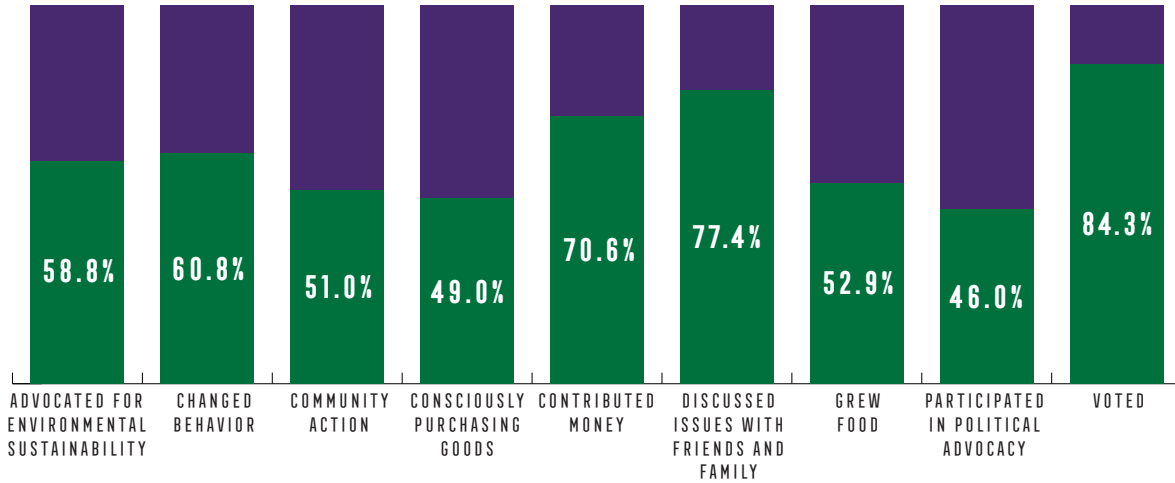
We used nine kinds of civic engagement (see list below) to measure informal participation in social change. Alumni were asked to select the kinds of civic action in which they have participated. Alumni were also given space to list additional actions as they saw fit.

1. Voted
2. Participated in political advocacy
3. Grew your own food
4. Consciously purchased goods or services from companies prioritizing environmental sustainability and/or justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion
5. Changed behaviors to minimize your environmental impact (ex. Taking public transit, composting, etc.)
6. Took action to do something about a community issue
7. Contributed money to a social cause
8. Advocated for environmental sustainability and/or justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in a workplace or another social space
9. Discussed issues of environmental sustainability and/or social justice with friends, family members, and/or colleagues

The table below highlights how the social action categories were abbreviated in the charts.

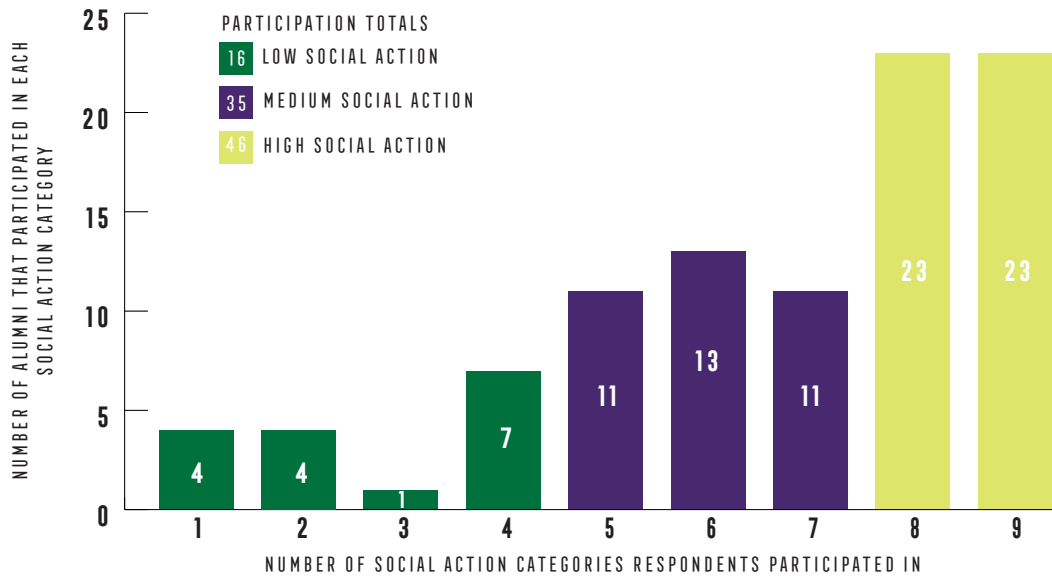
Social Action Category	Abbreviation
Voted	Voted
Participated in political advocacy	Participated in Political Advocacy
Grew your own food	Grew Food
Consciously purchased goods or services from companies prioritizing environmental sustainability and/or justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion	Consciously Purchasing Goods
Changed behaviors to minimize your environmental impact (ex. Taking public transit, composting, etc.)	Changed Behaviors
Took action to do something about a community issue	Community Action
Contributed money to a social cause	Contributed Money
Advocated for environmental sustainability and/or justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in a workplace or another social space	Advocated for Environmental Sustainability
Discussed issues of environmental sustainability and/or social justice with friends, family members, and/or colleagues	Discussed Issues with Friends and Family

PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL ACTION CATEGORIES



The most popular avenue for positive social change among alumni was through voting with an 84% participation rate. Close behind this were “discussing issues with family and friends” (77.4%), and “contributing money to a social cause” (70.6%).

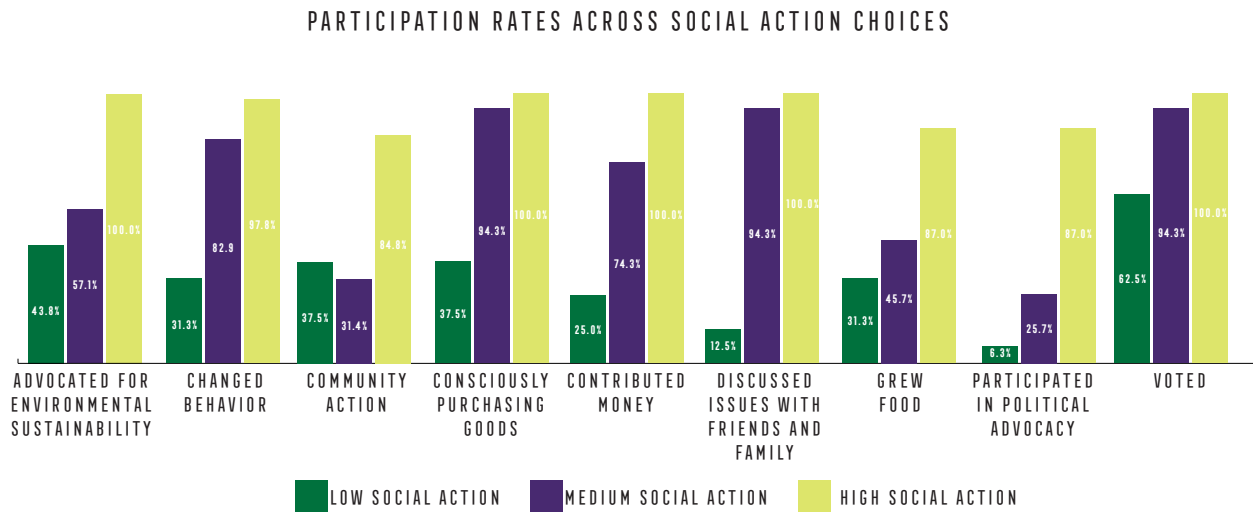
SUM OF SOCIAL ACTION



For each individual, we added together the civic engagement actions in which they reported participating, giving them a participation score from 1 to 9. The graph above shows the distribution of participation scores among our alumni color-coded by low (scores 1-4), medium (score 5-7), and high (scores 8-9) participation. Almost 80% of alumni were in either the medium or high participation groups and, on average, individuals participated in 6.3 social action categories.

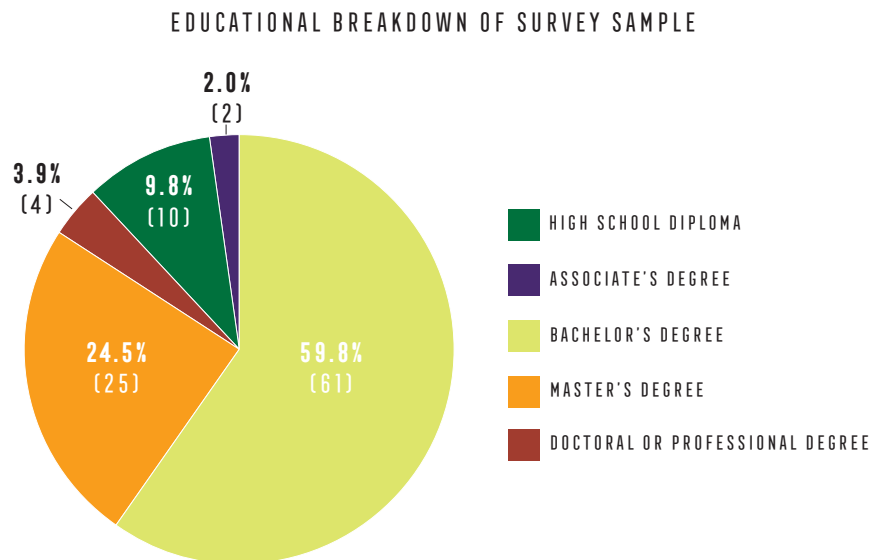
There were key demographic differences between those in each participation group. White identified individuals made up 49% of the sample; However, they made up 73.9% of the high participation group.

Over half (53.7%) of respondents from cohort B are represented in the high participation group while cohort A and cohort CX are more equally represented across the groups. For more information on the demographics of the participation groups, see appendix B.



Across the three participation groups, “voting” and “consciously purchasing goods” were in the top five most frequently selected civic engagement actions. In addition, “discussing issues with friends and family” and “contributing money” were in the top five most frequently selected civic engagement actions for both the high and medium participation groups. “Participating in political advocacy” was one of the least common choices for all three participation groups. For more information about civic engagement action choices by participation group, see appendix C.

EDUCATION

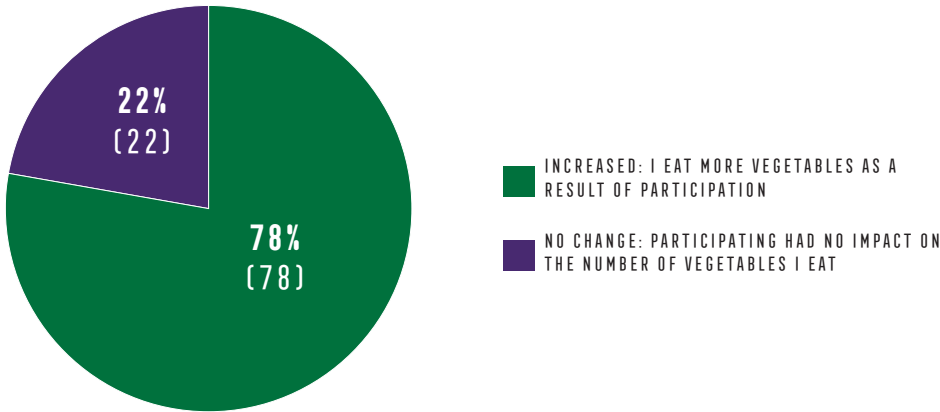


An overwhelming majority of our survey respondents (88.2%) reported having at least a bachelor's degree. Every individual who responded to our survey reported having graduated from high school.

EATING HABITS

A core tenet of The Food Project's youth program is its food system education. Therefore, it is no surprise that 78% of alumni reported an increase in the number of vegetables they eat as a result of participation. Twenty-two percent reported that there was no change in their vegetable intake as a result of participation and no one said that their vegetable consumption decreased.

IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION ON VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION

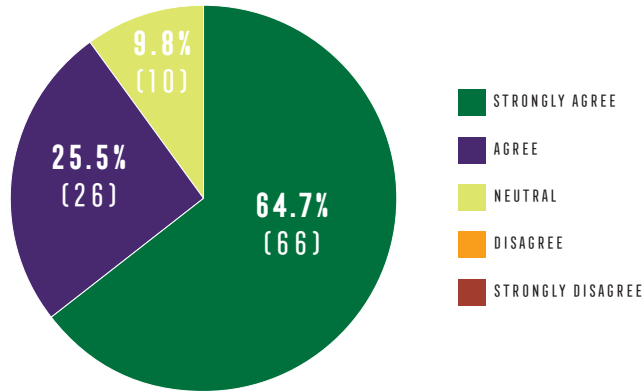


Out of our survey respondents, roughly two thirds reported that they eat vegetables once a day or more often. Less than 8% of respondents reported eating vegetables only once a week.

WORKING IN DIVERSE GROUPS

Another key part of The Food Project's youth programs is the opportunity to work with and learn from a diverse group of peers. As a result, over 90% of alumni surveyed agreed that they are more able to build relationships with people who are different than themselves as a result of participating in The Food Project. No respondents reported that they disagreed.

ALUMNI AGREEMENT WITH THE STATEMENT, "I AM MORE ABLE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT THAN ME AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE FOOD PROJECT."



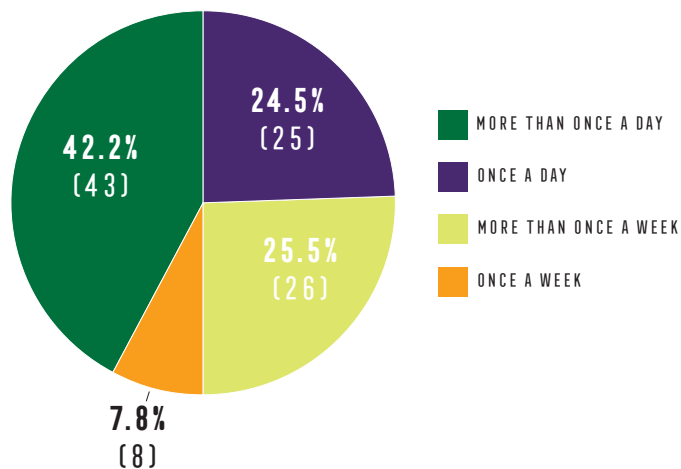
QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

METHODS

The goal for the qualitative data collection was to conduct in-depth interviews with alumni who completed the quantitative survey to gain a deeper understanding of The Food Project’s impact on their lives. In particular, we hoped to understand if and how their TFP experience enabled them to be leaders of social change. We developed a semi-structured interview guide with input from our alumni study team as well as members of Root Crew. Our questions asked about alumni’s career paths, their community engagement outside of work, as well as specific questions about if and how their TFP experience had influenced different skill sets, like working across difference. As is the goal of semi-structured interviews, our questions were intentionally open-ended to allow unexpected themes to emerge from the interviews. We also included more specific probing questions to ensure we covered all topics of interest.

We chose a convenience sample of twenty alumni from those who completed the quantitative survey and indicated in the survey that they would be interested in an interview. We selected people based on

HOW OFTEN DO ALUMNI EAT FRESH VEGETABLES?



their availability and their demographics to ensure that participants were representative of the base population in terms of race, gender, and cohort. We had difficulty recruiting alumni of color and alumni from cohort A, making twenty interviewees a natural cap to ensure diversity in the sample. Additionally, we believed twenty interviewees to be sufficient for reaching saturation where no new themes would emerge from the data. For more information on the demographics of our interview sample, see the table below.

		BASE POPULATION 573		SURVEY SAMPLE 102		INTERVIEWEE POOL 20	
RACE	POC	342	56.69%	52	50.98%	10	50%
	WHITE	231	40.31%	50	49.02%	10	50%
GENDER	FEMALE	303	52.88%	56	54.90%	9	45%
	MALE	268	46.77%	42	41.18%	10	50%
	NB	2	0.35%	4	3.92%	1	5%
COHORT	A	89	15.53%	15	14.71%	3	15%
	B	340	59.33%	54	52.94%	12	60%
	CX	144	25.13%	33	32.35%	5	25%

Interviews were conducted in spring of 2021 by Madison Beehler, Curtis Leonard, and one member of Root Crew, Grace K. The interview guide was piloted among four alumni who are also current staff members as a way to test the clarity of the questions and practice our interview skills. Interviewees were asked to sign and return a consent form listing the details of the study. In an additional effort to protect the identity of interviewees, we assigned each person a number (1-20) to identify them instead of using their names. The interviews ranged from 15 minutes to 61 minutes long with a median length of 42 minutes. All of the interviews were recorded and then transcribed using Sonix.ai software.

Transcripts were then entered into Dedoose software for analysis. Each transcript was given a set of descriptors that identified a respondent’s ID number, race, gender, cohort, and whether or not they had been identified as formally leading social change in the quantitative survey. To begin the analytical process, both members of the research team independently coded two interviews by searching for themes between the interviews. We then compared our themes and consolidated them into one code book. We checked the code book and inter-coder reliability by coding an additional interview and confirming we applied the codes in the same ways. Madison and Curtis then each coded half of the twenty interviews. All codes were checked for validity and themes were finalized.

RESULTS

What we learned through our in-depth interviews with alumni was “Yes”! The Food Project experience had influenced alumni to engage in social change as adults, both inside and outside of work.

Additionally, The Food Project prepared them to do so in a handful of ways. Alumni were prepared to:

1. Apply for and maintain a job
2. Act as leaders
3. Contribute to their communities
4. Work on diverse teams

5. Engage as consumers in the food system

ENGAGING IN SOCIAL CHANGE

The alumni interviewed were working in diverse careers. Eighty-five percent of alumni's careers met our criteria for formally leading social change. Below are examples:

A national organizing fellow at a “nonprofit focused on ending gender based violence centered on cis and transgender girls of color and gender non-conforming youth of color, particularly black girls.” - white, female, CX

An entrepreneur preparing to open his first restaurant serving locally-sourced “New England inspired Asian-American food” - POC, male, B

“I work for a for-profit company, it’s a civil engineering and environmental consulting firm, and I worked as an environmental planner.” - white, non-binary, B

“I currently work at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago in economic research. And I primarily focus on financial stability issues, not just here in Chicago, but in sort of the broader economy and a little bit of the international landscape as well.” - POC, female, CX

Thirteen of the 17 alumni whose careers met the criteria for formally leading social action (76%) indicated that their experience at The Food Project influenced what they chose as a career. Most commonly, alumni expressed that their TFP experience encouraged them to choose a career in food or farming (29%) or a career that “made a difference” (41%). Six of the seven alumni who chose a career that made a difference, as a result of participation, also identified as female.

“I think that The Food Project helped to build a very strong foundation in terms of that appreciation for food and also how hard it is to grow food and also the appreciation for the quality of food that you can get growing it yourself. And I mean yeah The Food Project totally put me on this path. There’s no other way to say it.” - POC, male, B

“I would say the biggest thing was just like there is a world out there and what are you going to do to make it better? And The Food Project sort of showed us that you could! And you could at least try, you know?” - white, female, A

Nine of the thirteen alumni who said TFP influenced their career choice also identified as white (70%).

The majority of the alumni interviewed (75%) were involved in community work outside of their career as well. The few who said they weren't involved in their community outside of work were deeply involved in community change through their profession.

“A lot of people talk about work life balance; I would describe my work as work life integration. And so we worked with The Food Project and the Urban Farming Institute throughout the summer to source food for our grocery box program this past year. But previous to that, [we worked together] for our catering orders or food truck events or what have you. A lot of our food truck events have been in the neighborhood of Roxbury and Dorchester. A lot of our prepared meals for food relief are done all over Boston, East Boston and Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, also in Chelsea and Revere. We’re up in Lowell. Down to Randolph. And so in some respects, the work is community engagement.” - white, male, B

“Well, I have two kids and I’m a pediatrician, so I don’t really do that much I’m sorry to tell you. I mean, I do though! You know what I mean? BMC is a really interesting place. What you would see is that there are a lot of community groups embedded in our practice. So I guess I work with services in the city through my job, right? So wraparound services for children.” - white, female, A

Thirteen of the 17 alumni (76%) who identified ways they were involved in community work, inside or outside of their profession, said that there was a tie to their TFP experience. This group included all but one of the female-identifying respondents who were involved in community work (8/9). For some, there was a direct connection because they had gotten involved through their work with TFP.

“My senior year of high school, we helped with a Real Food Challenge convening. It was at Northeastern. We helped plan it and make that happen. So I was already sort of around it before. And then, after freshman year figuring out what college was like, I realized I had time and I could actually make that happen. There was somebody who was already sort of working on it and then I sort of kicked off things more junior year. And then we ended up becoming an official club, got enough members and meetings and all of that. I ran the real food calculator as my thesis. And then we did a lot of action items and pissed off some bureaucrats. And we did not get the thing signed, but we did get our dining director to commit to 20 percent local food so that was cool.” - white, female, B

“Now I’m currently on the board of an organization in Lynn called Lynn Main Streets. Main Streets isn’t unique to Lynn, but there’s a new Lynn organization on the rise. And I got the opportunity through The Food Project but continued on outside.” - POC, female, B

For others, their TFP experience inspired them to get involved in youth development, food systems, or community change work as an adult.

“I think for as long as I remember at this point, I’ve been really involved in youth leadership opportunities. And I think it does come directly from TFP, but I really enjoy hanging out, hearing from, and helping young people do well. And so, depending on what city I am in, things have changed. But, here in Chicago, I’ve been a mentor for an organization called Chicago Scholars since I moved in 2018.” - POC, female, CX

“Because of The Food Project, I was able to get funding to start a massive garden bed in our community garden where all the food went to the food pantry. And it was the first time they had fresh food.” - white, female, CX

Additionally, some alumni discussed how they have carried forward the lessons of The Food Project into the communities they are a part of.

“And just the social aspect of having the conversations and, not enlightening, but talking to my friends about it too and really just having them involved. Like you don’t need to green your whole house but going vegetarian once a week isn’t going to hurt you. In the small scale, it doesn’t sound like it makes a difference, but if you do this over the course of the year... Especially with health and fitness, with the guys I roll with at jiu jitsu, it really plays an impact on the conversations of like, ok, well, nutrition and food and just how can you do those things correctly? Or how can you do those things while supporting the side of people and fair trade and the local organizations.” - POC, male, B

These results first validate the findings from our quantitative survey indicating that a large percentage of our alumni are formally leading social change through their careers and community participation.

Additionally, they suggest that alumni's experiences at The Food Project were, in large part, the motivator for getting involved in social change as an adult.

PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN SOCIAL CHANGE

The results from our interviews also provide a clear picture of how The Food Project prepares and motivates its alumni to be social change agents in their careers and communities. Each is explained more thoroughly below.

Prepared to apply for and maintain a job:

This skillset is a basic tenet of The Food Project's youth crews and a stepping stone to any career, including one making positive change. Eight of the 20 alumni interviewed (40%) shared how their TFP experience influenced their ability to apply for a job.

"The experience of being at The Food Project and having to continually apply to proceed through the internship program was definitely very helpful in building resume-making skills and just getting ready to apply for jobs. So, that was definitely very helpful for me." - white, male, CX

Twelve of the 20 alumni interviewed (60%) expressed that their experience at The Food Project increased their understanding of basic workplace behaviors, like arriving on time. Eight of the twelve alumni in this group also identified as white (67%).

"I think then also the regular everyday operations of work, just come to work on time... But, that discipline and being able to have a little bit more agency over ourselves, like taking the trains and stuff, I think having those responsibilities helped as well." - POC, female, B

"The Food Project was the first place where I think I learned about the importance of time management and responsibility because the goal posts were so clear, you know? Like, for a young person to have it spelled out for them, what's expected of them was really, really helpful. And so if you have that to start with and then you go into a regular job where they're not going to be quite as easily understood. They're not going to clearly delineate what they want out of you in terms of quality or work ethic or anything like that. You don't get as much regular feedback. You know, that was just- I felt a little bit more prepared to handle that as I was getting older." - white, female, B

There was also some mention of other more specific workplace behaviors for which TFP prepared alumni, like receiving critical feedback and performing physical work.

Prepared to lead:

Through the interviews, we learned that The Food Project gave alumni the confidence to lead by providing them with leadership opportunities. By increasing confidence, alumni's TFP experience encouraged them to see themselves as a leader—no matter their leadership style (12/20) and helped them find their voice (11/20). Of the eleven alumni who said TFP helped them to find their voice as a leader, seven also identified as female.

"One of my coworkers, when our summer internship ended, was like, 'oh, I really like how your quiet wisdom just would come about.' I feel like that's what TFP really told me is like I don't need to be the person in front ... I also don't have to blast through like a bullhorn, I can just share in a way and lead in a way that feels comfortable to me in the spaces that I'm in." - white, female, CX

"I think The Food Project really gave me a place to develop my voice and be more confident in it. So when I show up in these spaces, I'm making sure that I'm heard and not overlooked." - POC, female, B

There were three kinds of opportunities to grow as leaders at The Food Project that stood out amongst alumni's responses: feedback on leadership, roles of responsibility, and opportunities to become the expert. Four alumni, all of whom identified as people of color, cited the value of feedback to the development of their leadership skills.

"For me, I was a leader who didn't know how to lead, and I think that's what The Food Project really polished for me was that they took this kid with a lot of energy, a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of, you know, go and someone who's really wanting to always be in front and figured out how to take me and put me into the back while still leading. I think that was always my biggest lesson was me leading meant that like my other peers that don't speak often were the ones speaking. And I was just watching and facilitating." - POC, male, B

Six alumni cited the value of leading their peers or other youth in higher level positions at The Food Project, like peer leader or crew leader roles. Interestingly, being in a higher level position at TFP seemed to matter more to alumni from cohort A (67%) and B (42%) as opposed to those from cohort CX, none of whom cited this as an impact.

"I did the summer youth program. I did the academic year program. Then I continued with The Food Project to be an assistant crew leader ... and then went on to be an assistant crew leader for the academic year program. Then I took a summer off, came back as a crew leader, and then ended up leading the summer youth program for two summers. And so, you know, from that experience within the structure of The Food Project, I think it cultivated me not only to be a leader, but also gave me opportunities to lead within the organization from the age of 16 to 21, 22" - white, male, B

Finally, seven alumni, five of whom also identified as female, cited the value of opportunities to be the subject matter expert while leading or presenting to external groups. Presenting to external groups seemed to matter more to respondents from cohort B and CX as opposed to cohort A, none of whom cited this as an impact.

"Being able to lead big groups... We headed up the Kellogs Food & Fitness Initiative, you know, all that jazz. And I think that's really what allowed me to do what I do and just have the confidence, because it's like, OK, I have the confidence to speak in front of all of these people. I'm good. There's really nothing I need to worry about." - white, female, B

Prepared to make a difference:

Through the interviews, we heard from alumni that The Food Project prepared them to make a difference by giving them a critical awareness of the issues that affect their lives or the lives of others around them and by giving them opportunities to be involved in social change. Eighty-five percent of alumni interviewed expressed the value of The Food Project's workshops in increasing their awareness.

"Having the background that I have, I knew that things were not right in the world. I wasn't able to really put a name. I wasn't able to articulate what that was and The Food Project helped me acknowledge what these things are. And so, yeah, I think the workshops were really powerful." - POC, male, B

"I remember learning about different levels of racism. And we talked about internalized racism. And I remember hearing about examples about hair, which had never occurred to me and was never something that I had learned about previously, or had experienced." - white, non-binary, B

Five alumni, four of whom identified as white, expressed that the awareness gained from TFP motivated them to make a difference.

"Definitely an explanation of how inequity is manufactured and, based on a root understanding of fairness, you can very quickly understand that's wrong. We need to fix it. And so, yeah, I think that The Food Project gave me a really super duper solid understanding of problems surrounding social justice and an understanding that it is important to try and fix them." - white, male, CX

Nine alumni, six of whom identified as people of color, felt that gaining awareness made them feel more confident to speak up about issues affecting their lives or the lives of others. Eighty percent of those in cohort CX cited this as an impact as opposed to 33% in the other cohorts.

"It's made me a lot more confident in what I know, what I can talk about. I think before The Food Project, I was confident, but the confidence would just come from sheer confidence, not from the knowledge. And so, participating in these workshops and realizing that the world in 2011 needed to change, right? ... Especially for me, I would be a lot more comfortable talking to people I don't know about topics that a lot of times people wouldn't really talk about in the public forum." - POC, male, CX

Along with providing critical awareness, The Food Project offers young people opportunities to get involved in change-making at a young age. Sixty percent of the alumni interviewed talked about how they carried this experience forward with them into their adult lives.

"There was also an element of- like a feeling of being grounded in your community that is pretty neat because it's compelled me to try to do that wherever I go. I mentioned I moved to D.C. and then I moved to Chicago. And in both of those cases, I didn't really know people in the city and there was this feeling that I had to go out and try to get to know the organizations that were doing work and the people who were doing interesting work. And so I think that mentality and stuff as a young person really transpired into the work that I do now and the organizations I'm involved in now. I think in a different world, I would have just moved here and done my job and that would be it to that." - POC, female, CX

Eight alumni specifically mentioned participation in advocacy projects as preparation for being involved in social change in their adult lives.

"And then like we actually did stuff I think is the other big one. Like we had a lobbying day and went and talked to our congress people. I don't remember what [we talked to them about] now, but there was a bill. So, we went and did things like that. And we were actually working at hunger relief organizations and we were actually growing food for people and you could see that happening. So I think all of that sort of prepares you to do the work because you're already doing it. Yeah, that was a big one. And then there was a big old protest at the Real Food Challenge convening we helped plan. So, you know, stuff like that I think just- I mean, actually doing it, but in a guided way kind of then leads you to actually do it in a less guided way in the future." - white, female, B

Among the alumni who said The Food Project gave them an opportunity to take action, white alumni spoke more often about the impact of work on farms and in communities (5/7, 70%). Meanwhile,

alumni of color were more likely to talk about the impact of participating in advocacy opportunities (6/8, 75%).

Prepared to work on diverse teams:

The Food Project brings youth from diverse backgrounds together to grow food and learn about each other. For alumni, not only did their experience at TFP expose them to people who they may have not otherwise met, it gave them the skills, self-awareness, and compassion to build functional relationships across differences. Ninety percent of alumni interviewed talked about the value of being exposed to people with diverse experiences.

“I had never been to Marblehead, I had never been to Swampscott. I had never been to these communities that are literally 10 minutes away from where I live. And so, through The Food Project and through the very intentional way in which we hired youth- the same way in which we can be like ‘Alright, cool! You come from different places. Here we’re going to be this cornucopia of people and cultures and identities and all this.’ So for me, definitely it opened my eyes to knowing that the world is a lot bigger than only Massachusetts, right? Not only big, there’s this whole world out there that I really wanted to get to know and really wanted to get to know about myself and how I interact with these other communities.” - POC, male, CX

“I grew up 45 minutes outside the city in a not- maybe economically diverse, but definitely not racially diverse town. And so I went to The Food Project and was like, oh, this is like real life. This is reflective of how every different person is represented here and I loved that. And I remember thinking ‘this makes so much sense’. This is also really weird that I didn’t have a single friend from Roxbury prior to this, you know?” - white, female, A

Sixty-seven percent of the alumni for whom working in diverse groups made an impact talked about how the experience has made them more compassionate and open as adults.

“I would say sensitivity since, all too often, you might have a different religious background you know? And being able to interact with different people from different religious backgrounds in addition. It makes you a little more sensitive, you know? Because you’re like hey I know a person! It kind of starts to pull on some of the stereotype stuff you might hear otherwise.” - POC, male, A

Eleven alumni, seven of whom also identified as white, talked about how working in diverse groups helped them to better understand themselves and their own identities.

“I think that I have made an intentional effort throughout my career, in particular with diversity- in particular with going outside of my comfort zone and working with people of different races, right? I lived in a city in New Orleans that was 55 percent Black. My students were predominantly Black and Hispanic. I think because of the experiences that I had at The Food Project, I was really able to step into those roles and be really thoughtful about my approach as a privileged straight white guy in those conversations.” - white, male, B

The two alumni for whom working in diverse groups didn’t have an impact shared that they had already experienced diversity in the communities in which they grew up. Therefore, The Food Project wasn’t responsible for their feelings of comfort in diverse groups. Both alumni identified as people of color.

As a feature of working in diverse teams, TFP youth are taught how to have hard conversations with colleagues. Seventy-five percent of alumni interviewed discussed the importance of that training to their adult relationships.

“It definitely laid some groundwork for how to have difficult conversations” - white, female, A

“I think that that really helped me in terms of being able to navigate different audiences and being able to know what things that I should or should not say. And, just having that experience and being able to have- not only be working, but you’re working with some of your nearest and closest friends, you know? And so you’re able to have those conversations and talk to each other in a way that’s meaningful and you get to learn. And that helps you be able to kind of go out and navigate spaces.” - POC, female, B

Thirteen alumni talked about how their training in how to have hard conversations across differences became tools they use for personal reflection in their adult lives.

“Just again, the communication. Everything that I’ve said also relates to my personal life. It’s kind of like- it’s a whole thing. It’s not just like, oh, everything, just work, work, work. It’s even how I talk to my best friend. We always say it’s OK to disagree ... It’s just like a lot of the values that I grew up with, I use it in my own life. So it’s not just a work thing, it’s like it’s entirely in me.” - POC, female, B

“Oh, like every day and step up, step back and impact versus intent. Yeah, every day. I don’t remember all the titles to all of them, but if I saw them, I would know exactly what each one meant. And that’s part of that self-awareness. That’s part of that moving through the world, understanding your identity, you know? I step back a good amount to give the floor to others who are super smart and super talented on our team because I don’t need to be the center of attention.” - white, male, B

Seven alumni talked about how their TFP experience taught them the value of working on teams and of relying on the diversity in strengths amongst group members.

“I definitely value “team” a lot. I think that’s what it taught me. Your team is your everything because, by myself, I think I would have a hard time running the school. I have an amazing program specialist whose aka my assistant director. We are a dynamic team. Any type of weight I feel, she feels it with me. And I think The Food Project definitely did that because again we led groups of a lot of people. So I couldn’t form that all by myself. Like I knew that I had the support of my other teammates to lead the whole event. So I definitely love what it taught- It definitely taught me how to work in a team.” - POC, female, B

Ten alumni expressed how deep relationships with their colleagues enabled them to work effectively together. They talked about how they have brought that lesson into their adult relationships.

“During the retreats, the first night is always very vulnerable and you get into these stages of vulnerability and sharing certain aspects with yourself to strangers or people you’ve known for a year or whatever. And when you have these moments of a safe space to share about yourself and also listen to other people, you can understand where emotional responses and emotions that people have come from. And I think that allowed me to help- you know, in an analytical way understand a person... Definitely that kind of opened the world of emotional intelligence and emotional understanding for me.” - POC, male, B

Finally, a theme about working in diverse teams among alumni was the value of learning how to push through discomfort.

“I think as a kid, I understood if I got thrown into something that was different and I got thrown into something that maybe made me uncomfortable, that the upside was going to be transformative for me and for those around me. So, the personal element was really big.” - white, male, B

Prepared as consumers:

Alumni talked abundantly about the value of The Food Project experience being based on land, growing food. Sixty percent expressed that the experience increased their awareness of where their food comes from and a few shared that they now use food as a way to connect with others.

“I think that, [for the] people who go into TFP, I would say the vast majority of youth, don’t have a farm experience. And like the vast majority of youth probably can’t say, oh, I came back from Lincoln and, I don’t know, was digging for potatoes all day. I think being able to find something that is very unique to our community and take pride in it. I think that’s pretty special.” - POC, male, CX

“It was quite fascinating really. It was fascinating, just to, again, to watch it go from a seed to fully grown. Just to see all the work as far as the weeding and the cultivating that goes into it. It was pretty cool just to watch it come to life.” - POC, male, A

To make clear the impact of growing food, twelve alumni talked about how they actively grow their own food or have tried to in the past. A number had worked on farms since graduating from The Food Project.

Through workshops and work on the farm, youth learn about how the food system works and the inequities embedded in it. Alumni made it clear the impact of this education on their consumption patterns. Alumni reported eating more vegetables and eating less “junk” food as a result of participation. While eating more vegetables was reported equally among white alumni and alumni of color, four of the five alumni who reported eating less junk food also identified as people of color. For others, there was no impact because they had grown up in households where eating vegetables was common.

“I try not to have a lot of junk food and I try to go on the balance. I maintain the balance and make the decision of doing good food versus like a lot of that.” - POC, male, B

Beyond eating healthier, participation in The Food Project motivated alumni to be conscious consumers who view their dollar as a vote for the world they would like to see. Alumni, and more often alumni of color, talked about prioritizing the purchase of locally grown or organic vegetables and limiting their impact through waste reduction, eating less meat, etc. Limiting environmental impact was most often cited by alumni from cohort CX.

“I definitely think that it’s had an impact on waste, in terms of I didn’t even know you could eat beet greens, but we started eating beet greens. Literal things like that. We have a compost now and it’s figuring things out- how to utilize all of this or as much of that food as we can because now I know how much work went into making it.” - POC, male, CX

OVERALL IMPACT

Beyond the ways The Food Project prepared them to be agents of change, alumni, including 50% of female-identifying respondents, cited how their TFP experience made them more confident in who they are as individuals.

“Be who you want to be. And if people don’t like it, that’s their problem. It’s not your problem. You need to stay true to yourself. And if anyone’s going to have an issue with it and if anyone’s going to give you grief for it, they don’t need to be a part of your life. And that’s OK. It might hurt, but that’s OK because you just get stronger from it.” - white, female, B

Seven alumni, five of whom also identified as white, stated how participation in The Food Project changed the course of their lives. Sixty-seven percent of those in cohort A felt their participation in TFP changed their life as opposed to 42% in cohort B and none in cohort CX.

“I was probably always going to be OK. But the Food Project made it like- relatively speaking, I’m like a thriving adult. And there are a lot of factors that went into it. But I give The Food Project a really solid kudos” - white, female, A

“I have really fond memories of this organization. It means a lot to me. I’ve brought it into my life and referenced it and sort of preached TFP values and lessons for a very long time. So, it is, I would say, the most important foundation for me and all of the things that I think I’ve gone on to do since I was 13.” - white, male, B

As a final question, alumni were asked which part of their TFP experience had stuck with them the most since graduating. Most answers fell in the categories of:

- Experiencing diversity
- Connection to food/land
- Moments to build relationships
- Feeling capable

“It’s not like a specific thing or activity, and more a broader concept, and that’s that you can be a part of something that is larger than yourself and develop close relationships and friendship through it. But, you can also have a positive impact on your community and beyond. Just the fact that that is the thing that is true, shifted my worldview and made me really hopeful for and excited about going into the field I ended up going to. So I think that’s the largest impact. The most important thing from the Food Project.” - white, female, B

FEEDBACK

As we connected with alumni through the interviews, alumni offered feedback for the organization. Mostly it was positive, praising the TFP model. In addition, a number of alumni offered feedback on the ways in which The Food Project brings youth together across differences, cautioning the organization against prioritizing the learning of white youth at the expense of youth of color.

“The breaking the line or crossing the line or something like that? That workshop was hard for me as a young person because I was at the back of the line. And it’s definitely a workshop for white youth to kind of see their privilege. But, in that, it hurts all the POC or the folks who are in the back, which is kind of how it tends to work out... I don’t feel like The Food Project fostered a space for me to really unpack that

in thinking about how it should be empowering for me. It was like, oh, your mom didn't read to you? Back of the bus." - POC, female, B

"You're all holding hands and you read statements if you step up or back. So I wrote that as my college essay and what it felt like to open my eyes and be like sixth from the front and turning around and just seeing basically the shade of your skin impacting where you ended up. But what really stuck with me is just how angry so many people were in that activity and how so many people were just like, 'why like like why did we have to do that? Like, that was like, really?' Whereas, all the white people were like, 'oh, well, this opened my eyes' and then all of the black and brown youth were like, 'well, this was [messed] up. What the hell?' And so I think about that a lot... It's like where I am now and how where I am is still because black and brown young people had to go through a kind of version of hell and be paid whatever we were paid to teach me. So I think, holding that, I feel like those three things being like, yes, these relationships were really important and I really love these people. And then also this curriculum was necessary for me to live like that. And then also this curriculum is still entrenched in learning, at least in 2010, was still entrenched in learning and based on people sharing their own experiences when they shouldn't have to." - white, female, CX

CONCLUSIONS

OUR SAMPLE

Because of the challenges we faced reaching our alumni, we limited our study samples to alumni who had more than one participation at The Food Project. The Food Project's youth programs build on each other and youth who continue in the program get more opportunities for leadership and growth. Therefore, impacts from participation are likely greater for those who continued on as compared to alumni who only participated in Seed Crew. Because of this, we can only draw conclusions for the impact of participating more than once at The Food Project and cannot extend our conclusions to the whole of our alumni.

The sample for the quantitative survey was smaller than originally hoped but is still likely sufficient in size to confer representation of all alumni who participated more than once. Alumni who identified as white were also slightly overrepresented. However, we still maintained a 50-50 split between those who identified as white and those who identified as a person of color. Based on the size and breakdown by gender, race, and cohort of the sample for the qualitative interviews, we feel confident that we heard the core themes about the impacts of participating. However, due to the nature of qualitative methods, we can only use themes to more deeply understand results of the quantitative survey or to inform future studies. Finally, selection into both samples was non-random so there may be selection bias where those who participated are different from the rest of alumni who participated more than once.

LEADING SOCIAL ACTION

The results from our quantitative survey confirm that many of our alumni who participated more than once are out in the world leading and engaging others in creating personal and social change. They are engaged in careers that help others and are involved in community organizations doing important work. Additionally, almost all alumni are taking action outside of these formal arenas to advocate for a better and more just world, like being active voters and donating to worthy causes. Through our qualitative interviews, we learned from alumni interviewed that their motivation to pursue change-making careers and to be involved in community action came from their time at The Food Project. This

impact was cited more often by alumni who identified as white and for alumni who identified as female.

PREPARED TO LEAD SOCIAL ACTION

Through our qualitative interviews, we learned how The Food Project prepares our alumni to lead and engage in social change. Additionally, different parts of the experience seem to have more of an impact for different groups of alumni.

Leadership: The Food Project encourages leadership amongst its participants. As a result of participation, alumni interviewed felt more confidence to lead. This impact was cited more often by alumni who identified as female and those who identified as people of color, perhaps due to their target group membership. Surprisingly, different activities seemed to build leadership skills for the different cohorts. Alumni from earlier years of TFP cited that serving in roles of responsibility in their crews influenced their ability to lead while younger alumni expressed the importance of opportunities to present to or lead external groups.

Change-making: Almost all alumni interviewed expressed the value of The Food Project's social justice workshops to their awareness of issues in their communities. This awareness served as motivation to get involved, particularly for white alumni, and gave the confidence to speak up about issues, particularly for alumni of color and younger alumni. The Food Project also offered alumni opportunities to get involved in social action at a young age which made alumni interviewed feel more able to do so as they got older. Opportunities to participate in advocacy were more often cited as impactful by alumni of color while being involved on our farms and in communities was more often cited as impactful by white alumni.

Job skills: We learned in our qualitative interviews that The Food Project prepares its alumni for the working world by teaching them how to apply for jobs and upholding workplace expectations. The value of exposure to workplace standards at a young age was more often cited by white alumni compared to alumni of color. As evidence of this impact, the vast majority of alumni who responded to the quantitative survey indicated that they graduated with at least a bachelor's degree and are currently employed.

Working on diverse teams: A hallmark of The Food Project experience is the intentionality given to hiring diverse groups of young people to work together. In our qualitative interviews, alumni expressed the value of this feature of the program in not only introducing them to people they would not have met otherwise, but also in preparing them to work functionally together. Almost all alumni talked about using their training in dialogue across differences to facilitate hard conversation or as personal guideposts for how to show up in relationships. Relatedly, an unexpected theme that emerged from the interviews was how The Food Project teaches its alumni to value relationships and teamwork. This sentiment aligned well with how we heard alumni talk about leadership as well; For our alumni, leadership is not about being the loudest but about making sure everyone crosses the finish line together. As evidence of this impact, almost all of the alumni who completed the quantitative survey expressed agreement that The Food Project increased their ability to work with people who are different from themselves.

Prepared as consumers: Almost all alumni interviewed cited the value of work on the land to grow food. Many had tried their hand at growing their own food since graduating from TFP. Beyond that, growing food gave alumni meaningful information about where food comes from and altered their

personal consumption habits. While eating more vegetables was cited equally across all alumni, alumni of color cited more often that they eat less “junk” food as a result of participation. As evidence of this impact, the majority of alumni who completed the quantitative survey expressed that participation in The Food Project increased the number of vegetables they eat. Additionally, alumni talked about how they now use their power as consumers to make choices that reflect the world they would like to see. Buying local or organic vegetables was cited more often by alumni of color. Making choices that reduce your environmental impact was cited more often by young alumni. This theme supports our finding from the quantitative survey that indicates that most alumni consciously purchase goods as a means of informal social action.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The Food Project’s current model has made a lasting impact on its alumni who participated more than once in the direction of its desired ultimate outcome: youth leading and engaging others in creating personal and social change. The results from this study should be used to further define the ultimate outcome so that it can continue to be measured in future alumni evaluation efforts.

Themes from the qualitative interviews about how The Food Project prepares alumni to lead and engage in social action should be used to strengthen program activities and enable our ultimate outcome. Additionally, The Food Project should take into consideration the feedback given by alumni in the differential impact for white youth and youth of color. Using findings from this study, the organization should continue to prioritize activities identified as valuable for alumni of color to ensure equal impacts regardless of race. Finally, The Food Project should invest in ongoing efforts to engage with alumni to enable evaluation, ensure the regular collection of feedback, and to steward truly valuable relationships with and between our amazing alumni.

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APPENDICES

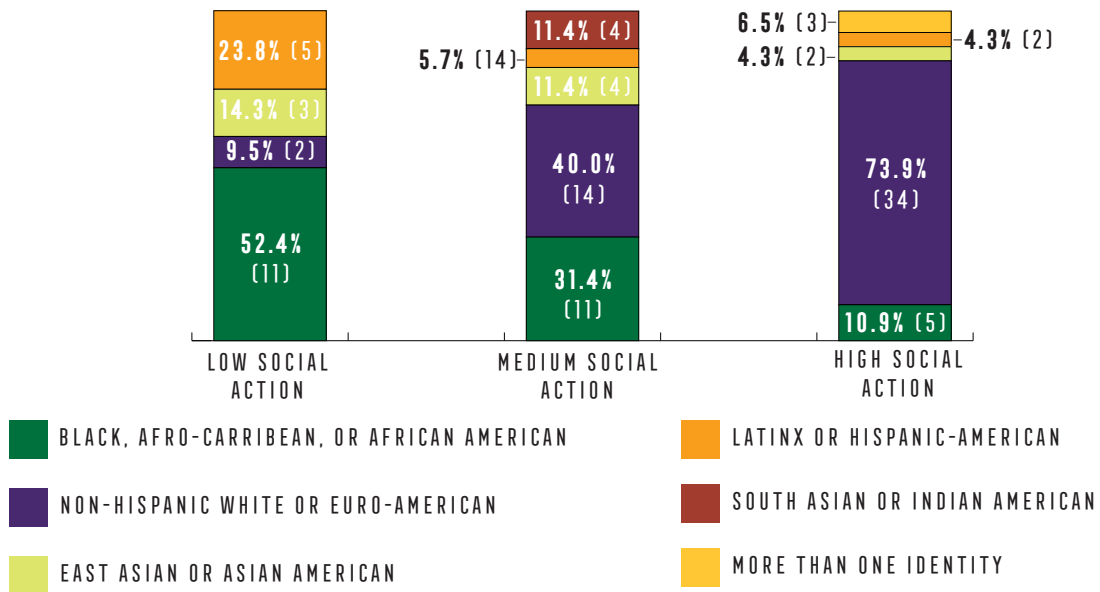
APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS BY COHORT

BASE POPULATION		
COHORT A		
POC WOMEN	25	4.36%
WHITE WOMEN	19	3.32%
POC MEN	30	5.24%
WHITE MEN	15	2.62%
NON-BINARY	0	0.00%
TOTAL	89	15.53%
COHORT B		
POC WOMEN	107	18.67%
WHITE WOMEN	77	13.44%
POC MEN	94	16.40%
WHITE MEN	61	10.65%
NON-BINARY	1	0.17%
TOTAL	340	59.34%
COHORT CX		
POC WOMEN	44	7.68%
WHITE WOMEN	31	5.41%
POC MEN	42	7.33%
WHITE MEN	26	4.54%
NON-BINARY	1	0.17%
TOTAL	144	25.13%
GRAND TOTAL	573	100%

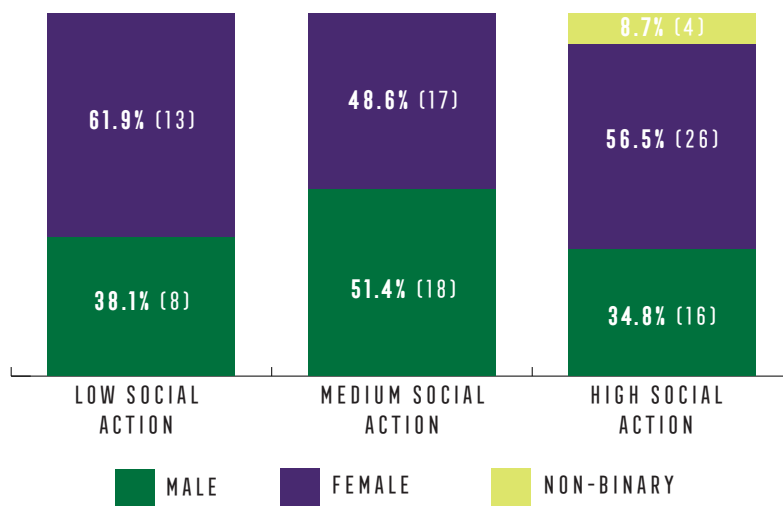
SURVEY SAMPLE		
COHORT A		
POC WOMEN	6	5.88%
WHITE WOMEN	3	2.94%
POC MEN	3	2.94%
WHITE MEN	3	2.94%
NON-BINARY	0	0.00%
TOTAL	15	14.71%
COHORT B		
POC WOMEN	17	16.67%
WHITE WOMEN	14	13.73%
POC MEN	9	8.82%
WHITE MEN	12	11.76%
NON-BINARY	2	1.96%
TOTAL	54	52.94%
COHORT CX		
POC WOMEN	9	8.82%
WHITE WOMEN	7	6.86%
POC MEN	8	7.84%
WHITE MEN	7	6.86%
NON-BINARY	2	1.96%
TOTAL	33	32.35%
GRAND TOTAL	102	100%

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS BY SOCIAL ACTION PARTICIPATION GROUP

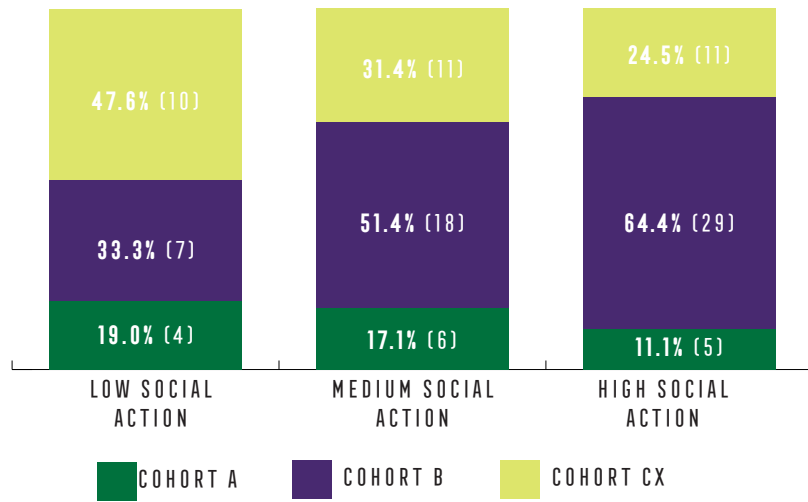
RACIAL BREAKDOWN ACROSS SOCIAL ACTION CATEGORIES



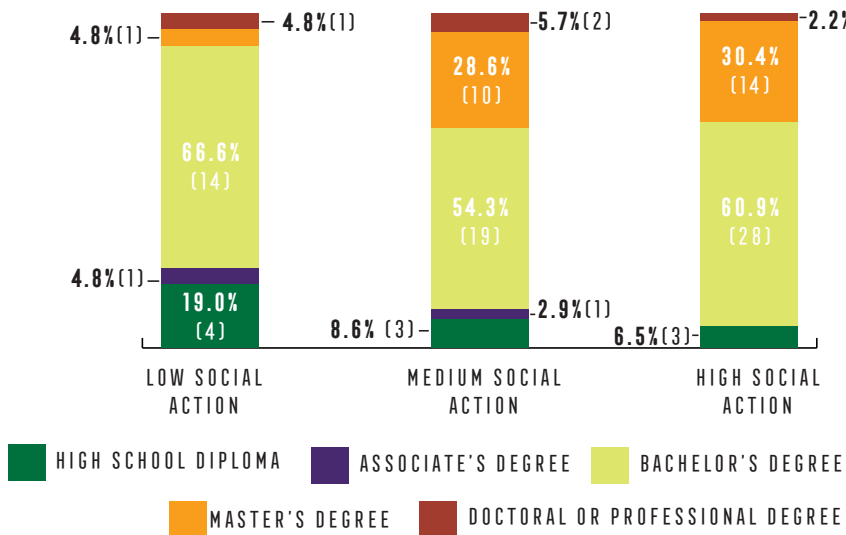
GENDER BREAKDOWN ACROSS SOCIAL ACTION CATEGORIES



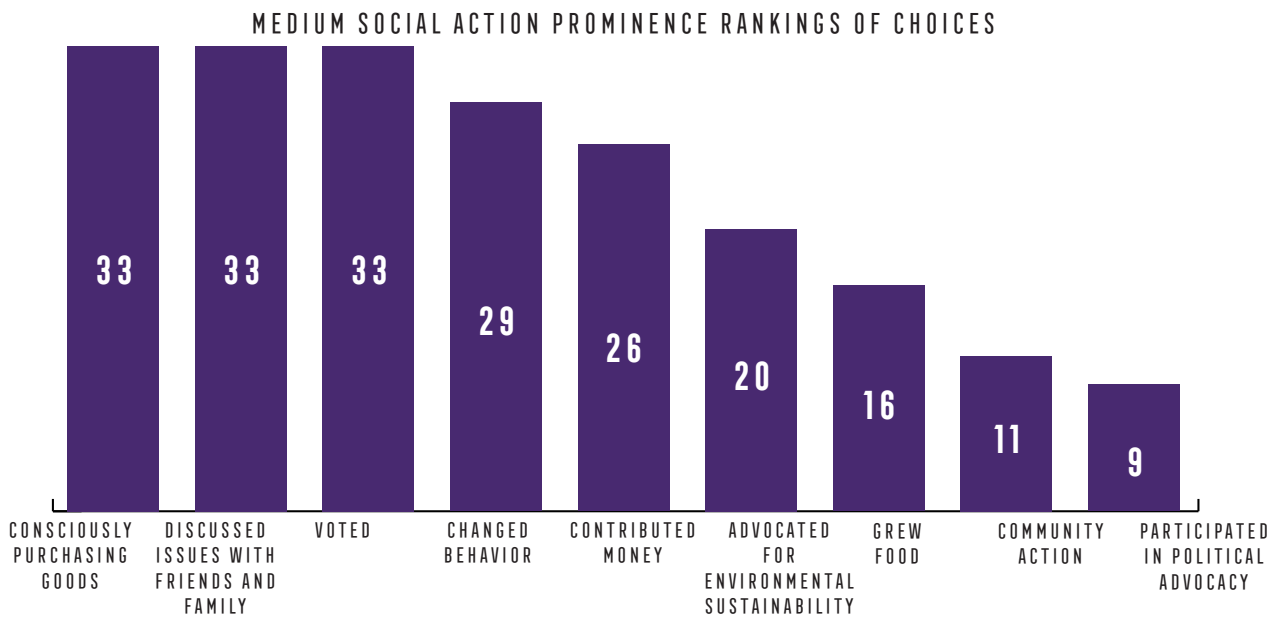
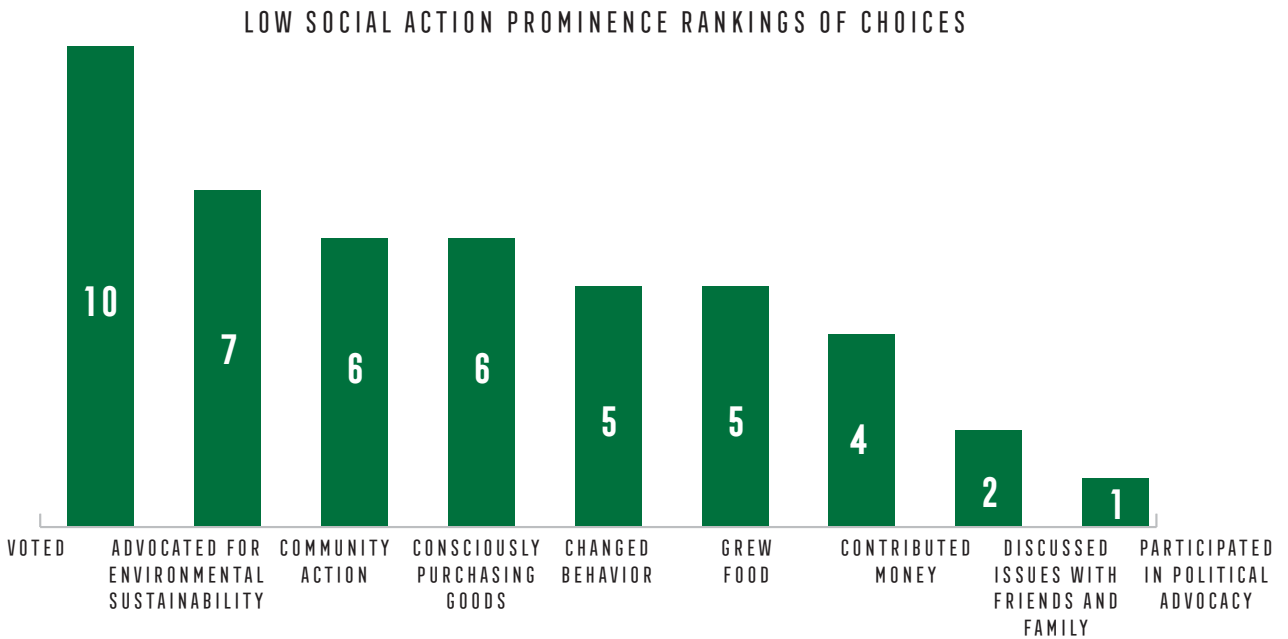
COHORT BREAKDOWN ACROSS SOCIAL ACTION CATEGORIES



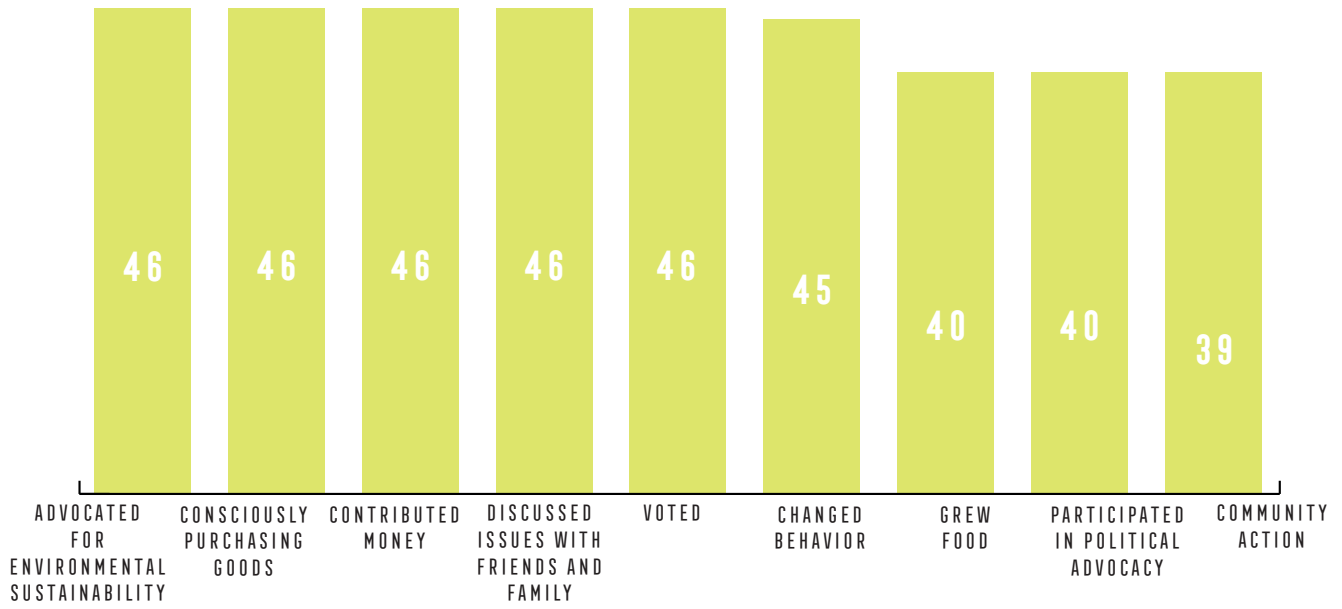
EDUCATION BREAKDOWN ACROSS SOCIAL ACTION CATEGORIES



APPENDIX C: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS BY PARTICIPATION GROUP



HIGH SOCIAL ACTION PROMINENCE RANKINGS OF CHOICES



APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Alumni Study Interview Guide

General Instructions: Each question has accompanying probe questions. If the respondent has already provided the needed information, please do not ask probe questions and continue to the next question. You may ask additional probe questions if a respondent provides new information not covered in the remainder of the questions.

Please read the following to the participants: Thanks for participating in The Food Project's alumni study. My name is (insert name) and I am (insert position). You were selected to participate in an interview after filling out our online survey. By conducting this interview, we are hoping to learn how alumni's experiences at The Food Project have impacted their life since their participation. As you answer each question, think about impacts in your life since graduating from TFP. Please answer as honestly as you can and feel free to choose not to answer any questions that you don't wish to answer. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Interviewer reads: Ok, great! Let's get started.

Q1. Can you tell us more about your current area of work?

Q2. Why did you choose this as a career?

Probes:

What influence did your youth experience at TFP have on what you chose as a vocation?

Q3. What experiences did you have as a young person that prepared you for the workplace?

Probes:

What influence did your youth experience at TFP have on your job-readiness?

What influence did your youth experience at TFP have on your ability to lead in the workplace?

Q4. Tell us more about your current participation in community groups outside of work.

Q5. Do you consider any of the work you do in your community groups to be "social action"?

By social action, we mean "people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities"

(If yes, ask Q6 & Q7. If no, ask probes ONLY)

Q6. What experiences did you have as a young person that motivated you to get involved in social action as an adult?

Probes:

What influence did your youth experience at TFP have on your awareness of social justice or environmental issues?

Q7. What experiences did you have as a young person that equipped or prepared you to get involved in social action as an adult?

Probes:

Describe the role your youth experience at TFP played in the development of your advocacy or organizing skills? (In the most general sense, doesn't have to be politically)

What influence did your youth experience at TFP have on your confidence to engage others in social action?

Q8. In what ways did your youth experience at The Food Project influence your personal growth?

Probes:

How did your youth experience impact your understanding of your emotions as an adult?

How did your youth experience impact how you think about your identity as an adult?

How did your youth experience impact how you build relationships as an adult?

Q9. What was the impact for you of working in diverse groups at The Food Project?

Probe:

Have you used the VISIONS guidelines for cross-cultural dialogue since graduating TFP?

Q10. Describe the impact for you of growing food at The Food Project.

Probe:

Have you grown your own food since graduating?

How did your youth experience impact your eating habits as an adult?

Q11. What was the most valuable thing you learned or experienced while at The Food Project? (In other words, what part of your youth experience has stuck with you the most?)

We have reached the end of our interview. Before we finish, would you like to share any closing thoughts?

Do you have any thoughts on how you might like to be engaged as an alumni?

Thank you again for your time!

APPENDIX E: CODEBOOK

2020-2021 Alumni Study Codebook

CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION
1.0 Career	Apply code when respondent is stating their job title and work
1.1 TFP had an influence	Apply when respondents share that their TFP experience influenced what they chose to pursue as a career
1.1.1 Interested in farming/ food systems work	Apply when respondents share that their TFP experience inspired them to work in the food system
1.1.2 Wanted to make a difference	Apply when respondents share that their TFP experience inspired them to pursue a career that made a difference in the world
1.1.3 Interested in the environment	Apply when respondents share that their TFP experience sparked their interest in the environment or natural sciences
1.1.4 Interested in youth development	Apply when respondents share that their TFP experience inspired them to pursue a career in youth development
1.1.5 Other influences	Apply when respondents share about other ways that their TFP experience influenced their career choices
1.2 No influence	Apply when respondents share that their TFP experience had no influence on their career
2.0 Prepared to apply for and maintain a job	Apply when respondents discuss the impact of participating on their ability to apply for and maintain a job. Anything not falling under the defined sub themes should be coded to a sub-theme of another section
2.1 Applying for a job	Apply when respondents discuss skill-building in job applications or interviews
2.2 Maintaining a job	Apply when respondents discuss how their experience at TFP influenced or reinforced their understanding of standard workplace expectations.
2.2.1 Working hard	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience influenced their ability to perform manual or physical work.
2.2.2 Giving and receiving feedback	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience influenced their ability to give and receive feedback about work performance.
2.2.3 Other	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience influenced other workplace skills.
3.0 Participation in their community	Apply when respondents discuss the ways they participate in their community

3.1 TFP influence	Apply if a respondents states that their involvement in community work is a result of their TFP experience or connection
3.2 Nothing outside of work	Apply if respondent states that they are unable to participate in community work outside of what they are currently doing through their profession
3.3 Other involvement	Apply if respondent states that they are involved in community work that has no direct tie to their TFP experience or connection
4.0 Prepared to lead	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience prepared them as a leader. Anything not falling under the defined sub themes but in this general theme will be coded into "other"
4.1 Feeling confident to lead	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience helped them see themselves as a leader.
4.1.1 Finding my voice	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience helped to gain confidence in themselves and their voice
4.1.2 Public speaking	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience helped them become confident when speaking publicly
4.2 Encouraging leadership	Apply when respondents discuss the elements of TFP's program that encouraged them as a leader.
4.2.1 Feedback on leadership	Apply when respondents discuss how real talk was used to encourage their growth as a leader
4.2.2 Roles of responsibility	Apply when respondents discuss how being given formal leadership roles at TFP supported their growth as a leader
4.2.3 Becoming an expert	Apply when respondents discuss how opportunities to present to or lead external groups supported their growth as a leader
4.3 No impact on leadership	Apply when respondents state that participating in TFP did not impact their leadership skills
4.4 Other	Apply to general comments related to how their TFP experience prepared them as a leader
5.0 Prepared to make a difference	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience influenced their ability to make a difference in their communities. Anything not falling under the defined sub themes but in this general theme will be coded into "other".
5.1 Critical Awareness	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience influenced their awareness of social justice issues.
5.1.1 Motivated to make a difference	Apply when respondents discuss how the awareness they gained from their TFP experience motivated them to make a difference.
5.1.2 Confidence to speak up	Apply when respondents discuss how the awareness they gained from their TFP experience made them more confident to talk to others about social justice issues
5.2 Taking action	Apply when respondents discuss how serving TFP's mission to

	improve food access in communities motivated them and/or made them feel able to make a difference
5.2.1 Participating in advocacy	Apply when respondents discuss how participating in advocacy at TFP prepared them to be involved in change-making
5.3 Other	Apply when respondents discuss other ways TFP prepared them to make a difference in their community.
6.0 Prepared to work on diverse teams	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience prepared them to work on diverse teams. Anything not falling under the defined sub themes but in this general theme will be coded into "other"
6.1 Exposure to diversity	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience exposed them to all kinds of diversity in a way that celebrated diversity
6.1.1 Open to relationships across difference	Apply when respondents discuss how working in diverse groups made them more accepting and compassionate towards others
6.1.2 Understanding of self	Apply when respondents discuss how working in diverse groups increased their understanding of their-self
6.1.3 No impact	Apply when respondents mention that their TFP experience did not change their thinking about diversity or their identity
6.2 Healthy communication	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience influenced their ability to have hard and productive conversations with their teammates across differences
6.2.1 Encouraging personal awareness	Apply when respondents discuss how they TFP experience influenced their awareness of how they are showing up in a group
6.3 Valuing teamwork	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience taught them the value of working as a team
6.3.1 Teams built on trust, connection, and support	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience taught them the value of trust, connection, and support when working as a team
6.4 Comfort with discomfort	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience helped them gain comfort with discomfort
6.4.1 Emotional vulnerability	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience helped them explore their emotions
6.5 Other	Apply to general comments related to how their TFP experience influenced their ability to work in diverse teams.
7.0 Learning in the farming context	Apply when respondents discuss the impact of working on a farm. Anything not falling under the defined sub themes should be coded to a sub-theme of another section
7.1 Seed to fork	Apply when respondents discuss how working on the farm made them more aware of how food travels from seed to fork

7.2 Sharing food	Apply when respondents discuss how they connected with people by sharing food
7.3 Growing with your food	Apply when respondents discuss the value of growing food to their own personal growth
8.0 Prepared as a consumer	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience influenced their behaviors as a consumer. Anything not falling under the defined sub themes should be coded to a sub-theme of another section
8.1 Grow their own food	Apply when respondents discuss growing their own food after participating in The Food Project
8.2 Eating habits	Apply when respondents discuss how their eating habits changed as a result of participation
8.2.1 More veggies	Apply when respondents discuss how they ate more vegetables as a result of participation
8.2.2 Less junk	Apply when respondents discuss how they ate less unhealthy food as a result of participation
8.2.3 No change	Apply when respondents state that participation in TFP did not influence their diet
8.2.4 Other changes to diet	Apply when respondents state other changes to their eating habits as a result of participation in TFP
8.3 Conscious consumer	Apply when respondents discuss how they changed their consumption patterns to influence the food system or environment.
8.3.1 Limit environmental impact	Apply when respondents discuss changes to their behavior that lessen their environmental impact by reducing waste, etc.
8.3.2 Prioritize buying local/organic	Apply when respondents discuss how they prioritize buying local or organic foods
8.3.3 Eat less meat	Apply when respondents discuss how they eat less meat to protect the environment and/or animal health
9.0 Sense of self	Apply when respondents discuss how their TFP experience influenced their understanding of their-self or encouraged their authenticity
Most valuable piece	Apply when respondents discuss the most valuable piece of their TFP experience
TFP changed my life	Apply if respondents states that their TFP experience changed their life
Experiencing diversity	Apply if respondent states that experiencing diversity was the most valuable piece of their experience
Connection to food/land	Apply if respondent states that connecting with food and the land was the most valuable piece of their experience

Feeling capable	Apply if respondent states that doing work that mattered was the most valuable piece of their experience
Moments to build relationships	Apply if respondent states that informal moments to build relationships with their peers was the most valuable piece of their experience
Other	Apply if respondent states that something else was the most valuable piece of their experience
Feedback for TFP	Apply when respondents discuss feedback for TFP. Anything not falling under the defined sub themes but in this general theme will be coded into "other"
Specific mention of staff as a role model	Apply when respondents discuss a specific staff member who influenced their development
Suggestions for alumni engagement	Apply when respondents discuss ways to engage alumni more effectively
Suggestions for valuing diversity	Apply when respondents are critical of the ways the program upholds white supremacy culture instead of truly valuing diversity
Don't underestimate youth	Apply when respondents encourage TFP to continue to update curriculum to match youth awareness
Best in class	Apply when respondents share positive feedback about TFP's model
Other	Apply to general feedback for TFP