

POVs and Experience Prototypes
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Problem Domain: Food Sustainability

Initial POVs:

We met Guillaume Bienaime, a restaurant owner and chef in Palo Alto.

We were amazed to realize that restaurant management experience correlates inversely with waste.

It would be game-changing to have some sort of mentoring system in which experienced restaurant owners teach new owners how to run their business more efficiently and sustainably.

We met Dunchadhn Lyons, a small-scale farmer from the mid-Atlantic.

We were amazed to realize how popular his farm products were with the people who could get them, but also at how he wasn't even able to sell at farmer's markets.

It would be game-changing to somehow connect small-scale farms with suburban/urban consumers.

Additional Needfinding Results:

We interviewed David Kay, the president of People for Animal Welfare (PAW) at Stanford, who is also one of the authors of an ongoing petition for a sustainability-themed dining hall on campus. He is also one of the students behind the Meatless Monday campaign/email list for Stanford. We asked David about the impetus for the dining hall petition, which he said was the response to a solid amount of demonstrated interest from the student body. The driving force behind the Meatless Monday campaign and the dining hall (which is proposed to be primarily vegan) is the fact that meat is vastly less sustainable than vegetarian options. In particular, David identified three main aspects of food sustainability which are influencing people to go vegetarian or vegan: environmental reasons, animal welfare, and health. He said that while in the general public, animal welfare and health are the primary reasons, but that environmental reasons seem to be more prevalent at Stanford. One interesting point he made was that one of these reasons pushes someone to eliminate meat from their diets, they tend to adopt the others as well, so that when asked, they will identify all three as reasons for their choice.

We interviewed Bryan Cheong, a Stanford sophomore from Singapore. We learned that Singapore is relatively sustainable as a city/country essentially because its location and population density necessitate it. Singapore is water-independent because it's an island city, which makes "the obtaining of food and water is at once a critical security measure and we can't afford large amounts of herbicides and pesticides" The runoff of chemicals from factories and farms would affect the health of the dense urban population. Vegetables grown hydroponically, which uses less water, less land, more controlled but more expensive. Singapore is one of the world's leading sources of technology for desalination and recycling/desalination of water, because it's such an important security measure. The sustainable food practices used in Singapore may not be practically implemented for the U.S., since they are expensive and must be spearheaded by the government. The U.S. already has a large amount of land, an established farming industry, and lobby groups which make it infeasible to scale Singapore's

sustainability practices. Bryan also expressed his “very Singaporean, very pro-government” opinion that the impact of individual action when it comes to sustainability are negligible, and people tend to be unwilling to change their habits anyways. He cited his own fondness for *maguro* sushi, despite that fact that he knows tuna is fished in a highly unsustainable way. Bryan also said that he, “as a very selfish, pleasure-seeking, hedonistic consumer” would still prioritize good food and reasonable price when eating out. Bryan also said perceived that while Singaporeans tend to subscribe to the value of sustainability (e.g. recycling, conservation) more than Americans, whether they act accordingly is a different issue. “We are a bit lazy, because our government does everything for us ... even though Singaporeans are generally not very active in choosing sustainably, whether in food or other practices, because of the regulations and government practices put in place, we are doing it even without consciously trying to.” Bryan also said that he would be interested in knowing where his food coming from, which is not very transparent as of now, he expressed doubt as to whether the information would affect his (or other consumers’) choices. Specifically, he noted that it is part of American culture to eat a lot of meat, which is not sustainable.