

Riley Park “Potting Studio” Education Plan

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Introduction

1. Background:

Previously, a student group from the Land and Food Systems (LFS) 350 class in 2016 worked on a project to determine what the community wanted out of a potential education program at Riley Park. The group created and carried out a survey for community members to participate in to identify barriers- especially demographic specific- and pinpoint benefits that a community education plan could include (Qi et al., 2016). Our LFS 350 project will utilize the knowledge generated by the previous group and incorporate it into a framework for developing an education plan.

2. Context:

The Riley Park Community Garden is located on East 32nd Ave east of Main Street (see Fig.1 below). Nearby are many community amenities, including parks and sporting facilities. Main Street is a cultural hub and is pedestrian-friendly with stores and restaurants. The Riley Park Community Garden focuses on the area within the boundaries of Knight and Cambie Street and between 16th and 41st Ave. In this area, the demographic varies widely among median age and also has a non—homogenous income level, with between 12.7% and 37.8% of households (depending on neighbourhood block) identified as Low Income Before Tax (Statistics Canada, 2009).

The education plan is meant to bring community into the shared space of the Riley Park Fieldhouse, fostering social connections among community members while following the philosophy of Riley Park Fieldhouse “to create community space and social cohesion through participation, education, and events” (Riley Park Garden, 2017). Appealing to the existing demographic in this community will be vital to finding success at the Riley Park Fieldhouse.

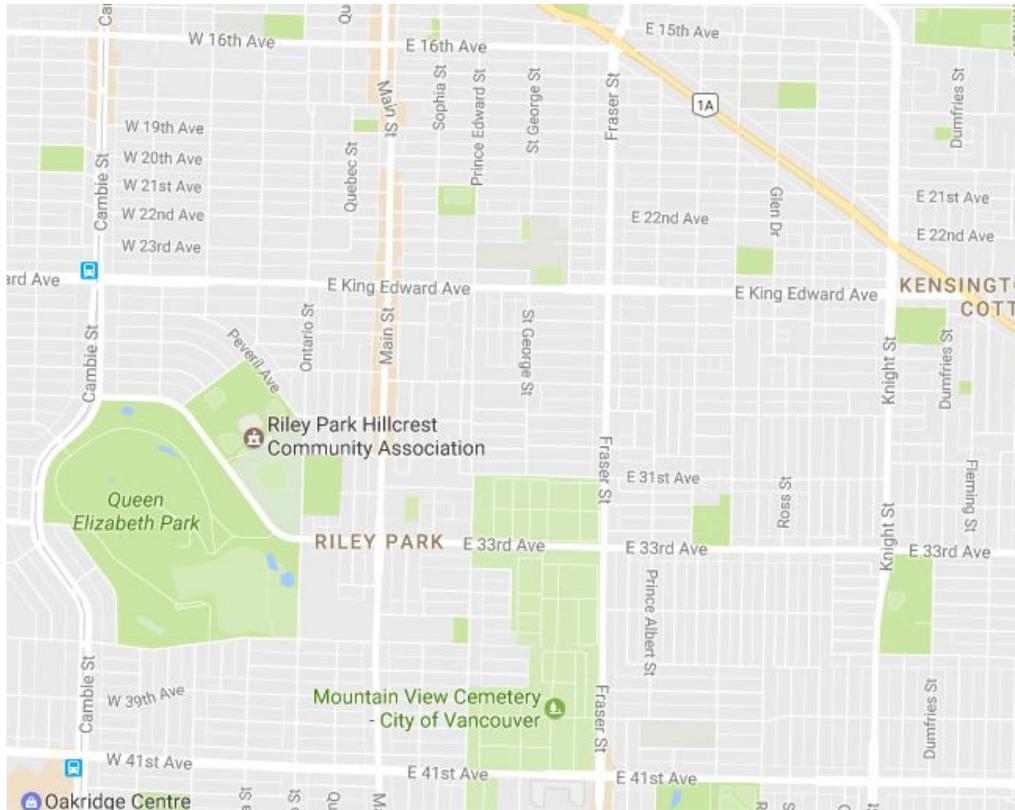


Fig. 1. Location of Riley Park and its surrounding area.

3. Aim:

Riley Park Community Garden, in agreement with the City of Vancouver, is permitted access to the pre-existing fieldhouse under the understanding that Riley Park will provide 350 hours per year of education programming for the community. The aim of this project is to contribute to the Riley Park Fieldhouse project by creating a framework for developing an education plan. The framework will describe a system in which the required 350 hours per year can be planned using assets from the community.

4. Significance:

Impact of the Global Food System on Community Food Security

Community Food Security is defined as “a situation in which all community residents

obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system” (Hamm & Bellows 2003). The growing distance between consumers and the food they eat has resulted in a diminished capacity to have agency over how food is produced. People of lower socioeconomic standing can have difficulty accessing local food, and by extension, the health benefits of these local products. (Schanbacher, 2014). Strengthening local connections to food, and shorter commodity chains, can therefore reduce some inequalities outlined above.

Importance of Community-Based Food Organizations (CBFOs)

A CBFO’s role in local food systems is acting as an intermediary between various levels of government, NGOs, and community organizations. This approach works by creating partnerships with businesses and community groups, and designing programs and policies for increasing food system access. (LaRiviere et al., 2003).

Community gardens and associated public spaces are an important extension of CBFOs, and bridge gaps in how community needs are addressed and assets may be advanced. They bring multiple stakeholders together in symbiotic relationships that further enhance community food security (McCullum et al, 2005). They also allow for community engagement through activities to improve food security and policy and decision making involvement (McCullum et al, 2005). Organizations and spaces which strive to build the connections currently neglected by the contemporary food system help to build community assets and improve food security.

5. Objectives:

1. Identify potential workshops and workshop facilitators for the Riley Park Fieldhouse.
2. Identify barriers to community members providing workshops.

6. Inquiry questions:

1. What community members are willing and able to host workshops at the Riley Park Fieldhouse?
2. What workshop themes are community members interested in offering?
3. What barriers exist that prevent community members from providing workshops?

Methods

An information sheet (Appendix 1) and application form (Appendix 2) were developed in consultation with the Riley Park Education committee and uploaded onto the Riley Park Garden website, displayed in physical form on public bulletin boards at the Little Mountain Neighborhood House (LMNHS), and handed out at various community events.

Surveys were conducted in person (at a farmers market) and through email, with the information sheet and application form provided in both incidences. The contact list for emails consisted of community members



Fig. 2. Participant filling out in-person survey at farmer's market.

who do work related to the workshop categories identified by the education committee (food, art, ecology, culture, and community connections.) During the in-person surveying, members of the research team followed a script (Appendix 3), in order to be

consistent with the subsequent online surveys sent out (Appendix 4).

We then analyzed the data provided on the surveys both qualitatively and quantitatively, comparing the quantity of people interested as well as the types of barriers that were presented.

Results

Fig. 3. Interest: Online Survey



Fig. 4. Interest: Farmer's Market



Overall the interest rate was high with 7 out of 10 online respondents and 13 out of 20 farmer's market respondents interested in hosting a workshop (i.e. saying 'yes' or 'maybe'). No respondents said they were interested but unable to facilitate a workshop.

Fig. 5. Barriers: Online Survey

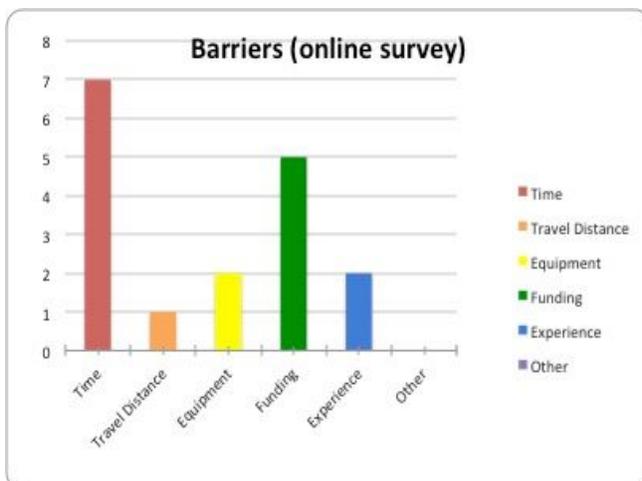
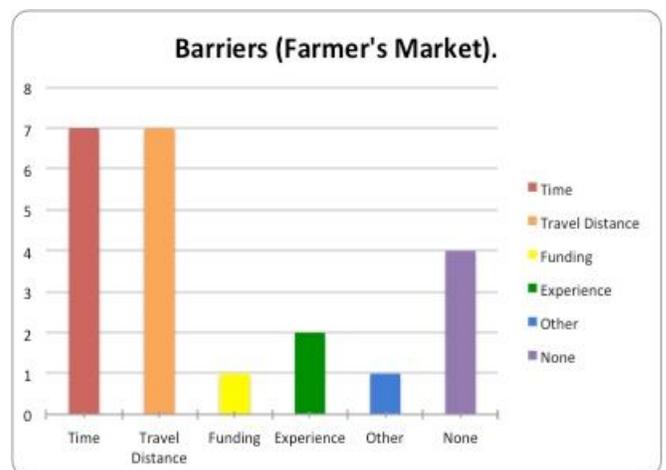


Fig. 6. Barriers: Farmer's Market



The major barrier identified in both surveys is lack of time. Respondents in the farmer's market survey talked about having "too many projects" or being "too busy with their business." Travel distance was a major barrier in the farmer's market survey, while funding was a barrier in the online survey.

Fig. 7. Workshop themes: Online Survey

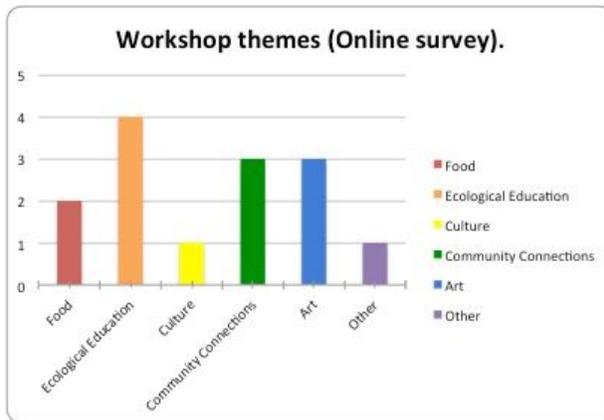
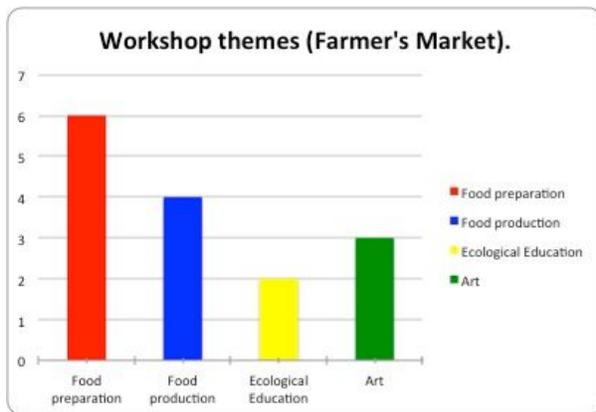


Fig. 8. Workshop themes: Farmer's Market



Workshop themes were sorted into the categories previously identified when designing the information sheet and application form (Appendices 1 and 2). Workshops may fit in more than one category. Many workshops identified at the farmer's market were food-related and thus subdivided into food preparation and food production. Workshops from the online survey were more diverse.

Discussion

Significance of data to project objectives and questions

Our data allowed us to better understand the potential of the community in participating in workshops for Riley Park's education plan. The 'barriers' data is crucial for LMNHS to formulate strategies to incentivize workshop participation. The 'themes' results is useful in recognizing the most common types of potential workshops, allowing us to identify other community partners that would be more pertinent to outreach to.

Meaning and interpretation of results and connections among results

After analyzing our data, we came to find that surveying at a farmer's market was not the best approach to recruit local community partners. Many surveyees came from out of town, mostly from the Fraser Valley/the Interior, making both travel distance and time disproportionately significant barriers. Many at the farmer's market were also already involved in other community work, discouraging them to commit time. Another significant barrier was the lack of funding and creating little incentives for the community partners to hold workshops, especially when the workshops are already taking up their time. Two respondents said that they couldn't hold workshops for free. Workshop themes identified at the farmer's market were overwhelmingly food themed whereas the workshop themes for the online survey were more diverse.

Significance of findings to broader of food system issues

As discussed previously, Community-Based Food Organizations play an incredibly important role in linking those in need to key resources by creating partnerships with businesses and community groups, and designing programs and policies for increasing food system access (LaRiviere et al., 2003). As part of the Vancouver Food Security Network, LMNHS actively engages in developing programs to improve community food security by taking stock of such salient resources like their newly acquired fieldhouse—a space that can bring stakeholders together to create relationships, exchange knowledge, and enhance community food security (McCullum et al, 2005). Our findings suggest that the infrastructure, i.e. the fieldhouse, exists as a medium to potentially improve food security, however, there is a lack of social capital that is preventing this overarching goal of community food security from being achieved. It is critical to first form and strengthen relationships within the community—to create a sense of accountability and dedication—before implementing large, long-term projects (Putnam, 1995). By improving social capital, interest in hosting workshops and success in recruiting participants may increase, allowing for improved community food security in the long-run. This would be reflected in higher positive response rates via the surveys

built in our sustainable framework (Appendix 3 and 4).

Limitations of methods

The low response rate to the online survey (17.5%) impacts our second objective as non-respondents may face different barriers than respondents. The farmer's market survey may also be biased as participants didn't have time to think about their responses and the surveys were not anonymous. This may result in a higher positive response rate for interest and open-ended questions about barriers or workshop themes may be more difficult to answer in person. Adding an additional survey method, for example phone surveys, or reaching out to a wider sample at various locations, for example surveying farmer's market attendees in addition to the vendors, would lend more validity to our data.

Conclusion

Our current survey found that both 'travel distance' and 'time' are significant barriers to hold workshops due to the bias of surveyed individuals at the farmer's market living outside of Vancouver and those already involved in community work. Hence, a future outreach will need to be done well beyond the scope of a farmer's market and to a wider sample of participants that also come from multiple community locations. Some unanswered questions that we encountered include 'How would our result be different if we had surveyed a larger number of participants?' as well as 'Will community partners change their responses and/or barriers if asked again in the future?'. Moving forward, we hope that Riley Park will not only be able to form stronger connections and identify with more community partners, but also seek out partners who will significantly contribute towards the food security of its community members.

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Critical Reflections

Student 1:

From all my engagements with the LFS course series, the Community Based Experiential Learning project which I undertook with my group proved to be the most personally difficult and rewarding one yet. Compared to my experiences in LFS 250, which was characterized by feeling a lack of connection to my group members and the project, this semester was a marked improvement.

During the previous term, our work focused on gathering data on food environments within schools. This task, while important, did not strike me as one which required critical thinking or a great degree of interaction with school representatives. Data was acquired through a survey that had been previously created by another task force, and our results were aggregated with peers' results to create a product which we lacked clear information about. In contrast, this year's project relied on our creativity as a group, personal strengths as individuals, and continuous communication and collaboration with community stakeholders. Whether there was more control over the parameters of the project, the design of how we acquired data and subsequently analyzed it was certainly more flexible. Similarly, our initial interactions with our client yielded feelings of uncertainty, but we were provided more agency in how we could determine our next steps.

In conclusion, I would assert that the ownership of project implementation which LFS 350 students were granted by the department resulted in a drastically more positive experience.

Student 2:

While I have to admit that this is not the first time I have engaged in a community-based activity, my opportunity to conduct a public outreach for Riley Park has been unlike anything I have experienced before in the past. One notable thing that I believe was very unique about the course is the utilization of flexible learning periods.

I was particularly stoked when I came to know that the project would include flexible learning time. I think these "freebie" days were particularly fitting to allow students to exercise their own agencies. This means that through our own best judgement and free will, we can choose to do whatever we think would be best for the development of our community project whilst juggling our other courses' assignments. Another thing that I most enjoyed from the course as a whole was definitely conducting the face-to-face survey with two of my other teammates at the Vancouver Farmer's

Market. It was so satisfying to be able to literally connect with Vancouver's community members on a deeper, more personal basis.

Ultimately, my entire class this term has taken my learning as well as my overall perspective on learning towards a different direction. As I move on from thinking that gaining knowledge and skill only happens in a lecture-based classroom, I came to adjust myself to be conscious that learning happens in whatever setting I found myself in.

Student 3:

Working with my group this semester has opened me up to how uncertainty can be solved through teamwork and compromise. Working on this project from the beginning has been a whirlwind of emotions, from our first meeting where we discovered the objectives were not the same as listed, to the dealing with the unexpected requests from our community partner. However, working together with my group and through communicating not only within our group, but reaching out to our resources (our TA), we were able to manage our problems. I have also learned a lot about the amount of passion it takes to launch community initiatives, especially when there is very little funding for projects.

Being able to work collaboratively on Google Drive with both our very own team and with our community partner has made it a lot easier to communicate and work with one another. I can't imagine how our work could have been done especially when we had our individual responsibilities outside of this project.

Overall, I've had a great experience working with my team, and I am thankful that we were all like-minded and worked so well together. Working on this CBEL project has allowed me to take a peek into just how much work it takes to launch a new project. I am grateful for the experience this course has given me.

Student 4:

This is the first time I've done any sort of community based research project and it was certainly a new and challenging experience. In particular, this course involved a great deal of uncertainty. First there was getting to know my group, then getting to know our community partner and finally understanding and figuring out how to execute our project. In one sense it was a bit scary to dive right in with very few guidelines.

This course is very different from the traditional lecture-based approach in which there are generally very strict guidelines and the course is very structured. However, I appreciated the independence and the latitude to make the project our own. The flexible learning sessions were essential to the success of our project. They allowed us to

schedule meetings with our community partner and with each other without the stress of trying to find time to meet outside of class. The use of a blog to update the course instructors on our project was also very helpful as it allowed us to keep track of our progress while continuing to connect project activities back to course readings and concepts from tutorial and lecture.

Overall this course has been a positive learning experience and I am especially thankful that I had such a great group and a fantastic community partner to work with.

Student 5:

Over the course of this semester this class and project have proven to be both challenging and rewarding. While the project with our community partner had many ups and downs, it was overall a positive experience and I believe that I have further developed valuable skills to take away from this course. Communication between our group and the community partner took some time to develop, but in the long run my group adapted to different communication styles that will help us in the future. Some difficult obstacles also arose that were frustrating at times, specifically dealing with uncertainty and changes in scope. The most rewarding moments in this semester were when we were able to tackle these challenges and continue on with our project.

Starting off this course I found the amount of self-directed content to be daunting, between having flexible learning periods and having to develop our project guidelines as we went. However, this aspect turned out to be engaging and motivating, and gave me a taste of what working on community projects of my own in the future could be like.

I am grateful to have been a part of a student group that has worked so well together in communicating, solving problems, and sharing ideas. LFS 350 has been a challenge at times but overall the experience has been educational and I feel a sense of accomplishment with my group that we were able to successfully develop and carry out a project.

Student 6:

This combined course and CBEL project was the largest community-based initiative I have ever been a part of, and through all of the challenging moments I have realized how much of any single person can be poured into a community-based project. From this project, I realize that for community projects, it is critical that the community, as a collection of individuals, imparts time, energy, and effort, as a sum greater than any individual can provide-- and even with vast amounts of these key components, may yield very little progress in the end.

The frustration of what felt like “1 step forward, 2 steps back” in this experience, I could not have managed without the help of my groupmates. Their emotional solidarity strengthened our team through difficult and uncertain moments, and the proactiveness and enthusiasm of certain individuals kept myself and the whole team moving forward to the next task. I am so grateful to have worked with such an amazing group who have each employed their individual strengths to make this team an excellent one.

My greatest takeaway, one that I experienced during Flexible Learning sessions with community partners, is that this course has brought me into a new stage of being. I realized partway, that people--my groupmates, my community partners--look to me now, as a person, an adult, with valuable knowledge, resources, and experiences. This experience has imparted on me an incredible feeling of accomplishment, value, and drive that is sure to see me through future endeavors.

Appendix 1: Information Sheet

Riley Park Fieldhouse Collective Information Sheet

Want to get more involved in your community?

Interested in food, art, or culture?

Consider leading a workshop for the Riley Park Fieldhouse Collective.

The Riley Park Fieldhouse Collective is located in the Fieldhouse at the corner of 32nd and Quebec. Little Mountain Neighbourhood House was given space in the fieldhouse by the Vancouver Parks Board in exchange for providing workshops, educational sessions and community meetings. The education plan is meant to bring community into a shared space, fostering social connections among community members. Activities within this space will support the core vision to improve food security, ecological sustainability and community development.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for inspired individuals and groups in the community to contribute by leading an educational workshop, information session or hands-on learning experience with one of the following themes:

- Food (for example food preservation: canning, drying)
- Art (for example painting, drawing, art appreciation)
- Culture (for example language, art, music, first nations knowledge)
- Community Connections (for example engaging citizenship, mapping assets)
- Ecological Education (for example gardening workshops, zero-waste initiatives, placed-based education)
- Other (get creative!)

Or, if you want to host a community meeting in the space let us know.

How to apply?

Please fill out the application form and drop off at the Neighbourhood House or Fieldhouse, apply online at www.rileyparkgarden.org or send an e-mail to info@rileyparkgarden.org

Questions?

Contact us and we will get back to you. Sign up for the newsletter: www.rileyparkgarden.org

Appendix 2: Application Form

Riley Park Fieldhouse Collective Workshop Application Form

The Fieldhouse is a space for workshops, meetings and discussion with the intention to promote food security, ecological sustainability and community development.

Date: _____

Personal Information

Name: _____ **Group Name (if applicable):** _____

Contact Method *Please check preferred contact method*

Email:

Cell Phone

Home Phone

Office phone

Workshop Information

Title: _____

Brief Description: _____

Category: *Please check one of our Educational Plan themes that your workshop best relates to:*

Art

Ecological Education

Community

Food

Culture

Other: _____

Length:

1 hour

2 hours

3+ hours

Frequency: *Check either Option A, or Option B with estimated weekly frequency*

Option A: Single Workshop

Option B: Sessional workshop *(see below)*

2 weeks

3 weeks

4 weeks

5+ weeks

Day and Time: <i>Please indicate time of day preferred</i>						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Workshop Facilitation and Equipment	
Technology Needed	
<input type="checkbox"/> Projector and Screen	<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers/Soundsystem
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Equipment Needed <i>Chairs will be provided depending on number of participants</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tables	<input type="checkbox"/> Whiteboard and markers
<input type="checkbox"/> Pens or pencils	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking Utensils <i>(please list):</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gardening Tools <i>(please list):</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art supplies <i>(please list):</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please list):</i>	

Administrative Use Only	
Date of Review: _____	
Approval of Workshop Submitted: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Name: _____	Signature: _____

Appendix 3: Script for Farmer's Market Survey

Hello we are (_____) from UBC and we are doing a quick survey on behalf of the Little Mountain Neighbourhood House. Little Mountain Neighbourhood House recently acquired a license to use the Fieldhouse in Riley Park. Under their agreement with the City of Vancouver they need to provide 350 hours of Education programming per year. Little Mountain Neighbourhood House is recruiting community partners to provide educational workshops in the Fieldhouse. We are doing a survey to help them identify community partners. May we ask you a few questions?

- Are you interested in providing a workshop in the Riley Park Field House?
Yes
No
Maybe
Yes but I'm not able to

If yes or maybe:

- What would the theme of your workshop be?
- How many hours/year of workshops are you able to provide?

All respondents:

- What barriers are preventing you or may prevent you from providing a workshop in the Riley Park Field House?
- Are there any incentives that would remove these barriers and encourage you to provide a workshop?

Appendix 4: Online Survey Questions

1. I am agreeing to complete this survey conducted by students of the Faculty of Land and Food Systems within the “Land, Food & Community II (LFS 350)” course. I understand that I have the right to not complete this survey. Also, I understand that my answers will remain anonymous unless I provide permission to the UBC student to disclose my name, working position or any other information revealing my identity, in any possible future use of the information I provide. I understand that such information may be shared in reports, including those published online.

2. Please describe your business/organization (note it is not necessary to provide identifying information, you will be asked later if you wish to provide contact information to the Riley Park Fieldhouse collective.)

3. Are you interested in running a workshop at the Riley Park Field House?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
 - Yes but I’m not able to

4. If you answered yes or maybe what would the theme of your workshop be?

5. If you answered yes or maybe, how many hours/year would your workshop be?

6. What barriers are preventing you or might prevent you from running a workshop? (Select all that apply)
 - Time
 - Travel Distance
 - Equipment
 - Funding
 - Experience
 - Other (please describe)

7. Is there anything that would entice or help you to provide a workshop?

8. Would you like to be added to the Riley Park Fieldhouse Collective contact list? Note: Clicking yes does not obligate you to provide a workshop. If yes, please provide contact info.

- Yes
- No, I wish my survey responses to remain anonymous