

Ending Hunger: Empowering Innovative Local Solutions

[Names Here]

The problem: In many communities, attention towards the problem of eating to excess has taken precedence over the problem of food accessibility. Yet globally and locally in many communities, access to food is compromised and hunger persists. However, some communities develop innovative solutions to get healthy food into the hands and homes of the hungry. These “bright spots” are often initiated by a local agency that finds a creative solution to tackle the problem of food accessibility.

This track adopts a relational engagement approach (Ozanne et al., 2016) to work directly with social impact organizations, including NPOs, government and social welfare agencies, for-profit enterprises, and community partners (churches, activist groups, schools, health providers, etc.) to investigate the “bright spots” in food accessibility programs. Our investigation will not only examine the dimensionality of programs that succeed, but will dig deeper to discover: how the idea materialized, what hurdles the organization faced, how they overcame start-up challenges, how the program has evolved and what they see as critical factors to ensuring future success. By systematically investigating the solution (rather than the problem) we hope to identify patterns others can replicate to uncover and develop their own innovative solutions for tackling hunger.

Track Goal: This track of the 2017 TCR Conference will assemble researchers and community action partners directly involved in developing and managing local innovations in tackling hunger to assess if and how some programs and ideas might be scalable to serve wider audiences. Further, we examine the process local leaders use to discover and develop innovative solutions that meet the unique needs of their community with an eye toward formulating and publishing a framework others working to tackle this important and complex social issue can follow to build their own creative solutions. Lastly, we hope to layout a network mechanism for disseminating knowledge and idea sharing to empower collaboration, cooptation, and customization of creative solutions within other communities large and small, far and near so that collectively we make progress toward eliminating hunger world-wide.

Pre-conference Activities

Knowledge building: Working under an established timeline, track team members will participate in online discussions and each recommend program websites, news stories, and research that will provide a broad-based perspective on innovative programs and approaches toward tackling hunger both globally and locally. In addition, we will gather and discuss research from other relevant perspectives including: government as a partner and road-block, community attitudes about why hunger persists, the co-morbidity of poverty and hunger, and community collaborations on a broader scale.

Bright Spot Research: Track participants will work to systematically investigate “bright spot” programs in their community. After developing a semi-structured interview guide to facilitate in-depth interviews, researchers and community action partners will individually collect data to uncover and understand what makes these innovative programs so successful.

Shared learning: Each track participant will then summarize and share what they learned from the leaders interviewed and programs investigated. Through online discussion and document sharing, the track team members will begin to layout an actionable framework for discovering and developing innovative food accessibility solutions that will work in their own community.

Tentative Conference Schedule

Day 1 – Morning Session: During the morning session the track team will organize, categorize, and synthesize the information and insights gathered during the pre-conference activities including: reading, review of secondary and primary research data and discussion of larger questions about hunger and food accessibility worldwide to develop a preliminary map of the conceptual framework.

Day 1 – Afternoon Session: After lunch we will map out a framework organizations can use to identify, investigate, and develop “bright spot” solutions. We will develop a poster along with a brief verbal presentation to explain the research used to develop the framework along with larger questions about practical applications to tackle hunger on a local and global level.

Day 1 – Evening Session: Poster session, integrative learning across the diverse TCR tracks.

Day 2 – Morning Session: During day two, we will discuss the feedback we received as well as ideas gleaned from other TCR tracks. Using these insights, we will refine our conceptual framework and develop a short presentation for closing. In addition, we will develop our action plan, teams and timeline for writing a competitive submission for the special issue in the *Journal of Business Research* entitled: “Transformative Consumer Research: Increasing Impact through Relational Engagement”.

Post-conference Activities

Competitive Paper Submission: Working in smaller teams, we will collectively write a competitive paper submission to document our conceptual framework developed at the conference and set forth a research agenda to advance and disseminate knowledge designed to tackle the local and global problem of hunger.

Continuous Community Partner Engagement: Our goal is to continue to engage community partners to find creative new ways to forge partnerships between research and practice but also across agency perspectives and geographic separation. Further, we will also examine ideas that may be scalable and discuss how a distributed network of community leaders in this cause space might better share information and work collectively.

Other Research Opportunities: Beyond our initial competitive paper submission, we will work in smaller groups to identify and execute additional research projects within the research agenda set.