

WORKSHEET

Purpose & Research Question

What is the objective?

To define the purpose of a Foodscape Assessment in your city and craft a specific research question(s) that, when answered, will generate insights that will help you address foodscape challenges. This includes identifying a study area, outlining known food and health issues in that area, and defining the communities you hope to reach.

Why is this important?

The intersection between food systems, food behaviours, and the built environment is complex. Being specific about where you are studying foodscapes, with and for whom, and why, will help direct your efforts.

How do I do it?

First, define what you want to get out of a Foodscape Assessment. Be clear about the challenge you're hoping to understand, your audience, and what you hope to accomplish by using these tools.

Consider the following key questions:

1. **Define your study context:** What area or neighbourhood do you want to focus on?
2. **Define your goal(s):** What is the general goal of your study? What challenges are you trying to address?
3. **Craft your research question(s):** What kinds of questions do you need to answer to better understand how to reach your goals?

PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTION

DEFINE STUDY CONTEXT

Before you begin, be specific about what geographic area you want to study and why.

STUDY AREA

Foodscape Assessments examine food access and behaviours within a neighbourhood. Be specific about the neighbourhood you're focusing on.

Example: We want to improve health outcomes within a 15 minute walking area around the Community Kitchen in North Philadelphia.

- What is the name of the neighbourhood or area? _____
- What are its geographic boundaries? _____

EXISTING FOOD AND HEALTH CHALLENGES

What do you know (so far) about food challenges facing this neighbourhood that you are hoping to better understand and address?

Example: This neighbourhood is a food desert and many families experience food insecurity and health issues related to imbalanced nutrition.

- What health challenges are predominant in this area? (E.g., high rates of obesity or diabetes)

- As far as you know, what might contribute to these challenges? Consider things like: access to affordable food, access to high quality active mobility infrastructure, public safety concerns, etc.

TARGET POPULATIONS

Are there any particular groups of people within this neighbourhood whose needs you want to study and help meet? For example, are there specific populations for whom access to healthy food is limited? Or, are there populations who disproportionately experience health issues related to diet? Consider traits like socioeconomic group, health condition, age, gender expression, ethnic group, known level of food access, etc.

Example: We want to understand the dietary habits of teenagers aged 13-18 who live within a 15 minute walking area around the Community Kitchen in North Philadelphia.

- What is your target population(s)?

PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTION

GOALS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the general goal of your study? What research questions will you develop?

GOALS

Think back to what sparked your desire to address foodscapes. Be specific about your intention, desired impact, and target population.

Example: Address teenage obesity by promoting access to healthy, affordable food.

- What was the event, policy, story, conversation, etc., that triggered this assessment?

- What is your goal for impacting food access in this neighbourhood?

ENVISIONING SUCCESS

Be realistic about what can be achieved using the resources available. Consider quantitative or qualitative metrics, in the short and long term.

Example: In the long term, success looks like reducing rates of teenage obesity in this neighbourhood. In the short term, success could look like reducing the average number of fast food meals eaten by teenagers and increasing the average number of fresh food meals.

- What kinds of health outcomes are you trying to promote?

- What kinds of behaviours are you trying to promote to help reach these outcomes?

WRITING A RESEARCH QUESTION

Once you've defined goals, create research questions. A good research question will help you identify what research tools to use in your study. Your research question should be:

- Specific enough to be answered in the time you have
- Complex enough that it requires research and analysis - no yes/no questions

Examples: How do teenagers aged 13-18 currently access food in this area? Is healthy, affordable food available in places that feel convenient, safe, and accessible to teenagers?

- Research Question(s):
