An Evaluation of East New York Farms! Project's Youth Internship Program Alumni Outcomes: 2000-2017

Prepared for East New York Farms!
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The mission of the **East New York Farms! Project** is to organize youth and adults to advance food justice in our community by promoting local sustainable agriculture and community-led economic development. *East New York Farms!* is a project of the United Community Centers, in partnership with local residents. www.eastnewyorkfarms.org

United Community Centers' mission is two-fold: to provide first- rate services that meet the needs of families, and to involve adult and youth residents in social efforts to learn about and resolve community problems. For over 60 years, UCC has helped to foster social change, worked with neighbors to address community concerns, and provided services to help make East New York a better, healthier place to live. www.ucceny.org.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The East New York Farms! Project (ENYF!), a program of United Community Centers, Inc., runs an intensive nine-month internship program for local youth ages 13-18 in Brooklyn, New York. Interns grow food in community gardens using sustainable methods; collaborate with adult gardeners to run two farmers' markets; and participate in workshops to help them understand the broader environmental and social context of their work. Youth who participate in the program must live or go to school in East New York (ENY), a historically low-income community and community of color. Reflective of the ENY population, interns are mainly Black-American, Caribbean, Latino, South Asian, and African youth. Since its beginning in 2000, over 300 youth have participated in the ENYF! Project's Youth Internship Program.

The goal of this alumni evaluation was to understand participant outcomes, attitudes, and behaviors after taking part in the ENYF! Project's Youth Internship Program. The study builds upon a previous evaluation of the Program, conducted in 2012-13 in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Falxa-Raymond and Campbell 2013; cf. Sonti et al. 2016). With support from New York State Environmental Protection Fund, as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation *Environmental Justice Green Skills Training for Youth in Environmental Justice Areas* grant program, this evaluation places specific focus on educational, job, green job, and career outcomes.

An online survey was administered in 2018 to alumni who had participated in the program for at least three months, and who had been out of the program for at least one year between 2002 and 2017. Additionally, follow-up interviews were conducted in late 2018 and early 2019 with a subset of survey respondents. The resulting quantitative and qualitative data provide the empirical basis for this report.

Key findings:

- **Education**
  - Over 50% of respondents reported being enrolled in high school, college, or graduate school at the time of the study.
  - Alumni indicated higher educational attainment at both high school/high school equivalency and post-secondary levels than the surrounding East New York community and New York City as a whole.
  - A small number of alumni had participated in training programs to learn essential job skills, notably in the culinary arts.
  - Among alumni who had attended four-year colleges, the highest percentage (nearly half) had attended public institutions, but almost one-fourth had attended institutions in the private sector; over one-fourth had attended community college; and just under 10% had attended job or career training programs prior to the survey.

- The highest percentage of alumni (approximately two-thirds) had attended college or training programs in the New York City area, but nearly one-third had attended programs in the Tri-State region, and over ten percent had attended programs in other US regions.

- Alumni reported diverse areas of study in college, with the highest percentage (over one-third) having studied social science fields including public administration, political science, criminal justice, and human services.

- **Employment and career**
  - Over sixty percent of alumni reported working either full- or part-time at the time of the study, slightly higher than in the surrounding East New York community and New York City overall.

  - Sales /customer service fields and health professions were the most frequently cited occupation types; Lower percentages of ENYF! alumni reported working in service/customer service, and higher percentages ENYF! alumni reported working in health professions than in East New York and citywide.

  - Over one-third of alumni indicated that participation in the ENYF! program had at least somewhat *directly* influenced their career goals, while nearly half indicated that participation in the program had *indirectly* impacted their educational and/or career paths.

  - Alumni specifically indicated having gained job and resume experience; workplace skills; inspiration to work for community change; and food- and environmentally-related skills that served them in their subsequent jobs and careers.

- **Self-development**
  - Alumni indicated positive self-development as measured by having self-confidence in communication and decision-making; interest in learning new information and skills; and feeling a sense of purpose in life.

  - Alumni were also involved in socially positive or employment-related activities such as meeting new people for social purposes, exploring new job or career opportunities, or reading other than that required for school or work.

  - In interviews, alumni discussed ways the program had positively impacted their lives, including learning teamwork and leadership skills, and the importance of dedication and work ethic; having opportunities to be engaged in meaningful work; and learning about social determinants of food access and the impact of nutrition on personal health.

- **Food, health, and the environment**
  - Alumni indicated continued interest and engagement in pro-environmental and/or healthy eating behaviors, including caring about the environment and understanding where the food they consume comes from.

  - In interviews, alumni discussed having gained new perspectives on environmental careers; the connections between agriculture, the environment, and public health; and about food access disparities in their communities and ways to address this challenge.

  - Some alumni noted changes in their families' eating habits, such as favoring organically-produced products over those produced with agrichemicals (such as synthetic pesticides) during and/or after participation in the program.

- **Community development and civic engagement**
  - Alumni reported engagement in their communities, as measured by interactions and connection with groups and individuals in their own lives. Over three-fourths indicated 'very often' surrounding themselves with people who would have a positive influence; and/or feeling comfortable interacting with people of different races, genders, and abilities.

  - Additionally, alumni indicated participating in civic activities including signing petitions, participating in public meetings, or voting in an election.
    - However, nearly one-fifth reported *not* having participated in any of the civic activities named in the survey.

  - In interviews, alumni pointed to community development or civic engagement opportunities as among the most important aspects of the program.

- **Interpersonal relationships**
  - Alumni discussed peer-to-peer relationships developed or strengthened in the program as being important in terms of both providing socializing opportunities and creating support systems among youth with similar upbringings.
    - Some alumni reported remaining in contact, particularly through social media, with program peers after completing the program.

  - Relationships formed with community elders were meaningful for alumni in terms of receiving guidance, learning respect for others, and developing intergenerational rapport, including with specific leaders in the surrounding community.

  - In interviews, alumni discussed ENYF! Staff mentorship as important to their educational and career development.

        - Feeling cared-for by ENYF! staff was identified as important by many alumni.

- **Alumni's overall assessment of and suggestions for program improvement**
    - Alumni had many positive things to say about the program overall;
        - Nearly half identified developing job skills, and over one-fourth identified engagement in farm and garden work as the top components of the program.

    - Alumni had several recommendations for improving the program in the future. These included:
        - Offering more of specific existing program activities and additional workshop topics.
        - Providing additional guidance and mentoring on specific topics including jobs, careers, and college.

1. INTRODUCTION

The East New York Farms! Project's (ENYF!) Youth Internship Program, a program of United Community Centers, Inc. (UCC), is a nine-month internship for youth between the ages of 13-18 who live in or go to school in East New York (ENY), Brooklyn. Participants learn sustainable urban agriculture techniques; grow food; run two weekly farmers' markets accessible to the surrounding community; and receive leadership, social- and environmental justice training. Interns participate in a variety of activities including workshops and field trips that help them to understand the broader context of their work, including food insecurity and environmental racism. Through program activities, youth interact with peers engaged in similar initiatives, helping them to develop an awareness of themselves as catalysts for change. The internship program is designed to enrich youths' future lives, educational, and career trajectories following participation, and provides participants with opportunities to develop important life and job skills while contributing to improving food and environmental justice in their communities.[1] Reflective of the ENY population, ENYF! Project youth interns are mainly Black-American, Caribbean, Latinx, South Asian, and African. Since its beginning in 2000, over 300 youth have gone through the program.

Context: East New York

The focus that ENYF! places on urban agriculture and on preparing youth for future education, employment, and leadership is particularly important in the context of the *challenges* faced by the surrounding community — and the program is also strengthened by several of its *social and environmental assets*. UCC and the ENYF! Project are situated in East New York, a neighborhood in eastern Brooklyn composed primarily of four neighborhoods— New Lots, Starrett City/Spring Creek, Cypress Hills, and City Line. (In terms of city jurisdictions, these neighborhoods are identified as Starrett City, East New York, East New York [Pennsylvania Ave], Cypress Hills-City Line, together forming part of New York City Community District 5.[2]) East New York is primarily a community of color, with 55% of its residents identified as Black or African American, and 35% identified as Hispanic or Latino, a higher percentage of each of these demographics than New York City as a whole. Compared with New York City overall, the community has lower median household income ($37,000 in ENY versus $58,000 citywide); lower per capita income ($19,000 versus $36,000, respectively); and higher percentages of both households receiving cash public assistance income (9% in ENY versus 4% citywide) and/or SNAP benefits (33% versus 20%, respectively) than is the case citywide. ENY also has a higher rate of families living below the poverty level (25% versus 16% citywide) and higher rate of youth under 18 years of age living below the poverty level (38% in ENY, versus 28% in New York City as a whole). (See appendix for a more detailed breakdown of these figures.)

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[1] See Daftary-Steel 2015. *Growing Young Leaders in East New York: Lessons from the East New York Farms Internship Program* for a detailed narrative of the program and how it works.

[2] New York City is divided into fifty-nine community districts, represented by community boards that address neighborhood planning, land use, budget, and service delivery issues.

In terms of education and employment, *higher* percentages of ENY's population 25 years and over have graduated high school or attained high school equivalency than in New York City overall. However, a *lower* percentage of residents have attained associates, bachelors, or graduate/professional degrees in ENY than citywide, as shown in Table 1. The percentage of *all* ENY residents above 16 years old who are employed is roughly similar to that of New York City overall (52% in ENY versus 59% citywide), as shown in Table 2. One-third of the employed population in East New York works in service, while nearly one-fourth work in either sales or office occupations; or in management, business, science, and arts. Table 3 shows how these figures compare with citywide patterns.

Table 1: Educational Attainment (Highest Grade Completed) in East New York (2013-2017 American Community Survey)*,**

	East New York		New York City	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Population 25 years and over	*119,223*		*5,969,948*	
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	49,379	41%	1,437,250	24%
Associate's degree	8,261	7%	383,693	6%
Bachelor's degree	12,203	10%	1,281,786	22%
Graduate or professional degree	4,768	4%	909,993	15%

*Data for East New York: Starrett City (BK93), East New York (BK82), East New York (Pennsylvania Ave) (BK85), Cypress Hills-City Line (BK83).

**For comparison with our data, table includes only categories similar to those in our survey. Categories in NYC Planning Department Data that are omitted here are: 'Less than 9th grade;' '9th -12th grade, no diploma;' and 'Some college, no degree.' Therefore, numbers total less than 100%.

Source: New York City Planning Department. Population FactFinder/2013-2017. American Community Survey (ACS) https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/profile/5208/social. Accessed July 6, 2019.

Table 2. Employment in East New York (2013-2017 American Community Survey)*,**

	East New York		New York City	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Population 16 years and over	*144,108*	*100%*	*6,954,418*	*100%*
Employed	74,421	52%	4,072,839	59%
Unemployed	8,252	6%	342,258	5%
Armed Forces	34	0%	2,265	0%
Not in labor force	61,401	43%	2,537,056	37%

*Data for East New York: Starrett City (BK93), East New York (BK82), East New York (Pennsylvania Ave) (BK85), Cypress Hills-City Line (BK83).

For comparison with our survey data, table displays employment statistics for the *entire* East New York population 16 years and older, rather than the labor force, as defined by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data in this table are ***not* equivalent to employment/ unemployment rate as percentage of Civilian Labor Force.

Source: New York City Planning Department. Population FactFinder/2013-2017. American Community Survey (ACS) https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/profile/5208/economic. Accessed July 6, 2019.

Table 3. Occupation in East New York (2013-2017 American Community Survey)*,				
	East New York		**New York City**	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	*74,421*	*100%*	*4,072,839*	*100%*
Service	24,626	33%	927,579	23%
Sales and office	17,244	23%	897,564	22%
Management, business, science, arts	16,922	23%	1,655,431	41%
Production, transportation, and material moving	9,176	12%	343,148	8%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	6,453	9%	249,117	6%

*Data for East New York: Starrett City (BK93), East New York (BK82), East New York (Pennsylvania Ave) (BK85), Cypress Hills-City Line (BK83).
** Occupation categories are cross-tabulated with approximately one dozen occupational "Subjects" in the ACS dataset. For example, 48% of the employed US civilian population 16 years and older working in "Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining;" (the largest percentage**)** are categorized as working in "Natural, resources, construction, and maintenance" occupations. And, 64% of those working in "Educational services, and health care and social assistance" are categorized as working in "Management, business, science, and arts" occupations.

Source: New York City Planning Department. Population FactFinder/2013-2017. American Community Survey (ACS) https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/profile/5208/economic. Accessed July 6, 2019.

Green Spaces and Food Security in East New York

Access to environmental amenities in ENY is uneven. In 2015, an analysis by the non-profit New Yorkers for Parks found that a higher percentage of City Council District 42 (which encompasses much of the ENY community)[3] is parkland than in New York City overall, (68% and 19% of the land in parks, respectively). However, the percentage of residents in Council District 42 who live within five minutes' walk of a park (55%) is lower than in the city overall (61%). Further, the number of acres of park and playground available per 1,000 children is less than one-half the citywide average: there are 5.3 acres per 1,000 children in Council District 42, versus 13.3 acres per 1,000 children in New York City overall (New Yorkers for Parks 2015).

In terms of food security, the East New York community experiences a shortfall. For example, an analysis by the New York City Food Bank found that in 2016 there was meal gap of 5.8 million or more, in Community District 5, representing the number of missing meals resulting from insufficient household resources to purchase food (Stampas and Koible, n.d.). This was the most severe level of meal gap in the Food Bank's rating. In ENY, more than 75% of children are eligible for free and reduced price lunch; and, 23.8% of children are classified as obese, among the highest rates in New York City (Citizen's Committee for Children, n.d.).

[3] New York City *Council* Districts are political units that may be revised every decade based on the US Census. Council Districts overlap with New York City *Community* Districts which are distinct city planning units, as noted above.

On the other hand, ENY's City Council District has a higher number of community gardens (n=34) than the average for all Council Districts in the City (n=11), according to the New Yorkers for Parks report (New Yorkers for Parks 2015). This provides residents with some additional access to green space, and members several of these community gardens collaborate with the ENYF! Youth Internship Program and farmers' markets. These patterns demonstrate both some of the positive environmental and community assets in East New York, and the need to further increase access to open spaces and adequate food in the surrounding community.

Green Jobs and Urban Agriculture

The community context described above presents entry points for programs that train youth in ENY to engage in activities that sit at the nexus of economic activities and environmental sustainability, often referred to as the 'green economy' (UN Environment Programme, n.d.). Relatedly, the US Department of Labor defines a green job as "any occupation that is affected by activities such as conserving energy, developing alternative energy, reducing pollution, or recycling." (New York State, n.d.) Examples of green jobs are those in clean energy, urban agriculture (including outdoor food production and composting), and other green infrastructure.

Green jobs are increasingly seen as an important part of addressing climate change and improving public health. They may help to increase environmental-, health-, and economic equity in environmental justice communities like ENY, and their relevance is expected to grow. For instance, the International Labour Organization predicts that, globally, measures taken in the production and use of energy, notably the adoption of sustainable energy practices, will lead to a net creation of approximately 18 million jobs by 2030 (International Labour Organization 2018). In 2019, New York City enacted citywide legislation to address building emissions, a significant contributor to the city's greenhouse gas emissions, as part of a goal to reduce overall emissions by 80% by 2050 (City of New York Local Law 97 of 2019; cf. Urban Green Council, n.d). And, the New York City Community Garden Coalition has undertaken a feasibility study, funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program, that will propose best practices to capture storm water in community gardens (New York City Community Garden Coalition, n.d.); this underscores the importance of urban agriculture as green infrastructure and a potential driver of environmentally-resilient community development. In terms of youth, a 2013 study of green job training and youth employment in New York City, observed among the positive outcomes increased pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors, and an increased sense of accomplishment among participants (Falxa-Raymond et al. 2013).

Providing youth from under-resourced communities with opportunities to engage in education and training in urban agriculture, as connected to the green economy, is thus of importance for several, interrelated reasons: It may contribute, broadly, to strengthening environmental and food system resilience in environmental justice communities; and it may help youth participants to develop the skills needed to obtain employment and to undertake leadership in improving conditions in their communities and beyond. Understanding the effectiveness of such programs, and how they may be improved is key to their long-term success.

2. THE EVALUATION

This evaluation report focuses on the impacts that the ENYF! Project's Youth Internship Program has had in the lives of alumni participating in the program between 2000 and 2017, with an emphasis on educational, job, and career trajectories. It builds upon a previous evaluation of the ENYF! Project Internship Program conducted in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service in 2012-13 (Falxa-Raymond and Campbell 2013; cf. Sonti et al. 2016). The evaluation discussed here sought to answer the following research questions:

- How has participation in the ENYF! program affected the ***educational paths*** of alumni?
- How has participation in the ENYF! program affected the ***employment and career trajectories*** of alumni?
- Has participation in the ENYF! Project's Youth Internship Program continued to affect ***alumni's self-development and their engagement*** with broader community, food systems, environmental, and social justice issues in years following the participation? If so, in what ways has it done this?

Additionally, the evaluation research gathered information about alumni recommendations for future improvement of the program. These perspectives are presented distinctly in the report.

Research Framework

The evaluation activities took place between fall 2018 and spring 2019, and used a participatory evaluation framework, a set of approaches in which participants are involved in some or all stages of evaluation research.[4] The evaluation was led by the author of this report (referred to below as the 'lead evaluator'). ENYF! Program staff, including alumni currently on the staff, participated in developing the research questions and data collection instruments, and in collecting data through online surveys and interviews. Scientists from USDA Forest Service who had conducted the previous evaluation referenced above participated in study design and analysis. Thus, throughout this report, the "evaluation team" refers to the lead evaluator, the ENYF! staff, and the USDA Forest Service scientists involved in planning and implementing various stages of this study.

[4] Examples of using participatory evaluation in food systems research include the use of photovoice to evaluate urban agriculture and urban food programs (Boston et al. 2015; Leung et a. 2017; see also Freudenberg 2017); and participatory survey design evaluating healthy school food initiatives (Koch et al. 2017).

Methods

The evaluation team used a mixed-method data collection process including surveys and interviews with program alumni; document review; and participant observation. These methods are summarized below. Further detail on research methods is included in the appendix.

Surveys
An alumni survey was conducted in fall 2018 using online questionnaires. The evaluation team designed the questionnaires, building on the 2013 survey, which asked about respondents' current employment status; educational and career trajectories since completing the program; participation in community and civic engagement; views about their experience in the program (e.g., what they learned; what were the most important parts of the program); whether and how the program continued to be meaningful to participants in their own lives; and suggestions for improving the program. Separate questionnaires were developed for those who had completed the program and those who had stopped participating before completion. The two questionnaires were nearly identical, but asked questions relevant to the whether or not the responded had completed the program or not (e.g., those who had stopped attending were asked why they had stopped attending). Following the methodology used in the 2013 evaluation, the 2018 questionnaires included several specific questions from the General Social Survey (GSS), a national-level sociological survey, conducted since 1972, which gathers data on attitudes, behaviors, and attributes in contemporary US society, as well as other national-level data sources. This enabled comparison with populations beyond East New York.

The questionnaires included multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended, write-in questions, and were administered online using Google Forms for ease of implementation and subsequent use by ENYF! program staff. (See appendix for survey instruments.) Survey recruitment requests were sent in in October 2018 via email, social media contact, and/or postcard to all program alumni having participated in the program for whom contact information was available, N= 237. Of these,186 had completed the program, and 51 had not, according to ENYF! records. Follow-up reminders were sent via postcard in December 2018. Responses were collected between October 2018 and January 2019. Questionnaire responses were compiled automatically in Google Spreadsheets, and were reviewed and cleaned for analysis. Responses were downloaded the Google Spreadsheet for coding and analysis in Excel.

Interviews
Following the survey, in spring 2019, the evaluation team conducted interviews of a select number of program alumni who had responded to the questionnaire (cf. Reynolds et al. 2018). The lead evaluator worked with the ENYF! Program Director and staff to design the interview questions and protocol. Questions were open-ended and asked about how participation in the program had affected alumni's education and employment trajectory; how participation had affected other aspects of their lives; the impact of ENYF! staff on the program impacts; and about various types of working or social relationships formed through the program, including with other adults (e.g., gardeners, market vendors) and with program peers. Questions were

pilot-tested with three current ENYF! Project staff members who are also alumni of the program and then refined for use.

ENYF! staff selected potential *non-staff* interviewees from among survey respondents who had completed the program, and who had indicated in the questionnaire a willingness to participate in an evaluation interview. An attempt was made to select at least one alumnus from each year of the program included in the study for which we had contact info (i.e., 2002-2017), and those representing different number of year spent in the program (i.e., one, two, three, or four years).[5] Interviews were conducted in person or by phone. Responses were recorded, then transcribed. Interview transcripts were coded for analysis in a simple word processing program.

Document review
In addition to the surveys and interviews, the lead evaluator reviewed program documents and academic publications pertaining to the ENYF! Project, which provided critical background information about the program and previous evaluation activities. (A list of the documents reviewed is in the appendix.)

Participant observation
The lead evaluator attended several ENYF! Project events or activities during the evaluation period. These included: a farmers' market in November 2018; a seminar given by the ENYF! project director and three current alumni-staff in April 2019 to the Community Food Funders (CFF, a regional network of foundations funding food systems work, which had recognized ENYF! with its Food Champions Award in 2018); and a forum at City University of New York Food Policy Institute in June 2019 at which the ENYF! Project Director and youth staff ran an informational table and facilitated a small-group breakout discussion about food, public housing, and civic engagement.

Limitations

Two survey design anomalies limit our interpretation of specific data points: In the online survey, 'select all that apply' language for some multiple-response questions was omitted from the online Google form. This may have led respondents to select only one of the potentially relevant responses to these questions. Additionally, in questions about employment status, we did not include the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) definition of unemployment (i.e., in the labor force – not employed *and* looking for work). Thus, we cannot make comparisons between federally defined unemployment rates in East New York and New York City, and our survey sample. We briefly discuss implications of these limitations, and remedial efforts we made to arrive at a more accurate picture of responses to specific survey questions, in relevant sections of the report. Further detail on these methods is included in the appendix. Despite the limitations, we are confident in our interpretation of our study data and what they tell us about the educational and employment outcomes of the ENFY! Program.

[5] Interns can reapply for the nine-month internship and, if rehired, may spend up to four years in the program.

3. STUDY PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Response rate

Surveys. In total, 60 alumni responded to the questionnaire, representing an overall response rate of 25%. Among respondents, 53 had completed the program, representing a response rate of 22% among program graduates, while seven respondents had stopped participating before completion of the nine-month internship. Due to the low response rate for those who had *not* completed the program, only data from those who completed the Program are included in this report.

Interviews. Alumni interviews were conducted with 13 non-staff alumni who had completed the survey, in addition to the pilot test interviews with three staff alumni noted above. Data from the pilot test/staff alumni interviews are included, and grouped with the non-staff interview data in this report to respect interviewee confidentiality. In total, data from 16 interviews are included in this report.

Age and gender identity of respondents

The median age of respondents at the time of the survey was 22. Ages ranged from 16 to 28 years, and 89% of respondents were over 18 at the time of the survey. The questionnaire used a write-in question to inquire about respondent gender identity. Among respondents, 27 indicated female; 22 indicated male; and 4 did not respond to this question. The questionnaire did not ask about race or ethnicity. However, the ENYF! program recruitment process ensures that interns reflect the demographics of the neighborhood (see above): Youth are recruited through local schools, and all interns must live or go to school in East New York.

When and how long respondents participated in the program

Respondents ranged from those who began the program in 2003 through those who began in 2016. The minimum age of respondents when beginning the program was 12, the maximum was 16, and 94% of respondents were 13-15 years old when they entered. Figure 1, shows the number and percentage of responses by years spent in the program, with distribution between one, two, three, and four years. Table 4 displays when respondents *completed* their time in the program in ranges corresponding to the first four years of completion represented in our survey data (2005-2009); the period from 2010-2012 when the program expanded as a result of increased funding (see Daftary-Steel 2015); and the four years immediately preceding our survey (2013-2017).

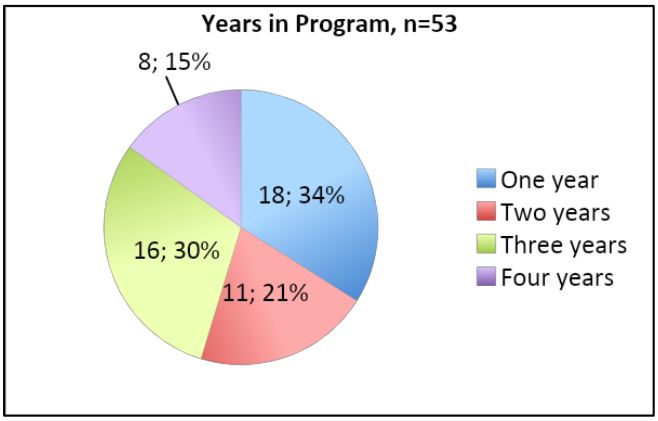

Figure 1.

Table 4. Year respondents completed the program (n=53)		
	Number	**Percent**
2005-2009	12	23%
2010-2012	14	26%
2013-2017	27	51%

Educational enrollment and employment among respondents at the time of the study

A multiple response question asked about employment and enrollment in educational programs *at the time of the survey*. Among respondents, 62% reported either working full-time (n=26) or part-time (n=7) at the time of the study, while 4% (n=2) reported seeking work or being unemployed.

As noted above, we can make only limited comparison of employment status between our survey sample and the overall East New York or New York City populations: Because we did not provide the BLS definition of unemployment on our questionnaire, we may have received responses of 'unemployed' from alumni who were not actively seeking employment and would therefore not be considered employed by BLS categorization. Because only two respondents in our survey indicated being unemployed, we find that the effect of this limitation on our interpretation of the data is minimal. Still, to enable a more relevant comparison, we juxtapose the employment rate among the *full* populations of East New York and New York City (not only those the labor force, which would be the equivalent of the official unemployment rate). For purposes of rough comparison, then, our data suggest that *employment rate is slightly higher* among our respondents than in East New York and New York City overall (52% in ENY and 59% citywide, as noted in Table 2 in the Introduction to this report), and that reported *unemployment is roughly similar* between participants in our study and the *full* populations of East New York and New York City overall (6% in ENY and 5% citywide).

In terms of education, over fifty percent of respondents in our study were in at least one educational or training program – high school, college, graduate school, and/or a job training or career program at the time of the study, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Respondent Educational Enrollment and Employment Status at Time of Survey

	Number	Percent
Education		
4-year college, full-time	13	25%
4-year college, part-time	1	2%
2-year college, full-time	4	8%
2-year-college, part-time	0	0%
In high school	5	9%
Job training or career program	1	2%
Graduate school	4	8%
Employment		
Working full-time (35 hours or more)	26	49%
Working part-time (less than 35 hours)	7	13%
>>> *Working full **or** part-time*	(33)	(62%)
Seeking work/unemployed	2	4%
Other (write-in, deployed in military)	1	2%
Other (write-in, creating own business)	1	2%
Totals greater than 100% due to multiple response.		

These data provide perspective on respondents' educational enrollment employment status *at the time of the survey*. We report on alumni's educational attainment, educational- and career *trajectories,* in the Findings sections below.

4. FINDINGS

This section reports findings from the questionnaires and interviews as follows: **Section A** focuses on ***education and employment.***

Next, **Section B** discusses outcomes related to ***self-development and engagement*** *with broader community, food systems, environmental and social justice issues* with findings organized around four themes: *self-development; food systems, health, and the environment; community development and civic engagement; and interpersonal relationships,* including mentor-mentee relationships.

Then, **Section C** reports on ***alumni's overall assessment of the program and suggestions for program improvement*** in the future.

A. Education and employment

A key goal of this evaluation was to understand how participation in the ENYF! Project's Youth Internship Program impacted educational and career trajectories in years after completing the program. This section reports on these findings, based on the survey and interview data, and helps us to answer the following research questions:

- How has participation in the ENYF! program affected the *educational paths* of alumni?
- How has participation in the ENYF! program affected the *employment and career trajectories* of alumni?

Educational attainment

In the questionnaire, we used a multiple-choice question to ask respondents about the education and training they had *already completed* at the time of the survey. As noted above, the language instructing respondents to 'select all responses that apply' to this question did not appear in the online survey, which we suspect resulted in under-reporting of educational attainments. We corrected for this limitation by assigning de-facto prerequisite to reported educational completion (e.g., assigning high-school or equivalency to all who reported completing college); and find that ***83% of all survey respondents and 94% of respondents 18 years or older at the time of the survey had completed high-school or equivalency***. (See appendix for explanation of this analysis.) In terms of post-secondary education, we find that 15% of all respondents, and 17% of respondents over 18 had completed a two-year college program; 28% of all respondents, and 32% of those over 18 years of age, had completed a four-year college program. Additionally, 9% of all respondents, and 11% of those 18 or older indicated having completed a job training program at the time of the study. These data are shown in Table 6.

For comparison, Table 1 in the Introduction to this report shows educational attainment in the surrounding East New York community, and in New York City overall, as reported in the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) for the four-year period, 2013-2017.

While the figures are not fully comparable due to differences in data segmentation,[6] our findings suggest ***higher educational attainment among ENYF! Project's Internship Program alumni than both the surrounding ENY community and New York City as a whole.*** Additionally, although college enrollment and completion are important measures of educational attainment, it is worthwhile to note the importance of job and career training programs in the future potential pathways of young people. As an example of such an outcome in our study, one respondent indicated having completed culinary training and now working as a private chef and food stylist.

Table 6. Education or Training Already Completed

	Number	Percent of all respondents (n=53)	Percent of respondents over 18 at time of survey (n=47)
HS/equivalency based on assumption of cumulative education achievements.	44	83%	94%
Two-year college	8	15%	17%
Four-year college	15	28%	32%
Job/career training program	5	9%	11%
None yet*	6	11%	n/a

* All respondents indicating 'none yet' were under 18 years of age at the time of the survey.

Numbers and percentages total greater than 100% due to multiple response.

Type and location of schools and training programs attended

In addition to educational attainment and training, we were interested in understanding where alumni had attended post-secondary educational programs, both in terms of the *types of schools* attended, as well as *geographic location*. An open-ended question asked survey respondents to list the names of all schools they had attended since high school. Table 7 below shows the types of post-secondary institutions and training programs listed by respondents who did not indicate still being in high school at the time of the survey (n=48). As shown, there was distribution among two-year and four-year institutions; public and private (including for-profit) schools; and specialized training programs. As shown in Table 8, the majority (65%) attended post-secondary programs in New York City, Yonkers, or Westchester (immediately north of the city); However, nearly one-third (31%) attended programs in other parts of the Tri-State region (i.e., New York State *except* NYC, Yonkers, and Westchester; New Jersey; and Connecticut); and 13% attended programs in other regions of the United States, including Massachusetts, Maine, Pennsylvania, Iowa, California, and Arizona.

[6] The ACS data reports on population over 25, while we chose to segment our sample population in this question as either "under 18" or "18 or older."

Table 7. Type Of Post-Secondary or Training Program Attended
(Among respondents not indicating still in high school, n = 48)

	Number of responses*	Percent of responses*	Examples of institutions mentioned
2 year college**	14	29%	• *NYC area:* LaGuardia Community College, Borough of Manhattan Community College, Westchester Community College. • *Outside New York:* Yuba City Community College (California); Cumberland County Community College (Maine).
4 year college,* public**	23	48%	• *City University of New York (CUNY)* system: Hunter College; Baruch; Medgar Evers; Queens College; NYC College of Technology. • *State University of New York (SUNY)* system: University at Albany; SUNY Delhi. • *Public colleges outside New York State*: The Pennsylvania State University; Iowa State University.
4 year college,* private (includes for-profit schools)**	11	21%	• *Non-profit:* Saint Josephs College and Helene Fuld College of Nursing, New York City; • *For-profit:* Monroe College; TCI College (closed in 2017).
Training program	4	8%	• Pursuit (four-year program for working class, non-traditional technology workers); Recording Connection (audio/engineering, electronic music school); French Culinary Institute; Le Cordon Bleu (culinary school)

*Numbers and percentages represent responses.

Totals greater than 100% due to multiple response.

** Most community colleges in the United States are public institutions. (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/ccfacts.html. Accessed 6/13/19)

****Some 4-year schools offer associates (2-year) degrees. This table considers an institution a "4-year" even if the respondent indicated elsewhere in the survey having attained a two-year degree.

Table 8. Where alumni attended college or training programs
(Among respondents not indicating still in high school, n = 48)

	n	% of total number of respondents*
NYC + Yonkers and Westchester	31	65%
Tri-State region	15	31%
Other regions	6	13%

Totals greater than 100% due to multiple response

Areas of study in college and training programs

To enrich our understanding of educational outcomes of the ENYF! program, we sought to learn about *what* alumni studied in college programs, if attended. Survey respondents were asked to list their current or possible major if still in college at the time of the survey; their major(s) or focus if graduated from college; and the focus of study in career training programs. Responses revealed that alumni studied a diversity of subject areas in their current and/or previous college programs. Table 9 shows responses categorized according to the broad areas of study in the New York State Taxonomy of Academic Programs (Higher Education General Information Survey, HEGIS codes),[7] and examples of specific areas of study that respondents mentioned.

The greatest percentage (35%) had studied areas broadly categorized as social sciences, with roughly similar percentages (10-15%) indicating physical sciences, business fields, biological sciences, or health professions. Based on HEGIS codes, four respondents (10%) studied in the broad field of education, and it is relevant to note that this HEGIS category includes culinary arts, which was the specific field of study indicated by three of these four respondents.

Of the four survey respondents indicating being currently enrolled in graduate school at the time of the study, two indicated biology as their major (HEGIS code 'biological sciences'); one indicated human resource management (HEGIS code 'social sciences') and one indicated exercise science (HEGIS code 'health professions') as their major.

Table 9. Area of Study in College or Graduate School by HEGIS Codes
(Among respondents having studied in post-secondary institutions, n=40)

	Number	Percent	Examples of specific areas of study
Social sciences	14	35%	criminal justice; psychology; political science; public administration; economics/finance; journalism; human services (e.g., serving clients in social services programs)
Physical sciences	6	15%	computer information systems/IT; chemistry
Business	5	13%	business administration and management; hospitality management; restaurant management
Biological sciences	4	10%	biology; biochemistry
Health professions	4	10%	nursing; health services management; exercise science
Engineering	2	5%	mechanical engineering; architecture
Education	4	10%	adolescent education; baking/pastry; culinary arts
Humanities	1	3%	liberal arts
Total	***40***	***100%***	

[7] The Higher Education General Information System (HEGIS) Taxonomy is a nationally accepted classification scheme for assuring consistency in the curriculum content of courses leading to a degree within a given HEGIS discipline category. The highest-level categories, which are used in this report, are very broad, and may not always be intuitive for a broader public. Nonetheless, we use these codes for consistency with national and New York State-level educational rubrics. For HEGIS codes: http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/new-york-state-taxonomy-academic-programs-hegis-codes . Accessed July 5, 2019.

Employment and career trajectories

As noted above, our survey data suggest that ENYF! alumni are employed at slightly higher rates than the overall East New York and New York City communities. In this evaluation, we were additionally interested in learning about the *types* of jobs and careers in which alumni work. A write-in question in the survey asked respondents: *"If you are working, what is your position?"* Seventy-five percent (39 of 53) reported working at the time of the survey. The highest percentage (19% of respondents) reported working in sales or customer service; or health professions or emergency response (17% of respondents), as shown in Table 10. Further, 8% of our survey sample reported being employed in food or culinary arts, and 4% reported employment in gardening and agriculture. While a detailed comparison of occupation types is beyond the scope of this report due to the way that US Census Bureau American Community Survey data are categorized (see note in Table 3 in the Introduction), these data suggest that *lower* percentages of alumni are employed in service occupations and *higher* percentages of ENYF! alumni are employed in health professions than in the surrounding East New York and New York City communities overall.

Table 10. Job and Career Types Among Alumni (n=53)

	Number	Percent of all respondents
Sales or customer service	10	19%
Health professions or emergency response	9	17%
Food/culinary arts fields	4	8%
Intern/student mentor	3	6%
Education	2	4%
Financial/business management	2	4%
Gardening/agriculture	2	4%
Communication/public affairs	1	2%
Administrative/admin assistant	1	2%
Childcare	1	2%
Military	1	2%
Police/correctional	1	2%
Technology	1	2%
no response	*15*	*28%*
Total	**53**	**100%**

Alumni views on impact of the program on educational and career goals and trajectories

Asked an open-ended question: "*Did your experience at ENY Farms impact your field of study or career goals?,"* twenty survey respondents (38%) unequivocally responded "yes" or "somewhat," and provided specific comments about how participation in the program had influenced their career ***goals***. Another twenty-five respondents (47%) noted that the program had not directly impacted their *field* of study or career choices, but that the program had impacted them in other ways that had helped them in their educational and/or career ***paths*** by

providing them job readiness or life skills such as responsibility or a desire to help their community. Eight respondents (15%) indicated that the program had *not* influenced their educational or career trajectory.

Write-in comments exemplified these perspectives, emphasizing the importance of learning about topics such as food systems, the environment, public health, customer service, or the importance of social services through the program. Comments also noted more generalizable job readiness skills, such as resume building, leadership, work ethic, and communication. One alumnus connected the community focus of the program with their current field of study, explaining, "It impacted me in wanting to give more to my community and trying to make it a better place to work, live and hangout. This is why I'm focusing on Criminal Justice." Another alumnus explained how the program had impacted their specific educational goals:

> [The internship] exposed me to the field of preventative health. From there I began to grow a passion for the health field and in college I completed several scholarship programs and fellowships. I plan to obtain my degree in medicine in the future.

In terms of the ways that the program affected respondents' career ***trajectories****,* interview data provided additional qualitative information about the positive impacts of the program. Interviewees were asked: *"Think[ing] about your education or employment since finishing the East New York Farms! program, has your experience with ENYF! impacted your path in life?"* Table 11 below summarizes response themes, and provides examples of each theme as discussed by interviewees. Job and resume experience; job skills; and workplace skills (e.g., working with others) were the three key themes directly transferable to employment in a broad sense, while community change skills or inspiration (e.g., inspiration about the importance of youth impact in the community); and food and environmental skills (e.g., growing food; composting) related to the specific emphasis of the ENYF! program on food access and social justice. Interviewees also mentioned developing life skills such as leadership and working with people from other cultures.

Table 11. ***"Think about your education or employment since finishing the East New York Farms! program. Has your experience with ENYF! impacted your path in life?"***	
Themes	**Specific examples**
Job/resume experience	● First job; helped learn professionalism ● Gave experience for future jobs ● Experience to document on resume
Job skills	● Work ethic; determination; self-discipline ● Time management skills ● Organizational skills ● Work efficiency ● Communication skills ● Engaging an audience ● Team work/how to work with others ● Customer service ● Working with children
Workplace skills	● Self confidence (in the workplace); not being afraid to ask questions ● Articulating oneself ● Comfort around people, generally ● Working with different types of people ● Engaging in networks ● Handling different group dynamics ● Techniques to stay positive/maintain morale in stressful workplace situations
Community change skills or inspiration	● Making an impact in one's community, generally ● Inspiration about importance of youth-impact in the community ● Inspiration to seek jobs in activism, giving back to community ● Inspiration for raising awareness of issues affecting marginalized communities within these same communities
Food and environmental skills	● Identifying different vegetables and herbs ● Growing food ● Composting ● Cooking ● Introduction to foods from other cultures
Additional life skills	● Responsibility ● Leadership ● Keeping a budget ● Open-mindedness ● Interacting with elders/intergenerational rapport ● Introduction to people from cultures around the world

One interviewee explained specifically how the program emphasis on youth-led community change had impacted their career path:

> I was 13 years old when I joined ENYF! It taught me responsibility, leadership, team work, how to make an impact in your community because we are the youth. We are the next generation coming up. It's up to us to build better. We impact and reflect on the past and see what it has done to us and see the kind of chaos and the things that happen [...] I have learned so much. I learned how to articulate myself to certain people and how to engage an audience. It has taken me f[u]rther in many of my other jobs. Now I'm working for another non-profit organization that's working to reduce [...] violence in many communities. Of course it had an impact on me.

Another interviewee discussed the connections between learning about teamwork and their career in the health sector:

> I would say I really enjoyed working together. It was my first job and the internship helped build on the ground to learn how to work. I learned how to work with others and how to work fast. I remember we used to do group work and some people were assigned to do certain things. I would say even as a nurse now, I work very well in teams. I feel like [the program] helped in that sense.

A third interviewee noted that the program "opened my eyes to all the possibilities to all of the different jobs and work that we can do in the green field."

Survey responses also discussed impact of the program on alumni's specific career trajectories, connecting learning about the 'green' sector to their educational choices and employment. As one respondent noted, "ENYF! introduced me to the world of urban agriculture, food justice, and urban sustainability. Although I ended up studying Business Administration and Management in college, environmental work has remained the core of my passion." Another noted, "My experience at ENYF! definitely helped me out today as far as my career goals because I'm still farming [and] now teaching middle schoolers."

B. Self-development and engagement with broader community, food systems, environmental and social justice issues

In addition to information about educational and career trajectories of ENYF! Project alumni, this evaluation sought to understand the broader impact of the program in terms of*: Self and individual development outcomes;* alumni's interest in, and understanding of *food systems, health, environment, and social justice;* alumni's involvement *in community and civic engagement*; and *interpersonal relationships*, including with peers, neighborhood adults, and ENYF! Staff as mentors. This section reports on findings related to these themes and helps us to answer the research question:

- Has participation in the ENYF! Project's Youth Internship Program continued to affect *alumni's self-development and their engagement* with broader community, food systems, environmental, and social justice issues in years following the participation? If so, in what ways has it done this?

Self- and Individual development

In the questionnaire, a series of Likert-scale questions asked respondents to rate themselves on a scale of 'very likely' to 'never' across a number of aspects specifically related to *personal or individual development* ("self"). Respondents placed themselves generally at the high end of the spectrum in this question, as shown in Table 12. Respondents indicated particularly frequently: enjoyment of learning ('new skills,' 91%; and 'new information,' 87%); and having a sense of purpose in life (83%). A combined 60% indicated 'never' or 'rarely' having low self-esteem, though a combined 21% indicated 'sometimes' or 'very often' having low self-esteem.

Table 12. Individual development, "self" (n=53)

	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Very often
I am a good leader		2%	11%	26%	60%
I feel good about myself		2%	2%	28%	68%
I have a lot to be proud of		2%	9%	11%	77%
I have low self-esteem	**28%**	**32%**	19%	15%	6%
I am motivated at work	2%			26%	72%
I enjoy learning new information			2%	11%	**87%**
I am comfortable applying math and science concepts when I need them	2%	6%	11%	26%	55%
I enjoy learning new skills				9%	**91%**
I plan for my future	2%		4%	19%	75%
I enjoy trying new things			9%	13%	77%
I feel like I have a sense of purpose in life	2%	2%	2%	11%	**83%**
I have confidence in my beliefs even when they are different from how other people think			2%	21%	77%

In addition to respondents' self-assessment of personal development, we used communication and decision making skills as metrics to further gauge self-development outcomes. Another series of Likert-scale questions asked survey respondents to rate themselves on a scale of 'very likely' to 'never' across a number of characteristics related to these themes. As Table 13, shows, 79% indicated that they communicated well with others, and 70% indicated that they felt comfortable taking with friends or adults before making a decision 'very often.' A combined 74% indicated that peer pressure influenced their decisions either 'rarely' or 'never.'

Table 13. Communication and Decision Making (n=53)

	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Very often
I communicate well with others		2%		19%	**79%**
Peer pressure influences my decisions	**32%**	**42%**	13%	6%	8%
I consider multiple viewpoints before making a decision			4%	26%	**70%**
I feel comfortable talking with a friend or an adult about difficult decisions			11%	26%	**62%**
When I get upset, I feel comfortable talking it out with others	8%	15%	21%	23%	**34%**
I speak up or take action when I see a problem	2%		9%	32%	**57%**

Alumni also continued to be involved in socially positive activities after completing the program, which is an additional, positive indicator of self-development. This included 'looking for a new job or explor[ing] career opportunities,' in which nearly 70% of respondents reported being involved. This question was drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS), as noted in the Methods section of this report, to be able to compare results with the wider US population. Table 14 shows responses from the 2018 evaluation, the 2013 evaluation, and the GSS. Across all but one category, alumni response percentages were similar in the 2018 and 2013 evaluations. In both studies, nearly 75% reported trying to meet new people for social purposes in the year preceding the survey, figures higher than for all "non-White Americans" [sic] in similar age categories and the overall American population. The majority of respondents in the 2018 and 2013 studies reported looking for a new job or exploring career opportunities; reading beyond required for work or school; and participating in sports. Interestingly, a *lower* percentage of the 2018 respondents reported looking for a new job or exploring career opportunities (68%) than in the 2013 survey (80%); taken together, however, these figures are roughly similar to that among all "non-White Americans" [sic] in similar age categories (74%) and much higher the overall American population (37%).

Table 14. "*In the past year have you:*"

	Percent of ENYF! Alumni, 2018 (n=53)	Percent of ENYF! Alumni, 2013 (n=50)	Percent of 18-25 Non-White [sic] Americans	Percent of American Population
Tried to meet new people for social purposes?	72%	72%	44%	39%
Looked for a new job or explored career opportunities?	68%	80%	74%	37%
Read novels, short stories, poems, or plays, other than those required by work or school?	66%	60%	64%	30%
Participated in any sports such as running, biking, swimming, football, soccer, basketball or bowling?	59%	54%	68%	59%
Discussed your views about political or social policy issues, current affairs, or political campaigns with other people?	49%	46%	38%	61%
Looked for information about political or social policy issues, current affairs, or political campaigns?	38%	34%	25%	41%
Written novels, short stories, poems, or plays, other than those required by work/ school?	34%	38%	n/a	n/a
Volunteered at an arts or cultural organization?	34%	32%	9%	7%
Gone camping, hiking, or canoeing?	32%	20%	22%	44%
None of the above	6%	--	n/a	n/a

Totals greater than 100% due to multiple response.

National sample data used in Falxa- Raymond and Campbell (2013), from the General Social Survey, cumulative file 1972-2006, see www.norc.org/GSS+Website/ (Accessed 17 May 2013).

Alumni interview data corroborated the survey findings, touching on a number of inter-related themes. Asked "*Aside from education or employment, has your experience with ENYF! impacted you in other aspects of your life?,"* interviewees mentioned **working with people**, including those from different backgrounds, which some attributed to making it 'easier to be around people.' Interviewees also mentioned **teamwork and leadership**, in terms of cultivating a sense of personal responsibility toward collective goal; learning, through peer-mentoring, about leadership; and **learning patience** through the experience of working with others who may have been less motivated about a particular task or group-oriented goal. As one interviewee explained:

> I tell people this all of the time. Even in my personal life, I interact with people my own age, romantic relationships, or even my family. I definitely have more patience and I try

> to bring in rules that we went over in workshops to help with a conversation or help with the situation. I sit back and I realize that there are so many people that don't have the tools that I was given. A lot of people my age are acknowledging it saying 'we want to grow, we want to change but we don't know how.' Some of the things that others find difficult, I was able to learn at a younger age.

Many interviewees appreciated the **opportunity to be engaged in meaningful or enjoyable work** (such as physical work or working outside) and recounted having learned the importance of **dedication and work ethic** that continued to serve them in their post-ENYF! careers. Interviewees also reported developing interest in and skills related to **community advocacy** through participation in the program.

In terms of individual development, interviewees discussed increased **self-confidence** as a result of having participated in the program, and **enhanced communication skills**, some of which they attributed to working as youth staff at the farmers market.

Additionally, **food, health and the environment** (discussed further below) were strong themes in terms of what stood out to alumni in the program. Interviewees mentioned learning about new vegetables, and about gardening and growing food. Alumni tied this to learning about healthy cooking and eating, which some noted had also impacted their families' eating habits, and, more broadly, learning about the food system (e.g., the structural dimensions of the food system such as access to healthy food, as well as nutrition) as a determinant of health. This is an important part of providing education about urban agriculture and its place in the broader community. As one interviewee explained:

> I definitely would say that, as a 15 year-old, I started eating completely different. I saw a change, not necessarily in my diet, but [in] the way that I went about my nutrition. I would also say that it gave me a new outlook on life in regards to interacting with people on a personal level and on a work related level.

Interpersonal relationships were an additional aspect of the program that remained in alumni's minds (discussed further below). Interviewees noted that **forming friends**, and **having a social life through the program** were meaningful, and **having mentors,** specifically those who talked to them about college was important. As explained by one interviewee: "On an interpersonal level. [These are] some of the things that I gained from working with some of the [ENYF!] staff members from back then."

Food Systems, Health, Environment, and Social Justice

In the survey, we asked respondents to rate themselves on a scale of 'very likely' to 'never' regarding attitudes toward and behaviors surrounding food, their own health, the food system, and the environment. Here again, responses fell mostly along the desired outcomes. Particularly high across respondents were **caring about the environment** (77% of respondents), and **understanding of where food comes from** (66% of respondents), as shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Food, health, and environment, (n=53)					
	Never	**Rarely**	**Every once in a while**	**Sometimes**	**Very often**
I grow food or garden	28%	23%	17%	9%	23%
I have a good understanding of where my food comes from	2%		4%	28%	**66%**
I cook	2%	8%	8%	28%	55%
I eat fruits and vegetables		2%	6%	32%	60%
I am physically active	2%	2%	13%	32%	51%
I eat fast food	6%	19%	34%	25%	17%
I care about nature and the environment			2%	21%	**77%**
I try to find ways to reduce waste (compost, reduce, reuse)	2%	13%	11%	34%	40%

In the interviews, alumni also spoke of food, environment and health themes. One alumnus noted that the program "opened my eyes to all the possibilities to all of the different jobs and work that we can do in the green field." Others mentioned these as the *most important* aspects of the program, noting having learned about **sustainable agriculture**; **ecosystems**; and **healthy eating**. One interviewee recounted how the program had enriched their understanding of the connections between food, their own health, and the broader food system, inspiring them to help others:

> [It] made me more conscious of where my food was coming from. I was part of a weight loss program when I was a child, so I was introduced to the concept of not just mere junk food, but [that] some foods are not made the same as others. I remember when we first went to [the] sessions hearing about how so many big food companies would distribute the food where there is a lot of chemicals and processing, and a lot of disconnect with food, whereas locally grown produce has none of that—no pesticides, no preservatives. It made me more food conscious. It helped me help people out.

When asked to recount a positive memory about their time in the program, alumni discussed memories of **providing organic vegetables to people in East New York** and **making food from recipes distributed in the program**. One interviewee recalled:

> The time we did the surveys at one of our markets [stands out] because I wasn't just at the stand selling the produce we grow. I was actually interacting and talking with the customers and vendors, and I got to survey customers and civilians on their opinions about how we could improve with our markets and the pros and cons to it. A lot of people appreciated what we had to offer because there's not a lot of places that provide organic and fresh fruits and vegetables, so they were very fortunate and grateful for the market.

Another interviewee recounted learning about beekeeping by watching work with the beehives that are kept at ENYF!

> I think the most positive memory is when we finally got honey and the honeybees being installed. It was interesting to me to see the whole process. It was interesting because I thought 'Is it going to be there all the time?' Every time I walk past the library [where the beehives are kept], I check to see if they're still there.

Alumni further discussed becoming more conscious of food access disparities in New York City through participation in the program. As explained by one interviewee:

> The farmers' market [was memorable]...All of the vegetables being sold...organic vegetables in a place like East New York [where] there is junk food everywhere. I never knew about farmers' markets [before]. Every time I pass the World Trade Center [I see that] they have a market every Tuesday. [But] when I used to live in Brownsville...there were two [farmers'] markets and a garden across from my house.

And, another interviewee discussed ways in which involvement in the farm and market had impacted eating habits in their family:

> [Now I] know how to farm and grow crops. Everyone is into that now and I'm just like 'Been there, done that!' [It] definitely helped my family and what they eat. My mom loves everything organic now. It wasn't the history of my family; [many have] heart disease or diabetes.

Community and Civic Engagement

A series of Likert-scale questions in the survey asked respondents to rate themselves on a scale of 'very likely' to 'never' regarding participation in their community. As Table 16 shows, 85% indicated 'surrounding ones' self with people having a positive influence;' 83% indicated 'very often' feeling comfort interacting with people of different races, genders, and abilities; and 68% indicated feeling capable of making changes in their community and beyond. A combined 68% indicated 'never' or 'rarely' to feeling lonely or disconnected from the people around them.

Table 16. Community (n=53)

	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Very often
I take leadership roles in my community	11%	17%	26%	23%	23%
I participate in community activities (volunteering, clubs, community gardens, church groups, etc.)	2%	19%	23%	36%	21%
I feel close to my friends and peers		4%	11%	28%	57%
I feel lonely or disconnected from the people around me	**30%**	**38%**	17%	11%	4%
I feel close to the adults in my life		2%	13%	34%	51%
I feel connected to a larger community (school, church, neighborhood, community groups)	2%	13%	17%	36%	32%
I feel comfortable interacting with people of different races, genders, and abilities				17%	**83%**
I surround myself with people who are a positive influence on me				15%	**85%**
I feel capable of making change in my community and beyond		4%	8%	21%	**68%**

The questionnaire also asked whether respondents had engaged in a number of community-oriented or civic engagement activities in the year preceding the survey. This question was drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS) and additional national-level data sources, as noted in the Methods section of this report, to be able to compare results with the wider US population. Table 17 shows responses from the 2018 evaluation, the 2013 evaluation, and respective additional data sources. More than half (55%) reported having signed a petition; 45% reported having voted; and 40% reported having attended a public meeting. However, 19% reported not having participated in any of the named civic activities.

Alumni responses were generally similar in 2018 and 2013, and similar to those of the general US population. However, a higher percentage of alumni in 2018 reported signing a petition than in 2013 (55% versus 40%, respectively), which we suspect is due to the divided political climate at the national level since the presidential election of 2016, along with the concurrent increased

prevalence of online petitions. A lower percentage of alumni reported in 2018 having voted in an election compared with 2013 respondents (45% versus 52%, respectively). Given the demographics of East New York (i.e., majority Black and Latino), we suspect that this may be due to the popularity of former President Barack Obama (who ran for re-election in 2012 but not in 2016 due to term limits) among this voting demographic (Roper Center, n.d.): younger alumni who would not have been voters in the 2012 election may have abstained from voting in the 2016 presidential election if they did not feel compelled to vote for one of the candidates. A much greater percentage of alumni in both 2018 and 2013 reported having given a speech than did the general population. We do note that interns are often provided opportunities through the program to speak at youth convenings and food systems events, which likely explains this effect, but does not diminish its importance in youth interns developing public speaking skills.

Table 17. ***"In the past year have you:"***

	Percent of ENYF! Alumni in 2018 (n=53)	**Percent of ENYF! Alumni in 2013 (n=50)**	**Percent of American Population**
Signed a petition?[b]	55%	40%	35%
Voted in an election?[a]	45%	52%	41%
Attended a public, town, community board, or school meeting?[c]	40%	28%	44%
Worn a button, or distributed or put up a flyer/sticker/poster of a political campaign?[d]	32%	26%	23%
Given a speech?[c]	32%	24%	4%
Contacted an elected government representative?[b]	17%	18%	22%
Collected money or signatures for a cause?	17%	10%	n/a
Contacted the national or local media?[a]	11%	4%	6%
Participated in a protest?[b]	9%	8%	6%
None of the above	*19%*	---	--

National level data sources as used in Falxa-Raymond and Campbell, 2013:

a) 2012 voter turnout for people ages 18-24 from *The Youth Vote in 2012* CIRCLE Fact Sheet, see http://www.civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CIRCLE_2013Factsheet_FinalYouthVoting2012.pdf (Accessed 17 May 2013).

b) National sample data from the General Social Survey, cumulative file 1972-2006, see www.norc.org/GSS+Website/ (Accessed 17 May 2013).

c) National sample data from the Roper Social and Political Trends Data, 1973-1994, see http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/data/datasets/roper_trends.html (Accessed 24 June 2010).

d) National sample data from the CIRCLE Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey, Ages 15-25, 2006, see http://www.civicyouth.org/the-2006-civic-and-political-health-of-the-nation/ (Accessed 17 May 2013).

The alumni interviews corroborated the survey findings about community development and civic engagement. Asked *"What were the most important aspects of the program for you, personally?"* interviewees mentioned several aspects related to this theme, including **'learning more about my community'** and **helping others** through visits to other [non-ENYF!] urban gardens. As explained by one interviewee:

> For a program to actively reach out to people in the community and teach us about our own community that we did not know and create a sense of our community is a big thing that I look back at now. I am really grateful for it. It taught us so much more than what they taught us in school.

Some interviewees drew direct connections between what they saw as the most important aspects of the program and their educational trajectories:

> [G]ardening and going around to other community gardens to help garden and renovate the vacant lots [was most important] because that has also helped me learn about my community. Now I'm majoring in sociology and politics, so that kind of relates. I always reminisce on when I used to work on the farm and how I've helped and have been a part of my own society, helping to develop with urbanization and then growing gardens.

Interviewees mentioned several additional points connected to community development, including **developing respect for small business owners** [at the market] who are "trying to make a living" through their business while also caring their customers; **helping and/or establishing relationships with community elders;** and **seeing the community helping itself**.

Interpersonal relationships

Interpersonal and mentor relationships are key aspects of the ENYF! program, and this was indeed important to the survey respondents and interviewees, particularly in terms of peer- and intergenerational friendships, and staff mentor-mentee relationships.

Peers and neighborhood adults. Interviewees were asked**:** *"Did you form any lasting friendships or working relationships with peers or adults from your time at ENYF!? Could you tell me more about them?"* Responses provided rich stories about the relational aspects of the program, including **lasting friendships** and the **importance of socializing with peers**. As one interviewee noted:

> We all have each other on social media. It's good because we get to share our experience in ENYF! We can talk about it and share. Everything happens so quickly on social media. It's like networking so everyone gets the word. Having the same people from your circle that you knew from a long time and being able to reflect on the experiences we had and build off of it for the future is just awesome.

Another interviewee explained the importance of the program in terms of a social place outside of school:

> I think the program was more of a space for me to interact with people [...] I had not socialized a lot before the program but working with the same people over and over again in groups, I got a couple of people's numbers and I hung with them after. I had a good two friends my first years [...] For me, it was the only space I really had to socialize with people. I'm sure there are a ton of kids that come in every year and it's their only place to socialize with people outside of school. It does provide something very valuable.

A third interviewee discussed the way that the program provided a safe place for youth who may not have otherwise felt a sense of security and support:

> [at ENYF!], I got the chance to meet people like me, children who are just innocent children who want to just have fun and live their life. So I got the chance to meet friends, it gave me a social life. It helped me learn about my future and everything...I felt like I had mentors, I had friends.

Throughout the interviews, numerous alumni also provided accounts of their rapport with individual gardeners, market vendors, and community elders, as illustrated in the examples below. One interviewee recalled specific interactions with elders and ENYF! staff:

> [I remember] Ms. [Elder A], definitely, because she's always saying "hi" to someone and always has something to say. Every time I see her at the market, or when I stop by, she's always catching up or talking to me. I remember one time we went to her garden and she was telling us about her typing skills and how fast she used to type and then she got arthritis so she backed down from the job. It's nice having the chance to hear older people and the experiences they went through and how they've helped the community out.

A second interviewee expressed their view that small actions, on the part of elders and market vendors, had great meaning for youth in the program:

> "Ms. [Elder B] was very patient. I used to ask her about her [healthy] drink and she would tell me the mixes that she would put it in... It was the way she came off. It was so natural. Everyone had such a pure heart when they spoke to people in the community. [The market vendors] were not just selling for the product, but selling to really get us to understand why they are doing what they are doing and let them know that there is people out here that have a mission to get us right...Just the little gestures that people do for us and it has the impact on us. It showed us that we should give that kind of impact off to the world."

Another interviewee summarized the impact of the relationships fostered through the program, providing their perspective on the longevity of the ENYF! approach to community building:

> It was interesting how certain gardeners or vendors may have come down hard on us and [at first] we just didn't understand [why]. As time went on, you realize that they could be just like your aunt or just like your grandmother, like the neighborhood grandmother. Once that switches in your mind, you actually take whatever time you get with that person and you cherish it. You want to learn things...I think ENYF! is ahead of its time. People are starting to do it now, but we've been doing it...The community and working on yourself – it's not just some hip thing to be a part of.

ENYF! Staff. In addition to relationships formed with peers and community elders, alumni interviewees were specifically asked what they saw as the impact of ENYF! staff on the program during the time they were in the internship. The types of stories recounted demonstrate the care, trust, and deep mentor-mentee relationships with staff that alumni had experienced during their time as interns in the program. These included helping youth navigate wider social issues including racialized policing, as well as focus on education, self-development, and job skills. One alumnus recounted discussions led by ENYF! staff in the period following the fatal shooting in the state of Florida of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, which were constructed to help ENYF! youth interns grapple with the situation:

> One thing that I always remember is, I believe the year of the Trayvon Martin shooting...that week [ENYF! staff member] Sarita sat [my group] down at a table at the farm and she asked us all how we felt about it. At the time, I didn't have an answer because it wasn't something that I cared about. I was maybe 14, 15. I wasn't really sure about the relations with police and people of color and around the country. For me, I just tried to become more aware of things after because I was kind of embarrassed. I didn't have an answer. Frankly, at the time, I didn't really care much. We see these things happen on what seems to be a daily basis and it must have been frustrating for Sarita at the time who I know deeply cares about that. It just showed that Sarita cared more about the program directly and she cares about outside the program as well. For just our safety, we did get those once a week, in the community room, we would have workshops and it did teach us things outside of the program. She cared about our lives outside of the program...[The staff] made it very, very clear that this wasn't just a pay job. They cared about us outside of the program...I never had that experience before and I haven't had that experience afterwards because every job I've had since then, say a coffee shop or being a doorman, I go there, do my thing, and then I leave.

Another alumnus explained the importance of staff members' dedication to the interns, and their ability to model motivation:

> I feel like staff put a big input and role. The reason why I say that is because if your staff is not motivated, the children won't be motivated. I feel like staff played a big role because sometimes they were able to listen to us talk about anything as far as school

> and other things. It wasn't just always about work. Most of it from my time, we used to always have positive staff that I liked. My favorite staff was [ENYF! staff member] David. He would tell us stories about college and things. I used to always find it funny and always had me open minded to things. I remember in the beginning he told me how he studied Spanish and I just admired that...He used to always plot little seeds in my head. It's always good to learn another language and it brings opportunities. He was just a cool, fun role model. He wasn't always the serious one, and I liked that.

A third interviewee discussed a 'tough love' approach that ENYF! sometimes takes in its work with youth:[8]

> Staff [were] great. They were awesome and so cool. They were harsh on us when the time needed it because it was important. Being that they were the ones that were guiding us, they needed that certain leadership among us. They were always there when we needed that kind of help and were always there to support us off and on the job. They always looked after us. To have those kind of people there for you to support you and want to see you do better, it really does have an impact on youth like myself. [ENYF! staff member] Roy was my group leader so he really taught us that when we felt like giving up...He was always motivating in a calm, cool manner. He just knew how to talk to the youth. He was considerate and always there.

Additionally, in the survey, in an open-ended write-in question asking for additional respondent comments, many alumni specifically mentioned staff, in addition to providing positive comments about the program overall. One respondent noted, "Leaders at ENY Farms cared about all of the youth and took time out to teach us not only how to garden and sell products but how to interact with people, and managing money. Weekly workshops were important as well and different topics (life skills workshops) were essential. " Another respondent stated concisely, "I would like to shout out Sarita, Deborah, and David for working with me and other people and helping us."

These findings reflect the emphasis on care, as described in previous studies and program documents. (See Daftary-Steel 2015; and Delia 2014 for a discussion.) They underscore the unique approach that ENYF! takes to building relationships and rapport as a part of its community and youth development work in this environmental justice community.

[8] See Daftary-Steel 2015. *Growing Young Leaders in East New York: Lessons from the East New York Farms Internship Program*.

C. Alumni's overall assessment of the program and suggestions for program improvement

In line with the participatory approach taken in this evaluation, we asked alumni about their overall assessment of the ENYF! Project program, and their suggestions for future improvements to achieve positive outcomes for youth. This section briefly reports these suggestions and helps us to understand possible directions for future improvement as seen by program alumni.

Overall assessment of program

In a Likert-scale question, we asked survey respondents to rank the top three components of the program. Underscoring the importance of the ENYF! Project's emphasis on jobs and career preparation, **'**Developing job skills' was the most frequently top-ranked selection, with 25 respondents (47%) selecting this as the number one component. The second-most-highly ranked was farm and garden work, falling squarely within the green jobs sector (n=14, 26%). These results are shown in Table18.

Table 18. Top ranked component of the program (n=53)

	Number	Percent
Developing job skills	25	47%
Farm and garden work	14	26%
Interacting with adults and the broader community	4	8%
Workshops	4	8%
Interacting with my peers	2	4%
Working in the farmers market	1	2%
no response	3	6%
Total	**53**	**100%**

When asked in interviews about the *'most important aspects of the program,'* responses corroborated the survey findings above. Interviewees mentioned points about leadership, teamwork/working with others, determination, patience, humility, working and forming friendships/camaraderie with other youth, and forming intergenerational connections, as the best parts of the program. **Work experience** and **how to operate in a professional environment** were particularly important, as one alumnus explained:

> I would definitely say that safe space that was created for workshops, along with the information from the workshops; it has been super important. Going forward, I've learned the 'do's and don'ts' when it comes to being in a professional space. I also gained a lot of general knowledge from that. I would also say building camaraderie with my peers around that age. That really took me far as a 15, 16 year old.

A write-in survey question asked additionally *"What did you learn by working at ENY Farms? How do you think it's affected you?"* The following themes were observed, mirroring those identified in the 2013 survey, with the addition of the category 'teamwork, collaboration, and leadership.'

- Communication/social skills
    - Overcoming shyness
    - Teaching, public speaking
    - Customer service
- Responsibility/work ethic
    - Time management
    - Show up prepared for work
- Confidence/Self-Efficacy
- Math skills and money management
- Gardening/eating healthier/food systems/agriculture/fruits and vegetables
    - Importance of all of the above
- Community awareness and engagement
    - Social justice, environmental justice awareness
    - Desire to help others, give back to community
    - Transfer of knowledge learned at ENYF! to another setting
- Multiculturalism/diversity/tolerance/patience
    - Talking to, and working with people of all ages and ethnicities
- Job readiness/career ladder
    - Resumes, transferring skills to other jobs, thinking about future career
- Fundamental values/self-identity
- Teamwork, collaboration, leadership

The following quotations from the survey exemplify some of these themes. One respondent wrote:

> ENY Farms was my **first job experience**, so I learned so much that has shaped my professional development. Representing ENY Farms at different conferences, managing the farm stand, leading panels and workshops and volunteer groups as well as have really helped me transition into my career.

Another respondent explained:

> ENY Farms was the first job i worked in where I needed to watch over and assist our new interns. This **tested my ability to work in a group** because I always wanted to do things correct and quick but I realized the hard way that if we all signed up to work we must all help each other.

A third survey responded recalled:

> I remembered the question that I was asked at my ENYF! [internship] interview was about commitment. I have no idea what I answered or if I even understood the

> question... But by working at ENYF! I was able to answer questions about commitment at my other job interviews. Subconsciously, **I figured out what commitment meant by interning at ENYF!**

Another respondent noted ways in which the community aspect of the program had helped them in their subsequent work environment:

> This community institution was the **first place where I experienced what is was like to partake in an interview,** and taught me what to look forward in future interviews. Also, by working at the farmers' markets, it has expanded my...communication skills and taught me how to converse and deal with customers. ENY Farms has taught me what it really was like to be a part of the community. And what is expected of you as a worker."

Another alumnus wrote about the importance of learning about urban agriculture in terms of understanding some of the social and political context of food insecurity and environmental change:

> Agriculture is an important factor in our lives that many of us who live, or have lived in big cities, may not experience. We see the supermarkets or fast food restaurants and we obtain our products while missing the process. In inner cities [sic] we tend to flock to the fast food restaurants and unhealthy food options, which in turn give us unwanted physical conditions in the future. Looking back **my experience at ENY Farms has reinforced the idea that communities should become more self-sufficient in terms of food production.** This could help defend against the environmental issues that we are going to face in the very near future.

Alumni's suggestions for improvement.

In addition to understanding how alumni assessed the program overall, we were interested in learning about alumni's suggestions for improving the program. These perspectives are summarized below.

'More!'

If wanting more is a mark of a successful program, ENYF! has had much success, according to alumni. Respondents suggested **additional engagement** with the following:

- visits to experience different cultures, such as restaurants or different neighborhoods in Brooklyn
- trips to farms upstate New York, or out of state
- conferences
- fun activities
- peer group trips to strengthen bonding/friendships
- collaboration with other youth programs in city
- leadership opportunities, including giving first year interns the experience of creating and organizing a community outreach program

Also suggested were **bringing in outside guest speakers**, and **giving tours of the garden** for people who are not directly involved with the gardens or with ENYF! Several respondents thought that the **program should be expanded,** offering specific suggestions including:

- expanding and integrating the program into the New York City public school system
- opening more slots for youth
- reaching out to youth outside of ENY and "all over the world," with one respondent suggesting peer-to-peer outreach

Workshop topics
Respondents also suggested several additional workshop topics, specifically:

- more education about politics and the law
- more home economics (e.g., cooking)
- workshops on "feelings and emotions," including [personal] relationship advice

Guidance and mentoring
Some respondents suggested more one-on-one guidance or mentoring, specifically:

- more personalized career/job/college counseling throughout the program
- individual check-ins with youth (about school, life, home)
- connect current interns/youth with alumni in the same career fields that they would want to be in
- start a mentor program with alumni that want to volunteer to help ENYF!

As one respondent explained:

> I think ENY farms could offer more career-deciding help. For example, bringing in college students from CUNY [City University of New York] to speak about their journey and how they figured out their career. Also giving more home economic opportunities. For example I remember cooking different things with the garden veggies, but I think it would benefit the youth to learn more about 'adulting' and what to expect and the 'do's and don'ts.'

The alumni reflections and suggestions presented here, in addition to their utility in future program development, are a mark of the holistic thinking that is supported among alumni within the program, many of whom, evidently, leave the program with broader perspectives about the connections between themselves and their own trajectories, as well as that between youth more generally and community-driven work.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation finds that the East New York Farms! Project's Youth Internship Program successfully provides educational and training opportunities in sustainable urban agriculture, food and environmental systems, and community engagement. The program combines urban agriculture, environmental justice and food systems learning with workshops, teamwork and job training opportunities for East New York youth. In doing so, the program nimbly weaves together skill building related to environmental and community resilience, green jobs, and the food system in, and beyond this environmental justice community.

Through the survey, interviews, document review, and participant observation conducted in this evaluation, we observed that the ENYF! Project's Youth Internship Program has had important outcomes for alumni over the program's nearly twenty-year history.

Alumni reported higher levels of educational attainment than both the surrounding ENY community and New York City as a whole, and had engaged in post-secondary educational and training programs in a broad range of areas, including those related to the environment, urban agriculture, and food systems, but also social service-oriented disciplines. Alumni attended school in various geographic locations within and beyond the city, at public and/or private (including for-profit) institutions.

Alumni are employed at slightly higher levels than those of the surrounding ENY community and New York City overall. An interesting finding with respect to employment pertains to the types of occupations in which alumni are working: primarily sales and customer service, or health professions or emergency response, but also fields related to the work at ENYF!, namely culinary professions and urban agriculture. This suggests an area of potential exploration for ENYF! as discussed below.

The most important aspect of the program for many alumni is the focus on job experience and gaining workplace skills. In the surveys and interviews; in ranking- as well as open-ended questions, alumni recounted many and diverse ways in which their time spent in the internship program had helped them in their subsequent job and career trajectories. This is particularly relevant since many of the alumni noted not having had other opportunities to learn workplace skills, from time management to teamwork to handling stressful workplace scenarios. Additionally, alumni noted having broadened their understandings of possibilities to work on environmental or food-related occupations through the program, and several reported actively working in these fields.

Beyond specific educational and job or career-related outcomes, alumni reported an array of outcomes related to broader community, food-, and environmental systems, including self-development; understanding broader contexts of food security and environmental racism, including how these connect to health and community well-being; learning ways in which urban agriculture and community-centered development can begin to address inequities on several levels; and becoming aware and inspired about the role that youth may play in leading positive

change. As has been found in previous studies of the ENYF! project, and in other studies of green jobs training for youth, forming interpersonal, and intergenerational relationships, and feeling cared for by staff and community mentors, is a lasting take-away for program alumni.

Recommendations

The previous section of this report provided *alumni's suggestions* for future program improvement. Based on an overall assessment of the research findings, and in line with the goals of the ENYF! program and the focus in this evaluation on education and career trajectories among alumni, the following overarching recommendations may inform potential growth and future work:

- East New York Farms! Project should continue combining agriculture, food system, and environmental learning with life-skill, community-development, and job readiness training. This is a unique, and key aspect of the program, and one that may be of increasing relevance in the context of expected growth in the green economy and green jobs sector. It is particularly important in the context of the environmental, economic, and food security challenges that the East New York community, and its youth, face.

- The program should also continue its emphasis on care and interpersonal relationships, as identified in previous studies and reports (Delia 2014; Daftary-Steel 2015), as core to the program. Caring intergenerational and mentor-mentee relationships experienced while in the program were highly meaningful to alumni in this study, and may also have effects on educational and career trajectories in ways that are not easily measurable.

- ENYF! may wish to consider further honing its focus on jobs and careers, in light of sectors in which alumni reported working (sales/customer service; health professions) and alumni's desired or otherwise recommended career trajectories. For example, using information about which occupational fields, including green jobs, are projected to grow in the future, or which types of jobs are likely to support a living wage, could help the program target skill development in these directions. Information about growth in green jobs, urban agriculture, and other food and environmental sectors would be particularly useful in this regard. Such an initiative could involve further collaborative research, new pedagogical approaches, and/or inviting guest speakers or counselors who are experts on these topics.

- Relatedly, ENYF! might consider honing or expanding educational mentorship for youth, such as discussions about types of colleges (e.g., public, private, and for profit institutions); deciding which type of post-secondary educational or training programs to attend; and affording education, including understanding budgeting, personal finance, and debt. As above, such an effort could involve outside speakers or educational guidance counselors to discuss these topics and consult with youth interns.

Conclusion

The East New York Farms! Project's Youth Internship Program has a nearly twenty-year history of providing meaningful and useful experiences to youth in the environmental justice community in which it is situated. As we learned in this evaluation, alumni value their experiences in the program on many levels, and in a diversity of ways. The above recommendations, and those of alumni, may only help ENYF! to continue to operate as a learning program, to thrive, and to serve youth in the current generation and in the future, in the East New York community and beyond.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Documents Reviewed For Study Design

Daftary-Steel, S. 2015. Growing Young Leaders in East New York. Lessons from the East New York Farms! Youth Internship Program.

Daftary-Steel, S., Herrera, H., and Porter, C. M. 2015. The unattainable trifecta of urban agriculture. Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development. Advance online publication. http://dx.doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2015.061.014

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Reynolds, K. and Cohen, N. 2016. Beyond the Kale: Urban Agriculture and Social Justice Activism in New York City. University of Georgia Press: Athens.

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Appendix 2.

Additional American Community Survey Demographics Tables

Racial Demographics in East New York* (2013-2017, American Community Survey)				
	East New York*		**New York City**	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Black or African American Alone	104,312	**55%**	1,885,890	22%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	65,561	**35%**	2,491,496	29%
Asian alone	7,525	4%	1,188,404	14%
White alone	6,623	4%	2,747,159	32%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	325	0%	15,060	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	82	0%	2,819	0%
Some other race alone	*1,799*	*1%*	*74,287*	*1%*
Two or more races	*2,042*	*1%*	*154,957*	*2%*
(Not Hispanic/Latino)	*122,708*	*65%*	*6,068,576*	*71%*
*Data for East New York: Starrett City (BK93), East New York (BK82), East New York (Pennsylvania Ave) (BK85), Cypress Hills-City Line (BK83).				
Source: New York City Planning Department. Population FactFinder/2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS). https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/profile/5208/demographic.. Accessed July 6, 2019.				

Income, Cash Assistance, and SNAP Benefits in East New York (2013-2017, American Community Survey)				
	East New York*		**New York City**	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
Total households	*64,629*	*100%*	*3,142,405*	*100%*
Median household income (dollars)	$36,612		$57,782	
Households with cash public assistance income	5,821	9%	133,893	4%
Households with Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months	21,041	33%	633,636	20%
Per capita income (dollars)	$18,524		$35,761	
*Data for East New York: Starrett City (BK93), East New York (BK82), East New York (Pennsylvania Ave) (BK85), Cypress Hills-City Line (BK83).				
Source: New York City Planning Department. Population FactFinder/2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS). https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/profile/5208/economic. Accessed July 6, 2019.				

Select Population Living Below Poverty Level in East New York* (2013-2017, American Community Survey)				
	East New York*		**New York City**	
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
All families (total)	*42,838*	*100%*	*1,881,005*	*100%*
Families living below poverty	10,703	25%	305,222	16%
Population under 18 years (total)	*48,388*	*100%*	*1,764,704*	*100%*
Population under 18 years living below poverty	18,314	38%	490,395	28%
*Data for East New York: Starrett City (BK93), East New York (BK82), East New York (Pennsylvania Ave) (BK85), Cypress Hills-City Line (BK83).				
Source: New York City Planning Department. Population FactFinder/2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS). https://popfactfinder.planning.nyc.gov/profile/5208/economic. Accessed July 6, 2019.				

Appendix 3.

Detailed Research and High School Equivalency Calculation Methods

Detailed survey methods

In fall 2018, the evaluation team designed two online questionnaires, building on the 2013 questionnaire, with minor changes (e.g., omission of some questions and addition of others, in order to obtain the desired data for this evaluation). One questionnaire ("Survey A") was for alumni who had finished (i.e., 'graduated') from the program; the second questionnaire ("Survey B") was for alumni who had stopped participating in the program before completion. The questionnaires asked about respondents' current employment status; educational and career trajectories since completing the program; participation in community and civic engagement; views about their experience in the program (e.g., what they learned; what were the most important parts of the program); whether and how the program continued to be meaningful to participants in their own lives; and suggestions for improving the program. Questions were similar in each questionnaire, but tailored to be relevant to whether a respondent had completed the program or not. (For example, those who did not complete the program were asked to share reasons that they left the program before completion.)

Following the methodology used in the 2013 evaluation, the 2018 questionnaires included specific questions from the General Social Survey (GSS), a national-level sociological survey, conducted since 1972, which gathers data on attitudes, behaviors, and attributes in contemporary US society (see https://gss.norc.org/), as well as other national-level data sources. Inclusion of the GSS and additional national-level survey questions enabled the evaluation team to make comparisons between our survey sample and the overall US population.[9] In this report, we use the 2013 GSS data for comparison with our 2018 evaluation findings and the findings of the 2013 evaluation. The questionnaires included multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended, write-in questions.

The surveys were administered online using Google Forms for ease of implementation and subsequent use by ENYF! program staff. ENYF! staff sent survey recruitment requests to all program alumni having participated in the program for whom contact information was available, N= 237. (Contact information was not available for four program alumni.) Of these,186 had completed the program, and 51 had not, according to ENYF! records. Recruitment requests directed participants to the relevant questionnaire (A or B). Respondents were offered a small 'thank you' gift of their choice (subway card; gift card; or ENYF! sweatshirt) for completing the questionnaire. Recruitment requests were sent via email, social media contact, and postcard in October 2018. Follow-up reminders were sent via postcard in December 2018. Responses were collected between October 2018 and January 2019.

[9] Survey questions drawn from the GSS or other data source reports are denoted in the report where relevant.

Questionnaire responses were compiled automatically in Google Spreadsheets, and were reviewed and cleaned for analysis. Based on program archives, ENYF! staff manually entered into the spreadsheet information about when respondents had begun the program; their age when they began the program; and their age at the time of the survey. This was to ensure accuracy, as responses to these write-in questions on the questionnaire were not uniform. Responses were downloaded the Google Spreadsheet for coding and analysis in Excel.

Detailed interview methods.
Following the surveys, in spring 2019, the evaluation team conducted interviews of a select number of program alumni, following a participatory evaluation methodology co-developed and used previously by the lead evaluator (2018). The lead evaluator worked with the ENYF! Program Director and staff to design the interview questions and protocol. Questions were open-ended and asked about how participation in the program had affected alumni's education and employment trajectory; how participation had affected other aspects of their lives; the impact of ENYF! staff on the program impacts; and about various types of working or social relationships formed through the program, including with other adults (e.g., gardeners, market vendors) and with program peers. Interview questions were pilot-tested with three current ENYF! Project staff members who are also alumni of the program (hereafter, "alumni-staff") and then refined for use.

ENYF! staff selected potential non-staff interviewees from among survey respondents who had completed the program, and who had indicated in the questionnaire a willingness to participate in an evaluation interview. An attempt was made to select at least one alumnus from each year of the program, and those representing different lengths of time spent in the program (i.e., one, two, three, or four years). Interviews were conducted in person or by phone. Responses were audio recorded, then transcribed. Interview transcripts were coded for analysis in a simple word processing program.

High school equivalency calculation

A *preliminary review* of the data found that: 49% of respondents reported having completed high school or GED, 32% reported having completed a 4-year college program, 8% reported having completed a 2-year college program; 11% reported having completed a job or career training program; and 13% reported not having not completed any education or training at the time of the survey.

However, language instructing respondents to "select all that apply" did not appear on the Google Form (as discussed in the Limitations section in the report), and we suspect that most respondents may have checked only their *highest level* of education, rather than selecting *all* relevant options, leading to lower reported completion of high school or equivalency in particular: A high school degree or equivalency[10] is required for to enter college programs, yet

[10] The questionnaire in this evaluation used the term "GED," though we note for accuracy that, according to the NYC DOE: "As of January 1, 2014, the GED test is no longer offered in New York State. The GED has been replaced by the TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) exam which will continue to lead students to a High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma."

19 of the respondents who indicated either having completed or being currently enrolled in a 2-year and/or 4-year college program *did not also indicate* on the survey having completed high school or a GED. By assigning high school or equivalency to all those who either indicated this in the survey *or* did not indicate it but indicated enrollment in college (i.e., adding 19 to the number indicating HS/GED), we find that high school/GED completion rate among *all* respondents is 83%. When excluding the responses of respondents who were under 18 at the time of the survey (n=6), we calculate that 94% of survey respondents 18 years or older at the time of the survey had completed a HS or GED.

Appendix 4.

Questionnaires

East New York Farms! Alumni Survey - 2018

We are surveying alumni from ENYF so we can know what you have been doing since leaving the program, as well as the impact of the program on your life. This will help us continue growing and improving the program.

You are eligible and encouraged to participate in this survey even if you filled out the 2012 Alumni Survey

We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey! We estimate it will take you about 20-25 minutes. You will also receive a thank you gift from us – your choice of a $20 MetroCard; 2 movie tickets to a Regal/United Artists theater; or a 20th Anniversary ENYF Hoody – after you've completed the entire survey and returned it to us at:

David Vigil
United Community Centers
613 New Lots Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11207

SURVEY MUST BE COMPLETED BY DECEMBER 1ST, 2018

**If we have your email address, you'll also receive an email version of this survey. You can fill out either the paper or email version.*

ABOUT YOU

1. **What are you doing *now*? (***Check all that apply***)**
   - ❑ In 4-year college program full time (full credit load)
   - ❑ In 4-year college program part time (half credit load or less)
   - ❑ In 2-year college program full time (full credit load)
   - ❑ In 2-year college program part time (half credit load or less)
   - ❑ In a job training or career program
   - ❑ Working full time (35 hours or more)
   - ❑ Working part time (under 35 hours)
   - ❑ Seeking work or unemployed

2. What education or training have you *already completed*? *(Check all that apply)*
   - ❑ Completed a job training or career program
   - ❑ Completed a 4 year college program
   - ❑ Completed a 2 year college program
   - ❑ Completed high school or GED
   - ❑ None completed yet

3. If you are in college, what is your major? Or if you haven't picked your major, what do you think you'd like to study? If you have graduated from college, what was your major?

4. If you completed a job training or career program (other than college), what did you study?

5. If you are working, what is your position? Where?

6. Did your experience at ENY Farms impact your field of study or career goals? If so, how?

7. Please list the schools or colleges you have attended since high school:

School name	**Graduated? Yes / No**	**Years attended:**
example: LaGuardia Community College	*No*	*2015-2016*

YOUR ACTIVITIES

8. In the past year, have you: *(Check all that apply)*

- ❑ Gone camping, hiking, or canoeing?
- ❑ Looked for a new job or explored career opportunities?
- ❑ Participated in any sports such as running, biking, swimming, football, soccer, basketball or bowling?
- ❑ Read novels, short stories, poems, or plays, other than those required by work or school?
- ❑ Written novels, short stories, poems, or plays, other than those required by work or school?
- ❑ Tried to meet new people for social purposes?
- ❑ Volunteered at an arts or cultural organization?
- ❑ Looked for information about political or social policy issues, current affairs, or political campaigns?
- ❑ Discussed your views about political or social policy issues, current affairs, or political campaigns with other people?
- ❑ None of the above

9. In the past year, have you: (*Check all that apply)*

- ❑ Contacted an elected government representative?
- ❑ Contacted the national or local media?
- ❑ Signed a petition?
- ❑ Attended a public, town, community board, or school meeting?
- ❑ Given a speech?
- ❑ Voted in an election?
- ❑ Collected money or signatures for a cause?
- ❑ Worn a button, or distributed or put up a flyer/sticker/poster of a political campaign?
- ❑ Participated in a protest?
- ❑ None of the above

YOUR EXPERIENCE AT ENY FARMS!

10. How old were you when you started working at ENY Farms? _____

11. How many years did you work at ENY Farms, including Externships? *(Check one)*

- ❑ less than one year
- ❑ 1 year
- ❑ 2 year
- ❑ 3 years
- ❑ 4 years
- ❑ 5 years or more

12. What do you see as the most important components of the program? (Please rank your top three, with 1 being the most important.)

___Farm and Garden Work
___Workshops
___Working in the farmers market
___Interacting with adults and the broader community
___Interacting with my peers
___Developing job skills
___Other (please describe) _____

13. What did you learn by working at ENY Farms? How do you think it's affected you? **Please share as many examples and stories as you want! Your detailed response here will REALLY help us**

14. What do you think ENY Farms! could do to improve experiences for youth? What would make the program better?

We are interested in learning if things you learned at East New York Farms! stuck with you and affect your life today. Circle one for each row

I enjoy trying new things.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel like I have a sense of purpose in life.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I have confidence in my beliefs even when they are different from how other people think.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
COMMUNICATION AND DECISION-MAKING					
I communicate well with others.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
Peer pressure influences my decisions.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I consider multiple viewpoints or perspectives before making a decision.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel comfortable talking with a friend or an adult about difficult decisions.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
When I get upset, I feel comfortable talking it out with others.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I speak up or take action when I see a problem.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
FOOD, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT					
I grow food or garden.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I have a good understanding of where my food comes from.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I cook.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I eat fruits and vegetables.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I am physically active.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I eat fast food.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I care about nature and the environment.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I try to find ways to reduce waste (compost, recycle, reuse).	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
COMMUNITY					
I take leadership roles in my community.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I participate in community activities (volunteering, clubs, community gardens, church groups, etc.).	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel close to my friends and peers.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel lonely or disconnected from the people around me.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel close to the adults in my life.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel connected to a larger community (school, church, neighborhood, etc).	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel comfortable interacting with people of different races, genders, and abilities.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I surround myself with people who are a positive influence.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel capable of making change in my community and beyond.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
SELF					
I am a good leader.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I feel good about myself.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I have a lot to be proud of.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I have low self-esteem.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I am motivated at work.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I enjoy learning new information.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I am comfortable applying math and science concepts when I need them.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I enjoy learning new skills.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
I plan for my future.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often

CLOSING QUESTIONS

15. How old are you? _____

- ❑ Prefer not to answer

16. What is your gender identity? _____

- ❑ Prefer not to answer

17. Are you willing to be contacted for a follow up interview? Yes___ No___

If Yes, please provide your email and/or phone number

18. Anything else you want to add? Any comments, questions, shout outs, ideas…

19. Which thank you gift would you like?

Make sure you've completed all of the questions on this survey to receive a gift

- A $20 Metrocard
- Two passes to see a free movie at a Regal/United Artists theater
- 20th Anniversary ENYF Hoody in Burgundy. Size: _____

20. Please list your name and address so we can mail you your gift!

21. You can also add your email so that we can keep in touch with you!

_____

THANK YOU!!!

And remember to like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram for more updates!

East New York Farms! Program Survey - 2018

We are surveying people who started but did not complete the ENYF Youth Internship program. This will help us continue growing and improving the program.

We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey! We estimate it will take you about 15-20 minutes. You will also receive a thank you gift from us – your choice of a $20 MetroCard or 2 movie tickets to a Regal/United Artists theater – after you've completed the entire survey and returned it to us at:

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   - ❑ In 4-year college program part time (half credit load or less)
   - ❑ In 2-year college program full time (full credit load)
   - ❑ In 2-year college program part time (half credit load or less)
   - ❑ In a job training or career program
   - ❑ Working full time (35 hours or more)
   - ❑ Working part time (under 35 hours)
   - ❑ Seeking work or unemployed

2. What education or training have you *already completed*? *(Check all that apply)*
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3. If you are in college, what is your major? Or if you haven't picked your major, what do you think you'd like to study? If you have graduated from college, what was your major?

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6. Please list the schools or colleges you have attended since high school:

School name	**Graduated? Yes / No**	**Years attended:**
example: LaGuardia Community College	*No*	*2015-2016*

YOUR ACTIVITIES

7. In the past year, have you: *(Check all that apply)*

- ❑ Gone camping, hiking, or canoeing?
- ❑ Looked for a new job or explored career opportunities?
- ❑ Participated in any sports such as running, biking, swimming, football, soccer, basketball or bowling?
- ❑ Read novels, short stories, poems, or plays, other than those required by work or school?
- ❑ Written novels, short stories, poems, or plays, other than those required by work or school?
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- ❑ Looked for information about political or social policy issues, current affairs, or political campaigns?
- ❑ Discussed your views about political or social policy issues, current affairs, or political campaigns with other people?
- ❑ None of the above

8. In the past year, have you: (*Check all that apply)*

- ❑ Contacted an elected government representative?
- ❑ Contacted the national or local media?
- ❑ Signed a petition?
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- ❑ Collected money or signatures for a cause?
- ❑ Worn a button, or distributed or put up a flyer/sticker/poster of a political campaign?
- ❑ Participated in a protest?
- ❑ None of the above

YOUR EXPERIENCE AT ENY FARMS!

9. How old were you when you started working at ENY Farms? _____

10. Please share the reasons why you left the program:

11. What do you think ENY Farms! could do to improve experiences for youth? What would make the program better?

We are interested in learning if things you learned at East New York Farms! stuck with you and affect your life today. Circle one for each row

FOOD, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT					
I grow food or garden.	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Often
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- ❑ Prefer not to answer

13. What is your gender identity? _____

- ❑ Prefer not to answer

14. Anything else you want to add? Any comments, questions, ideas…

15. Which thank you gift would you like?

Make sure you've completed all of the questions on this survey to receive a gift

- A $20 Metrocard
- Two passes to see a free movie at a Regal/United Artists theater

16. Please list your name and address so we can mail you your gift!

THANK YOU!!!

Dont forget to follow us on Facebook and Instagram!!

Appendix 5.

Interview Questions

ENYF Alumni Interview Questions

1. Think about your education **or employment** since finishing the East New York Farms! program. Has your experience with ENYF impacted your path in life?
   (If yes,) What are two or three of the most important ways? Can you give an example?

2. Aside from education or employment, has your experience with ENYF impacted you **in other aspects of your life**?
   (If yes,) Can you describe this or provide an example?

3. What **were the most important aspects of the program for you personally**?

4. What do you see as the impact of the staff on the program?
   a. Were there qualities or actions that stand out?
   b. Can you give specific examples or tell us a story?

5. What about the other adults such as vendors, gardeners, etc.? Is there anything that stands out about your interactions with them?

6. Did you form any lasting friendships or working relationships with peers or adults from your time at ENYF? Could you tell me more about them?

7. What is a positive memory you have from your time in the program?

8. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

9. Do you have any questions?

Thank you!