

Addressing the Need for Food Security Through Sustainable Business

Eleana Downs-Perez College Park Scholars – Science & Global Change Program Chemical Engineering edownspe@umd.edu College Park Scholars Academic Showcase, April 30, 2021



Introduction:

For my practicum project, I decided to take the class "Social Enterprise: Changing the World through Innovation and Transformative Action" (BMGT289A). The purpose of the class was to inform us about sustainable business models which contribute to society, and then apply that knowledge to propose a business idea that would solve an issue local to our community.

Site Information:

Location: University of Maryland, College Park

Activities:

The issue my group decided to tackle was that of food waste and insecurity, and we decided to focus on the area of Gaithersburg, MD because it is local to the university.

We decided to create a meal kit service using the one-for-one model; for every paid for meal kit, a meal kit would be donated to a food insecure household. We decided that donating meal kits was the best solution to fighting food insecurity in Gaithersburg because four of the seven zip codes within the city lack food banks (Montgomery County Food Council). We began researching and formulating a hypothetical business plan that would allow us to meet our goal of donating healthy food to food insecure households while also growing a business.

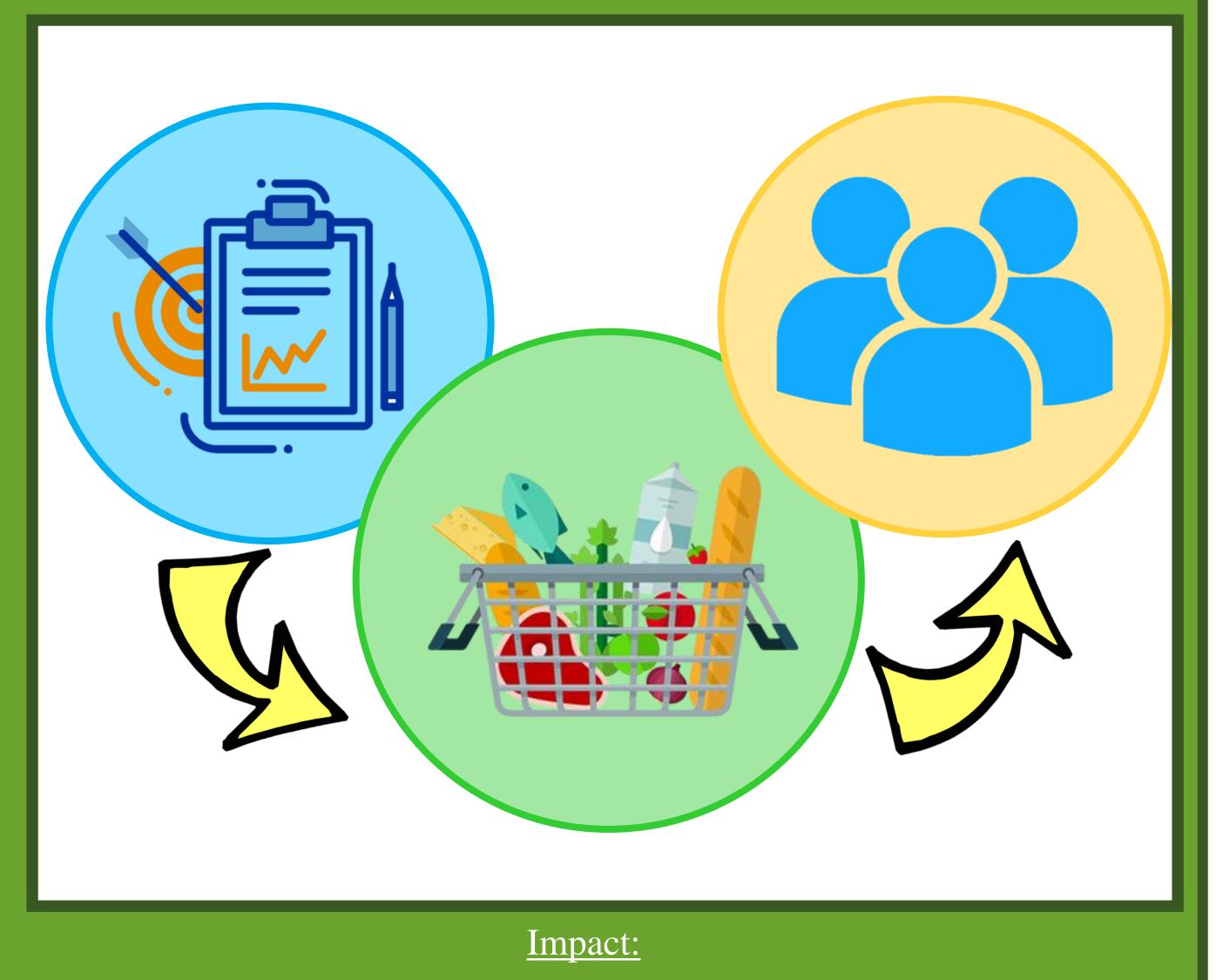
Supervisor: Professor Le-Marie Thompson

Mission: To create a realistic and sustainable business plan that addresses the needs of food insecure households in Gaithersburg, Maryland.



Issues Confronting Site:

My group was tasked with identifying an issue facing our local area, and we decided to focus on food insecurity in Gaithersburg, as parts of the city are classified as food deserts and do not have easy access to food assistance. We first came across reports claiming that parts of Gaithersburg were considered food deserts, meaning that residents of those areas lack access to affordable or healthy food options. Upon further investigation, we found that of the seven zip codes that make up the city of Gaithersburg, four had no food banks (Montgomery County Food Council).



Acknowledgments:

Thank you to Dr. Holtz and Dr. Merck for teaching me the values and skills of critical thinking and problem solving. Thank you to Professor Thompson for her guidance and experience throughout the project and thank you to my teammates Sai Cherukuri, Elijah Kaufman, Thomas Maloney, and Jason Sladic. The plan that my group and I came up with is only a hypothetical solution to the issue of food insecurity, but if there were to be businesses that had a similar model and donated some amount of food in proportion to the food they sold, that food insecurity would be reduced.

Future Work:

It would be nice to see a business implement a similar model to the one my team proposed, but my teammates and I are unlikely to go into the meal kit industry ourselves.



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Montgomery County Food Council. (n.d.). *Food Assistance Resource Map*. Food Assistance. Retrieved February 22, 2021, from https://mocofoodcouncil.org/map/ Image of Maryland Hunger from https://www.pinclipart.com/pindetail/iTbhxRm_page-plans-planning-business-proposal-proposal-clip-art/ Image of clipboard from https://digital.thechicagocouncil.org/stability-21st-century Image of food from https://www.png.ving.com/en/free-png-nbpoa

Citations:

Image of people from <u>https://hungryharvest.net/blog/foodaccessinbaltimore</u>

Image of curved arrow from https://www.jing.fm/iclip/mbhRo_free-stock-photos-curved-arrow-clipart-png/

