

INSIGHT 11

IDENTIFY AND FOCUS ON WHAT DRIVES INNOVATION, OUTSIDE OF A CRISIS.

One of the highlights of all identity conversations was the focus on the innovations and collaborations that happened during the COVID-19 pandemic. While there was a lot of **energy** and **passion** around what crisis made possible, our team wondered, “What drives innovation outside of a crisis?”

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, people have become more aware of the injustices and inequities that exist across and within different communities. With unreliable supply chains and a shift to buying from small farmers, the pandemic also exposed the fragility of our current food system.

Within the current system, rigid policies result in limited room for innovation. Necessity was the major driver of advancement during the pandemic. Participants discussed different ways to innovate beyond a crisis while considering different strategies for the future. Multiple groups discussed the movement of food to people who need it. They also discussed taking aspects of emergency food and integrating it into a future system. For example, food trucks selling traditional foods, delivering food boxes, and utilizing buses to transport food.

The shift from competition to collaboration among organizations was seen as a major innovation. Some organizations were no longer as driven by profits. They were also focused on equity and strategically distributing food and resources to those who needed it. Rural communities can be a source of resilience and creativity, as they have needed to innovate long before the pandemic.

“When you have chaos, people begin to do things that they weren’t doing before. Little things like having your own garden. It is a little thing, but unrest is making people think differently and they are doing so from the standpoint of survival. Necessity is positioning us to think about what we are doing everyday and why we are doing it.”

- BIPOC

“Sometimes it takes a tragedy to come together.”

- LATINO



Calls to Action:

- Explore what strategies promote innovation outside of crisis response.
- Create tools for long-term change based on those strategies.
- Build upon the momentum and innovation created by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Work in multi-racial coalitions that are grounded in power analysis (see insight #4) as a step in crafting a better food system beyond crisis.