

BFI Foodscape Mapping Project – Oral Histories
Category: Student Group Stories

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Transcription of excerpts of an interview conducted with

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Ching:

The Food Collective is-- I think it's just a great place to kind of put ideas into practice in terms of anyone like our members and even customers can suggest ideas, but can formulate an idea and then really use this space as a place to try it out. It's an experiential learning situation and it's also like you get to see immediately your impacts. We are a model for what we want the food system to be where we have just very horizontal organizations where people can make things happen and they don't have to wait for "higher up approval" and all these different things. You can just do things immediately and see your impact. When we create this system, though small, it's an example of things that can happen and hopefully inspire other people to form their own collectives and really take back power into their own hands and make these operations happen. I've really learned that the issues you really wanna tackle are a lot more complicated than you think and also that you really can't change them by yourself. You gotta build a strong community and a strong network that can really support each other. It's about empowering yourself and the people around you to tackle these issues and it's not so much about just overloading yourself and doing it all yourself because if you want something done right you gotta do it yourself. It's about trusting in your team and empowering each other so you can take on these larger issues. Seeing these as not just consumer's problems, not just recycling, because that's very downstream. Looking upstream at the issue, like the root of the problem and who's responsible for that and how do we change that and that's something I've learned at Berkeley. Getting involved in these organizations at Berkeley, a lot of the mentors and my peers who I really look up to, encourage me a lot, reassure that they thought I was competent and important to these organizations. That they encouraged me to take on more responsibility and of course I never felt ready but after jumping in, you just realize "wow, I've done so much and learned so much and I'm doing it!" Many times

you think you have an open mind, somebody will say something that makes you really uncomfortable, like “I don’t know about this” but always embrace that kind of discomfort and understand it and kind of move past it so that you can grow more as a person.