

## How New Yorkers are fighting for food justice

### Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

Which of these statements do you agree with or disagree with and why?

1. The best place to buy fruit and vegetables is the supermarket.
2. The best place to buy fruit and vegetables is your local market.
3. The best place to buy fruit and vegetables is your local greengrocer's.
4. The best solution is to grow your own fruit and vegetables.

#### 2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers will help you.

activist

life expectancy

setback

shed

committed

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a small building, usually made of wood, in which people store things. (para 1)
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a problem that delays or stops progress and makes a situation worse. (para 2)
3. If you are \_\_\_\_\_ to a belief, organization or group, you are loyal to it and willing to work hard for it. (para 2)
4. An \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who takes part in activities that aim to achieve political or social change. (para 2)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is the length of time that someone will probably live. (para 3)

exclusion

neighbourhood

obese

elitist

grocer's

6. An \_\_\_\_\_ person is overweight in a way that is bad for their health. (para 3)
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a particular area of a city or town. (para 5)
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a small shop that sells food and other goods for the home. (para 5)
9. An \_\_\_\_\_ system is one where a small group of people have a lot of power and influence. (para 9)
10. \_\_\_\_\_ is the opposite of inclusion and is a situation in which people are not included in something. (para 10)

#### 3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

1. In which city is the Libertad Urban Farm?
2. When did the Food Research and Action Center do their study?
3. By what percentage are low-income families more likely to be overweight or obese?
4. How long has Tanya Fields worked as a community activist in the Bronx?
5. What is GreenThumb?
6. How many community gardens does GreenThumb manage?

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#### One community garden at a time: how New Yorkers are fighting for food justice

Edward Helmore

12 June, 2017

- 1 For the past three summers, Tanya Fields produced large quantities of fruits and vegetables at the Libertad Urban Farm in the South Bronx area of New York. But then, a drug addict burgled their garden three times. "He took everything. He knocked down the shed, destroyed the tomato plants and stole the eggplant."
- 2 These difficulties are a setback but Fields is still committed to food justice and food equality, which is a growing aim of community-focused activists across the US. Food justice is sometimes described as "communities using their right to grow, sell and eat healthy food".
- 3 There is a strong relationship between poor food, discrimination and reduced life expectancy. According to a 2011 study by the Food Research and Action Center, low-income families are 30% more likely to be overweight or obese due to lack of quality fruits and vegetables.
- 4 Fields, who has worked as a community activist in the Bronx for more than ten years, says the idea isn't new, just the words. "We didn't call it food justice before – we called it survival. We introduced some new terms but really, it's just the same thing we've been talking about for years."
- 5 The Bronx, she says, isn't a food desert. The USA's largest food distribution centre is a few minutes' walk away from her kitchen garden but the local shops show it is a low-income neighbourhood. "There's the cake shop, the McDonald's, the Burger King ... . But, in the only grocer's, the food costs you more as a poor person. And that's a symptom of a globalized food system we want to change."
- 6 Fields started the garden project as a response to what she calls "cycles of poverty and extreme inequalities that mean far too many women stay poor and are unable to look after their families."
- 7 Her group is just one of many. In New York, GreenThumb, the largest community gardening programme in the US, estimates that the 553 community gardens it manages produce 39,000kg of food. The city recently increased the number of GreenThumb gardens in neighbourhoods with limited access to healthy food.
- 8 According to community organizer Beatriz Beckford, food producers often believe lower income people wouldn't buy fresh food even if it was available in their communities. At the same time, community gardens often indicate that richer people are beginning to move to the area. This means that houses become more expensive so poor people can no longer live there. Community gardens are created to help the same people that soon have to leave those areas.
- 9 "It's a very political space in a story that goes beyond the issues of food," Beckford says. Her work in this area was once focused on trying to make local businesses, elected officials and school boards change the way systems of food distribution work. But over the years, she began to see the issues differently. "If we want food justice, we need to build local and national systems that deconstruct the old system and build a new, less elitist one."
- 10 For Tanya Fields's Libertad Urban Farm, the current task is to replant and secure the garden so that 2016's damage is not repeated. She looks over her garden. It's going to take a lot of time and effort to get it back in good condition. "Food injustice is a symptom of a larger disease: economic exclusion. It's about how we build our communities without social, educational or financial capital." A delivery of soil, expected soon, will be a good place to start.

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#### 4 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make statements about the text.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. A drug addict burgled the Libertad Urban Farm, ...    | a. ... poor people often have to leave.  |
| 2. People who do not eat enough fruit and vegetables ... | b. ... to replant the garden and make it secure.                                 |
| 3. Food producers often think that poor people ...       | c. ... are more likely to be overweight or obese.                                |
| 4. When richer people start to move to an area, ...      | d. ... the globalized food system.   |
| 5. Tanya Fields's first task is ...                      | e. ... would not buy fresh food even if it was available in their neighbourhood. |
| 6. She wants to change ...                               | f. ... knocked down the shed and stole vegetables.                               |

#### 5 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

- ten more for than years
- just thing it's same the
- minutes' few a walk away
- lot effort a time and of
- place start good a to
- healthy the right food to eat

#### 6 Two-word phrases

Match the words in the left-hand column with those in the right-hand column to make phrases from the text.

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. food    | a. expectancy |
| 2. local   | b. addict     |
| 3. drug    | c. producer   |
| 4. healthy | d. income     |
| 5. life    | e. business   |
| 6. low     | f. food       |

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#### 7 Word-building

Complete the table using words from the text.

	verb	noun
1.	deliver	
2.	discriminate	
3.	exclude	
4.	distribute	
5.	respond	
6.	survive	

#### 8 Discussion

- Do you think community gardens are a good thing? Why? Why not?

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#### KEY

#### 2 Key words

1. shed
2. setback
3. committed
4. activist
5. life expectancy
6. obese
7. neighbourhood
8. grocer's
9. elitist
10. exclusion

#### 3 Find the information

1. New York
2. 2011
3. 30%
4. more than ten years
5. the largest community gardening programme in the US
6. 553

#### 4 Comprehension check

1. f
2. c
3. e
4. a
5. b
6. d

#### 5 Chunks

1. for more than ten years
2. it's just the same thing
3. a few minutes' walk away
4. a lot of time and effort
5. a good place to start
6. the right to eat healthy food

#### 6 Two-word phrases

1. c
2. e
3. b
4. f
5. a
6. d

#### 7 Word-building

1. delivery
2. discrimination
3. exclusion
4. distribution
5. response
6. survival