

**CFSC Board Meeting
Saturday, April 5, 2008**

Environmental Scan

What are the strengths/weaknesses of CFSC?

Strengths:

- * Technical Assistance
- * Policy Advocacy
- * Bringing people together - networking
- * Bringing an awareness to whatever is happening in the movement– conference
- * Diverse/capable board, linked to the grassroots
- * Committee participants – committed volunteers.
- * Online resources
- * Membership – undertapped resource
- * Raising the profile of food security
- * Founders are still involved – longevity among participants.
- * Publications
- * Funding base
- * Collaborative partnerships
- * Connecting the dots across different issues
- * Strong Leadership
- * Developing New Leadership
- * Reputation
- * Flexibility to rise to the call of an issue that arises. Openmindedness.
- * Broad range of sector & actors – scope.
- * Easy access – one-stop shop.
- * Spread-out staff (geographically) allows staff to respond to different things more quickly.

Challenges:

- * Not a clear sense of where people are engaged in the organization. Not much education across various areas of our work – a person involved in one area might not have much understanding of another area of our work.
- * Different entry points set very different expectations of what CFSC is about. Challenge is communicating clearly what CFSC is to the various constituents.
- * Unclear role of the membership.
- * Haven't clearly defined who we are – one big tent of various interests.
- * Multiple issues (inclusivity) makes it difficult to focus our work on the most important . – Makes it difficult to pressing issues. How do we take our principles and use them to respond to outside stimuli without checking with the membership?
- * Grassroots/tops and people at every level in between. Lack of inclusiveness of grassroots – no mechanism to connect grassroots people to the people higher-up.
- * Lack of clarity over who CFSC serves – lack of clarity that it's out priority to engage disenfranchised folks and develop leadership.
- * How does CFSC invite those grassroots folks? What opportunities are there for these folks to participate once they are here?
- * Lack of balance btwn an experienced person (grassroots) & academic level talking on behalf of the grassroots without necessarily interacting with them.
- * Rely too much on email to reach grassroots.
- * Lack of unrestricted funding
- * Lack of systems & structures
- * Heavily dependent on grants
- * Staff structure is program-oriented, very little management staffing
- * Spread-out staff (geographically) makes it difficult to build cohesion. Body language/nonverbal cues are not communicated.
- * Not enough rural involvement

- * Role of board – governance. Lack of training for Bd members.
- * Feels like a coalition trying to be a non-profit. In reality it should be the other way around.
- * We have ind'l and orgz'l members. Would like to see coalition clearly defined as that org's belong to the coalition, and that the flow of info goes through the org's out to the members, and that the grassroots get served through those org's. But it's never been like that. (But big difference in capacity of org's.)
- * Many issues have been raised over and over again for years. Need to change approach to resolving those issues and examine how we do business to have better success.

Trends in next 3-5 yrs that will impact CFSC's work?

Two parts: "the real world" (cultural, economic, new Admin). Want to pick the top 6-8 ones.

Increasing costs of food and energy. Huge issue for low-income people. Cost of healthy food especially high.

Input costs for farmers also rising.

Industrial food system is starting to fall apart.

Corp control of food system is a big issue—farmers and consumers are taking a big hit, but corp profits are still high.

Climate change and increasing cost of oil

Transformation of fuel sector

Crop failure.

Greening

more people env'tly conscious.

Small farms emerging

More people eating local, wanting to know where food comes from.

Food Gap

Basic food access and people getting squeezed economically leaves them with little choice with limited food dollars.

Two things happening: more access issues and limited choices for one part of the population; another part has immense choices—growing food gap.

Health costs

Public health crisis of diet-related disease

Political change – new administration

Poverty czar?

Economy downturn – perfect storm disproportionately affecting low-income folks

Structure of agriculture

Consolidation of land ownership

Barriers to farming as a viable career choice

Role of public policy to stabilize farm prices & food prices.

Deterioration of physical infrastructure – transportation, etc.

Higher cost to develop supermarkets, etc. Costs are transferred to developers, private sector in general.

Big box retail marketed as a solution to poverty. Wal-martization.

Good Food Movement

Growing alliances,

emerging coalitions & networks.

Work has gone mainstream.

Competition

Addressing diversity, racism, inclusivity.

Emerging new groups representing minority groups, connecting with others

Growing awareness of need to change the roots of hunger rather than just providing emergency food.

Limited capacity to transform things at a larger level.

Connecting the dots – interdisciplinary approach to the problem.

Young folks interested in this work, looking for career paths.

Passing on the knowledge so young folks aren't starting from scratch.

Build their capacity to continue the work.

Interest in social justice issues – many are already interested.

Kellogg moving away from funding

Sustainable ag into vulnerable populations, children

Interest in fair trade internationally and domestically, labor issues around food production.

Growing awareness of the need to bridge the gap between food insecurity/lack of access and high quality food (with cultural value as well more traditional def.s of quality) .

Increased academic courses on these topics – social justice.

Food bank warehouses are growing, increasing food stamp enrollment.

Huge growth in direct marketing.

Increasing use of high technology

Conflicts & threats, opportunities -> what does it mean for CFSC's work?

Small group discussion.

[gap]

Both groups reported back (points on flip charts).

Questions of where to go next, how does this relate to SP work we will do w/consultant, how will we get broader input on these ideas.

Some of the movement trends that we need to address overlap a lot w/our challenges. Addressing them could mean shifting what we do.

What we can do is more clear than how—how we work with our membership and engage disenfranchised people. Fundamental question whether we are going to change how we do things or not, tackle our challenges. If we do make it priority, it might change what we do also. Need to decide if CFSC is going to do this.

Haven't discussed what happened at Jekyll Island or gotten broader input—putting cart before the horse. Could see this as internal process that comes up w/ideas for SP process. It's a piece of info, not a decision.

How will this and the summer SP meeting be publicly reflected at the October conf? Don't want to make it look like we are moving forward without people's input.

Could just see this as a group think—not making decisions.

But want to build on this info, have it be part of SP process. See how it compares to input from membership. This should be a representative group.