



## Sustainability Series



### Chelsea Wentworth

#### Food Security, Sustainability, and Urban Gardening: Applying Anthropology to Interdisciplinary Research in Vanuatu and Oceania

In this research presentation, I analyze the discordant interventions that are pursued by governmental organizations hoping to develop sustainable food systems in the Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu. Both the government and families place high social value on locally grown food as healthy for children and important to sustainable development. The Ministry of Health promotes the consumption of locally grown staple foods as crucial to improving poor childhood nutrition, and the Ministry of Agriculture encourages urban gardening for food security and sustainable land use practice. However, rapid population growth, limited access to land, poor soil quality, and theft prevent many families in the capital city of Port Vila from engaging in subsistence farming. I draw on applied anthropology and interdisciplinary research to call for the creation of unified policies and interventions encouraging agencies to work together to create sustainable food systems to promote health, development and conservation. I conclude by drawing parallels between this research in Vanuatu and food security in Hawai'i, and discuss the potential for future research in this area.

**Chelsea Wentworth** is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at High Point University. She is an environmental and medical anthropologist with interests in the anthropology of food and nutrition, sustainability and natural resource management, gender studies, political ecology, and Pacific Island studies. Beginning in 2010, she has been engaged in research in Port Vila, Vanuatu, and the peri-urban areas around the city, where she works with public health practitioners and families on sustainable food systems, issues of infant and young child feeding practice, urban gardening and land use change, and childhood malnutrition. She received her Ph.D. in Anthropology with a dissertation titled "Feasting and Food Security: Negotiating infant and child feeding in urban and peri-urban Vanuatu" from the University of Pittsburgh where she also earned a Master of Public Health, and a certificate in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies. Previously, she served as a Visiting Instructor for the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh and as a qualitative research consultant for the Allegheny County Department of Human Services.

Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>

3-4:20 PM

Crawford Hall 115

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