



MEarth Team 1: Marketing and Branding Report

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HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

Introduction

This report is an in-depth analysis scanning the internal and external environment of MEarth and organizations alike to MEarth. The main focus being on MEarth's brand and making recommendations on how they can develop their brand. The internal environmental scan focuses on MEarth's organizational structure, resources, capabilities, and strengths. In comparison, the external environmental scan focuses on MEarths general environment, competitive environment. Then following the current strategies for MEarth and what new strategies can be in plays to improve the brand for MEarth. Research and interviews with management were used to gather information and data. MEarth or Me - Earth educates and inspires the next generation of environmental leaders. Students learn and grow in MEarth gardens, green kitchens, and natural habitats.

History

From the start of MEarth, there have been many important events that have continued to push for more community involvement. MEarth first expansion to the 10-acre property. The more the community was growing the more space they would need. Further investment was made into the greenhouse, shade sheds, and bird banding lab. To make MEarth the go-to place to experience the native plant's nursery and wildlife interaction with nature. As time went on there were partnerships that were made including the Carmel Unified School District and the Boys & Girls Club of Monterey. Around the same time frame, the volunteer program had begun and in work-study internships. Shortly after this in 2008 MEarth was incorporated as a nonprofit. In 2012 MEarth opened up its LEED-certified cooking classroom. All of the current progression MEarth has done has been to better serve its community.

1998-2000: Programming expands on the 10-acre Habitat site

Capital investments continued: Greenhouse, Shade Sheds, Bird Banding Lab

2001: Preparation of Organic gardening begin alongside already expanding native plant restoration

2004-2007: Partnerships are growing with Carmel Unified School District and Boys & Girls Club of Monterey

Beginning of Volunteer Program

Monterey Institute of International Studies brings work-study internships

2008: MEarth incorporates as a 501(c)3 nonprofit

AmeriCorps and Monterey Peninsula College bring skilled interns to work with MEarth

2012: LEED-certified cooking classroom opening

Post Ranch in collaboration cooking demos

Vision

MEarth set out to build an interconnected community of engaged citizens and future leaders by promoting analytical thinking through experience-based learning at the Hilton Bialek Habitat.

Mission

MEarth educates and inspires through environmental stewardship.

Guiding Principles

MEarth has seven values that guide the business throughout its life in all circumstances which everyone in the company understands what is essential. They are Sustainability, Education, Stewardship, Community, Integrity, Passion, Leadership.

Goals

MEarth has six goals that were set for the business for the next five years from 2016 to 2021.

Goal One: To inspire youth by providing hands-on sustainability education programming.

Goal Two: To encourage families by providing environmental and sustainability education at their location.

Goal Three: National leadership, to help people become national leaders in environmental stewardship by developing a community of engaged citizens and future leaders.

Goal Four: To promote MEarth's mission within their partnerships and community.

Goal Five: Organizational capacity by the building committee, staff, and volunteer capacity and organizational sustainability in order with MEarth's vision and mission.

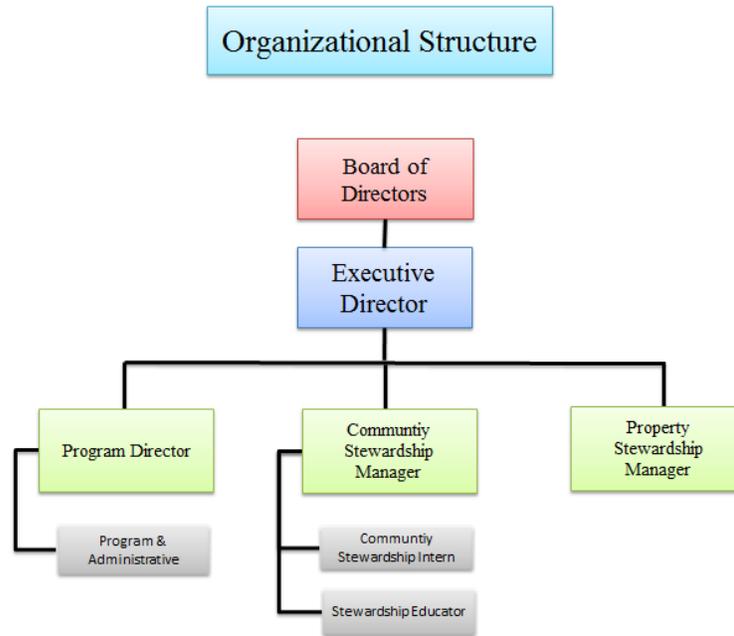
Goal Six: To ensure the long-term fiscal sustainability of MEarth by establishing and implementing a strong revenue model for the company.

The six goals above help MEarth structure its outcomes and decision making as they refer back to its original intent in 2016. As MEarth grows in these six areas its community will grow alongside it. As its external community grows its internal community should also grow.

Currently, the organization structure currently observed by MEarth is below in figure 1.1. The Structure is what you would expect from the Board of Directors, Executive Directors, and then followed by the program director, community stewardship manager, and property manager.

Under the program director, there is the program and administrative personnel. As well as under the community stewardship manager there is a community stewardship intern and educator.

Organizational Structure and Design (including board member below **Figure 1.1**)



Board of Directors

- President- Andrea Lewis
- Secretary- Kimberly Briggs
- Treasurer- Nicole Saulnier
- Bill Cox
- Erin Fogg
- Charles Franklin
- Shelby Lambert
- John Long
- Elizabeth Lorenzi
- Brett Melone
- David Ramirez

Products/Services

MEarth products and services revolve around community building and interaction with the environment. The ones that involve the most team building, and community interaction are the after school and Summer programs. These two programs are what MEarth first steps are to introducing the community to each other. Then building trust and connection which shows the people within the community there is a place where they can come and have positive experiences alongside the MEarth team. This all then leads to the experience-based learning MEarth believes in as well as its teaching alongside with the environment. Mearth’s other services include

Seasonal workshops, bird watching and an interactive look with the native nursery program. MEarth has all these programs to help establish and push for the Environmental Stewardship learning. Living side by side with the environment in a way where both can benefit and learn from each other.

- Field Trip Program: Schools will contact MEarth and schedule a walk and experience the grounds. The trips encourage a classroom, Connect, Connect, and Community connection.
- After School Day/ Summer Programs: Fee programs that have kids after and during summer to come and experience more everyday immersion with the native plants and wilderness surrounding them.
- Seasonal Workshops: MEarth Day, Glass Pumpkin Patch
- Bird Watching: Within the grounds, there is a variety of wildlife to observe and this activity is about seeing the birds that rely on and are a part of the environmental growth of the 10 acres.
- Native Plant Nursery Program: A program dedicated to preserve and restore the plant life already native to California.

Markets Served

MEarth is serving the majority of Monterey county and a little bit outside of the county as well (See Appendix D). The ages ranged from six to thirteen that attended the programs camp or afterschool program. Their main demographic is going to be families in Monterey county, but they also want to expand to serve inter-generational families to bring them together and to get more participants in their programs. They roughly had 1585 youth participants which were divided into 873 in the food connect program, 138 nature connect program, 430 classrooms connect programs, and 140 for summer day camp program (Annual Report). Most of the participants that were recorded this year which was 2016/2017 attended multiple programs that they offered.

Industry Introduction

Positive youth development (PYD) is an approach to working with youth that emphasizes building on youths' strengths and providing support and opportunities that will help them achieve goals and transition to adulthood in a productive, healthy manner. (Health, 2019). The NTEE code is NTEE: O50 - Youth Development Programs, Other. After school programs and summer camps. The industry life cycle for MEarth is as shown in the figure below.

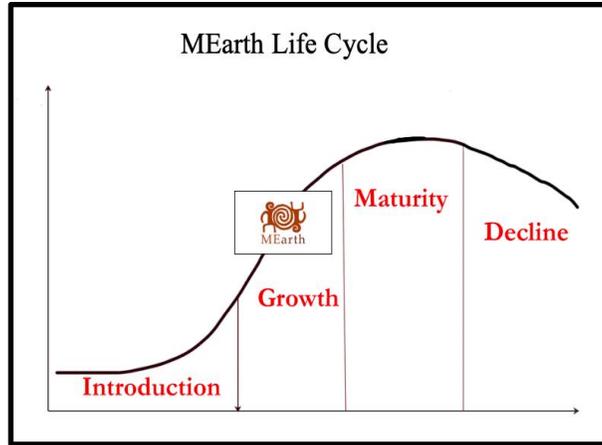


Figure 1.4. MEarths Life Cycle in the Industry

The stage that MEarth is currently at is the growing stage since they have the chance to expand to the Salinas area.

MEarth Brand

To start off with MEarth's brand description is the name analysis. MEarth is pronounced "Me-Earth", which was intended for youth to connect themselves to the earth around them. Next, we analyze the logo, which is a drawing of two human figures with their arms intertwined. This represents the connection between all humans and living things in a sense of being a part of a community. Then, the brand positioning of MEarth is analyzed. Their current positioning is environmental stewardship, interconnected community, and experience-based learning. All three of these factors have contributed to what MEarth's brand is today.

Conclusion

In conclusion, MEarth is in the growth phase of its industry life cycle which allows for great opportunities for the organization. They have a strong community presence within Monterey County and are the only camp within the area that provides this type of education. Being that they are in their growth phase means that they have an opportunity to establish their brand within the county.

EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

General Environment

PESTEL Analysis

In analyzing the PESTEL for the organization, there were five out of the six areas that have an influence on MEarth (See **Appendix A**). The political environment was the only area that did not have an impact on the organization. The economic environment has somewhat of an effect and was ranked fourth. This environment is important due to MEarth gaining some of its

revenue through camp fees. If the median household expendable income goes down this could affect the organizations. Next are the social factors, this was ranked first. The social environment greatly impacts MEarth being that it is a social business. With trends in home gardening increasing, this puts MEarth in a good position. These trends have grown particularly with the millennial generation which accounted for a quarter of 2018’s garden spending according to the National Gardening Association (Weigel, 2020). Next, is the technological environment, which is ranked fifth for MEarth. These factors play into MEarths need for being sustainable. MEarth uses the most up to date technology in their LEED-certified culinary classroom. This building uses solar panel technology and was mostly made from recycled materials. Then we have environmental factors, which is ranked second. MEarth is all about sustainability and protecting the environment. A Pew Research Center survey found that about 74% of U.S. adults agree that the nation should do everything to protect the environment (Anderson, 2017). This shows that being conscientious of the environment puts MEarth in a good position. Finally, we have legal factors, which is ranked third. The ranking for this category is so high due to the recent effects of the global pandemic. With regulations and safety precautions changing, MEarth will have to do everything in its power to meet these guidelines.

External Stakeholders

Table 1.1 External Stakeholders	
Carmel Unified School District	Highest Level of Influence
Franklin Legacy Foundation	
Boys and Girls Club	Mid Level of Influence
CalFresh	
Monterey County Food Bank	
Monterey Bay California Native Plant Society	Low Level of Influence
Monterey Regional Park District	
Blue Zones Project	
Public school districts	

External Partners for MEarth that we have found were nine. They were broken up based on level of influence in table 1.1. There are potentially more but we have found these nine have been overwhelmingly talked about when considering the Monterey county community which is also MEarths community.

MEarth has many external stakeholders with red holding the biggest influence followed by orange than blue. The external stakeholders in red are very important for MEarth because major influence comes with those two partners. The stakeholders in orange are the partners that MEarth has that are very regular and familiar with all the interactive work and segments MEarth

are reaching. Stakeholders that are in blue are the partners that have had a smaller interaction with MEarth but are potentially great partners to have more regularly.

1. Carmel Unified School District - This stakeholder is a partner of MEarth and currently funds one-third of MEarth's operation.
2. Franklin Legacy Foundation - This foundation has helped many other non-profits expand their organization and has taken interest in MEarth's business model. They wish to become a donor of MEarth and help them expand their business.
3. Boys and Girls Club - This stakeholder is a key partner to MEarth and helps bring in youth to learn about their program.
4. CalFresh - This partner helps serve the underserved and MEarth wishes to make this partnership stronger in the future.
5. Monterey County Food Bank - This stakeholder will potentially help MEarth expand by allowing them to open their new facility on one of their properties located in West Salinas.
6. Monterey Bay California Native Plant Society - MEarth has begun to grow native plants at their facility and has partnered with the native plant society in order to grow this operation.
7. Monterey Regional Park District - This partner has recently provided a grant to MEarth and also allow MEarth to have events at their properties (Monterey Regional Parks District, 2020) (MEarth's Facebook Page, 2017)
8. Blue Zones Project - A partner that MEarth wishes to build a stronger relationship with.
9. Public school districts - MEarth partners with local school districts in order to conduct field trips at their facility.

Competitive Environment

Competitive Comparison Analysis

Below is a list of direct competitors, indirect competitors, and benchmark organizations that were used to compare with the MEarth organization. Being that MEarth is a local organization they only have one true competitor which is Life Lab. Life Lab is located north of Monterey County in Santa Cruz, California and is the only organization like MEarth within the tri-county area. The benchmarks provided are peers that MEarth aspires to be. They are a much larger organization with more distribution throughout the nation. These were used to gauge MEarth's progress throughout their journey so far.

Direct Competitors: The top direct competitor to MEarth is an organization based out of Santa Cruz, California called Life Lab. This organization specializes in garden-based learning through workshops and consultations. This organization's pricing seems to be much steeper with prices ranging from \$300- \$700 depending on your child's age (Life Lab, 2020). This is also the pricing for a single session (one week). MEarth's pricing is much more reasonable ranging from \$350- \$400 for two weeks of the program (MEarth, 2020).

Indirect Competitors: Edible School Yard is an organization located in Berkeley, California that specializes in educating youth about healthy food options. They have a one-acre facility with a cafeteria, kitchen, and garden. They concentrate on training educators through summer training and have had customers from 14 different states and 4 countries complete their program (Edible School Yard, 2020).

MEarth's next indirect competitor is Vida Verde located in San Gregorio, California. This organization provides free overnight camps that specialize in outdoor and farming education for those that may not have an opportunity to do so (Vida Verde, 2020).

MEarth's final indirect competitor is the Pie Ranch located in Pescadero, California. The Pie Ranch has been in the youth camp industry since 2005 and offers field trips for schools within the bay area. They also use their facility for private events such as weddings and corporate events, and all revenues go towards their youth program. They also offer apprenticeship programs for those that wish to learn more about organic farming (Pie Ranch, 2020).

Substitutes: Substitutes to MEarth would be summer camp programs like the YMCA. The YMCA is a leader in youth programs such as sports and summer camps. Their summer camps have a weekly rate of \$170 per child and in some cases can provide financial assistance. They serve children from TK-8th grade (YMCA, 2020).

Benchmark Analysis

Life Lab: This is an organization located in Santa Cruz, California and again is the only true competitor of MEarth. They are also a benchmark for the organization due to their larger number of students served.

- Target Beneficiary- Primary beneficiaries include educators, children and students Pre-K to middle school, and families.
- Business Model - Life Lab uses a social network business model as a nonprofit organization.
- Services Focus: Life Lab works to “cultivate children’s love of learning, healthy food, and nature through garden-based education”.
- Primary Participants: Elementary level students, usually in a classroom group plus an educator.
- Brand Positioning: Engaging young people in gardens.
- Distribution Channel: Located in Santa Cruz County

- Reputation: A nationally recognized organization who has received awards by the National Science Foundation, California School Board Association, U.S Department of Education and many more profound allies.

Big Green: This is a larger organization that MEarth has looked up to. They currently have impacted seven cities across the nation and have a high growth rate.

- Target Beneficiary: Underserved schools around the country, serving grades from kindergarten to high school.
- Business Model: Big Green uses a network social business model. They provide initial financing, sharing of expertise, and coordination of joint activities.
- Services Focus: Big Green services focus on “improving the health of students and communities by creating experiential learning and garden-based education opportunities in low-income schools.”
- Primary Participants: K-12 youth and faculty/teachers that work at schools with Big Green’s gardens.
- Brand Positioning: serving the underserved, nutritious foods, healthy habits
- Distribution Channel: Over 500 learning gardens across the country in seven different cities: Denver, Chicago, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, and Detroit.
- Reputation: Well known nationally, with Kimball Musk (the co-founder of Big Green) being Elon Musk’s brother there is a large amount of press attracted to the organization.

Food Corps: This is a well-known organization dominating most of the Western U.S. and has a large program outreach. This organization is one of the few that involves faculty into the programs as well as the students.

- Target Beneficiary: K-12 kids and families with teachers and faculties.
- Business Model: The business model that Food Corps uses is a social network business model as a nonprofit organization.
- Services Focus: Food Corps services focus “is creating a future in which every school is a healthy school, and every child is well-nourished and ready to learn.” and also collaborating with educators to teach cooking, gardening, and tasting, since kids love foods they have grown and prepared themselves.
- Primary Participants: K-12 and the school community such as the teachers and faculty.
- Brand Positioning: Food corps comes together with communities to connect kids to healthy foods
- Distribution Channel: They reached 375 schools in 18 states with most of them being in the western side of the United States.

- Reputation: They are known in 18 states in the United States known to exceed schools’ expectations.

Edible School Yard: This is a very unique organization being the only organization on the benchmark list with international recognition. This organization is also the largest on the benchmark list and has the highest growth rate.

- Target Beneficiary: Students (K-12), families, educators, and farmers.
- Business Model: They use a network social business model.
- Services Focus: Edible Education - “transforming the health of children by designing hands-on educational experiences in the garden, kitchen, and cafeteria.”
 - Provide professional development programs and short courses to empower educators in order to create and sustain similar programs in their home communities.
- Primary Participants - Students (k-12) and educators.
- Brand Positioning - health, nutrition, sustainable gardening, edible education towards students and families.
- Distribution Channel: The edible schoolyard network connects 5,681 programs from 53 U.S states & territories as well as 75 countries around the world.
- Reputation - Very well-known across 14 countries, 48 states. Alice Waters, the founder, is a well-known American chef, author, and food activist.

Competitive Positioning and Strategic Groups Analysis

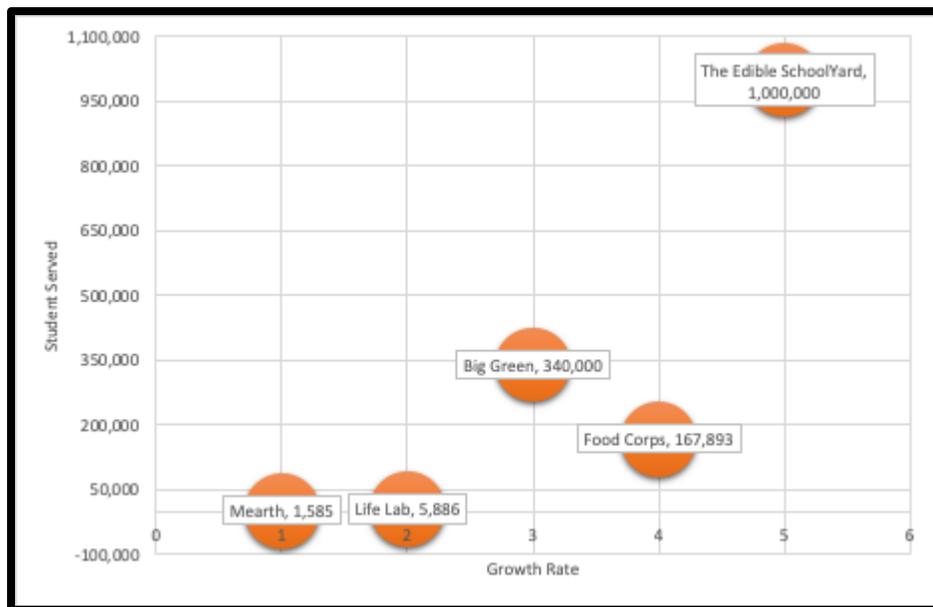


Figure 2.1. Growth Rate

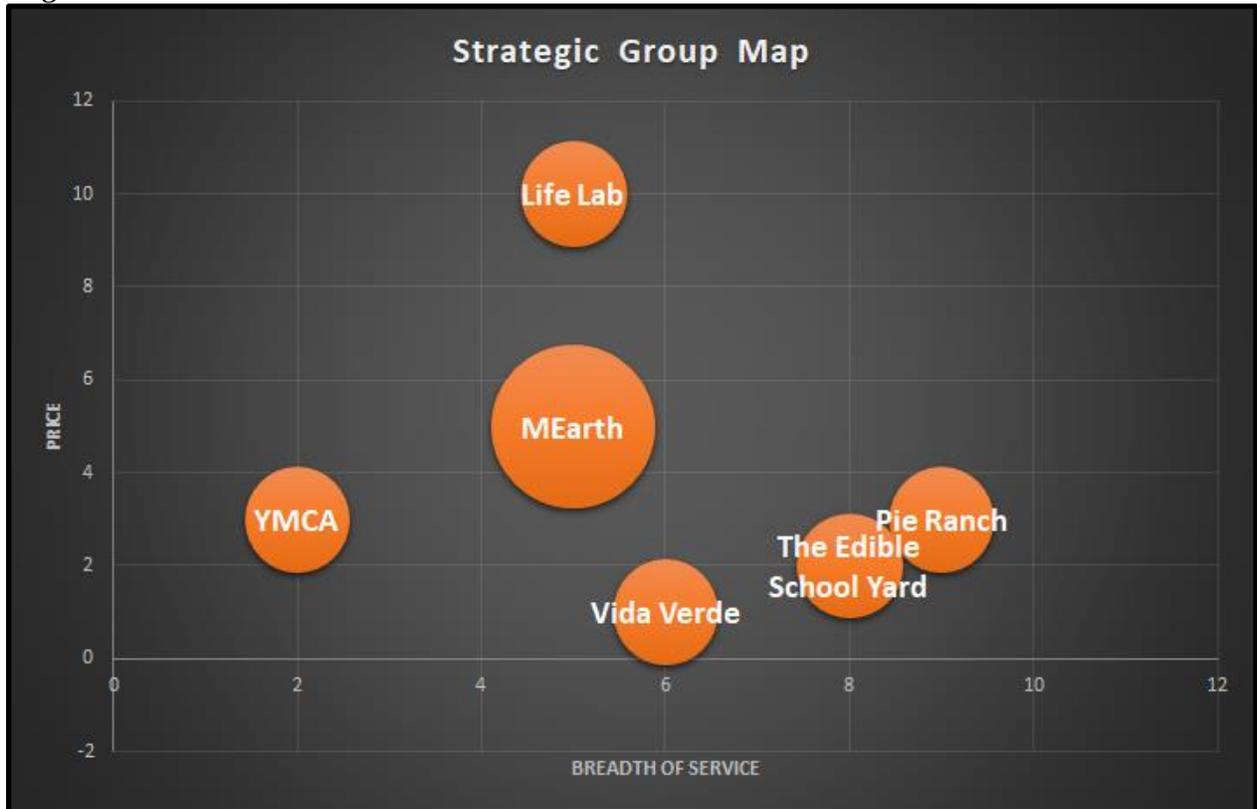
The graphic states the following organizations' growth rate: MEarth, The Edible Schoolyard, Big Green, Food Corps, and Life Lab. It determines how each organization is compared to the students they served each year. The chart was made to see the growth rate of each MEarth competitor and determine how small MEarth was to the other organizations. Compared to other organizations, MEarth is not the youngest organization. Still, it does not have the same followers as Edible Schoolyard, which started in the same year in 1995, as MEarth with more students coming to their location. MEarth has developed slowly with a smaller size compared to the other organizations. They need to increase their marketing as they do not get as many students to their location as the other organizations and serve less than any other organization. The chart determined that MEarth has not grown with the time it has been operating and continues to show no new growth for the following years, but if they expand their organization, that could change.

Industry-Level Key Success Factors

Concerning the KSFs, chart for graphics (See **Appendix E**), the most important threat facing MEarth is brand awareness; they are local to the region they are in but have not reached outside their county to gain a wider clientele. This is not bad for MEarth since they have gained the trust of the community they are in and know that they would have people attend their events and programs. MEarth location is close to the Carmel school district and has schools around them. They must keep in mind if their leadership is not making the organization operate to its fullest, they must change and find the right person for the job. The programs that are taught at their site help the youth and any adults that want to know more about sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Strategic Groups Analysis

Figure 3.1



Donor/Beneficiary Brand Perception

Brand perception is important to an organization. Brand perception provides the mission and goals of the organization to its internal and external stakeholders. From a beneficiary perspective, MEarth’s beneficiary programs do not have a negative perception of the brand. Instead, the brand misconceptions lie internally within the organization. According to Executive Director, Benjamin Eichorn, there are two main issues with the brand. First, the name “MEarth” has had misspelling, mispronunciation, and has been “butchered” in the news media. Second, the design of the logo is an issue because it does not represent the message or brand of MEarth. Instead, the logo looks similar to a Native American cave painting. Rebranding is highly being considered; however, the organization does not have the funding to do so.

On the other hand, the Donor’s perspective on the MEarth’s brand is similar to the beneficiaries. There is a positive impact of MEarth’s brand and mission. For those who have been in the community for a long period of time, there is an understanding of MEarth’s brand and mission. However, outside of Carmel and even northern Carmel, are not aware of the organization. The Donor had the same issues in regard to MEarth’s name and logo. In the future, the donor would like to see the MEarth market itself to gain more individuals within the region.

They would also like to see the organization market itself outside of Carmel to the Salinas Valley.

From an outsider's perspective, MEarth's brand would be confusing to understand. Since it is located in Carmel, people not familiar with the area would not know that MEarth exists. MEarth is the only organization that does the operations and services it does within Monterey county. Someone who is not within the Carmel area or within the premises of MEarth would not know the brand message. They would not have applicable knowledge that MEarth is an organization that provides programs for middle school students on topics of sustainability, nutrition, and the natural environment. There would be a misunderstanding of the brand name, logo, and message because of lack of outreach. Its brand perception of community is also lackluster because it primarily focuses on the youth instead of a whole community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, MEarth has some external factors that weigh in on their organization. Their top priority being social. As a service driven organization this factor makes them depend on the external environment. Capitalizing on social trends such as sustainability, environmental stewardship, and at home-gardening could tremendously help them. Threats that have an impact on the organization would be the new regulations that have arisen due to the global pandemic. Again, being a service driven organization makes them susceptible to rules and regulations that are now in place to help slow the spread of the virus. Another threat that has an effect on the organization is their one true competitor, Life Lab. Being that both organizations are located within the tri-county area, this makes for some competition for those beneficiaries that are located in the halfway point of the organization's locations. The benchmarks provided are used to evaluate where MEarth could be headed in the future and are a great example for them to follow. The brand perception of the organization is just as important as the rest of these factors. Having a clear and concise brand image will only help the organization flow into something that is more like their peers in the near future.

INTERNAL ANALYSIS

Resources And Capabilities

Extraordinary Resources Analysis (See Appendix C).

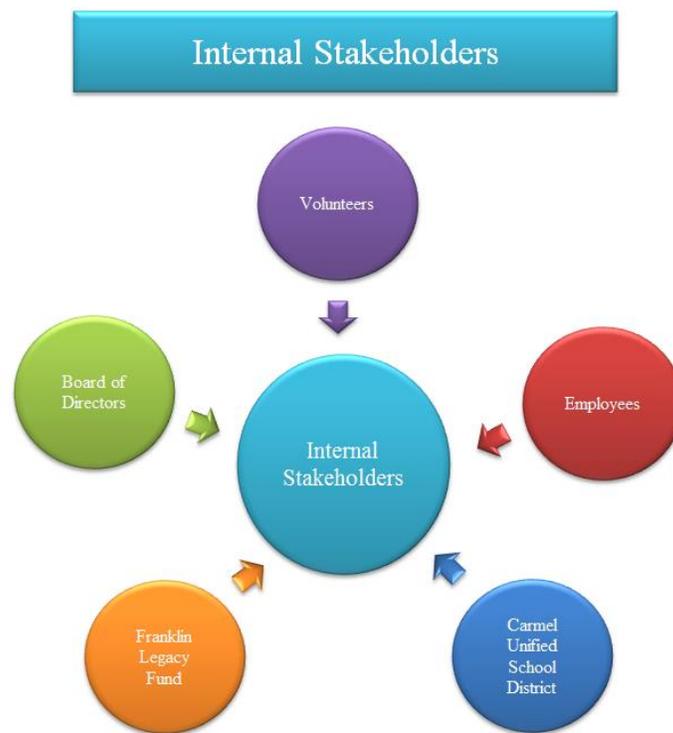
The extraordinary tangible resources are the location, the native plant program, and the LEED-certified cooking classroom opportunity. The extraordinary intangible resources are the Carmel Valley School District and the California Native Plants Society partnership. All of these resources provide strengths to MEarth as they serve a unique purpose as an organization in the community. The location for MEarth is in close proximity to numerous schools in Carmel Valley School District over a span of ten acres. This location creates ultimate access to the community making it quite difficult to imitate. The native plant program and the LEED-certified cooking

classroom are rare and valuable opportunities for the community. The Carmel Valley school district and Native Plants society offer services and values that are difficult to trade and substitute.

The weakness in the extraordinary resources for MEarth is the LEED-certified cooking classroom. While this program is extraordinary and focuses on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design while cooking, it can become a taxing resource for MEarth. The classes require a significant amount of preparation and organization for the company. Due to the detail engraved in this rare activity, it is considered the weaker of the extraordinary resources provided.

Internal Stakeholders

Figure 4.1



Highest Influence: Board of Directors

- President- Andrea Lewis
- Secretary- Kimberly Briggs
- Treasurer- Nicole Saulnier
- Bill Cox
- Erin Fogg
- Charles Franklin
- Shelby Lambert
- John Long

- Elizabeth Lorenzi
- Brett Melone
- David Ramirez

Mid level of Influence: Employees

- Executive Director - Benjamin Eichorn
- Program Director-Leigh Eck
- Administrative and Program Assistant- Olivia Bond
- Community Stewardship Manager- Jennifer Phillips
- Community Stewardship Intern- Madeleine Smith
- Property Stewardship Manager- Casey Ameil
- Stewardships Educator- Tiffany Chung
- Stewardships Educator- Nancy Vielmas

Involved Partners

- Franklin Legacy Fund
- Carmel Unified School District

Volunteers

- Regular volunteers

Value-Adding Activities

<i>Table 3.1</i>		
Value Chain Activities		
Service	Operations	Marketing
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong focus on youth camps ● Community involvement ● Provides environmental and health education 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Efficient coordination for camps and other activities ● Cost efficiency ● Eco-friendly 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home website ● Well- known only in Carmel ● Newsletters for events and upcoming camps.
<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited to Carmel ● Funding ● Price? 	<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staffing ● Transportation 	<p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social Media ● Outreach out of Carmel ● Other sources to use rather than newsletters and emails

Table 3.1. MEarth’s value chain activities illustrate where the non-profit organization

provides value-adding activities towards its customers. The table above infers MEarth's value chain activities and where its strengths and weaknesses occur. Starting from the left is its strongest and the right being its weakest. MEarth's service is the strongest out of the three because of the high value it provides to its customers. Next is MEarth's operations because it provides substantial value internally which results in value for the customers. Lastly, marketing being the weakest activity because of its lack of resources. It needs to find other outlets to utilize for marketing. Updating its social media would greatly benefit as well.

Performance Measures Analysis

Financial Performance Analysis

In analyzing the financials, the ratios prepared for a MEarth were months of spending's ratio, saving ratio, program services ratio, and fundraising expense ratio. MEarth financial performance was compared to its closest direct competitor, Life Lab, in Santa Cruz. The financials for both companies were derived from their 990 filings for 2018, 2017, 2016. In the months of spending ratio, MEarth had decreased throughout its years. It shows MEarth does not have a strong liquidity position as Life Lab. Then in the saving ratio, MEarth did not save any revenues to help with future expenses. For nonprofit organizations, they must maintain some surplus to replace existing debt or future costs. The ratio should be assessed to the context of the organization's anticipated needs in which MEarth has not done so. Next, the program service expense ratio shows how the expenses incurred from mission-related programs are a percentage of total costs. MEarth showed that their rate was low to the one of Life Lab, but it did not mean using the funds correctly. Their fundraising expense ratio showed that MEarth in 2018, 2017, and 2016 had higher fundraising than Life Lab, but that is not a good thing. Having a higher percentage value shows that resources are not being directed to the organization's mission or programs but towards fundraising. The graphics for the ratios can be founded in the (see **Appendix B**) of the paper.

Current Strategies



Figure 5.1. Organizational-Level Strategy Chart

MEarth’s organizational-level strategy is differentiation focused. The non-profit organization is unique in what it provides within its target market. MEarth specializes in providing natural (nature, environment) education towards K-12 students and also provides hands-on learning opportunities within gardening and culinary arts. A strength is MEarth’s focus towards natural education and health which gives them the uniqueness that other organizations do not offer. This gives MEarth more market power to create and offer more services within Monterey Bay county. A weakness associated with targeting a niche group in a large county is that there are not enough resources to reach further than Carmel. MEarth does have future plans to branch out further into the county to provide its valuable services. It also has plans to target not only K-12 students but also generational families. In order to do so, the organization needs to find ways to develop more funding.

Brand Perception Gap Analysis

MEarth wants to improve its brand to create a better perception for its future goals. Benjamin Eichorn wants the brand to evolve to pursue a greater purpose for its customers. According to Benjamin, he wants MEarth’s brand to revolve around family and natural world learning. He wants the brand to recognize that all backgrounds are welcomed and where young people want to work when they are older. Essentially, the brand needs to bring the message of recognition and attraction to MEarth. The brand also needs to go into the direction where beneficiaries and donors have a clear understanding of MEarth’s programming. In addition, the brand also needs to fulfill the expectations and mission of MEarth.

Currently, there is a gap within MEarth's brand. The organization's brand currently revolves around humans and all living things intertwined together to connect with the earth. The current brand positioning is under environmental stewardship, interconnected community, and experienced-based learning. However, "interconnected community" is not portrayed through the programs that MEarth offers. Instead, the programs and services are focused on a singular segment, middle school students. This is a problem because it limits MEarth to expanding their brand and programs to other segments, such as families and interconnected communities. MEarth needs to recognize what they are doing currently does not match their brand. It would be ideal for MEarth to focus their branding efforts towards community building. MEarth needs to take a holistic view of what the community is and how it can incorporate environmental stewardship, nutrition, and a healthy world together. It needs to recognize the diverse demographic within Monterey county. There are many generational families within the Monterey county area. If MEarth can recognize the meaning of community, it will open new opportunities for them to grow. It would be able to build a community that mutual interest in a healthy earth intertwined and supported by healthy people. This would translate into branching out to other segments in order to bring a community together. It would bring a sense of togetherness or an "interconnected community" and more people would have a better understanding of MEarth's brand.

Geographic and Demographic Analysis

As stated above, the organization is struggling to grasp the "interconnected community" segment of their brand. In order to achieve this, the organization first needs to understand the geography of their target segments. Appendix F is a gradient map of Monterey County displaying the distribution of K-12 youth within the county. This shows that the largest amount of K-12 youth is located within the Salinas Valley. Appendix G is another gradient map of Monterey County displaying the distribution of grandparents within the county. Again, this shows that the largest number of grandparents are located within the Salinas Valley. In order for the organization to grow toward being a community-based organization their most promising territory would be the Salinas Valley.

Conclusion

In conclusion, MEarth has some Internal factors that strengthen their organization. In their resources and capabilities captures the extraordinary resources that they have available for their organization. The highest influence in MEarth internal stakeholders is shown, and the mid-level of influence and any of the involved partners with MEarth. For MEarth value chain activities shows the strengths and weakness within their services, operations, and marketing. As for the performance measure analysis, it was determined that for MEarth financial performance, MEarth was compared to its closest direct competitor, which is Life Lab. MEarth current strategy was recognized as a differentiation-focused organization since it provides a unique service within

its target market. The MEarth brand perception gap analysis states what MEarth could do and change for the brand. This leads to the geographic and demographic for MEarth. MEarth has struggled to apprehend the interconnected community segment of its brand. MEarth needs to make sure they move forward with a move that will help the organization grow and share its mission to the communities they move in.

IMPROVING STRATEGIES

Recommended Strategies

Some improving strategies we would like to recommend after much deliberation, will be to change the name, logo of MEarth, and implement the intergenerational program services. As mentioned previously, the organization is aware of the difficulties associated with the pronunciation of the name MEarth. The name is intended to be pronounced as “Me- Earth”. While the intent of the name for children to associate themselves with Earth, the constant butchering of the name by consumers creates a distraction from the message they intend to be sent. Restructuring the spelling of the organization's name allows for it to become less of a distraction. We recommend MEarth consider changing its name to “Our Earth” to incorporate the inclusive community culture in their rebranding. Along with considering a name change, another implementation recommended is about the MEarth logo. The logo currently resembles a “Native American cave painting” (B. Eichorn, personal communication, July 20, 2020). Changing the logo to an image that more accurately reflects the organization and by choosing an image that embodies their passion for connecting people to the Earth. The logo a company uses is commonly one of the first things potential consumers associate an organization with, it is “much more than just an image”. When considering a new logo, it is important to use visuals and imagery that “should be appropriate for your company to avoid any discrepancies or confusion” (Chrysalis, 2014). The second implementation we recommend for MEarth is to progress on implementing intergenerational program services to the community. Ben mentioned multiple times in our conversations together of his vision he has for expanding MEarth. The intergenerational program services will offer opportunities for family members from different generations to share a common experience of connecting with the Earth together.

Brand Reveal

For the unveiling of MEarth's new name and logo it is recommended to first start with social media. Simply creating content announcing the rebranding expedition to followers on social media will have a strong impact on the community. The use of social media is the most convenient, speedy, and cost-effective way to spread news. This leads into another opportunity for MEarth to share their rebranding efforts with followers and friends by introducing the intergenerational program services. Especially during a time like now where our face to face socializing is limited, this is a great time to get people and families talking together about the MEarth, the Earth in general, and making plans to come out together when it is safe. This also

creates an opportunity for MEarth to expand local familiarity into northern Carmel and Salinas area as members of the Franklin Legacy Fund mentioned above as a goal of theirs.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

As a team we have found two areas of the organization that can be improved, and these are the results. First, we want to implement this in a year span for the results to best fit our recommendations. Starting off with our first recommendation being rebranding the organization with changing the name and the logo. We want to change the name so it can be properly pronounced and have people remind them of what MEarth stands for and connects to. This leads to our second recommendation that is changing the logo so it can better reflect what MEarth represents and is portrayed within the logo. The combination of these recommendations will in our opinion stand out for the organization so it can connect to the message they are sending to its customers. The time frame that we believe that this can be achieved is, if MEarth was to start in September of 2020 they would have about 12 months to take on the rebranding before MEarth Team 2 proposes implementing stage one of Improve and Expand Funding Model. In Figure 6.1 below Stage One of: Improving Brand Identification. We have recommended forming a team to develop a rebranding strategy this should take three months starting September 2020. Second would be to recruit/ hire a rebranding team. We chose to give ample time for the right people to get on board from October 2020 to January 2021. Next task we recommend on the timeline is to consider changes to name and logo that should not be rushed and should be considered carefully for this reason we have allocated 5 months to this task. Our main goal in stage one is to prepare any changes of the brand for MEarth Team 2 fundraising events. This will put all the new branding on any necessary objects. It is important to note that the orange outline around April - August 2021 is representing the overlap in MEarth Team 2 stage one of fundraising. The last two tasks for improving brand identification is to recruit a marketing team and market the new revamped organization. This marketing process should also continue throughout the rest of 2021.

Stage One: Improving Brand Identification

Branding		2020				2021											
Recommendation	Task	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rebranding	Form team to develop a rebranding strategy																
	Recruit/ hire rebranding team																
	Consider changes to name and logo																
	Recruit/ hire marketing team																
	Roll out well designed marketing plan																

Figure 6.1 Stage One: Improving Brand Identification

That leads us to our second recommendation which is moving forward with implementing intergenerational program services located in Figure 6.2. We believe that implementing this program will bring in more customers to their site and a way to expand the services they offer. Also, the importance is to bring the community together which leads us to believe that this can take up to 12 months to perfect the program. Again, this stage overlaps with the second MEarth’s team timeline, represented by the orange square. This stage will be

implemented after the acquire grants phase proposed by the second team. The first step is to design a curriculum for the intergenerational programs which could take about three months. Next is to recruit volunteers to help run the program which would also take three months. Next would be to market/advertise this new program and this could take the rest of the year and become ongoing for the organization. Finally, we have the unveiling of the program which would not happen until the sixth month of the phase.

Stage Two: Intergenerational Programs

Implementing Intergenerational Program Services		2023											
Recommendation	Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Intergenerational Programs	Design a curriculum												
	Recruit Volunteers												
	Market/Advertise new program												
	Roll out Program												

Figure 6.2. Stage Two: Intergenerational Programs

We believe that this rebranding process and intergenerational program will be successful with the time frame that we came up with and be sufficient time to adapt to the organization. The structure of the timeline allows customers to take in the new changes with a timely manner and understand the changes that will let the organization evolve and expand further.

PROJECTED EFFECTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing the recommendations stated above will have a positive impact on the MEarth organization. First off, changing the name to something clearer and more concise will make the organization more noticeable and memorable. As stated above, the butchering of the name is a distraction to the brand of the organization and takes away from the overall message. MEarth is all about connecting humans with the environment around them, and a slight change to the name would help beneficiaries understand the connection that the organization is trying to portray. Second, is the effect of changing the organization’s logo. The “Native American cave painting” does not portray a sense of community, which is what MEarth is trying to promote. The logo currently portrays two humans interconnected, but it could use slight improvement by showing a clearer sense of community. Third, is the implementation of intergenerational programs to MEarth’s scope of services. In order for MEarth to become more involved with the local community conducting intergenerational programs will help the organization be perceived as a community hub rather than a youth camp. Making these three changes will improve the organization's branding image and be viewed as more of a community focused brand. Being a community-focused brand will ensure that the organization can reach broader customer segments. These segments may include beneficiaries of all ages such as parents, grandparents, and other extended families. This in turn will attract not only more beneficiaries, but more

donors and key partners as well. MEarth has the potential to grow into an organization such as their peers compared above if they continue to focus on community outreach. With help of these three recommendations, MEarth can become a community player within the county.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the MEarth organization is currently in the growth phase of its industry life cycle and has the potential to expand much like its peers and competitors. The organization is impacted by factors within the external environment much of which is based on social trends. MEarth is focused on sustainability, environmental stewardship, and experience-based learning. In order for them to move into a more community-focused organization and to reach aspirations inspired by their peers they must fix issues that exist within their branding. They have issues with their name, logo, and the implementation of intergenerational/community-based programs. To enhance brand perception of both beneficiaries and donors, the organization must come up with clear and concise changes to its brand. In doing so, the organization can reach a broader target market segment, which can include the entire community. Changing the brand to more community-focused, rather than youth-focused, can potentially put the organization in a better position to compete with its peers rather than aspire to be like them. All in all, the organization has good potential for growth and can most likely achieve this once they start with their branding issues.

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Appendix A

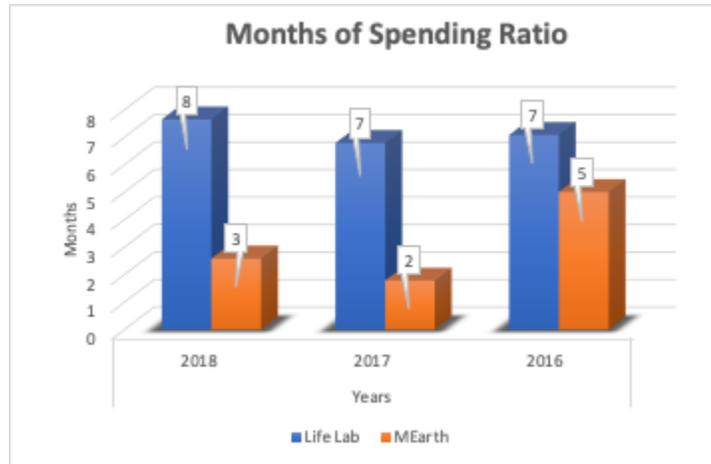
<i>Appendix A</i>	
MEarths PESTEL Analysis	
Political (6):	Political factors do not have a very high significance for MEarth which is why this is rated last on the spectrum. The organization is not reliant on the political environment in order to thrive.
Economic (4):	Economic factors such as consumers' disposable income have some influence on MEarth due to one of their revenue streams being camp fees. With the second quarter of 2020 coming to a close, households have significantly pulled back on spending due to social distancing restrictions that have arisen since the start of the global pandemic. Households have cut back on expenses such as entertainment, travel, and services that require close interaction. With this in mind, the Congress Budget Office expects the second half of 2020 to rebound from this decline. With a stay at home orders slowly lifting and restrictions regarding social gatherings slowly diminishing, they expect consumer spending to grow by 22.6% through the rest of 2020 (Congress Budget Office, 2020). This will hopefully mean more camp sign-ups and more donations for MEarth's organization.
Social (1):	Social factors such as age distribution and lifestyle choices have a high influence on an organization like MEarth. Their main focus is on environmental stewardship and their second focus is on youth within the area. There are about 120,000 youth members within Monterey county which are a large demographic for MEarth to focus on (kidsdata.org, 2018). The social trend of at-home gardening has also taken off over the past couple of years and has now grown popular for the millennial generation. Millennials alone accounted for a quarter of 2018's garden spending according to the National Gardening Association. Across the board gardening at home as a whole has grown more than 10% in the year 2018 (Weigel, 2020). Another trend that has been on the rise is gardening in a more eco-friendly and sustainable way. Organic gardening is not enough these days, and consumers are looking for ways to reduce waste and maintain healthy soil without coddling or spraying their plants. Research shows that 50% of consumers in the U.S. would choose a brand that produces its product with the environment in mind, rather than a brand that showed no concern for the environment (Weigel, 2020). Another trend that has caught on in recent years is the concern for planting native plants to attract pollinators like the monarch butterfly (Weigel, 2020). These social trends are all in favor of MEarth's practices and show signs of their business growing with the trends.
Technological (5):	Technological factors have an influence on MEarth because they use the most up to date technology in their LEED-certified culinary classroom. This building uses solar panel technology and was mostly made from

	<p>recycled materials. The building was first launched in March of 2012 (MEarth, 2020). MEarth relies on technology in order to run their facility in a sustainable manner.</p>
<p>Environmental (2):</p>	<p>Environmental factors have a high influence on MEarth. As stated above their main focus is environmental stewardship and they plan on being leaders in this concept. A Pew Research Center survey found that about 74% of U.S. adults agree that the nation should do everything to protect the environment (Anderson, 2017). MEarth can tap into this growing market of adults wanting to change the environment they live in and better it for their future children. In the U.S., 75% of adults state that they are particularly concerned about bettering the environment in their daily lives and could rise as social-environmental awareness increases (Anderson, 2017). In some cases, people with more education tend to be more concerned about climate change, so with more programs to educate people to see climate change as a serious threat could help environmental awareness (Fagan, 2019).</p>
<p>Legal (3):</p>	<p>Legal factors also have a significant influence on the organization. With a global pandemic now in effect, MEarth will have to obey the most recent rules and regulations while having customers at their facility. This could become a major threat if the organization is unable to meet the new regulations that may come about.</p>

Appendix B

Financial Performance Analysis Graphics

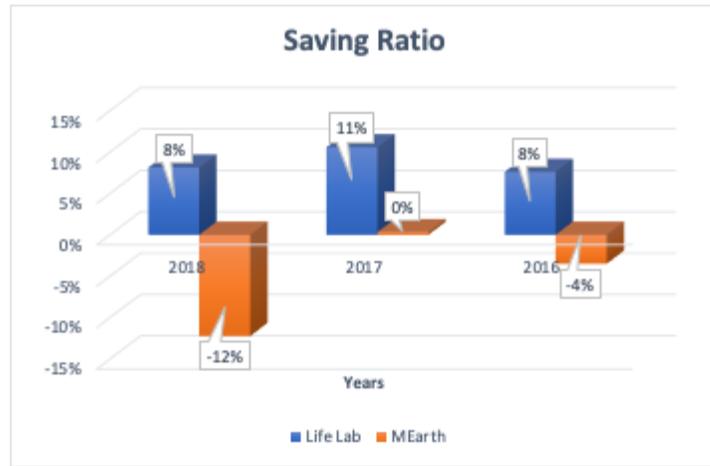
Months of spending ratio. This ratio for MEarth has decreased throughout the years. This shows it does not have a strong liquidity position as Life Lab. If any organization has a higher value, it will indicate a stronger liquidity position in their markets. For MEarth to have sufficient resources, it must meet the organizational expenses as they come due.



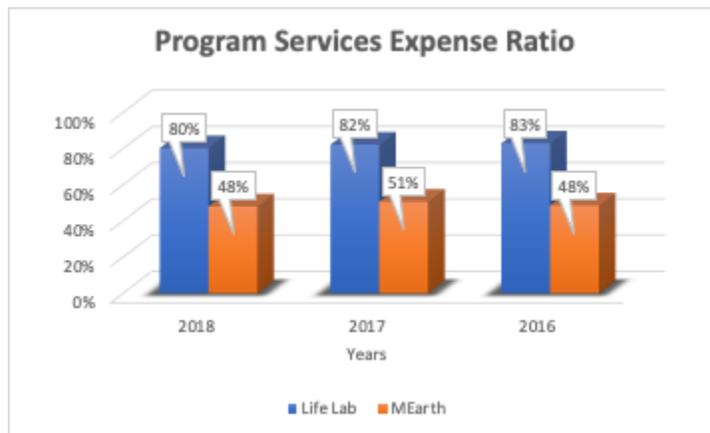
Saving Ratio. The Saving ratio implies for MEarth that it did not save any revenues to help with future expenses. For nonprofit organizations, they must maintain some surplus to replace existing debt or future costs. This ratio should be evaluated in the context of the anticipated needs of the organization in which MEarth has not done so.

Program service expense ratio. This ratio shows how the expenses incurred on mission-related programs as a percentage of total costs. MEarth shows that the rate was low to the one of Life Lab, but it does not mean that it was using the funds correctly. They were just smaller than Life

Lab, but for a contributor, if they have seen this, it will show that MEarth does not use its



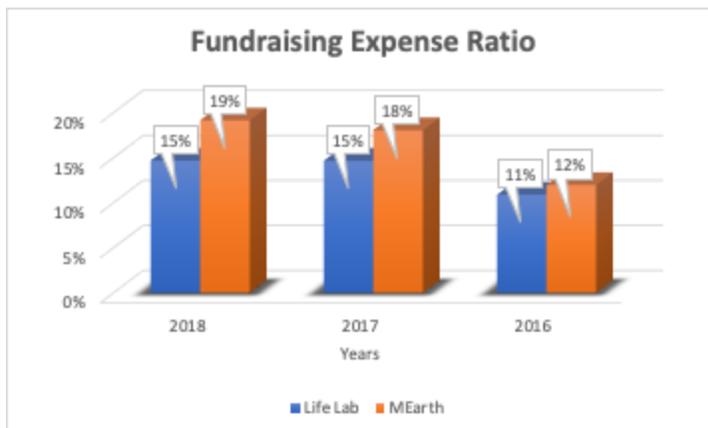
resources towards its mission programs.



Fundraising

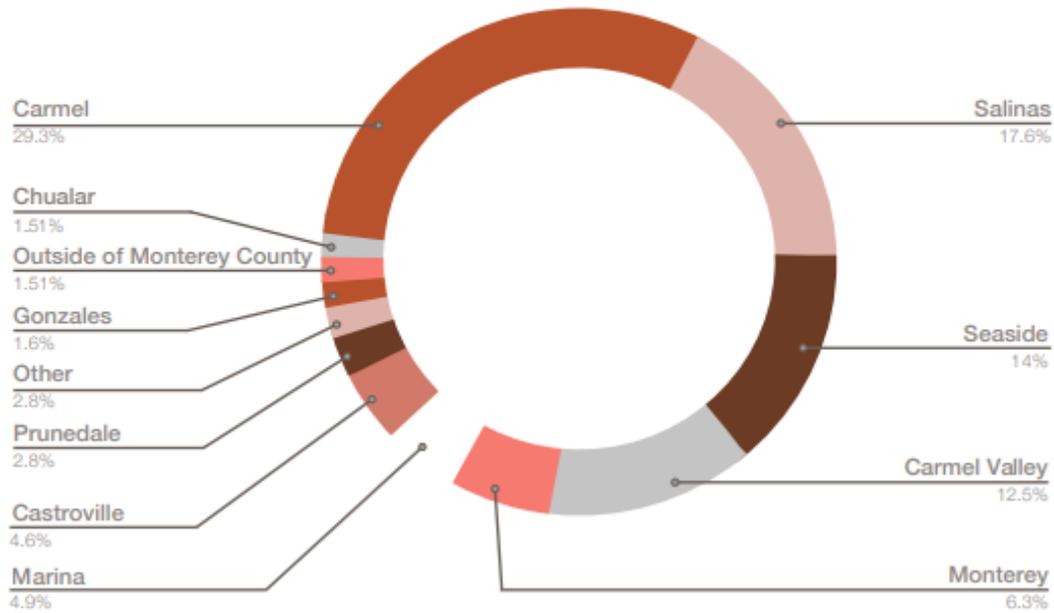
expense ratio.

This ratio showed that MEarth in 2018, 2017, and 2016 had higher fundraising than Life Lab, but that is not a good thing. Having a higher percentage value shows that resources are not being directed to the organization's mission or its programs but towards fundraising.



Appendix C

Program Reach



Appendix D

<i>Appendix C</i>					
VRIST Evaluation of Resources Tangible and Intangible					
Tangible Resources	Valuable	Rare	Difficult to Imitate	Difficult to Substitute	Difficult to Trade
Location- 10-acre property	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Programs	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Native Plant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bird Watching	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

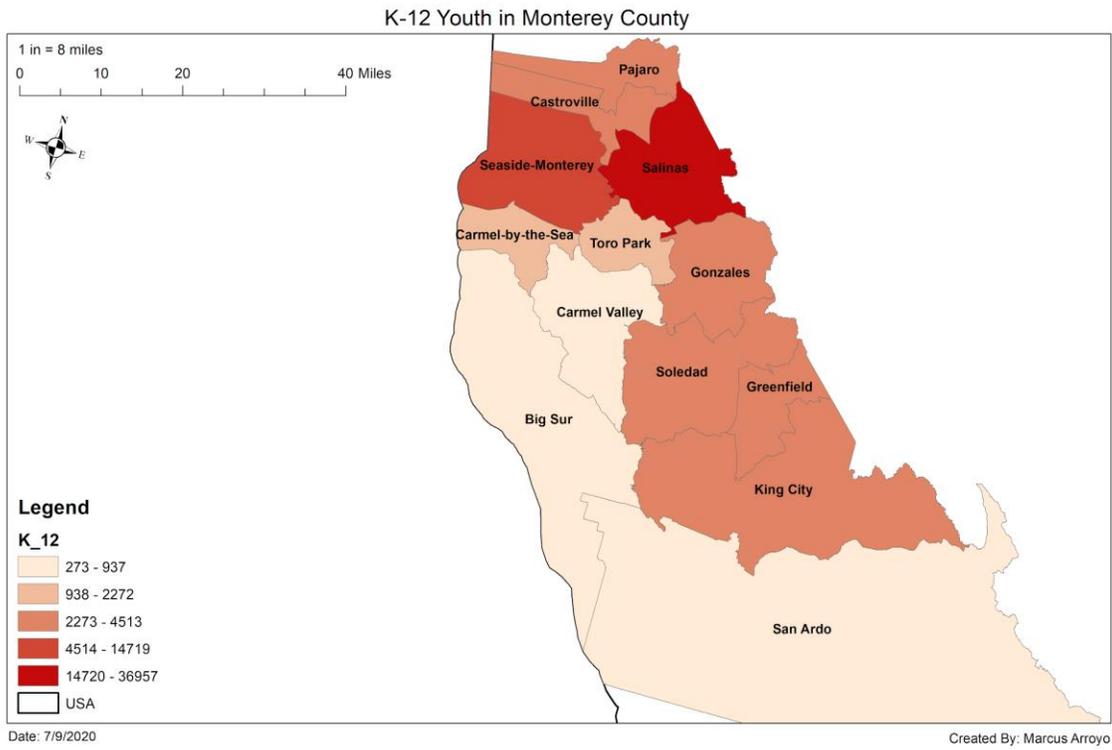
Summer camps	Yes	No	No	No	No
After school program	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
LEED-certified cooking classroom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intangible Resources					
Partnerships	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Boys & Girls Club	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Carmel Unified School District	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
California Native Plants Society	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
California Fresh	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Monterey County Department of Public Health	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monterey County Food Bank	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

 Extraordinary

Appendix E

Key Success Factors	
 <p>Education</p>	<p>Teaching plays a central role in increasing awareness of environmental challenges and developing attitudes that can make a difference (Today, 2014)</p>
 <p>Location</p>	<p>The geographic position is a significant factor when deciding to open an environmental stewardship center. California, with its Land Stewardship Institute, assists public and private landowners in implementing land management practices to benefit the environment (California Land Conservation Assistance Network, 2013).</p>
 <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Leaders in an organization are valuable, accomplishing connections in a globalizing society. Leaders ensure that individuals work well in teams, and individuals can improve their sense of environment (The New York Times in Education, 2020).</p>
 <p>Events</p>	<p>Events build brand awareness, bring new clients or sponsors, unite the community the organization is working in, and build trust within the district (Eventbrite US, 2020)</p>

Appendix F



Appendix G

