



Community Food Initiatives



This Part of the Guide presents practical information on how to set up and run specific types of Community Food Initiatives (CFIs), as follows:

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Throughout this Part, you might find it helpful to refer back to Part A, and in particular to section A.1 'Setting up a Community Food Initiative', which guides you through the key steps involved in setting up any Community Food Initiative.

B.1 Community café



B.1.1 What is a community café?

Community cafés provide access to healthy, affordable food for local people in a welcoming environment. For many people, particularly those on low incomes, accessibility, affordability, availability and awareness of healthier options often present barriers to eating a healthy diet. Community cafés provide a practical way of addressing such barriers. They can be situated in community centres, Healthy Living Centres or other community buildings, and can be run by volunteers, paid staff or a combination of both.

B.1.2 Why set up a community café?

The main benefit of a community café is that the food is affordable, but they also offer people a social space to combat loneliness and isolation. Community cafés have the potential to provide people with a healthy alternative in terms of food choices. They may also provide a base for a range of community alliances, where local people can gain access to services and facilities which may not otherwise be available to them, such as counselling, health information and advice on welfare benefits. A community café creates opportunities in terms of local employment and enables volunteers to gain new skills.

B.1.3 Guidelines for setting up a community café

In addition to the issues discussed in section A.1, the following points should be borne in mind when setting up a community café.

Needs assessment

You need to ascertain the needs of the local community in order to determine the overall viability of the project and the best scale at which to operate. You need to conduct research to find out answers to the following questions:

- Is there a demand for a community café?
- How many people want it?
- Who is the target group?
- What services do they want?
- Will they use the service?



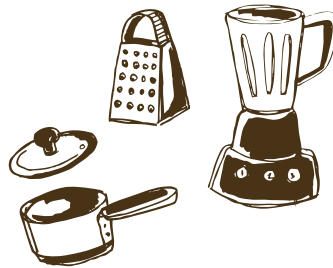
Choosing and buying equipment

What you need in terms of kitchen equipment will depend on how many people you expect to serve in your café. If you anticipate serving between 30 and 40 people a day and your budget is tight, then consider domestic appliances rather than paying higher prices for a professional range.

The internet is a valuable source of information on products and you can compare different products easily, based on price, features etc.

To get the best value when buying goods:

- Find out about the goods in detail before buying, compare different types and makes for quality, design, after-sales service and suitability
- Check consumer websites
- Read instructions and information leaflets carefully, particularly guarantees and servicing details. Keep details in a file so you can refer to cleaning and maintenance instructions and how to get replacement parts
- Keep receipts and sales agreements for all equipment.



Food Safety in the Kitchen

If you are operating in **Northern Ireland**, environmental health is the responsibility of the local district councils. Talk to the Environmental Health Officer in your local council with regard to food safety legislation.

For a list of councils see: www.direct.gov.uk

Contact the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland:

www.food.gov.uk

Tel: +44 (0)28 90417700.

Look for the *Safe Catering Guide* Issue 4 (2007): www.food.gov.uk

If you are setting up a community café in **Ireland** you will need to contact the Food Safety Authority of Ireland for guidance in relation to meeting food safety legislation – www.fsai.ie or contact their advice line on 1890 336677. You should also contact your local HSE Environmental Health Officer. For contact details of Local Health Offices see www.hse.ie.

Planning what to sell in your café

People will not alter long-held eating habits overnight, even if their health is being affected by what they eat. It takes time, encouragement and motivation. Food that is well prepared, well cooked and attractively presented is more likely to be chosen and enjoyed, but it is important to give people a choice. For ideas and information contact your local community dietitian services.

As the café becomes established, you will get to know your customers and their likes and dislikes. You will be able to judge what will be acceptable. You may decide to adopt a pricing policy that reflects your commitment to healthy eating and make the cheaper dish the healthier choice. You could consider tasting sessions and open days where customers are given an opportunity to try different recipes and provide feedback. This could help you to develop your menu.

Whatever you decide to sell, the key to an efficient service is to keep it simple. Stick to a simple general menu made up of a combination of main meals and quick and easy snacks. It is a good idea to state that a dish can be reduced to half portion size for children or for older people.

Testing recipes and portion control

Two important factors in controlling your costs are testing recipes and portion control. The recipe should list not only all the ingredients, but also their weights and cost. Portion control is important for many reasons. Profit margins can be altered dramatically by the size of the portions offered. Standard portion sizes make it easier to plan how much food to prepare for customers and maintain consistency. It is worthwhile having standard sized equipment both in the café and in the kitchen to help staff with portion control. Make sure all staff are aware of measures used and why it is important to use them.

Service in the café

There are several ways in which the customer can be served in the café:

- Self service
- Waiter service
- Counter service
- Counter order and service

Whichever system is used, staff working in the café need to know exactly what their jobs are, so they don't duplicate tasks or get under each other's feet. Service should be efficient and quick.

Stock control

Stock is any item which is owned by the project but which has not yet been sold. It is important to turn stock into sales as quickly as possible. Stock should be kept at its lowest workable level to reduce

the amount of capital tied up and to keep losses due to spoilage to a minimum. A good stock control system will enable you to tell what is selling and what is not; to know when goods need to be ordered, and to keep records of suppliers. Good communication with suppliers is essential to keep ahead of price changes and any special deals on offer.

Ideas for attracting and keeping business

When planning ideas for attracting and keeping customers for your café, keep reminding yourself that if the food looks good, it is likely to sell well, especially if attractively displayed. Consider a variety of promotional schemes such as special offers, a happy hour, loyalty cards, special meals for cultural holidays, or cookery demonstrations.

Remember, there are many other people interested in promoting healthy eating that you can team up with. Community dietitians and health promotion staff have a wealth of experience to offer.

Happy Heart Catering Award (Ireland)

Since 1998, the HSE Dublin North East and the Irish Heart Foundation have run the Happy Heart Catering Award to encourage restaurants, hotels, pubs and workplaces to provide and promote healthy food choices in a healthy environment. It is also hoped that the award will encourage customers to make healthier food choices. The Happy Heart Catering Award currently runs in Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan. It is now being extended to other counties in Ireland with the support of the HSE and **safefood**.

? Want More Information

Contact Irish Heart Foundation, www.irisheart.ie
4 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Ireland.
Tel: +353 (0)1 668 5001. Fax: +353 (0)1 668 5896.

Case Study

Community Café, Raphoe Family Resource Centre, Co. Donegal

Background to the Café

Raphoe Family Resource Centre (Raphoe FRC) is based in an area of high social and economic deprivation and high levels of welfare dependency. Raphoe FRC has always explored ways of supporting the needs of low-income families and those most at risk of consistent poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation through various courses, programmes and activities. In early 2008, the Centre received funding to employ a Community Development/Outreach Worker to further develop outreach work within the community, including helping to set up the community café.

Opened in August 2008, the community café is first and foremost a point of social contact and a place where people can meet in a welcoming environment. The community café is seen as a concept, rather than just a building: it is a vehicle for further outreach within the community. Through the community café, Raphoe FRC aims to improve access to affordable healthy food choices to the local community. To support the Community Development/Outreach Worker, a focus group was set up within the Raphoe FRC to help establish and manage the café.

The objectives of the Community Café included:

- Improving access to, availability of and affordability of healthy food choices
- Raising awareness of healthy food choices
- Influencing the health and eating behaviour of the local community
- Reducing the consumption of convenience foods, particularly by children and young people
- Promoting older children as role models for younger children in generating a positive culture towards healthy lifestyles

- Supporting the area's farming community by purchasing local produce.

In conjunction with the community café, Raphoe FRC has developed a 'neighbourly care' project, with four principal objectives:

- To provide a weekly subsidised meal scheme for those affected by food poverty
- To establish a volunteer community car scheme to take those who have no access to transport to the community café
- To establish a 'befriending' project to up-skill members of the local community as 'listening ears' to visit those most isolated from family and social networks
- To provide a meals-on-wheels service to those incapacitated in the home through age, injury, or illness.

The beneficiaries of the 'neighbourly care' project are service users of Raphoe FRC, and those referred by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Public Health Nurse, Community Psychiatric Nurse, Child and Family Services, or A Voice for Older People (support organisation for older people). It is envisaged that up to 50 people per week will directly benefit from the project, and subsequently the café.

Management structure

The management committee supports the manager, who is employed to oversee the day-to-day running. The manager is also the Chef/Cook. The café is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee without Share Capital.

Funding

The community café does not receive any core funding, but relies on the generosity of the local community, who have readily accepted the principle that all surplus after outgoings will be reinvested back into the work of Raphoe FRC and subsequently the whole community. As a community-based organisation, Raphoe FRC has been able to attract funding from a number of funding agencies.

Venue/location

The community café, which is adjacent to the Raphoe FRC, is leased. The property came with equipment, which the café is purchasing over a three-year period.

Staffing levels

The community café currently employs five part-time staff (including the manager). Four part-time staff are drawn from the target groups that Raphoe FRC works with, and one part-time staff member is on unpaid work placement from Rehabcare three days a week. It is envisaged that up to six volunteers will assist in delivering the various elements of the 'neighbourly care' project.

Menu

As the Chef/Cook has many years experience in the catering business, she was able to devise a suitable menu. The prices being charged by other restaurants/café/bistros locally were noted and the lowest price was introduced in the community café to ensure affordability.

Healthy options

There is at least one healthy option on the menu each day and the option is pointed out by staff to customers. The plan is to introduce further healthy options, including, for example, increasing the intake of fruit and vegetables (subject to funding).

Recruitment

Applications were sought through the local press. Raphoe FRC has a good relationship with Donegal Volunteer Centre and is able to use its service to attract volunteers.

Raphoe FRC is also developing a youth café and hopes to attract the support of parents by encouraging them to purchase meals and encouraging their children to use the café.

? Want More Information

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Co Donegal, Ireland.

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Email: raphoefrc@eircom.net.

For examples of other community cafés, see:

- Knocknaheeny Community Café, Cork (Ireland).
Tricia Donovan, Tel. +353 (0)21 430 3902.
- Southill Area Centre Community Café, Cork (Ireland).
www.southillareacentre.ie/cafe.html
- Bogside and Brandywell Community Health Forum,
Derry (Northern Ireland) www.bbhealthforum.org
- East Belfast Mission, Belfast (Northern Ireland)
www.ebm.org.uk
- Footprints Women's Centre, Belfast (Northern Ireland)
www.footprintswomenscentre.org



B.2 Community Food Co-ops

Food Co-op

B.2.1 What is a food co-op?

A food co-op is a group of people who get together to buy food in bulk from wholesalers or even direct from farmers. More and more communities are setting up food co-ops so that they can get food at an affordable price and have more control over where their food comes from. Many food co-ops are registered formally as co-operatives, in which they sign up to co-operative principles agreed by the International Co-operative Alliance. However, over the past few years, the term has come to be used to describe any community food outlet (such as food clubs, bag or box schemes, fruit and vegetable stalls, mobile stores) run on a not-for-profit basis for the benefit of local people. Not all of these community food co-ops have a formal membership structure and so do not necessarily meet the strict definition of a co-operative. In this Guide we have used the term food co-op to describe any outlet run by local people that is involved in supplying food for the benefit of the community, rather than for private profit.

B.2.2 Why set up a food co-op?

A food co-op provides access to affordable, good quality fresh produce. In many residential areas there are often few shops that sell fresh fruit and vegetables. People have to depend on larger supermarkets which may be a distance away, and, in some neighbourhoods, households may not have access to a car and public transport may be limited. In such localities, food co-ops can result in substantial financial savings and increased consumption of fruit and vegetables. There are other advantages as well: food may be delivered to people who are elderly or housebound and who cannot collect their orders. The food co-op can provide a setting for exchanging recipes or information about healthy eating. In addition, there are other social benefits, such as groups of people working together for their own and the community's benefit. Volunteers can also gain new skills and increase their chances of employment. Food co-ops provide an opportunity to create partnerships among diverse community groups.



B.2.3 Guidelines for setting up a food co-op

As well as addressing the issues covered in Section A, you should read the detailed toolkit covering all aspects of food co-ops available from www.sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit/. Much of the discussion below is based on the information contained in this resource.

Needs assessment

If you are thinking of setting up a food co-op, you need to establish the following:

- Is there a demand for a food co-op?
- How many people want it?
- What products do they want?
- Will they use the service?
- Will they pay the prices you are proposing?



Identifying key partners and stakeholders

The first thing you need in order to set up a food co-op is to identify people who are ready, willing and able to get involved. These might consist of the organisers (a steering group or management committee); workers (volunteers or paid staff) who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the food co-op, and your customers. In consumer co-operatives the organisers, workers, and customers of the food co-op are often all the same people, as everyone has to become a member to shop there and also help to run and develop the co-op. But many community food co-ops nowadays are open to everyone, rather than just members. You may also want to invite people from potential partner organisations (community groups, the public sector, government organisations, etc.) who might not be directly involved but could support it in various ways.

Management, organisation and administration

It will be useful to have a small committee that meets regularly to deal with the management of the food co-op, with possibly an annual general meeting (AGM) of the whole membership. Committees usually have particular officers including a chair, treasurer and secretary. These officers are elected at the AGM. When recruiting committee members and electing officers, you need to ensure that the people involved have enough time and commitment to take on the responsibilities involved and attend regular meetings, and also that they have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles.

Policies and principles

Any group that defines itself as a co-operative can sign up to the formal co-operative principles defined by the International Co-operative Alliance. However many community food co-ops are not necessarily run as consumer co-operatives and may have a variety of different structures.

It is advisable to set up a committee with governing documents. As the Sustain toolkit notes, if a food co-op does not have a committee or any governing documents, difficulties may arise as roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and there is no forum for dealing with problems.

Membership

Some food co-ops require everyone who wants to buy food there to become a member and to pay a fee to join before they can start shopping, while others allow non-members to shop as well. A membership system is a good way of keeping track of customers and of keeping them more involved. You will need to decide criteria for eligibility to join and decide on a membership fee.

Governing document or constitution

According to Sustain, a food co-op should have a governing document or constitution, giving details of the organisation's purpose, what it does, how it is going to do it and how it is organised. The contents of such a document are set out clearly in www.sustainweb.org/foodcoopstoolkit/.

The business structure

It is best to start at a manageable level. Seek guidance from those already working in community food projects. It might be best to start by setting up something like a food buying club based on a simple pre-order/pre-pay system.

Selecting a venue

As the Sustain toolkit notes, the type of outlet you've decided to run affects the type of premises and facilities you need. For example, bag schemes will need quite a lot of space with several tables to lay out produce and pack it in bags, whereas a stall can operate in a smaller space.

Case Study

Southill Food Co-op, Limerick, Ireland

The Southill Food Co-op was established in September 2000 as a joint initiative between Southill Family Resource Centre (FRC), Southill Integrated Development Project and the Health Promotion Department of the HSE Mid-Western Area (formerly Midwestern Health Board, MWHB).

Needs assessment

Needs were assessed at a one-day mini-market by issuing questionnaires. The results confirmed a definite interest in the development of a food co-op.

Phase One – development of the Co-op

The former Midwestern Health Board health promotion department initially led the setting up of the food co-op. Following the needs assessment and several meetings with relevant stakeholders:

- A committee was formed representing all relevant stakeholders.
- Four staff members were given responsibility for running the food co-op. These staff members were part of a three-year community employment (CE) scheme.
- The co-op opened every two weeks from 9.30am to 12.30pm in Southill House and operated on a non-members basis.
- Co-op staff purchased initial stock and other equipment with funding from the Health Promotion Centre.
- All money was lodged to a bank account to be opened under the names of the four staff members and used to fund the co-op.

- The co-op was run on a non-profit making basis. Stock was sold at cost price with a small margin added to cover expenses.
- Additional activities also take place such as tasting of different fruit- and vegetable- based dishes.
- Advertising was carried out via posters, local papers and local radio stations.

Implementation of the pilot enterprise

The co-op remained open for the duration of the three-year CE scheme. Only one member of staff stayed with the project from the beginning. This local member of staff reported great satisfaction in terms of skills and personal development, but the survival of the co-op become dependent on this person's dedication and availability. Advertising for the co-op was primarily through word of mouth.

The co-op progressed to open every week and continued to have a healthy bank account for the three years that the CE scheme was in place. During the spring and summer of 2003, the one remaining member of staff was not able to maintain the constant weekly openings of the co-op. The co-op closed temporarily until new premises and new staff were secured.

After the initial 18 months, a questionnaire was issued to 27 local residents to assess the impact of the food co-op. The results were very positive and allowed plans to be made to establish a permanent, dedicated space for the co-op.

Phase Two: current status of Southill Food Co-op

The Paul Partnership made €5,000 available to purchase a Portacabin to permanently house the food co-op in the grounds of Southill House. Two employees of the FÁS Jobs Initiative were allocated to the food co-op. A survey of local residents was carried out by the co-op staff to assess their needs and recommendations in relation to the re-vamped co-op.

A management committee was appointed at this time, representing the following organisations:

- Midwestern Health Board Health Promotion
- Paul Partnership
- Southill Community Services Board
- FÁS
- Limerick Enterprise Development Board
- Food co-op staff.

A Health Impact Assessment was conducted on Southill food co-op in 2005. From this, recommendations were made with regard to the future of the co-op, including:

- Increased visibility, presence and usage of the co-op is likely to have a positive impact on the health of local people if changes were made in terms of opening hours, advertising, and improved access.
- Increased purchase and consumption of fruit and vegetables would have a positive impact on the health of local people. This would be helped if the co-op were to operate an order/delivery system.
- Current road safety issues outside the co-op were likely to have a negative impact on the health of local people; it should be possible to reduce this impact by traffic calming measures.
- Transportation of heavy goods (such as potatoes) without a suitable means of transport was likely to have a negative impact on the health of local people. It should be possible to reduce this if the co-op were to operate an order/delivery system.

In light of this assessment, the decision was made to introduce a limited delivery service. For 12 months, the co-op used the Limerick Food Partnership's food delivery van and driver, and sales into the community increased. As part of the regeneration process, the new Southill Area Centre opened and included a community café. To further expand the service into the local

community, the food co-op is currently exploring ways of linking to the community café and the growing schemes affiliated with the Southill Area Centre and the Limerick Food Partnership. Staffing and funding remain an ongoing challenge.

Currently the food co-op has two part-time staff members and is open from 10am till 12 pm during school term time and 10am till 4pm during school holidays. Deliveries take place on Thursdays and Fridays within the surrounding community. Plans are currently being drawn up to extend the outreach of the co-op into the community by setting up a market stall outside the Area Centre. It is hoped that this will reach a much larger customer base.

? Want More Information

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B.3 Community Farmers' Markets

B.3.1 What is a community farmers' market?

At farmers' markets, food is sold by the producer directly to the public in a location as near as possible to where the food was grown or processed. Farmers' markets are one of several methods of direct selling that have grown in popularity in recent years.

There is considerable diversity in the types of markets, including private markets, shopping centre markets, traders' markets, country markets and co-operatively run or community-based markets. Community-based farmers' markets are run by a group of producers or a community-based organisation on a non-profit making basis and are the main focus for this Guide, because they target low-income areas. In Northern Ireland, the majority of markets are municipal based and are run by the local district council, with a small number having their origins in co-operatives.

B.3.2 Why set up a community farmers' market?

Community-based farmers' markets can address key barriers to healthy eating, by improving the accessibility, availability and affordability of healthy food in low income areas.

As Bord Bia notes in its *Guide to Selling through Farmers' Markets* (2007) farmers' markets can mean fresh food, better understanding between producer and consumer, high-quality produce and a fairer income for producers. They promote a more sustainable society by reducing packaging and by using local produce, thus minimising transportation costs. Farmers' markets can help create a vibrant local economy and a sense of locality. The emphasis should be on local food which helps support local employment; other local businesses may benefit from the passing trade. According to Bord Bia, there is no universally accepted definition of local food but, as a general rule of thumb, for a product to be considered local, it must be sourced within a 25-30 mile/40-50km radius of where it is sold.

Community
FARMERS
MARKET



B.3.3 Guidelines for setting up a community farmers' market

In addition to addressing the issues discussed in Section A, you need to consider a range of issues pertaining specifically to community-based farmers' markets. There is a useful and detailed tool kit dealing with Urban Farmers' Markets in Wales available from www.foodvision.gov.uk. Much of the discussion below is based on this resource.

Needs assessment

- Research the area - what shops are in the area?
- Is fresh food/produce available in the local shops?
- Is such food expensive?
- Do people have to travel a distance to food shops and if so what local transport options are available?
- Are there any farmers' community markets in the area already, and if there are, are they targeting the same market?

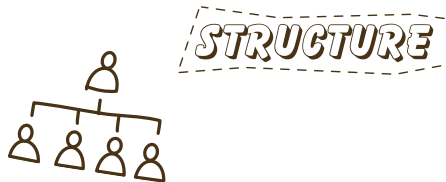


Key stakeholders

Farmers' markets involve and impact on many sectors of the community. It is important that as many groups as possible are involved in the development of a market. These may include local authorities, local business organisations and retailers, community and voluntary groups, state agencies, food producers and food/ farming organisations.

Management, organisation and administration

Establish a steering committee representing key stakeholders to drive the project: This should include a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, a Market Manager, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Part of their remit should be to articulate the aims and objectives of the project.



Budgeting for the start-up phase

According to the Urban Farmers' Markets toolkit, the following are the key items that need to be considered:

- Staff costs (including the market manager and any casual workers)
- Publicity material
- Insurance – Public Liability, Employer's Liability (essential, even if all staff are volunteers)
- Purchase or hire of market stalls
- Planning fee (if planning permission is required from your Local Authority)
- Site costs, including: site rental, electricity supply, cleaning costs (if any)



B.3.4 Good practice standards for farmers' markets

Northern Ireland

In the United Kingdom there is a certification programme designed to uphold the principles and criteria of farmers' markets, and to distinguish genuine farmers' markets from poor imitators by awarding a distinctive logo. This process is managed by the National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association (FARMA). Markets are independently verified as meeting the criteria before being awarded certified status.

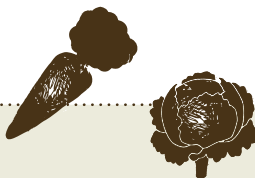
Ireland

In Ireland, stallholders must register with their local Health Service Executive (HSE) Office. Your Environmental Health Officer will advise you about specific requirements pertaining to the manufacturing and selling of your type of food product.

FSAI's Guidance Note 16 *Food Stalls* sets out the standards and arrangements necessary for all food stalls. It covers current food hygiene legislation, HACCP principles, training of staff, relevant documentation, labelling requirements, preparation of food off-site, transportation of food, and personal hygiene, as well as the general requirements of food stalls, including what constitutes low- and high-risk activities. The document can be downloaded from www.fsai.ie.

You can contact the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's advice line on 1890 336677.

A Good Practice Standard and Flag for Farmers' Markets was launched in June 2009. The pilot Standard, which is voluntary, is denoted by a Flag, which participating markets may display. Farmers' markets signing up to the Good Practice Standard undertake to hold markets regularly, to source a substantial proportion, ideally 50%, of local produce from the county or neighbouring counties, to accommodate seasonal and local garden/ allotment produce and to comply with food safety/ labelling rules and criteria on good governance.



? Want More Information

Northern Ireland

- Department of Agriculture & Rural Development Northern Ireland: www.dardni.gov.uk
- The National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association (FARMA): www.farma.org.uk
- Food Standards Agency: www.food.gov.uk
- Sustain (UK): www.sustainweb.org

Ireland

- Bord Bia: www.bordbia.ie/farmersmarkets.
Also, check out their publication *Guide to selling through farmers' markets, farm shops and box schemes in Ireland* (2007)
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, Ireland: www.agriculture.gov.ie
- The Environmental Information Service (ENFO): www.enfo.ie
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland: www.fsai.ie
- Middleton Farmers' Market (Cork, Ireland): www.middletonfarmersmarkets.com
- Teagasc – The Irish Agriculture & Food Development Agency: www.teagasc.ie



Case Study

Best practice example:

Cardiff's Riverside Market (Wales) – Integrating farmers' markets with the local community

Background

Riverside Community Market Association (RCMA) was originally founded in 1998. The aim was to set up a local farmers' market and run a range of community-based food and nutrition outreach and education activities to improve local access to a fresh, healthy diet and reduce the level of food poverty in the South Riverside area of Cardiff. The area is a culturally diverse inner-city community characterised by a large number of low-income and single-parent families.

Riverside Market

Riverside Market has grown to become the largest farmers' market in Wales, with up to 35 stalls each week. Stalls sell all kinds of fresh, local and organic food, as well as a number of 'world food' stalls, representing the diversity of the local community. RCMA has evolved into a viable social enterprise, and has launched a second successful farmers' market in East Cardiff. At the same time RCMA has continued to expand and develop its educational and outreach programmes, including its work in local primary schools and the Riverside Community Garden project. RCMA is committed to raising awareness of the importance of fresh, locally produced foods for health, to strengthening the local economy, and to protecting the environment. RCMA recently employed a Community Food Coordinator, funded by the Tudor Trust, to develop and deliver food and health activities in the disadvantaged and diverse inner-city communities of South Cardiff.

The RCMA has been successful in meeting a range of community needs in a direct and practical way, by providing:

- Local people with access to affordable, fresh produce sold direct by the producers
- Small scale local producers with the opportunity to trade directly with the public

- A space in which new, fresh food-related business ideas can be developed by local people
- An attraction, which draws new people into the area, contributing to local regeneration and helps to create a sense of local community

Education and outreach work in the local community is central to the ethos of RCMA. Past partnerships with local schools have included nutrition and healthy living workshops for local residents, food workshops in schools, and farm visits for children. The award-winning RCMA Community Garden attracts up to twenty local residents each week to learn how to grow their own food and enjoy the social, recreational and health benefits of gardening.

RCMA has established strong links with a number of local community development organisations, and with Cardiff University's Planning department. The organisation is also represented on a number of policy-making and advisory bodies.

Operational Details

Management: RCMA Social Enterprise Limited, set up in 2003, is a Company Limited by Guarantee and manages RCMA's income-generating activities, such as the weekly running of the Riverside Market. RCMA oversees the company's activities through quarterly strategy meetings and an Annual General Meeting, and has a formalised link which ensures that the Chair and Treasurer of RCMA will always be directors of the Limited Company. Both the Company and the Association are managed by a board of trustees and directors who are drawn from the local community and stallholders from Riverside Market. The aim is to ensure an open and accountable structure, which will enable RCMA to remain responsive to the real needs of the local community.

How the market runs: The market runs every Sunday morning in a highly visible location close to the city. This high-profile location has lent credibility to the market as a facility for the whole city, while remaining close to the Riverside area which it originally intended to serve.

All stallholders are required to meet statutory standards of food safety. These standards are policed by the local Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers who visit the market from time to time. To date they have not found any cause for serious concern, but have been able to provide advice to some stallholders on how to improve their operation.

Producers are required to have Public and Product liability insurance and sign an agreement between the Market and stallholders.

The RCMA maintains a 'Friends of the Market' email network and contacts provide feedback on the market's development and assist with awareness raising. A monthly newsletter is sent to all friends, including flyers for distribution.

Income is mainly from stall rentals. In 2006/2007 there was an average of 30 stalls each week paying about £30 each. The RCMA's three-year planning permission and licensing agreement with Cardiff Council was renewed for a further three years.

Future Priorities

Maintaining customer interest: It is important that the loyalty of Riverside Market clientele is maintained and expanded and that more people find out about the Market. This requires the Market manager to maintain and further develop promotional activity and to get feedback from customers and stallholders on how the market should develop. Initiatives in recent times included the following:

- Friends of the Market: 'Friends' are useful to the market, as they help to recruit further potential clients and develop customer loyalty. The ever-expanding RCMA mailing list makes sure Friends receive advance notice of special offers or events.
- Feedback surveys: Surveys have been regularly carried out both formally and informally to find out what customers think of the Market, where they came from, how much they spent, and how they think the market could be improved.

- New stalls and events: New stallholders are selected to avoid oversupply of a particular item and also to diversify the range of product available and to introduce seasonality in produce. New events and music were sought for each market.
- Other information or stalls at the market: One stall was kept for use by RCMA to sell Fair Trade teas and coffees and juices in the summer months. The RCMA offered promotional space to other appropriate organisations. Local artists and craftspeople were invited to take stalls in the four-week period leading up to Christmas.

Supporting local production: One of the most worrying issues facing the local food movement is the scarcity of producers. The RCMA is constantly identifying and pursuing opportunities for working in partnership with relevant bodies to ensure adequate support is available to enable the growth of local food producers. In the meantime, by operating a popular, lively and well-known producers' market, RCMA contributes directly to the viability of local producers and at the same time raises awareness amongst the public of the importance and benefits of purchasing local food.

? want More Information

Steve Garrett, The Riverside Community Market Association
Social Enterprise Ltd.

Website: www.riversidemarket.org.uk

Community
FARMERS
MARKET



B.4 Community Food Growing Projects

B.4.1 What are community food growing projects?

Community food growing projects are those that introduce people to the theory and practice of growing their own food. In recent years there has been a significant increase in interest in such grow-your-own initiatives. Types of projects range from household initiatives such as hanging baskets, window boxes and backyard gardens, to allotments and community gardens.

B.4.2 How to set up and maintain a community food growing project?

In addition to addressing the issues discussed in section A.1, there are a number of key steps that are specific to setting up and maintaining a food growing project.

Planning

- Establish a steering group.
- Consult with the community, and in particular with potential participants, to:
 - Identify expectations, needs and assets
 - Provide interested stakeholders and participants with an overview of the project and what it hopes to achieve
 - Clarify expectations – groups involved need to be aware of the time and effort that is required to establish a food growing project.
- Identify a suitable site – is it easily accessible? Does it have the support of the local residents? Consider enlisting the support of the Local Residents Association.
- Find out who owns the site. Is it privately or local authority owned? Ascertain if they'll let you use the land.
- Get public liability insurance.
- Establish a work plan for the project. Decide what you will grow and schedule the sowing, planting and harvesting. Decide what resources you need.

- Prepare and map the site, allowing the necessary space for each variety.
- Purchase materials, tools and other necessary items.

Establishing the garden

- Put necessary structures in place, such as raised beds, compost, cold frames, irrigation and paths.
- Order seeds.
- Prepare the ground.
- Train participants as necessary, for example in seed sowing, transplanting, crop rotation, composting and organic pest control.
- Harvest crops.
- Hold cooking sessions or other relevant training and events (for example, harvest celebration).

Evaluating and planning for the following year

- Carry out an evaluation to learn from success and challenges (see section A.3).
- Plan for the following year.
- Plant fruit trees, bushes and future crops.
- Order seeds.



Remember:

- **Get full commitment** from a key person within the group to ensure that the garden development remains a priority throughout the year.
- **Start small** – a few raised beds are all that you need – you want to create success and enthusiasm, not a massive garden that soon becomes too much for the group to maintain.
- **Make sure your garden plans are based on a specific site.** You will be able to work with most sites, but make sure you consider constraints such as soil quality, sun and shade, water-logging, wind corridors and steep banks.
- **Keep the group involved** right from the planning stage through to the purchasing of tools and materials, selection of plants and seeds and assessment of training needs. This will ensure the group's ownership of the garden – and ultimately determine the project's success.
- **Provide plenty of hands-on training** – do not assume that children or adults involved already know how to sow seed, transplant or weed. Training should be on-site, tailored to the needs of the participants, and cover all aspects of garden development

Note: These steps and tips have been adapted, with kind permission, from *How to set up a local food garden* produced by the South Tyrone Community and Schools Food Gardens Project.

Useful resources

- *The Growing in Confidence Community Food Project How-To Guide* (2006), The Organic Centre, www.theorganiccentre.ie
- *The Dublin City Guide to Community Gardening* (2010), Dublin City Council, www.dublin.ie
- *How to set up a local Food Garden* is a user-friendly resource created by the South Tyrone Community & Schools Food Gardens Project. For more information contact the Armagh & Dungannon Health Action Zone at +44 28 87729017
- Community Garden Starter Pack, Federation of City Forms and Community Gardens, www.farmgarden.org.uk

? Want More Information

Northern Ireland

- Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland: www.cvni.org
- Department of Agriculture & Rural Development: www.dardni.gov.uk
- Groundwork Northern Ireland: www.groundworkni.org.uk

Ireland

- An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland: www.antaisce.org
- Bord Bia: www.bordbia.ie
- National Botanic Gardens of Ireland: www.botanicgardens.ie
- Get Ireland Growing: www.getgrowing.ie
- Royal Horticulture Society of Ireland: www.rhsi.ie
- The Organic Centre (Co. Leitrim): www.organiccentre.ie

Other

- BBC Gardening: www.bbc.co.uk/gardening
- Garden Organic: www.gardenorganic.org.uk
- Kids Gardening (US): www.kidsgardening.com
- Let's Go Gardening: www.letszogardening.co.uk
- National Gardening Association (US): www.garden.org
- National Trust: www.nationaltrust.co.uk
- Royal Horticulture Society(UK): www.rhs.org.uk
- Soil Association: www.soilassociation.org



Case Study

‘Growing in Confidence’ Community Food Project, The Organic Centre, Rossinver, County Leitrim

Beginning in 2004 with just two sites, the project was set up in response to evidence that those on a limited income have less access to fresh fruit and vegetables. Now in its sixth year, the project has nine sites. The project is run between the Health Promotion Department of Health Service Executive West and the Organic Centre, Co. Leitrim, a not-for-profit company.

The project seeks to improve access to fresh fruit and vegetables for those on a low income, by encouraging and helping participants to grow their own produce organically. In cooperation with local agencies and community groups, participants were initially recruited in 2004 from Sligo town and rural Leitrim. They met regularly with professional and experienced gardeners from the Organic Centre, with weekly or fortnightly organic gardening sessions offered on plots provided by the Organic Centre and the St Michael’s Family Life Centre in Sligo town. The project was evaluated independently by Sligo Institute of Technology, following which the second community food project (now titled *Growing in Confidence*) commenced in March 2005.

Target group

The project steering group works with the site providers, local agencies and community groups to recruit participants for the project (average 15 in each group).

Management

Membership of the steering group includes a part-time project co-ordinator, gardeners, a community dietitian, a public health representative and a participant representative. The steering group meets monthly to develop the project plan, oversee recruitment, manage the evaluation process and manage the budget.

Funding

The project was funded in 2004 and 2005 by the Health Promotion Department of the North Western Health Board (now part of the HSE) under the National Strategy for Cardiovascular Health. Since 2006, funding has been provided from the Obesity Taskforce Implementation funds.

Objectives

The project aims 'to increase knowledge, awareness and skills among target groups in relation to fruit and vegetable production, preparation and consumption and to promote positive health and well-being'.

The specific objectives are to:

- Improve participants' knowledge of and skills in vegetable and fruit growing
- Enhance participants' skills in preparing and cooking fruit and vegetables
- Increase participants' consumption of fruit and vegetables
- Increase participants' knowledge of the nutritional value of fruit and vegetables
- Develop more positive attitudes towards consumption of fruit and vegetables
- Provide opportunities for physical activity outdoors
- Provide opportunities for positive social interaction and development.



Overview

The project enables participants to learn about the health benefits of eating fruit and vegetables in season. They acquire gardening and cooking skills, and in particular:

- How to grow vegetables and fruit organically
- How to store and preserve
- How to cut costs
- How to grow what you and your family like to eat
- How to prepare and cook fresh produce and make interesting and economical meals for family and friends.







The project involves developing and sharing a plot from scratch. The participants also attend cookery sessions in kitchen facilities available at each site. A couple of weeks prior to the cookery session, the tutor links in with the gardener to ascertain which vegetables could be used from the garden, and participants are consulted as to what type of recipes they would like to try out. The cooked meals are then eaten by all the participants to encourage social participation.

What produce is grown?

A wide variety of produce is grown. Most of the sites have polytunnels, which have the added advantage of offering shelter to participants during inclement weather. In March, the gardener discusses with participants what they would like to grow, taking into account soil type, exposure, etc. When the produce is harvested, it is divided up between participants to be taken home to their families, neighbours and friends.

Where can you find the project?

The community gardens are located on lands donated by various community groups, organisations, churches, local authorities and colleges. There is no charge to the project for the use of any of the sites involved in the project. The project runs for an eight month period during the growing season: March to October. The make-up of the participant groups depends on the site provider – for example, the project in Sligo IT is made up of students and college staff. For other locations, the project is advertised in February, either by the site provider or by the Organic Centre, and information sessions are run the beginning of March. For a list of garden sites, see www.theorganiccentre.ie/community_food_project.



Who works with participants?

An experienced gardener from the Organic Centre guides and helps participants to grow the food, while the HSE trained 'Cook it' tutor shows exciting new ways to cook what has been grown.

Evaluation has continuously highlighted the benefits to participants of having an experienced gardener on site. In addition to gardening skills, the gardening tutors have also received training in group facilitation skills and in working with people with disabilities. In 2010 some participants are being given facilitation skills training to encourage them to become more involved in leading their group.

Evaluation

Besides increasing access to healthy foods and improving nutritional intake, the project has been shown to reduce social isolation, improve physical activity levels, and promote community involvement and working in partnership.

Long-term

The future of the project depends on continued funding from HSE. However, the steering group is continually examining options that will allow the project to continue.

There are a number of ways in which the sustainability of this project has been demonstrated:

- At two of the current locations, the contact time with the gardener has been halved and previous participants in the programme have returned and are mentoring new participants when the gardener is not present. This reduces the cost of the project at these sites and allows for new groups to be taken on and developed.
- At one of the current locations, an allotment scheme has been developed from the initial gardening site. This is now being managed by past participants, with new participants learning the skills with the project gardener on the original plot.

- Once the participants acquire the necessary skills, they can either move onto an allotment site or use their own gardens.
- Salad bags will be produced by the group to be sold locally, with the funds going back into the development of the project.
- The project is considering developing a support network between a number of sites in Sligo town.
- Links have also been developed between gardening groups and school garden projects.
- The steering group developed a 'How to' Guide for other community groups to use. There has been much interest in the guide, and other projects have followed the model.
- The cost-effectiveness of the project is continuously examined.

? Want More Information

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Emma Ball, Community Dietitian Manager, HSE Northwest.
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Case Study

The 'Dig it and Eat it!' Project, Belfast

The 'Dig it and Eat it!' project commenced in January 2004 as a programme of education and practical action to tackle dietary problems and provide regular physical activity.

The project involves the Green Gym (Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland Health Initiative) and the Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service working in partnership to develop four community-based gardens in the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) region.

Funding

The project was initially funded for four years, from 2003 to 2007, by the Big Lottery under the New Opportunities Fund, Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke and Cancer Programme. The project was subsequently taken on and funded by HSCB as part of their preventative health measures. The funding covers two staff, tools, equipment and materials for each project, vehicles and insurance.

Participants

The participants were drawn from the local community and given training in how to grow their own fruit and vegetables, as well as in the nutritional reasons for healthy eating.

The 'Dig it and Eat it!' project was advertised locally and groups were encouraged to apply. Four groups – one from each of the four trust areas – were chosen by a rigorous points system relating to their site, the community group commitment and the multiple and health deprivation rank:

- Ards New Horizons, Newtownards
- Ardmonagh Women's Group, Turf Lodge
- St Colmcille's Primary School, Downpatrick
- Salvation Army/Help the Aged, Cregagh Road

These groups all had access to a patch of land either at the local community centre or at the school or church.

As the project progressed and became better known, groups approached us to request shorter term projects. The Green Gym Project Officer also attended networking events, put articles in health trust and community magazines and produced leaflets to encourage participation.

The new shorter term projects have enabled 'Dig it and Eat it!' to work with a wider range of community groups, minority ethnic groups, and disabled and disadvantaged groups. Groups without land were also accommodated in the shorter term projects.



*Grow your
own*



Objectives

The objectives of the project are to:

- Develop four community food gardens in deprived areas of EHSSB
- Recruit people in each area to grow vegetables, fruit and herbs
- Provide training in horticultural and environmental skills
- Include raised beds where necessary to enable access for all participants
- Increase knowledge about diet and healthy eating amongst participants
- Publicise the project more widely and highlight the need for a better diet
- Provide a quality product in a safe working environment
- Provide opportunities for improved health through physical activity

Steering group

A steering group was established to oversee the 'Dig it and Eat it!' project, representing the Conservation Volunteers, Chief Community Dietitian, and Senior Community Dietitian and a Health Promotion co-coordinator. They meet regularly to plan the project, and ensure that the aims and objectives are achieved.

Staff

The funding allows for two staff. Groups meet once a week for a half or a full day. This allows staff to cover three to five groups at any time.



Progress

The first year was spent designing and constructing the gardens. This enabled the participants to learn many new skills such as planning, measuring, costing, bricklaying, carpentry and landscaping. Volunteers from each of the groups attended training at the Organic Centre in Leitrim. This was highly beneficial to the group as it taught them the basics of looking after the plot and also gave them the opportunity to see a working organic centre with polytunnels, reed systems, native orchard and productive vegetable beds.

The second year was spent maintaining the vegetable gardens. A wide variety of vegetables was grown, and harvested. A garden design course was run during the winter months by the Project Officer, with visits to local gardens to learn about the history, structure and design of the gardens. Fruit and vegetables grown in the gardens were entered into the Belfast Flower and Produce Show in the Botanic Gardens.

As the project progressed and more groups became interested, shorter courses were offered, of between 15 weeks and one year. During these shorter projects, groups grew fruit and vegetables in pots, containers, window boxes and plastic bags.

Cooking

The project also incorporated Cook it! to encourage groups to prepare fresh and healthy food. The Cook it! sessions were generally run in the centres during the winter period, when there was less to do in the gardens. The teamwork and sense of achievement from creating a dish from start to finish using produce harvested was very worthwhile. Cook-it! training was also undertaken by project members and some have gone on to run Cook it! sessions with groups.



School based projects

A number of shorter projects were run with schools using the Square Foot Gardening technique.

This technique involves a small square raised bed, divided into sections, so a variety of quick growing vegetables can be grown.

This enabled the project to be run in the spring and summer terms and solved the issue of watering over the holidays.



Evaluation

An evaluation of the initial four years of the project was undertaken in the summer of 2008. Using questionnaires and interviews it was seen that the majority of the participants became more healthy and aware of both health and environmental issues.

? Want More Information

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B.5 Community-run Breakfast and After-Schools Clubs

Services that extend the traditional school day are now being offered by community groups as well as schools. These services include initiatives such as breakfast clubs and after-school clubs.

B.5.1 Breakfast Clubs

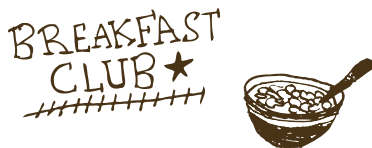
Why set up a breakfast club?

Research has shown that children benefit both nutritionally and behaviourally by eating breakfast, but almost a sixth of Irish children go to school or bed hungry (HSBC, Ireland, 2009). These children will invariably be hungry in class and therefore unable to concentrate or participate fully in school activities.

All children need a healthy breakfast to grow, learn and play. A nourishing breakfast is a good start to the day and gives the child the energy needed to concentrate and learn.

While a key function of a breakfast club is to provide children with food at the start of the day, a good breakfast club can be about much more than that. Breakfast clubs are becoming effective environments for promoting healthy eating and for enriching the curriculum through informal learning. They also tackle issues of social exclusion and academic underachievement by encouraging children to come to school who might be reluctant to attend otherwise.

A breakfast club should ideally involve school staff, children, parents, carers and the wider community. It should aim to improve the health and health behaviours of children, staff and volunteers who become involved.



? Want More Information

Northern Ireland

School Food: Top Marks School Food: The Essential Guide,
www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Ireland

- Department of Health & Children (2003) *Food & Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools*, www.dohc.ie
- Department of Health & Children (2004) *Food & Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services*, www.dohc.ie
- Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives (HFfA, 2009), www.healthyfoodforall.com

Potential outcomes associated with breakfast clubs include:

- Helping to meet nutritional needs
- Improving school attendance and punctuality
- Improving concentration in class
- Creating positive links between families and the school
- Creating a sense of security in the school environment
- Providing a mechanism for helping young people who may not present as being in need
- Fostering a more positive outlook towards school, resulting in improved participation
- Improving interaction with adults
- Developing social skills
- Allowing participants to have fun
- Improving peer relationships
- Fulfilling childcare needs, allowing parents to attend work or further training and thus tackling social disadvantage.

Types of breakfast club

Community-focused breakfast clubs are generally off-site and held in the community as part of a social programme. They offer a single menu and are run by community staff, such as family support workers. An example of this type is run by The Get Ahead Club, Clondalkin, Ireland, which is described below.

A good breakfast club should be child-centred, inclusive and fun. It will enable its members to make confident choices about a balanced diet. The club should offer them opportunities to learn new things and try out different activities.

Setting up and running a breakfast club

There is no single or ideal way to set up a breakfast club. What works in one situation may not work in another. In addition to the issues discussed in section A.1, the specific aspects that need to be considered when setting up and running a breakfast club are described below. They can be adapted further to suit different circumstances.

Choosing a location

Breakfast clubs can meet in a variety of settings in the community, such as a family support centre or a community centre. Before deciding on the location, consider the following:

- Number and age of children most likely to attend
- Size of venue. Can it accommodate the expected numbers of children, plus staff and volunteers?
- Facilities within the venue. Is there a drinking water supply, access to kitchen facilities, sinks, toilets, storage facilities?
- How will children get to the venue and then to school if it is not in the school itself?
- Availability of the venue at the specified time on an ongoing basis. Try to ensure that a specific room is available, so that the children always have a familiar environment.
- Does the venue meet health and safety requirements?
- Are there road safety considerations? Is the venue near a busy road?

Running costs

The cost of running your breakfast club will depend on a number of factors, including the resources and facilities available, attendance rates, charging policy, staffing levels, menu. When drawing up your budget, consider the following:

Regular expenses, including:

- Food costs and wastage
- Cleaning costs
- Transport costs
- Staff wages
- Volunteer expenses
- Administration and banking charges
- Road crossing supervisors if they do extra hours.



Once-off expenses, including:

- Set-up costs
- Cutlery, crockery and glassware
- Electrical equipment – fridge freezer, kettle, microwave, toaster
- Bins, table covers, jugs, chopping boards
- Training costs
- Promotional material and stationery
- Theme days, Halloween, Christmas, Easter and other cultural events.

Equipment needed

Your equipment needs will be determined by the type of breakfast club you decide to establish, but there are a few basics that will be needed whatever type of club you set up. These include:

- Kettle
- Fridge
- Cutlery and crockery
- Tables and chairs
- Cleaning products
- Waste disposal facilities.



Getting the room right

If you are running a small club in a big hall, mark out the 'club space' with posters or markers. If possible offer an area where club members can go to relax.

Try to set aside an area for members to display some of their work or photos of club activities – this gives a sense of pride and ownership and is also an excellent way to attract other children.

Getting the menu right

Healthy eating guidelines are based around the Eatwell Plate in Northern Ireland and the Food Pyramid in Ireland. These are summarised in Appendix A.



Tips

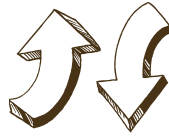
Tips to make it more appealing

- Put healthier choices first on the menu and make sure they can be seen.
- Make food look attractive
- Have special promotions such as:
 - Theme days, for example breakfasts across the globe
 - Promotion of different fruit, for example exotic fruits, fruit salad
 - 'Taster days' where small portions of unfamiliar foods can be tried

Coordinating the club

A designated breakfast club coordinator should be appointed to ensure that the club is developed to meet its objectives. Typically, the coordinator might be responsible for:

- Planning activities
- Identifying the target group of children
- Staffing
- Looking after premises
- Marketing and promotion
- Reporting to funders
- Liaising with the steering committee and senior management team
- Health and safety
- Child protection issues
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Making appropriate links with the local community.



Where breakfast clubs are overseen by a steering committee, the committee's remit may cover some of the areas set out for the coordinator above, thereby sharing the burden of responsibility. Having a range of members on your steering committee will give you access to a broader base of information and expertise. It also means that the key players are involved in decision making and that work can be shared between members.

Staffing and training

Depending on how you structure your club, you could think about involving parents, local school completion coordinators, local home-school-community liaison officers, youth workers, and other members of the community.

- Parents and other family members may be able to help on a rota basis if they cannot commit themselves to coming in every day.
- Local colleges may have students that would be willing to help with the club in order to gain experience.
- Check the venue's policy on who can work with children: this may need to involve the Criminal Records Bureau of the Police Service Northern Ireland, or (in Ireland) Garda Clearance.

Staff training may be needed to maximise the effectiveness of the breakfast club. Examples of training areas include food hygiene, health and safety, first aid, childcare, play skills, computer skills and record keeping.

Child supervision measures

The number of children attending your breakfast club will determine the number of adults needed to supervise. Always check what the adult-child ratio should be with the school, health service or organisation with which your club is linked.

Activities to Include

You can run a wide variety of activities at breakfast clubs. Some breakfast clubs run their activities before breakfast and others afterwards. You could set up your activities so that children can opt in or out of them. The activities you select must reflect the needs and wishes of the members. The emphasis should be on having fun. Remember to ask the children what they want and be prepared to change what you are doing every now and then to keep them interested. Suggestions include reading corners, free and structured play spaces (for example for skipping, dancing, hopscotch, or playing board games), and areas for drawing, painting and participating in group activities.

? Want More Information

For more information on setting up a breakfast club:

- In **Ireland**, see *Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives* (2009), Healthy Food for All, www.healthyfoodforall.com
- In **Northern Ireland**, see *School Food: an essential guide* (2009), Public Health Agency, www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Case Study

The Get Ahead Club's Breakfast Clubs, Clondalkin, Dublin 22 (Ireland)

The Get Ahead Club is a community-based education project that aims to support the participation and progression in school of children at risk of marginalisation. It achieves its aims using a community development model that provides a range of services to targeted children and their families. These services include after-school groups, breakfast clubs, summer programmes, and developmental work with parents and participation in integrated responses to educational needs. The project is managed by an independent committee made up of a range of local interests. It includes representatives of parents, community groups, schools, South Dublin County Council, the Eastern Regional Health Authority, Ronanstown Youth Service, religious of the area, and An Garda Síochána. Nineteen Community Employment (CE) staff work on the project, with one CE Supervisor and a Project Co-ordinator.

Context

The area that The Get Ahead Club operates in is one of the most severely disadvantaged in Ireland. It faces a range of socioeconomic challenges, including high unemployment, poor educational achievement, antisocial behaviour and chronic problems of drug abuse. The Get Ahead Club tries to face these challenges as a community, in partnership with the State, schools and other organisations. The breakfast club began in 2000 as a means of giving children a healthy start to their day.



Objectives

The breakfast clubs aim to make sure that children participating will:

- Develop healthy eating habits in relation to their breakfast
- Get a good start to their school day by having a healthy breakfast in a relaxed and caring atmosphere
- Improve their concentration levels in class due to the fact that they have eaten breakfast.

Operation

The breakfast clubs are held on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings each week, from 8.15 to 9.00am, in the schools themselves. Three project core staff and six community employment staff run the clubs, which provide approximately 80 children with a breakfast and a chat in a structured setting. The age profile of the children varies from approximately seven to twelve years.

Funding for the clubs is provided by the Department of Social & Family Affairs, Ireland, through the Schools Meals Scheme. There is no cost to the children or the schools for the breakfast clubs.

Healthy eating policy

In consultation with a dietitian from the Department of Health & Children's Health Promotion Unit, a healthy eating policy was implemented in the clubs from the start. This policy excludes foods such as sugar-coated cereals from the menu. Children are encouraged to help tidy up and to interact in an appropriate way with their friends and project staff, thus developing their social skills as well as their eating habits.

Evaluation

An evaluation of the clubs was conducted with the project staff, their supervisor, the school principals, the project coordinator and the project management committee. Overall, the clubs were judged a success, in that the children attending do have healthy breakfasts at the club and are happy with how it operates.

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? Want More Information

- Department of Social & Family Affairs, School Meals Programme, Social Welfare Services Office, College Road, Sligo. Tel: +353 (0)71 913 8612.
Website: www.welfare.ie.
- Breakfast Club Plus (2006). *How to Set Up Your Own Breakfast Club and Keep It Going* ContinYou Publications.
www.breakfastclubplus.org.uk
- Scottish Community Diet Project (2004). *Breakfast Clubs ... More of a Head Start. A Step-by-Step Guide to the Challenges of Setting Up and Running Breakfast Clubs* in Scotland. Scottish Consumer Council. www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk

B.5.2 After-school Clubs

After-school clubs help to ensure that children have an opportunity to do their homework and have healthy snacks while doing so. After a long school day, children may find it hard to concentrate and learn, and an after-school snack while doing homework can remedy this and keep them satisfied until their evening meal.

Listed below are some snack and drink ideas which are in line with the healthy eating recommendations from the Eatwell Plate (Northern Ireland) and the Food Pyramid (Ireland) – these are summarised in Appendix A.

Healthy snack ideas

- Washed fruit (such as apples, bananas, grapes, satsumas or cherry tomatoes)
- Washed, raw vegetables (such as carrot sticks, pepper strips or cucumber slices)
- Plain popcorn (unsalted)
- Small sandwich (can be made with bread, rolls, or wraps)
- Plain crackers, crispbreads or crackers served with fruit or cheese
- Plain rice cakes
- Plain or wholemeal scones.



Healthy drinks

- Water and milk are the most suitable drinks between meals.
- Unsweetened fruit juice, flavoured milk, diluted sugar-free squash, yogurt or milk-based drinks, smoothies and unsweetened fruit juice drinks should only be taken with meals when they are less damaging to teeth.
- Sweetened fruit juice and juice drinks and fizzy drinks should be avoided.

Case Study

Dolphin House Homework Club, Rialto, Dublin (Ireland)

Dolphin House Homework Club is based in Dolphin House flats complex in Rialto in Dublin's south inner city. The Rialto area has been very disadvantaged over the last few decades, with high rates of unemployment, poverty, substance abuse and early school leaving.

Dolphin House Homework Club was founded in 1997 as a community-based response to the increasing incidence of early school leaving and the subsequent lack of choices and opportunities for young people in the Rialto area. It soon became apparent that there was a high level of interest in, and demand for, the service.

Mission statement

The club's mission is to combat educational inequalities in Dolphin House by developing and delivering a series of interventions which enable young people from the area to reach their full potential.

Aims

The club aims to:

- Provide a comfortable, safe place for young people
- Provide support by assigning a worker or volunteer to work with the young person
- Develop the young person's range of abilities
- Allow for the development of a respectful relationship between the worker and the young person
- Provide relevant training for the workers and volunteers
- Strengthen the link between the homework club and the families of the young people in the club



- Develop and improve links with other relevant services in the area, such as schools and youth services
- Encourage participation by the target group in other local activities
- Develop a model of best practice, which can be promoted and shared with other communities experiencing similar levels of disadvantage
- Acknowledge and challenge inequalities in the education system
- Prevent early school leaving.

Objectives

The club's objectives are to:

- Provide space and structured support to enable young people to do their homework
- Provide a support person to help young people with their homework
- Provide opportunities to explore other educational mediums, such as art and play, which go beyond the formal structure of homework
- Provide opportunities for building and developing relationships between the worker and young person
- Liaise and network with schools and youth projects.

Running of the Club

The homework club is run by a full-time coordinator supported by two part-time workers, CE workers and volunteers. It is open Monday to Friday from 2.00pm for educational and homework support and for art and crafts projects or activities. Those attending the club range from five-year-olds up to Junior Certificate level (15 years old).

The club is very popular and local schoolchildren have shown themselves to be motivated and eager to learn. Approximately 75 children and young people attend the homework club every week.

Activities

Ongoing help with schoolwork is given to the children and young people, encouraging them to reach their potential and feel more confident in their abilities. A lot of effort is put into boosting self-esteem and confidence. This can motivate them to enjoy learning and to stay in school to Leaving Certificate level.

Along with learning support, the club also allows participants to explore creative outlets. Musicians and artists are heavily involved in the club, sharing their talents and skills with the young people.

Nutrition

Each day the children are provided with a healthy meal including plenty of fruit, yoghurt and sandwiches. Water is the drink of choice. Healthy eating is always encouraged and informal learning on nutrition and health is supported. There have been demonstrations to the young people on how to make a healthy and economical family meal with fresh ingredients.

? Want More Information

Rialto Community Network,
568 South Circular Road, Rialto, Dublin 8, Ireland.
Email: rialtonet@connect.ie



B.6 Nutrition Education and Training Programmes

In this chapter, we look at a range of community food initiatives whose focus is to improve healthy eating practices amongst low income groups through a combination of education and skills training. These include cookery courses, supermarket tours and behaviour modification programmes.

Tips

B.6.1 Tips for setting up a nutrition education and training programme

- **Identify the needs of your target group.** For example, do they require information on healthy eating or the skills necessary to put this into practice or both?
- **Look at what assets you already have.** Can you engage the services of a local community dietitian? Are there existing courses on offer in your area or perhaps further afield that you could link in to? There are many programmes already in existence – find out what is available, and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Perhaps you have volunteers in the community willing to become peer trainers?
- **Think about what facilities you have and your group size.** If you don't have access to a kitchen, then cookery courses are not feasible – perhaps you could identify other facilities in your area?

B.6.2 Programmes currently on offer

This section looks at a range of programmes currently in place on the island of Ireland, along with case studies to demonstrate how nutrition education and skills training programmes work in practice. They include:

In Ireland:

- Healthy Food Made Easy
- Food & Health Programme

In both **Ireland** and **Northern Ireland**:

- Cook it! Programme
- Supermarket Tours

In **Northern Ireland**:

- Weigh to Health Programme
- Focusing Resources on Eating and Shaping Health (FRESH)
- Food Values
- The Goodfood Toolkit

Healthy Food Made Easy

Healthy Food Made Easy (originally called Food and Health) began in 1992 as a peer-led nutrition education programme among low-income groups. It was initiated by the former Health Promotion Unit within the Department of Health & Children and the Eastern Regional Health Authority (now the HSE).

The programme has evolved to become a six-session fun and practical course that delivers basic information about healthy eating. The cookery component of the course, during which easy and delicious recipes are prepared and tasted by participants, provides the practical skills to put knowledge into practice for participants and their families. Members of the community are trained as peer-leaders to deliver the course to groups in their local community. This is carried out with the support of a local coordinator and community dietitian. Healthy Food Made Easy uses a community development approach and embraces many of the principles of health promotion, including developing personal skills and strengthening community action.

Since its inception, the project has brought many community development organisations into partnership with the HSE.

? Want More Information

To find out about Healthy Food Made Easy, contact the Community Dietitian in your HSE area, www.hse.ie

Case Study

Healthy Food Made Easy, Kildare

In November 2006, the Community Dietitian with responsibility for Health Promotion in Kildare and West Wicklow, began planning to extend the Healthy Food Made Easy project to that region. Early in 2007, assistance was sought from the well-established and very successful project in neighbouring County Laois, where there was (and still is) a partnership project between the Mountmellick Development Association (MDA) and the HSE. The Healthy Food Made Easy co-ordinator in the MDA agreed to assign part of her time to developing the project in County Kildare. Two County Laois peer-leaders (who were living in or near County Kildare) were approached to deliver courses on a pilot basis.

Courses were then advertised to local community groups in County Kildare. Interest was high, and in the last quarter of 2007 five courses were delivered by the two peer-leaders. Following this pilot phase, it became apparent that to progress the project in County Kildare local peer-leaders would need to be trained. The Health Promotion Service in Dublin Mid-Leinster provided funding and in January 2008 the MDA Project Co-ordinator was formally appointed to run the Kildare project. Recruitment then commenced for local peer-leaders for County Kildare. Following a very positive response, eight successful applicants completed a training course between March and May 2008. Ten Healthy Food Made Easy courses were delivered in Kildare in 2008 to groups such as adult mental health groups, active retirement groups, back-to-education groups and young mothers on low incomes. This number doubled in 2009, and by the time this Guide was going to press in 2010, ten courses had already been booked.

eat well

Food & Health Programme

The Food & Health (F&H) programme is a nutrition education programme running in counties Longford, Westmeath, Laois, Offaly and Kildare. It is aimed at supporting people who are interested in healthier eating, particularly where cost is a consideration. It includes practical cookery, nutrition and cookery tips and lots of recipe ideas.

The main goal is to help improve people's access to good quality information that can be put into practice in everyday life. This is a community peer-led programme whereby local women have been trained as F&H instructors. The F&H instructors come from all across the Midlands region in Ireland. The project is a joint initiative between the Mountmellick Development Association (MDA), Westmeath Community Development Ltd and the HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster.

Since the inception of the project in 1999:

- Two local coordinators have been employed
- 35 peer-led instructors have been trained
- 400 adult courses have been delivered
- 12 'Cool Dude' courses have been delivered

Four courses are available, depending on the needs of the group:

- **Healthy Food Made Easy:** This course includes both theory and cookery elements. The instructor takes the group through the food pyramid chart, discusses balance in their diet, and gives shopping tips. A Community Dietitian visits the groups as the course progresses.
- **Cooking for Health:** A modified version of Healthy Food Made Easy, delivered to people with low literacy skills and people with intellectual and learning disabilities.
- **'Cool Dude':** Aimed at young people, this course is both practical and fun, and includes a physical activity module.
- **Community Heart Health:** Designed for groups who have already completed one of the other courses, this course focuses on nutrition, stress and physical activity.

? Want More Information

For courses in Laois/Offaly or Kildare contact:

Barbara Lalor, Food & Health project,
Mountmellick Development Association,
Mountmellick, Co Laois, Ireland.

Tel: +353 (0)57 8644989 or +353 (0)57 8624525.

Email: barbaralalor@eircom.net

For courses in counties Longford or Westmeath contact:

Karen Scarnicchio, Food & Health Project,
Ball Alley Lane, Athlone, Co Westmeath, Ireland.

Tel: +353 (0)90 6493906 or +353 (0)88 58458627.

Email: kscarnicchio@westcd.ie

Supermarket Tours

The Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, HSE West, Galway, set up a Supermarket Tours programme in the West of Ireland in 2003, in response to the perceived need to address the growing incidence of diabetes, dyslipidaemia and obesity. Previous research had shown that teaching people the skills needed to take care of their own health led to behavioural change.

The Supermarket Tours programme aims to:

- Increase the understanding and knowledge of health through nutrition
- Inform people better about food labelling and how to make healthier food choices
- Provide information to people with chronic conditions (such as diabetes) and their support network on how to manage their condition with diet



The tour involves a qualified dietitian or nutritionist accompanying participants through the aisles of the supermarket, giving advice about their food choices. Supermarket tours are organised at a well-known city centre supermarket in Galway, focusing on themes such as 'Shopping with Diabetes', 'Shopping for a Healthier Heart' and 'Shopping the Low-Fat Way'.

Dietitian-led tours are held monthly, are free of charge and are open to all members of the public. Application forms for the tours are available through GP clinics, local pharmacies, health centres, and the programme's own clinical service and group meetings.

The programme was formally evaluated in 2004 and continues to receive positive feedback from participants. It is planned to roll out the programme beyond Galway City to Galway County. As part of this expansion of the programme, the range of topics will be broadened to include 'Shopping for One', 'Healthy Foods for your Toddler', as well as more specific topics such as 'Shopping for a Gluten-free diet'. Morning, evening and weekend sessions will be made available to ensure the programme is client-focused and accessible.

? Want More Information

Contact Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service,
HSE West, West City Centre, Seamus Quirke Road, Galway, Ireland.
Tel: +353 (0)91 548335.
Email: community.nutrition@mailn.hse.ie.

Cook it! Programme

Cook it! was originally introduced to Northern Ireland in 1997 by the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (now the Public Health Agency) in partnership with the Eastern, Northern, and North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Boards. Cook it! is a community nutrition and cooking skills programme which aims to support people in the community who want to enhance their cooking skills and who have an interest in healthier eating. It has subsequently been adapted by the HSE and is now used in Ireland also.

Cook it! is aimed at groups where cost is a consideration and is designed to enable participants to eat more healthily on a limited budget. The programme is made up of six sessions, including both theory and practical, 'hands-on' cookery, each lasting between one-and-a-half and two hours, as shown below.



During Cook it! Sessions, the participants work together to prepare one or two dishes from the recipes in the Cook it! manual. The completed dishes are then tasted and shared by the participants, presenting them with an opportunity to try new foods in a 'social' atmosphere. Some Cook It! courses also include a supermarket tour.

A number of interactive activities are included in each session to reinforce the messages about healthy eating and food hygiene. This combination of cooking and other activities makes the course very participative and enjoyable, and also enables individuals to make healthy changes to their own shopping, cooking and eating habits. Evaluation, both local and regional, has shown Cook it! to be an effective way of achieving this. The programme is delivered by tutors who have attended Cook it! tutor training.

Who is Cook it! for?

Cook it! provides healthy eating information for healthy population groups. The information given is not suitable for some individuals, such as frail elderly people, adults or children with serious illnesses, babies, or children under five years.

What facilities and equipment are required?

In order to deliver the course, you need a suitable venue and equipment. Premises should include the following:

- A kitchen with a domestic cooker (with working oven), fridge and sink with hot and cold running water
- Space to work and eat together – table and chairs etc. This may be in the kitchen or in a separate room
- Kitchen equipment – saucepans, kitchen utensils, plates, cups, cutlery, etc. – sufficient for the group to prepare the dishes and afterwards, to eat together (some Cook it! teams have equipment which can be borrowed by the tutor)
- A first-aid kit
- Flipchart, paper and pens
- Fire safety equipment – fire extinguishers, fire blanket, etc.

Premises where Cook it! sessions are to be held should be assessed for suitability and safety prior to commencing the course. The Cook

it! teams can provide organisations and tutors with guidance and assistance on request.

Insurance issues

There are two important insurance issues which must be addressed before Cook it! delivery commences:

- Insurance for the building: The venue in which Cook it! is held must be covered by Public Liability insurance and Cook it! should be listed on the insurance as one of the activities which takes place in the venue.
- Insurance for tutors: Tutors delivering Cook it! as part of their work duties must be covered by the employing organisation's insurance. Organisations are advised therefore to inform their insurers that they are providing the Cook it! programme as part of their activities. Volunteers who deliver Cook it! for an organisation should be similarly covered by the organisation's insurance.

Organisations wishing to bring in a community tutor to deliver one or more Cook it! sessions need to make sure that the tutor is insured before delivery commences. There are a number of options here:

- The organisation covers the tutor's insurance – the organisation will have to ensure that their insurance policy allows them to do this.
- The tutor takes out their own insurance.

Evaluation

In March 2009, an evaluation report *Cook it! An evaluation of a community nutrition education programme in Northern Ireland* was published by the Public Health Agency. The evaluation examined tutors' and participants' views on the programme, the process of running, organising and managing Cook it! and the impact on participants' shopping, cooking and eating habits. The report can be downloaded from the Public Health Agency's website at: www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk.

Cook it! in Northern Ireland

Cook it! is well established in Northern Ireland and there is a large network of tutors trained to deliver the programme. Tutor training is delivered by community dietitians and support staff and coordinated by the Cook it! teams in each locality approximately twice a year. Once

trained, tutors are incorporated into a support network. They receive regular invitations to update sessions on nutrition issues, dealing with, for example, food for young children, food labelling, food hygiene or budgeting. They also receive a biannual community nutrition newsletter keeping them up to date with current nutrition information, training opportunities and community nutrition initiatives.

- The Public Health Agency is working in partnership with Mencap Northern Ireland, community dietitians, speech and language therapists, health development personnel, and others with a specific interest in learning disabilities to develop a Cook it! course for people with a learning disability. The project will be piloted in 2010.
- The Cook it! team in the Western Health & Social Care Trust is working with 'Hands that Talk' in Dungiven to train staff who have profound hearing loss and support workers, with a view to having Cook it! delivered to deaf people by deaf tutors.

? want More Information

Community Food and Nutrition Team, Western Health and Social Care Trust, Unit 13, Strabane Enterprise Agency, Orchard Road Industrial Estate, Strabane, BT82 9FR.

Tel.: +44 (0)28 7188 0221.

Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, Admin Building, Forster Green Hospital, 110 Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 6HD, Northern Ireland. Tel: +44 (0)28 9094450.

Cooking Skills Programme, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Lisonally House, Co. Armagh Tel +44 (0)28 37520558

Laura Taylor, Health Development Officer – Nutrition, Public Health Agency, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS.

Tel: +44 (0)28 90311611

Cook it! in Ireland

In Ireland, things have progressed considerably for Cook it! in recent times. Funding was received from the HSE to publish the pack in Ireland and make it available to community dietitians who expressed interest in it. A community dietitian in HSE Dublin North East provided training on its use to community dietitians in all areas in 2008. The programme is currently being used in all HSE areas. Training was also given to the Home Economics teachers in the Prison Service throughout Ireland.



Another development in the Cook it! programme in HSE Dublin North East is a Transition Year Cook it! programme in post-primary schools. The programme is delivered in the schools by a Home Economics teacher. To date, up to 40 schools in HSE Dublin North East have received training on the programme and 330 Transition Year students completed the programme in 2008/2009. Nationally, over 80 post-primary schools have expressed an interest in delivering the programme as part of their Transition Year or Applied Leaving Certificate programme. One unplanned spin-off which arose from this project was that some schools made the programme available to parents of their pupils.

? Want More Information

Susanne Shevlin, Senior Community Dietitian, Health Promotion Department, St. Brigid's Complex, Ardee, Co. Louth, Ireland.
Tel: +353 (0)41 6860713
Email: Susanne.shevlin@hse.ie



Weigh to Health Programme

Weigh to Health is a six-week integrated nutrition and physical activity programme which aims to modify behaviour. It was developed by community dietitians to aid weight loss for obese and overweight people living in the Eastern Health & Social Services Board (EHSSB) area in Northern Ireland. The programme aims to tackle the growing problem of obesity by developing a combined nutrition and physical activity approach to weight management in the community, based on behavioural change principles.

Funding

Funding for the development of Weigh to Health was provided through the Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke and Cancer Prevention Programme of the Big Lottery Fund. The project was hosted by the Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service of the legacy trust North and West Belfast Health & Social Services Trust in the EHSSB area.

The programme

A part-time registered dietitian was recruited for three years to co-ordinate the project. The programme was developed in conjunction with Health Promotion and Physical Activity Co-ordinators of the EHSSB and the Clinical Psychology department of the legacy trust North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. A pilot programme was run to train community volunteers in how to run the six-week programme. Of the people who attended the volunteer-led programme, 67 per cent lost weight, with an average weight loss of 2.2kg among those who lost weight. Ninety-one per cent of attendees reported positive changes in dietary habits, and 88 per cent reported improvements in physical activity levels. Community groups also continued to pursue nutrition and physical activity opportunities after the programme had ended.

Evaluation

Results of programmes led by trained community volunteers were comparable with dietitian-led groups in the community, with greater scope for sustainability by linking with local physical activity opportunities. The programme was evaluated and several improvements were made to the training and programme as a result.

Training

The training programme for volunteer tutors consists of a two-day training course with ongoing support from a community dietitian. All tutors are given a comprehensive manual detailing everything covered on the course, session outlines and resources for running the programme. Tutors also receive a quarterly newsletter *Community Nutrition News*. They are also invited to updates run through the Cook it! programme. Before running the programme, all tutors are advised to undergo relevant physical activity training, such as walk leader training, chair-based activities, or dance leader training.

? Want More Information

Contact Wendy Nesbitt or Alison Armstrong,
Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, Admin Building,
Forster Green Hospital, Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 6HD,
Northern Ireland.

Tel: +44 (0)28 909 44500.

Email: wendy.nesbitt@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Focusing Resources on Eating and Shaping Health (FRESH)

The FRESH programme – Focusing Resources on Eating and Shaping Health – is delivered by the Southern Group Environmental Health Committee in conjunction with Armagh City and District Council, Banbridge District Council, Craigavon Borough Council, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council and Newry and Mourne District Council. In 2009, the Southern Group Environmental Health Committee received funding from the Public Health Agency (Southern Office) to improve the provision of nutrition education and interventions across the Southern area.



A programme of work (until March 2011) has been designed to meet the needs of the selected groups and organisations. It includes programmes such as cooking on a budget and food gardens. A community development approach was used to highlight areas of concern and need in terms of healthy eating and nutrition, and to identify suitable programmes.

The community healthy eating initiative developed through this formal service agreement is known as FRESH (Focusing Resources on Eating and Shaping Health). Over the two years of the project (until March 2011) it will be delivered by a Community Project Officer and a Dietitian, under the guidance of the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Food Control/Infectious Diseases/Health Promotion).

Aims

The main aim of FRESH is to encourage and support members of five local community groups and organisations from across the five constituent Council areas to achieve a healthy, balanced and safe diet by providing practical, community-based support and advice on nutrition and healthy eating.

Other aims are to raise awareness and understanding of healthy eating in order to encourage positive changes in eating habits and to build on and enhance participants' skills and confidence, for example in the preparation and cooking of low-cost, healthy meals.

Group selection

Groups were selected through an open application process. A press release was issued to local papers and an email inviting applications was circulated through individuals working locally including the Community Development Officers (Health Trust and Local Councils), Investing for Health Officers, and Neighbourhood Renewal Officers. The selection criteria that were applied included:

- There should be evidence of need in the area
- Groups should show evidence of having consulted with members prior to application
- Groups should show evidence of community capacity and readiness to participate
- Groups should agree to involve other members of the community who may wish to participate in local programmes or activities

The groups selected to participate in FRESH are:

- REACT, Armagh
- Seapatrick Community Association, Banbridge
- Drumellan Community Association, Craigavon
- The Vineyard Church, Dungannon
- Mourne U3A, Newry and Mourne

On selection, each group organised a workshop where members of the community were invited to participate. The information gathered was then used to develop individual programme plans.

Programmes offered

Programmes offered by FRESH include:

- Cook it! (see page 122)
- Weigh to Health (see page 128)
- The Big Cook, which runs over a number of weeks and incorporates healthy eating, food safety and cooking skills. Recipes used include those from other counties. Participants have the opportunity to sample food and bring some home for storage.
- Supermarket Tours (see page 121)
- Food Gardens
- Movement and Rhyme Sessions for Parent and Toddler groups, which include singing, movement and rhythm, along with healthy eating messages

Those taking part in programmes include adults, children and young people, older people and minority ethnic groups.

Steering group

All work carried out by FRESH is overseen by a Steering Group. The group was set up to:

- Advise and support the development of the FRESH Project throughout the Southern area
- Ensure the involvement of other key stakeholders in the delivery of the project
- Monitor and evaluate individual programmes within the project

- Ensure effective communication and dissemination of information about the FRESH Project within the five District Councils and other external organisations
- Monitor the progress of the overall project in line with the Service Level Agreement
- Provide direction and guidance on project development, including aims, objectives, target setting, etc.

Lessons learnt:

- It is important to build and develop relationships with each group
- A link person needs to be identified from within each group
- The consultation process does take some time, but it is important to work at the pace and within the capacity of each group
- The programmes need to be flexible in order to meet the particular needs of each group

Evaluation

Internal evaluation of programmes will be carried out, and funding may be sourced to have an external evaluation conducted.

Sustainability

Groups will be offered the opportunity to take part in training (for example in Cook it!) so that some programmes can be offered and sustained beyond 2011.

? Want More Information

Contact Tracey Powell, Community Project Officer (Nutrition),
Southern Group Environmental Health Committee,
Riverside House, Tower Hill Complex, Armagh,
BT61 9EG, Northern Ireland.
Tel: + 44 (0)28 3751 5800 ext. 308.
Email: T.Powell@sgehc.com

Food Values

Food Values is a short programme that shows people how to get better nutritional value for money when shopping for food. The programme originated in 2006 in response to an identified need for a short programme on budgeting that would complement Cook It! It was produced by the Community Food and Nutrition Team of the Western Health & Social Care Trust for use by community and voluntary sector organisations.

Food Values consists of practical activities covering the following aspects of food budgeting:

- Spending on food
- Menu planning
- Comparing food prices
- Nutritional values
- Making and using a shopping list
- Using food labelling
- Store cupboard
- Hands-on cooking
- Cost of convenience food compared with home-cooked meals
- Practical shopping activities



Pilot

A pilot of Food Values, funded by **safe food**, was conducted between September and October 2009. Representatives from community and voluntary organisations were trained to deliver the programmes and an external evaluator was employed. A total of 86 participants from 13 community organisations took part in the pilot programme.

Evaluation

In January 2010, a seminar was organised to present the results of the evaluation and explore how to progress the programme. The results of the evaluation indicate that there is a need for a community food budgeting programme such as Food Values to develop essential practical skills and allow the opportunity to socialise. Many participants gained the ability to budget their food spend, plan meals in advance and use a shopping list, which led to a change in shopping patterns.

These skills, combined with a greater awareness of healthy eating and valuable cooking skills, resulted in changing the eating habits of the majority of participants, with many adopting a healthier diet.

The evaluation report is available from the Community Food and Nutrition Team at infoCFNT@westerntrust.hscni.net or can be downloaded from www.healthyfoodforall.com

Food values is delivered by trained tutors recruited from community/ voluntary sector organisations. The programme is currently undergoing redesign following the pilot and should be available in late 2010.

? want More Information

Contact Claire Holmes, Community Food and Nutrition Team Dietitian, Unit 13, Strabane Enterprise Agency, Orchard Road Industrial Estate, Strabane, BT82 9FR, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland.
Tel: +44 (0)28 7188 0221.
Email: Claire.Holmes@westerntrust.hscni.net

The goodfood Toolkit

The goodfood Toolkit was developed in response to an identified need in the local community within the Eastern Area of Northern Ireland. Community groups were increasingly requesting healthy eating talks from the Community Nutrition & Dietetic Service, who did not always have the capacity to fulfil these requests. To address this issue, a basic healthy eating pack was produced for delivery by trained volunteers working in the community with adults, and that the volunteers would be trained by the Community Nutrition & Dietetic Service. The goodfood Toolkit was developed to help ensure that local people within the Eastern area receive consistent, accurate and practical nutrition messages on how to follow a healthy balanced diet. The Public Health Agency funded the production of the Toolkit and commissioned its delivery.



The goodfood Toolkit uses the Eatwell Plate model as a practical tool to help people understand and enjoy healthy eating. It uses

a participatory approach and includes a wide range of nutrition activities. The Toolkit includes background nutrition information, session plans and activities, and useful contact details, including websites and support organisations.

Who does it target?

The goodfood Toolkit is intended for adults who do not have special dietary requirements. It is not suitable for adults with learning difficulties, infants and young children, or frail older people. Anyone who requires advice on therapeutic diets (for example, people with diabetes, coeliac disease, allergies or metabolic disorders) should seek referral to a registered dietitian.

Community workers who work with adults can be trained to deliver the toolkit. To date, trained volunteers have been recruited from a variety of organisations and backgrounds including:

- Action Cancer
- Surestart
- Leisure centres
- Heart Project
- Age Concern
- Health promotion teams



Trained tutors have come from a variety of occupations, including health visitors and nurses, family support workers, fitness instructors, residential workers, community health development workers and disability workers.

The goodfood Toolkit can be delivered as a 'one-off' session or a full programme. It can be tailored to focus on specific topic areas to suit the needs of a particular group. The healthy eating section is delivered as a core session.

The Toolkit includes a session plan for each topic area, along with suitable resources and activities, such as games and quizzes.

If a tutor is asked a question about a nutrition issue which is beyond the scope of the Toolkit, they are encouraged to contact the Community Dietitians who are available for advice and assistance.

Long-term sustainability

The Community Nutrition & Dietetic Service within the Eastern Area currently provides a number of training sessions each year. Once tutors are trained, they receive nutrition updates four times a year. They can also access nutritional advice from community dietitians via phone or email. Tutors are also kept up to date on nutrition-related issues via a biannual newsletter.

Other Trusts within Northern Ireland have indicated an interest in introducing the programme to their local area.

If tutors want to further develop the healthy eating focus in their community or to introduce cooking, they can be directed to other programmes such as Cook-it! (see page 122) or Weigh to Health (see page 128).

Evaluation

Each training session is evaluated. Pre- and post-training questionnaires are used to assess the participants' knowledge of nutrition before and after the programme. It is planned to issue a further three-month post-delivery questionnaire to assess the longer-term effect of the programme.

? Want More Information

Contact Emma Vincent, Dietitian, Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, Admin building, Forster Green Hospital, Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 6HD, Northern Ireland.

Tel: +44 (0)28 90944500.

Email: emmak.vincent@belfasttrust.hscni.net

B.7 Healthy Food for All Resources

A number of other resources are available to support the availability of food in the community. These include:

- Healthy Food for All's *Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives*
- Demonstration Programme
- Online Directory

B.7.1 Healthy Food for All's *Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives*

In June 2009, Healthy Food for All published a *Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives*. This is a practical and user-friendly resource which aims to support the development of School Food Initiatives in Ireland. (The Guide is not intended for use in Northern Ireland.)



The Guide offers advice on:

- Funding for school meal initiatives
- Providing school lunches
- Setting up and running breakfast and after-school clubs
- Planning a school food initiative
- Devising a Healthy School Food Policy by introducing healthier snacks and lunchboxes, providing water, and running school fruit and vegetable growing projects.

The Guide:

- Promotes best practice in the provision of food in schools, in particular the delivery of official school food schemes (such as School Meals Programme, EU School Fruit and Milk Scheme, and Food Dudes)
- Shows how the provision of food in school can be linked with a whole school approach to healthy eating and drinking, including lunchboxes, water/drinks, and growing projects, thereby maximizing the impact on attitudes to food and the consumption of food by children and their families
- Connects school food provision with national policy objectives relating to food poverty, nutrition, obesity, and health inequalities

The *Good Practice Guide* is available in hard copy free of charge from Healthy Food for All (while stocks last) or electronically from the Healthy Food for All website. New and existing School Food Initiatives are encouraged to submit a case study on their initiative for the website, highlighting what did and did not work, to create a network of shared learning and best practice. In Northern Ireland, the Public Health Agency has published *School Food: an essential guide* (2009) which aims to assist schools improve pupils' nutrition and implement healthier eating and drinking practices.

B.7.2 Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives

The Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives (CFI's) is a three-year programme, managed by Healthy Food for All and funded by **safe food**. The programme funds seven projects across the island of Ireland. The aim of the Programme is to identify supports and resources necessary for the development and long term sustainability of CFI's. There is strong emphasis on shared learning and networking between the selected projects and CFI's external to the programme. The lessons learnt from the selected projects will also be used to inform and support policy initiatives in relation to food poverty.



Demonstration Programme of **Community Food Initiatives**

The seven funded projects are listed below

Food Focus Knocknaheeney, Cork	NICHE (Lead)	elaine@nicheonline.ie www.nicheonline.org
KASI Community Garden, Killarney	KASI Drop-In Centre	marilyn@kasi2000.com info@kasi2000.com
Limerick City Seed to Plate Project	PAUL Partnership (Host)	eslattery@Paulpartnership.ie www.paulpartnership.ie
Food for Life, Derry	Bogside Brandywell Health Forum	mary@bbhealthforum.org www.bbhealthforum.org
The Food Garden Project, Dundalk	RehabCare (Lead)	deirdre.quinn@Rehabcare.ie www.rehab.ie
Building a Transition Community, Belfast	Footprints Women's Centre	eileen@footprintswomenscentre.com www.footprintswomenscentre.org
East Belfast Healthy Eating Education Programme	East Belfast Mission	peter.tomlinson@ ebmwarehouse.co.uk www.ebm.org.uk

? want More Information

For more information on the Demonstration Programme please contact Georgina Buffini gbuffini@healthyfoodforall.com
+353 86 152 6569 or visit our website www.healthyfoodforall.com

B.7.3 Online Directory

Healthy Food for All's *All-Island Community Food Initiative Directory* is an online resource hosted on www.healthyfoodforall.com that provides information on CFIs currently in operation across the island of Ireland. The directory provides a forum for Community Food Initiatives to advertise their project, and enables projects to find out what is going on elsewhere on the island. We encourage projects to get in touch with each other in order to share their learning and experiences. The aim is to create awareness and knowledge locally, nationally and in both jurisdictions about the different CFIs. This knowledge will subsequently be used to inform policy.

B.8 Resources for Food in the Community

B.8.1 Dublin Food Bank

The Dublin City Food Bank was established by Crosscare in 1989. It is designed to divert food which would otherwise go to waste to voluntary organisations working with people on a low-income in Dublin. The Food Bank acts as a clearing house for food and non-food groceries donated by manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. These include discontinued lines; returns from the trade; production overruns; goods which are mislabelled, of irregular size or have damaged packaging; those with a short shelf-life and approaching their expiration date. Other items such as cleaning detergents, personal hygiene products (toothpaste, deodorants, hair gels and shampoo) are also received and on occasion items such as DIY products, gardening and electrical goods are taken in.

The food bank solicits these surplus goods, emphasising donation as an economic, efficient and environmentally clean means of disposing of the products and eliminating the freight and disposal costs associated with dumping. Donors are offered protection regarding the use of their produce, the agencies to which they are supplied and the manner in which they are stored. They are also indemnified against public liability risk, and the Food Bank undertakes not to provide the products to individuals or unregistered agencies.

Any agency that uses the Food Bank must be a 'recognised caring organisation which, irrespective of religious affiliation, caters for at-risk groups such as the homeless, the elderly, travellers, disadvantaged youths, ex-prisoners, victimised women and their dependent children'. Each organisation must sign a formal agreement in order to be accepted as a member and pay an annual membership fee. The agencies make a payment when they receive goods; this is known as a shared maintenance contribution, both for indemnity reasons and because the donors specify that the donated goods cannot be sold.

The Dublin Food Bank is a member of the European Federation of Food Banks. The Food Bank liaises with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food regarding the operation of the EU Food Intervention Programme. This programme redistributes food products under the market price support mechanisms. The Food Bank opens from 9am to 4pm, five days a week.

For more information contact Valerie Cummins at +353 (0) 1836 5040 or email vcummins@crosscare.ie

B.8.2 Meals on Wheels

The Meals on Wheels service provides meals to thousands of older people across the island of Ireland everyday. It is an important aspect of care in the community and in the home, and is often seen as a central support for older people that enables them to continue to live at home. The service is important from both social and nutritional points of view.

The Meals on Wheels programme varies from region to region.

Appendix A: Quick Guide to Nutritional Guidelines

Eating nutritious foods, coupled with active living, can help to maintain good health throughout life. The benefits of eating well and being active include better overall health, feeling and looking better, a healthy body weight, stronger muscles and bones, and a lower risk of disease.

Enjoying a wide variety of foods is the key to healthy eating. No one food can provide you with all the vitamin and minerals you need. Therefore, we have to eat foods in the right amounts and in the right combinations to achieve a healthy diet.

This basic principle forms the basis of the Eatwell Plate (used in Northern Ireland) and the Food Pyramid (used in Ireland), both of which are educational tools that illustrate what foods we need to eat every day and in what proportion.



Both the Eatwell Plate and the Food Pyramid are based on the following five food groups:

- Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods
- Fruit and vegetables
- Milk and dairy foods
- Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar.



Both resources encourage people to choose foods from the first four groups every day, to help ensure they obtain the wide range of nutrients the body needs to remain healthy and function properly. Choosing a variety of foods from within each group will increase the range of nutrients consumed. Foods in the fifth group – foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar – are not essential to a healthy diet.

It is not always easy to get the balance right – some people may be missing out on important nutrients because they are not getting enough variety, while others may be eating too much of the foods we need the least, such as cakes, biscuits and fried foods, which are high in saturated fat and calories. Getting started on the road to healthy eating can often be a case of taking less of the foods we currently eat in order to make room for the more nutritious foods. The Eatwell Plate and the Food Pyramid will support you in identifying an appropriate diet.

? Want More Information

- For details on the Eatwell Plate, contact:
Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland, Tel: +44 (0)28 9041 7700.
Email: infofsani@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
www.food.gov.uk also www.eatwell.gov.uk
- For details on the Food Pyramid, contact:
Department of Health & Children, Tel: +353 (0)1 635 4000.
www.dohc.ie

Appendix B: Bibliography

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