

Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives 2010–2012 Evaluation Executive Summary Report



Demonstration
Programme of
**Community
Food Initiatives**

Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives 2010-2012

Executive Summary of Evaluation

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Foreword

Recent analysis has estimated that as many as one in 10 households on the island of Ireland are experiencing food poverty. This report provides a summary of the evaluation of a three year **safefood** funded programme, delivered by Healthy Food for All, of seven Community Food Initiatives based in areas of socio-economic deprivation across the island of Ireland.

This report highlights that the practical community-based approach is valuable and worthwhile. Within a supportive programme the CFIs grew and delivered a range of activities in their communities that promoted the development of healthy food skills. It showed how, with a supportive network focussed on food, local communities can work together to develop solutions that will improve health and tackle inequalities. Communities and individuals engaged with food and healthy eating in a way that was meaningful and relevant.

It is intended that this report will help shape future Community Food Initiatives as well as influencing policy.

Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan

Acknowledgements

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- The seven Community Food Initiatives and their host organisations for taking the step of getting involved whole-heartedly in the Demonstration Programme, the first of its kind on the island of Ireland.
- All the participants and volunteers for engaging and contributing to the projects which, without them, would not exist.
- Healthy Food for All's Board of Management for the support and guidance that they provided during the programme.
- The Community Food Initiative Working Group for their continued advice on the programme and development of support materials for communities on the island of Ireland.
- To Nick Mack and Jason Donaghy for co-ordinating the evaluation of the programme.



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access | availability | affordability



Demonstration
Programme of
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Food Initiatives**

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1 Introduction

Food poverty is a complex aspect of poverty that has health and social consequences. It can be addressed through a range of approaches from policy to practical, community-based initiatives. This report gives a summary of the evaluation of a three-year, **safefood**-funded programme, delivered by Healthy Food for All, of seven community food initiatives (CFIs) based in areas of socio-economic disadvantage across the island of Ireland (IOI).

The evaluation of the programme fundamentally looked at how effective a supportive programme was for the CFIs and how well the CFIs performed. There was a strong focus on self-evaluation, with support from a development worker and external evaluation team. The current report examines how well the programme, as a whole, met its objectives and brings together some of the main learning provided by the programme.

What is food poverty?

Food poverty is defined as the “inability to access a nutritionally adequate diet and the related impacts on health, culture and social participation”(1). Households experiencing food poverty consume less nutritionally-balanced diets and suffer from higher rates of diet-related chronic diseases such as heart disease, diet-related cancers, and overweight and obesity. An understanding of the extent and nature of food poverty on the IOI has grown over recent years (2, 3). The extent of food poverty was measured in Republic of Ireland, with one in 10 households in ROI found to be experiencing food poverty (3).

What are Community Food Initiatives?

CFIs are a means by which barriers to healthy eating can be addressed in a practical manner at a local level. They provide an excellent opportunity to combat food poverty in the local area, giving the power of choice and change back to local communities. CFIs can respond to the various identified

determinants of food poverty including local food economies, local access issues, role of partnerships, and networks and skills (4).

The Demonstration Programme

In 2008, Healthy Food for All was awarded funding from **safefood** to establish a Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) on the IOI over a three-year period. Seven projects were selected for funding under this Programme (Table 1), which was officially launched in Belfast in January 2010.

The aim of the programme was “to promote greater access and availability of healthy food in low income areas, through a programme of local projects using a community development approach”. The programme objectives were to:

- Provide funding for seven CFIs over a three-year period
- Provide technical support, collective training and facilitate networking between CFIs
- Promote shared learning amongst CFIs on the island of Ireland
- Identify and support models of best practice amongst CFIs on the island of Ireland
- Increase awareness of CFIs among key stakeholders across the island of Ireland
- Identify policy and practice lessons to ensure best practice of sustainable CFIs which address food poverty within local communities.

Key features of the programme were:

- On-going support was provided, i.e. a programme approach, as distinct from the provision of money only, i.e. a grant scheme. Support included technical advice, training, regular networking opportunities and on-going evaluation.
- The selection process sought projects that were hosted in an established organisation with a proven track record in managing grants and projects. This allowed an immediate focus on developing the CFI itself rather than the organisation.
- All projects were located in communities of socio-economic disadvantage.
- A development worker from Healthy Food for All provided the technical support, and facilitated collective training and networking between projects. They also co-ordinated the programme and assisted in raising awareness of the programme on IOI.
- Three networking meetings were held each year to make training, sharing learning amongst the CFIs and site visits possible.

Table 1: Overview of Community Food Initiatives who participated in the Demonstration Programme

Project title	Host organisation	Location	Main target group(s)
Food for Life	Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum (BBHF)	Derry~Londonderry	Community located in the Triax ward, which is ranked sixth most deprived ward area in Northern Ireland (NI).
Healthy Eating Education Programme	East Belfast Mission (EBM)	East Belfast	Homeless people, people experiencing drug and alcohol problems, people living on very low incomes.
Building a Transition Community	Footprints Women's Centre (FWC)	Colin Neighbourhood Belfast	Women and residents of the Colin Neighbourhood, which is placed in the upper 10 per cent of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland.
The Community Garden	Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative (KASI)	Killarney	Asylum seekers and refugees.
Seed to Plate Project	Limerick Food Partnership (PAUL)	Southill and St. Munchin's, Limerick	Community located in areas which rank among the 10 per cent most deprived estates in the County.
Food Focus Community Food Initiative	Northside Community Health Initiative (NICHE)	Cork Northside	Community in the Knocknaheeny and Hollyhill area, which is in the 'extremely disadvantaged' category for Cork City.

The Food Garden Project	RehabCare / Simon Community (RCSC)	Dundalk	People with an intellectual disability, mental health issues and resettled homeless people.
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2 Evaluation methodology

An overview of the tools and methods that feed into the overall evaluation of the programme is provided in Figure 1. The evaluation process, during the three-year period of the programme, focused on three core elements:

- In the first two years of the programme, the evaluation focused on the programme development and shaped how it was implemented.
- The development of self-evaluation tools within the first six months of the programme and their use thereafter.
- Overall evaluation to establish how well the programme met its key objectives.

This report will focus on the overall evaluation of programme, but will take into consideration learning from the other two elements. For more details of the methods and self-evaluation tools developed, please see full report, Figure 1, Figure 2 and Appendix 1. The full report from the evaluators is available from Healthy Food for All and **safefood**'s website.

Figure 1: Demonstration Programme Evaluation - Timeline and Methods

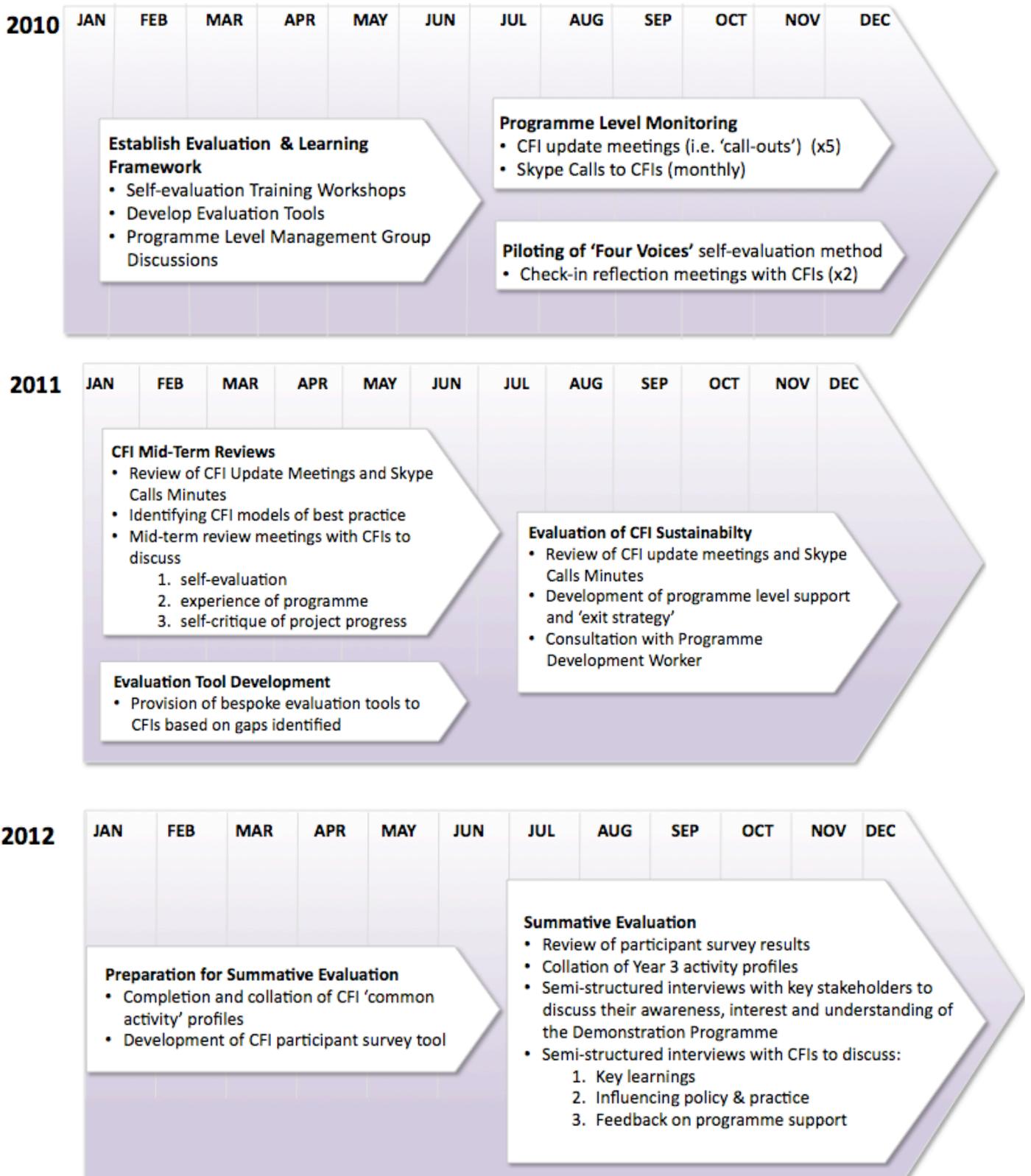
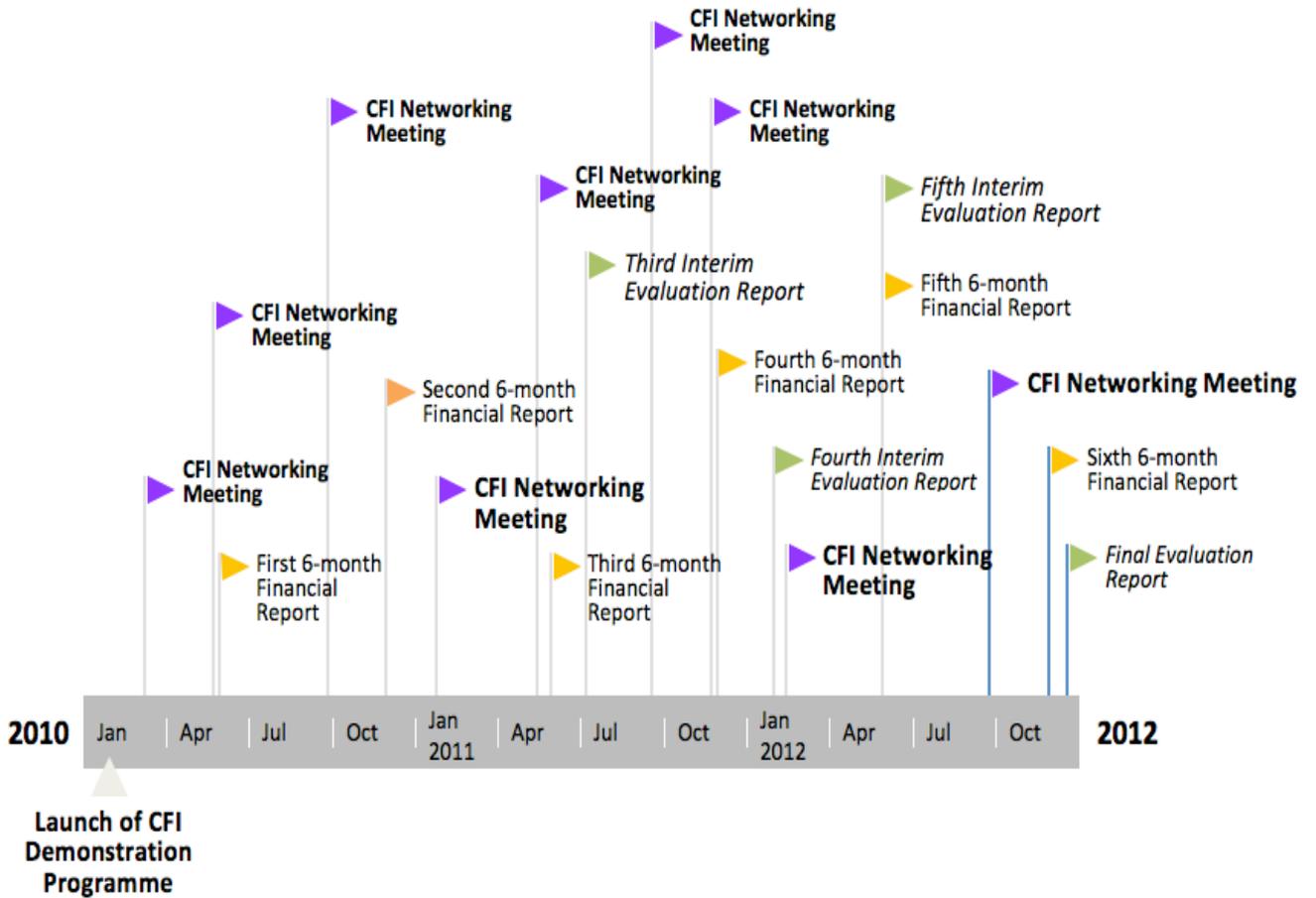


Figure 2: Demonstration Programme Evaluation - Key Milestones





3 Results

What did the CFIs achieve?

Over the three-year period of the programme, the CFIs collectively resulted in:

- 8,228 individual attendances at one-off events, e.g. food taster sessions or single workshops¹
- 195 separate food taster sessions, events or single topic workshops delivered across the seven CFIs
- 1,849 individuals participated in longer term activities such as training courses in gardening, horticulture and cookery skills, regular meetings of a garden club, or planning groups for events or for the development of a food garden
- 73 courses were held (typically six sessions each)
- 1,097 gardening sessions were held involving around 200 people
- 10 programme networking meetings for CFI staff involving around 20 people per event, with detailed follow up reports.

The CFIs reported a broad age range of participants engaging with the projects, from children to older people. The host organisations were important in promoting the CFIs through their other services, and their client groups determined who was mostly like engage with their CFI. Host client groups were most likely to be middle to older age groups. However, there was no clear pattern in one gender engaging overall with CFIs to any differing degree. CFIs which had difficulty engaging males or females found targeting with gender specific activities useful, e.g. women's gardening groups and men only groups. More details on the activities and development of each CFI during the three years are provided in Appendix 2.

¹ As CFIs could not realistically distinguish between individuals attending more than one event, we must refer to these as attendances rather than individuals

All but one of the CFIs incorporated a community garden into their projects. The gardens helped improve access to, and affordability of, fresh food by providing the skills and training to transfer to home or an allotment. They provide an effective way of engaging people with food. Food and the growing of food were key in helping to foster a sense of community and social inclusion, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Partnerships and steering groups featured in all CFIs. Whilst this part of their development required time to properly establish, it also enabled stronger local integration of the CFI with other local initiatives.

Many of the CFIs were able to use the food project as a base to get additional funding or resources to expand their project.

Did the Programme achieve its objectives?

3.1 Programme funding

All CFIs were able to draw down the funding that they had been awarded to conduct project activities. Requests for changes to budget items were made by CFIs and, where possible, were accommodated for by the funders. This process was facilitated by the development worker.

When budgets were compared to the numbers of participants who engaged with the CFIs, the average cost per participant (dividing the funding provided to each CFI by the number of participants who participated in that CFI) ranged from £13 (BBHF) (€15) to £207 (RCSC) (€243) across the CFIs. Each CFI was able to avail of the funding agreed at the outset of the programme, which ranged from £22,513 to €74,997 (Table 2). The lowest cost was from a wide urban CFI, while the highest cost was associated with a special needs group.

Table 2: Funding and attendance numbers by CFI

CFI	Total amount awarded	Number of people attending single events				Number of people attending courses or regular activities			
		Yr 1	Yr2	Yr3	Total	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Total
BBHF	£55,425	860	1,380	1,000	3,240	180	272	287	739
EBM	£49,840	290	1,000	805	2,095	6	15	17	38
FWC	£22,513	68	93	-	161	10	14	10	34
KASI	€55,154	128	313	312	753	84	82	81	247
NICHE	€74,997	539	424	292	1,255	24	30	10	64
PAUL	€72,620	376	300	438	1,114	19	58	32	109
RCSC	€62,654	53	53	65	171	35	34	35	104
Total		2,314	3,563	2,912	8,789	358	505	472	1,335

Funding allowed CFIs to achieve a high level of overall activity and impact on their local communities to improve access and availability to healthy food. It was beneficial that each of the host organisations had solid accounting structures in place that supported their CFI in financial reporting tasks.

The evaluation highlighted the following strengths and weaknesses of the funding and financial processes:

Strengths

- As projects evolved and needed to accommodate unforeseen demands and readjustments of budgetary items, CFIs were able to request adjustments to budget plans set out at the beginning of the programme.
- The flexibility shown by **safefood** in accommodating unforeseen budgetary changes was generally welcomed by the CFI projects.
- Financial reporting forms were simplified during the course of the programme.

Weaknesses

- The application process was complex, and initially CFIs were unclear as to what items were eligible for funding.
- The requirement to negotiate budgetary changes through an intermediary (i.e. the development worker) was viewed as an unnecessary step, making this process more time-consuming.

The need for at least one dedicated CFI project worker was identified by all seven CFIs. The majority of CFIs considerably underestimated the resource demands in fulfilling the requirements of the Programme and, in particular, in relation to capacity and partnership building activity.

The Demonstration Programme helped discussion and encouraged thought on how financial sustainability for each CFI could be achieved beyond the lifetime of the programme funding. This was made possible by focusing networking events on topics such as developing a volunteer base and social enterprise. While it was recognised most CFIs would not be able to sustain the same level of activities after the programme finished, insights into how some financial sustainability could be achieved included:

- A strong connection to an established 'host organisation' and its associated supports and networks
- Focus on the issue of on-going financial supports and building the volunteer base from the earliest possible stages of project development
- Establishing partnerships and networks with other local groups and organisations to share knowledge and resources
- Harness the goodwill of local businesses
- Charging external organisations for training and expertise
- Selling garden produce.

3.2 Technical support and shared learning

The unique element of the Demonstration Programme was to provide the CFIs with support, and to promote shared learning within the programme and for other CFIs. All seven CFI projects reported a significant growth in knowledge and confidence in progressing initiatives to address food poverty at a community level. They credited this enhanced understanding and experience with learnings afforded by the programme, its support team and, in particular, the programme development worker. The

evaluation also identified the importance of ensuring that participating CFIs have a clear appreciation of the difference between a programme approach to funding as opposed to a grant-based scheme, so that sufficient resources are allocated by each project to fulfil the necessary requirements (e.g. self-evaluation, capacity-building and partnership-building activities).

The key findings related to the training and networking aspect of the programme were:

Strengths

- The development worker was central to driving the training and shared learning for the CFIs.
- The programme created a space for shared learning that helped with the development of individual projects, primarily at the three networking events held each year.
- CFIs recognised the benefits of support and training and how this led to the faster uptake of ideas. All CFIs noted how little they knew at the start of programme and how much they felt they knew at the end.
- Regular contact with CFIs as part of the programme helped identify support needs as they emerged.
- Informal shared learning opportunities were amongst the most commended aspects of the Programme amongst CFI staff. In particular, the networking meetings where people met in person were beneficial. Limited time for informal networking was available during the meetings due to the time allocated for training.
- Informal networking was particularly effective where projects had commonality in their activities and client group.
- Formal training facilitated as part of the Demonstration Programme networking meetings was welcomed overall. Every CFI was represented at each meeting.
- Formal training was tailored to meet the emerging needs of projects.
- At networking events practical topics (e.g. volunteering) were reported by CFI participants to be the most useful, as opposed to training on abstract theoretical concepts (e.g. sustainability and policy influencing).

Weaknesses

- The diversity of CFI projects with different circumstances and development challenges restricted more specialised shared learning around community development work with particular social groups.

- All CFIs underestimated the time and resource required to take part in training - attending the networking events was time-consuming, particularly if the meeting was at the other end of IOI. Where long distances had to be covered, it took up to two days to travel and attend meetings. In some cases, this was more than the allocated project worker's weekly hours.
- Self-evaluation was complex and overly time-consuming for CFIs. As a result, individual CFIs conducted self-evaluation to differing degrees, and it was difficult to compare data of individual experience between CFI projects. This limited the learning at a CFI level from the programme.

3.3 Informing policy and practice

The previous sections highlight a number of strengths and weaknesses in the Demonstration Programme to inform best practice for future CFIs. The programme, through the publication and dissemination of this report, will contribute to “identifying and supporting models of best practice amongst CFIs on the island of Ireland” and to “identifying practice lessons to ensure best practice of sustainable CFIs which address food poverty within local communities”.

The potential for each CFI to influence policy at a local level was addressed in a workshop held in January 2010. At the workshop, CFIs reported being confident about getting food onto the agenda of local community groups and communities, and making links to local councillors and political representatives. They reported less confidence about extending the reach of CFIs. The challenges experienced by CFIs in self-evaluation makes it difficult to determine how individual CFIs informed policy and practice in their localities, but a number of common features are evident:

- The existence of CFI projects in their respective localities was reported by CFI staff to have raised awareness of how a community development approach can be used as an effective means of tackling issues related to food poverty in the community, and in spreading this message to policy and practice.
- Stakeholder partnerships and steering groups featured as an aspect of all seven CFI projects. They proved crucial to securing access to additional funding and other resources. CFIs who invested time and resource in multi-stakeholder partnerships reported much higher levels of success in gathering support for wider outreach activities into the community.
- The social interaction and positive mental health benefits associated with participation in CFI activities were consistently cited by CFI staff as an important benefit of the initiative. This aspect of improving access and availability to healthy eating may be an unexplored benefit of CFIs that can be used to influence policy and practice.

To evaluate the achievement of the objective “to increase awareness of CFIs among key stakeholders across the IOI”, senior personnel in relevant stakeholder organisations were invited to complete a semi-structured interview in person or online. A three-week timeframe was given for response and six out of 14 (42%) individuals responded. Organisations targeted included the Departments of Health and Food Safety organisations in both jurisdictions, Community Development and Health Network, Institute of Public Health, Health Service Executive, Public Health Agency, **safefood**, European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland and NI Anti-Poverty Network, University of Ulster, NUI Galway and Department of Social Protection. The main findings were:

- Most of the organisations were aware of the programme and, even if they didn’t know about the detail of the programme, they knew what it was about in general terms.
- All respondents were in favour of the exploratory approach taken in the programme.
- All felt the programme was of huge interest and relevance to them and would like to learn more.
- Many stakeholders felt that there was a need to raise more awareness and understanding of the role of CFIs at policy level. It was felt that voluntary organisations could do this with support from **safefood** and Healthy Food for All.
- The majority of stakeholders were in favour of a future CFI programme, provided time was taken to apply the learning from the current programme.



4 Conclusions

Overall, the programme achieved what it set out to achieve. It proved to be a worthwhile and valuable approach to tackling food poverty at a community level. This programme provided a testing ground for whether funding CFIs through a support programme can make a distinctive and valuable contribution to food poverty. Each CFI reported making a difference to food poverty at a local level (see full report). The degree to which the overall programme met each of the objectives varied. There is a clear need to inform future practice and policy more directly with the learning highlighted by this evaluation.

One of the consistent messages from the evaluation was that CFIs underestimated the resource required to participate in a programme that emphasised networking and shared learning. As this programme was the first of its kind on IOI, CFIs had no benchmark around the level of commitment and resource required. This may, in part, explain why some CFIs expressed a concern that they weren't clear as to what was expected from them at the outset of the programme. The findings from this programme will help inform future projects on requirements.

A balance must be achieved between the funder's governance requirements and practical resource constraints in future programmes. Some aspects of the programme were found to be cumbersome and time-consuming. Simplifying processes such as the application process, financial reporting, and evaluations to reduce the resource burden of the programme was found to be important. This also applied to training where practical relevant topics were viewed more positively than other topics.

Where CFIs had common challenges and client groups, it was found that they learnt much from each other. This enhanced the shared learning and informal networking aspect of the programme between these CFIs. In contrast, the shared learning between diverse CFIs was restricted due to some knowledge gained not being relevant to other CFIs. Cost also varied depending on the size and higher dependency levels among clients. Future programmes may be enhanced by focusing on CFIs with greater commonality.

Concern over how CFIs remain sustainable after funding ends is an on-going issue for many community projects. The reality for the sustainability of many community initiatives is that they are reliant on at least some level of funding. To support CFIs with on-going funding, the current programme highlighted that integration of a CFI into other activities of a host organisation and a strong volunteer base are greatly beneficial to long-term sustainability. The current programme

approach allowed for discussion around this topic, with networking events focusing projects on the issue and possible solutions such as volunteers and social enterprise. A future follow-up with CFIs to investigate their on-going sustainability would shed light on what happened after the project ended.

The Demonstration Programme highlighted a number of important lessons for best practice for supporting CFIs in the future. These are reflected in key recommendations in the next section. The main findings presented here will act as a valuable tool to promoting best practice and awareness of the role of CFIs in tackling food poverty at a local level.



5 Recommendations

Based on the findings from the evaluation, the following recommendations are made for future funding of CFIs:

Approach

- Support CFIs financially through a programme approach of technical training and shared learning.
- A designated Development Worker, to co-ordinate and manage a programme, is essential.

Types of CFIs funded

- Choose those that are part of an established community development 'host' organisation.
- Ensure more commonality between CFIs under the programme to ensure that learning can be harnessed fully. This may be achieved by choosing either community-wide projects or, alternatively, those that target very specific marginalised groups.
- Prioritise those that have the potential to integrate their activities with existing local resources such as peer-led training programmes, local authority land and schools.
- Consider the potential of projects to develop food skills more broadly than food growing skills through their associated activities. Food gardens are excellent at engaging communities with food and improving access and availability of foods, but CFIs have greater potential to build further broader food-related skills. These can range from budgeting, shopping, storing, preparing and cooking healthy and safe meals.

Process

- Ensure that the training and networking commitments of the programme approach are understood by CFI co-ordinators from the outset.
- Simplify the application process and provide clarity on what is and what is not eligible for funding.
- Keep the financial reporting process as simple and straightforward as possible.

- Allow adequate flexibility in budgets to facilitate CFIs in developing and adapting to local needs.
- Make evaluation needs for the CFIs simple and clear from the outset.
- Keep training practical, relevant and accessible.
- Encourage CFIs to think about long-term sustainability and resource from the outset, e.g. build local partnerships, develop steering groups, develop a strong volunteer base.

Increasing awareness about the programme and influencing policy

- Ensure more scope to share learning among community organisations from this programme.
- Make the learnings of the Demonstration Programme available to statutory and voluntary organisations to influence policy and practice.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1: Methods used during evaluation

Time period	Main activity for the period	Methods / Tools
Jan - June 2010	Establish an effective, collaborative evaluation and learning framework.	<p>A workshop was held with all CFIs to help each define what outcomes and outputs they planned to evaluate. The evaluators facilitated the meeting and used a Framework called 'Theory of Change'² to assist this process. Notes were taken at the meeting and a guide was subsequently developed by the evaluators for CFIs to develop individual project evaluations.</p> <p>The evaluators held a workshop with the Programme Level Management Group (Healthy Food for All and <i>safefood</i>) to explore concepts and programme level expected outputs and outcomes. The 'Theory of Change' framework was used. The output from the workshop was that the group defined what is and isn't a CFI.</p> <p>Four face-to-face meetings with Development Worker (DW) to review early stages (Open conversation). Notes were taken.</p>
July – Dec 2010	Programme level monitoring: progress in the development of CFIs and of programme support.	CFIs were invited to complete call out exercises issued on a three-four month basis from September 2010 to January 2012 (five in total). Their purpose was to check in with CFIs to gather feedback on developments that were rewarding, challenging or interesting over the period. These took the form of a one-page questionnaire emailed to each CFI by the

² ActKnowledge: Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change

Time period	Main activity for the period	Methods / Tools
		<p>DW.</p> <p>Nine Skype calls in 2010 and 2011 with CFIs were held on monthly (shifting to bi-monthly) by the DW, to continue to share updates on progress and learning. The DW took notes on each Skype call.</p> <p>Two Check-in reflection face-to-face meetings between evaluators and the DW on progress were held. A framework called 'Four Voices', which was developed by the evaluators, was piloted for self-evaluation by the DW to enable any emerging issues to be documented for discussion.</p> <p>A network meeting was held involving CFI staff, host organisation representatives and the programme management group to jointly review the policy significance of the work and how it might influence future policy thinking. A detailed report was written by the DW and shared with all participants.</p> <p>Evaluators presented the programme evaluation to the All-island Obesity Action Forum.</p>
Jan - June 2011	Individual CFI mid-term review and evaluation support.	<p>Review of content of Call-Outs and Skype Calls.</p> <p>Evaluators held half to one-day sessions with each CFI co-ordinator and manager face-to-face to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress and issues around self-evaluation with provision of bespoke solutions and tools collated and circulated with guidance for use to all CFIs. • Experience of programme to date – ethos, support provided, communication and networking, attitude to the programme and to the CFI concept (Semi-Structured Interviews). • Critical reflection on progress – encouraging a focus on what didn't work so well, as well as what did.

Time period	Main activity for the period	Methods / Tools
		<p>The findings to date from above-mentioned activities on (a) emerging practice and development of each CFI and (b) programme level feedback was collated in a mid-term report. It was presented and discussed with Programme Level Management Group.</p>
July – Dec 2011	Sustainability of CFIs and third year exit strategies.	<p>Review of Call-Out and Skype Calls</p> <p>Evaluators assisted in the design and facilitation of the sixth network event to explore concepts of sustainability and options for CFIs to develop in Year 3. A detailed report was written up by the DW and disseminated to all participants.</p> <p>Evaluators prepared a briefing paper documenting options for programme level support during Year 3 (fourth interim report). This was discussed with the Management group.</p> <p>An informal meeting was held between the DW and evaluators to get reflections from the DW on CFI Demonstration Programme. Notes taken by the DW.</p>
Jan - June 2012	Preparation for summative evaluation.	<p>Final Call-Out Jan 2012</p> <p>The evaluators prepared an activity template (outlining number of events, courses, participant numbers involved, etc) which was sent out to each CFI project officer to complete. The template was reviewed by HFfA and safefood before being sent to each CFI. The CFIs were then asked to complete the activity template for Years 1 and 2.</p> <p>Development of participant qualitative survey tool to explore the experiences of CFI participants and any difference they felt the CFIs made to their diet and wellbeing. The CFI project workers were also consulted at the May networking event.</p>

Time period	Main activity for the period	Methods / Tools
July – Dec 2012	Summative evaluation.	<p>Development and implementation of the participant interview tool. The survey tool was used by CFI project workers with a sample of four-five participants each.</p> <p>Collation of third year activity profiles from each CFI by evaluators.</p> <p>Individual CFI de-briefings were held using semi-structured interview schedule (four face-to-face and three via Skype) exploring key learning from project work, wider influencing on policy and practice, and feedback on programme support. This involved the evaluators, CFI project officer and their line manager.</p> <p>Stakeholder interview survey over October/November with six organisations (contacts suggested by Demonstration Programme Working group based on policy linkages - Health, Education, Poverty and Welfare). The evaluators interviewed senior personnel from each organisation on a one-to-one basis using a semi-structured interview (one held face-to-face and the other by telephone) format to explore awareness, interest and understanding of CFI Demonstration Programme.</p>

Appendix 2: Demonstration Programme CFI project profiles

Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum (BBHF)

Host Organisation

Health Improvement Team (HSC Western Trust), Youthfirst and Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir

Community Area

Triax area, Derry~Londonderry City

Target Groups

Community-wide, with an initial focus on engaging teenagers

Shared Learnings, Scope and Outreach

BBHF CFI activities focussed on post-primary, school-level teenagers and families with school-going age children, however, later, the project incorporated more marginalised groups in the community as the CFI developed (e.g. local men's physical activity group in Year 3).

A total of 15 'Food 4 Thought' cooking courses, each six-weeks long, were run during Year 1, involving 180 young people. Short courses aimed at teenagers ('Back 2 Basics' course) and adults ('Cook It' course) were run in Year 2, in addition to a 'healthy eating' family breakfast club, which ran for the summer period. The club was attended by 80 children in Year 1, growing to 90 children in Year 2. Activities were organised after the Breakfast Club to encourage participation.

In Year 2, a community garden was developed to support a 'Grow Your Own' initiative, which included seasonal gardening programmes (four in total). Strong buy-in to the garden project was reported. This grew in Year 3 with the establishment of a cross-agency partnership group examining community growing schemes in the area.

Later CFI activity involved the establishment of a men's physical activity group, which involved elements of healthy eating. This activity proved highly successful in engaging this group with the CFI activities. In Year 3, an Active Family Parent and Teenage programme was established covering 16 sessions with an attendance of 24 families.

Sustainability

BBHF CFI reported success in leveraging external funding via their community garden partnership group formed in Year 2. As a result of the work of this partnership group, a total of three sites for community garden development in the Derry Triax area were secured from the local Housing Executive. By the end of the programme, the future progression of these initiatives remained uncertain due to staff changes and lack of a dedicated development worker.



East Belfast Mission (EBM) Healthy Eating Education Programme

Host Organisation

East Belfast Mission

Community Area

Inner East Belfast City

Target Groups

Community-wide including residents and former residents of the EBM homeless shelter, low-income families and senior citizens

Shared Learnings, Scope and Outreach

EBM CFI activities aimed to provide greater access to knowledge about healthy eating and cooking meals on a budget for the Hosford House (EBM's homeless shelter) residents and former residents, local community residents, senior citizens and EBM service-users.

The 'Healthy Eating Education Programme' established in Year 1, formed the cornerstone of the EMB CFI activities for the duration of the programme. In the early stages, it aimed to provide a nutritious evening meal for 22 Hosford House residents twice a week. EBM CFI activities grew to incorporate health and diet information sessions and cookery demonstrations, on the theme of healthy eating on a low budget, through a six-week long 'Cook It' course in Year 1 (three-six participants per session), an eight-week long Mums' and Tots' Cookery course in Year 2 (15 parent participants) and an eight-week Men's Cookery course in Year 3 (20 participants). Taster sessions were made available to all EBM service-users in Years 1, 2 and 3, ranging from 15 participants per session in Year 1, growing to 30-45 participants per session in Years 2 and 3.

The EBM CFI did not develop a garden, but rather chose to partner with a local 'Going Green' allotment project. This initiative provided information sessions on developing vegetable growing skills in an urban environment. EBM's partnership with 'Going Green' later led to the successful funding application for a green space area in which to develop their own community garden in 2013.

Two Health Fairs were hosted in Year 1 and Year 2 (approximately 200 participants per event), as well as a celebration event (in partnership with Action Cancer Big Bus Health Checks) in Year 3 (approximately 300 participants).

Sustainability

In Year 1, attracting participation of residents and former residents of the EBM homeless shelter proved challenging. Meetings and discussions with EBM service-users and stakeholder resolved the issue resulting, by the end of Year 1, in an even higher than expected demand for the healthy meals service, as well as a surge in volunteer numbers.

Despite initial difficulties, the EBM CFI achieved significant growth in participant numbers throughout the programme, with a knock-on effect of partnership-building opportunities with local community groups (e.g. EBM's cross-community women's group) and multi-stakeholder groups (e.g. Health Forum for East Belfast).

Footprints Women's Centre (FWC) Building a Transition Community

Host Organisation

Footprints Women's Centre

Community Area

Colin Neighbourhood Area, Belfast City

Target Groups

Women, children and local residents

Shared Learnings, Scope and Outreach

The FWC CFI activities aimed to build capacity of the centre's Healthy Living Project (already incorporating a wide range of accredited courses on nutrition, healthy eating and cooking on a budget) to include the provision of food growing skills to its service users.

Throughout the programme, FWC CFI activities centred on the development of a community garden in which to grow food and support the Footprints Catering social enterprise initiative. Partnership with Colin Glen Trust allowed for technical support in the form of a trained gardener to supervise the local volunteers. Year 1 activities focused on establishing a volunteer base of 10 women to meet regularly throughout the year (42 meetings in Year 1, 38 meetings in Year 2, 30 meeting in Year 3), as well as a steering group to guide development. Gardening sessions were held regularly, expanding in scope in Year 2 to incorporate training in cookery skills and cooking on a low budget using the produce of the CFI garden. Excess garden produce was donated to the Footprints Catering social enterprise. By the end of the programme, FWC reported that use of produce of the CFI garden in this way had allowed a saving of £300.

In Year 2, raised beds in which to grow vegetables were made available for use by 20 pre-school children, to support an initiative aimed at developing food growing skills and a knowledge base on food origins in young children. This initiative was particularly successful in attracting external funding and raising awareness of the FWC CFI amongst key stakeholders. A one-off, tree-planting event was also arranged in Year 2, aimed at young families (19 adults and 15 children participated).

Sustainability

In Year 1, the visible presence of the FWC CFI garden resulted in a growing awareness amongst the FWC senior management and service-users of the potential of CFI activities to influence food policy and, as a result, links were established between the FWC CFI and FWC Nutrition and Physical Activity programmes, and on a wider scale the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) and Community Health Development Network NI (CDHN).



Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative (KASI) The Community Garden

Host Organisation

KASI Ltd Immigrant Support Centre

Community Area

Killarney, Co. Kerry

Target Groups

Asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers

Shared Learnings, Scope and Outreach

The KASI CFI activities aimed to tackle the mental and physical health issues which can be brought on as a result of the sedentary lifestyle experienced by asylum seekers/refugees who are not permitted to work.

Throughout the programme, KASI CFI activities centred on the development of a community garden as a healthy form of activity for their service-users, as well as a place to grow their own crops, and as a means of facilitating interaction between KASI target groups and local communities. Year 1 began with a strong volunteer base of 40 participants and a schedule of 70 gardening sessions in that year alone. A dedicated project worker was also employed in order to sustain CFI activity levels and ensure continued development. Years 2 and 3 saw a steady growth in the volunteer base, reaching 66 participants by the end of the programme, but with the number of gardening sessions declining in the final year. Knowledge-sharing and interaction between volunteers was encouraged in Year 2 via an externally facilitated workshop on garden planning and mapping. In Year 3, a recipe book project was launched ('Recipes from Home') as a further means of engaging CFI participants with their fellow volunteers.

Training in healthy eating and food growing skills was made available in the form of organic gardening and cookery courses (45 participants in Year 1; 37 in Year 2 and; 15 in Year 3), as well as one-off workshops on a range of topics (e.g. Tree-planting workshop in Year 2; Willow-dome workshop in Year 3), each with an average of 18 participants.

Social events featured heavily in the KASI CFI activities and included several 'Harvest Parties', 'End of Ramadan' barbeques, KASI Men's Group summer barbeques and garden produce sales. Participant

numbers at these events ranged from 48 to over 240 individuals, including members of the wider community.

Sustainability

Although capacity-building activities were not a major focus of the KASI CFI's activities, owing to the specialist nature of the target group of the project, there was a consistent emphasis on integrating CFI participants with members of the local community. This was largely achieved through the frequent and well-attended social events held over the course of the programme.

PAUL Partnership (PAUL) Limerick Food Partnership ‘Seed to Plate’ Project

Host Organisation

PAUL Partnership, St Munchin’s Family Resource Centre and Southill Area Centre

Community Area

St Munchin’s and Southill, Limerick City

Target Groups

Community-wide

Shared Learnings, Scope and Outreach

The PP CFI activities aimed to provide a setting for community-based education around healthy eating and food growing skills, as well as increasing accessibility to fruit and vegetables for members of the local community. Another key aim of the project was to encourage interaction between members of the community and, in particular, between older and younger age groups.

The PP CFI encompassed two community gardens, one located in St. Munchin’s and the other in Southill. Part-time gardeners were employed at each location, tasked with maintaining the garden as well as aiding in the delivery of training, in partnership with the local Vocational Education Committee (VEC), to CFI project workers and participants. A wide range of CFI activities were launched including open day events in each garden (nine in total, averaging over 300 participants per event), VEC gardening classes (six participants per course), and ‘Cook It’ training courses (six participants per course). Gardening classes continued to be offered in Years 2 and 3 (16 and 14 participants respectively). After-school classes were introduced in Year 2 (six participants per course) and an intergenerational gardening class in Year 3, with the participation of nine elderly adults and seven children over the course of five weeks.

A gardening group was established at St. Munchin’s (seven participants meeting one-two times per week). A gardening sub-group was also formed, to oversee the allocation of gardening plots to a diverse range of local groups including afterschool, women’s, local residents and youth groups. Wider outreach activities, as a means of involving marginalised service-users unable to readily access the CFI garden, resulted in the development of a total of 18 home gardens. Improved participation levels and the involvement of yet more local community groups, including a mental health group and a homeless hostel, were a feature of Year 2. During Years 2 and 3, focus shifted to activities for long-term sustainability of the CFI project. Extensive publicity surrounding the PP CFI attracted the interest

of three other Limerick city communities who were seeking to follow the example of the PP CFI and establish their own community gardens.

Sustainability

The PP CFI invested significant resource from an early stage (beginning in Year 2) to ensure sustainability of the project. An external evaluation was commissioned to inform the capacity-building process, whilst a concerted effort was made to engage volunteers and get their commitment for longer periods of time. 'Train the Trainer' courses were also introduced, as a means of empowering local participants to educate their peers in the wider community.

Northside Community Health Initiative (NICHE) Food Focus Community Food Initiative

Host Organisation

NICHE, Health Service Executive (HSE) South Health Action Zone and South Health Promotion Unit, Knocknaheeny Community Café, Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID), Cork City Partnership, Le Chéile School Completion Programme, University College Cork (UCC)

Community Area

Knocknaheeny, North Cork City

Target Groups

Community-wide

Shared Learnings, Scope and Outreach

The NICHE CFI activities aimed to promote healthy eating through a variety of activities designed to help members of the local community achieve a positive approach to food. An overall goal of the project was to become a model of best practice for similar projects across the North Cork City area.

The NICHE CFI commenced activities in Year 1 without the use of a community garden, rather focusing on delivery of training to members of the local community (e.g. 'Grow Your Own' workshops totalling 161 participants in Year 1 alone; 'Healthy Food Made Easy' six-week courses held in Years 1 and 2, totalling 40 participants). A Community Food Charter initiative was also launched in partnership with the local HSE Community Dietician, to capture local residents' aspirations for the quality and availability of the food provided in the area, and as a means of promoting healthy eating in local policy. The Charter was displayed in local schools, community centres and public outlets. Later in Year 1, space in which to develop a community garden was acquired through negotiations with Cork City Council. A garden committee (averaging 14 members per year) was formed to oversee the development of the garden whilst, at a strategic level, a multi-stakeholder Steering Group (with representation of the local community, NICHE board and Cork City Council) was also established to guide development of the CFI project and its integration into complementary initiatives in the wider community.

The NICHE CFI volunteer base grew in Year 2 to include more members of the local community. A growing confidence amongst volunteers in taking ownership of the CFI project also became evident during this time. Late in Year 3, delays that had been encountered, in relation to external funding

allocated for the development of the CFI garden, were resolved allowing the project to progress the plans for the garden. A Food Mapping exercise, in partnership with UCC, involving a total of 130 participants was also completed, as well as the formation of a Food Club (one meeting per week with 15 participants).

Sustainability

The NICHE CFI Steering Group played a key role in filtering the project's objectives into the agenda of interest groups looking at wider food policy. This was achieved primarily by leveraging contacts made with Cork Healthy City project, UCC Cork Food Environment and Well-Being Cluster and the local Youth Network Forum. At community level, the NICHE CFI empowered local participants to educate other members of the community via the 'Grow Your Own' workshop programme. The Food Club, established in Year 3, soon expanded their activities into social enterprise, looking at ways in which the club could contribute towards community food provision (e.g. a community cookery equipment store).

RehabCare / Simon Community (RCSC) The Food Garden Project

Host Organisation

RehabCare and Simon Community

Community Area

Dundalk, Co. Louth

Target Groups

Marginalised groups with a focus on intellectual disability, mental health issues and resettled homeless people

Shared Learnings, Scope and Outreach

The RCSC CFI activities aimed to integrate service-users of both RehabCare and Simon Community in offering practical activities and classes on the topics of healthy eating and food safety, and how to transfer these skills into their home lives. Another key delivery was to provide a therapeutic space, in the form of a community garden, to promote positive mental health and social interaction with fellow participants and the wider community.

RCSC CFI activities were planned from the outset by the early establishment of a gardening group of 18 participants meeting four times per week (approximately 180 meetings per year). Gardening classes were also offered to participants, whilst individuals unable to access the CFI garden could avail of a home garden visit by a CFI project worker to help them get started growing their own food (four home gardens developed in Year 1; six home gardens in Year 2 and nine in Year 3). Cookery classes using recipes tailored to the CFI garden produce were another aspect of project activity, and showed a steady trend in participation numbers from year to year (17 participants per class per year). By the end of Year 3, external funding had been obtained from the National Lottery Fund to produce a calendar of the cookery class recipes.

Sustainability

Partnership-building and social enterprise activities featured consistently in RCSC CFI project. In Year 1, local and national media publicity helped raise awareness of the project amongst stakeholders in the wider community, leading to strong linkages with the Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) student garden project, as well as public support of the project by Dundalk Simon Community CEO Niall

Mulligan. A stall was also acquired at the local Farmer's Market, staffed by project participants and workers, to sell excess food produced in the garden.



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safefood

7 Eastgate Avenue, Eastgate, Little Island, Co. Cork
7 Ascaill an Gheata Thoir, An tOileán Beag, Co. Chorcaí
7 Aistyyett Avenue, Aistyyett, Wee Isle, Co. Cork

Tel: +353 (0)21 230 4100 **Fax:** +353 (0)21 230 4111

Email: info@safefood.eu **Web:** www.safefood.eu

www.safefood.eu
HELPLINE
NI 0800 085 1683
ROI 1850 40 4567