

MAKING FOOD MATTERS PROJECT EVALUATION



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Introduction

The making food matters project was developed as a community based learning pilot as part of the wider Communities Living Sustainable lottery funding initiative across Irwell Riverside. The project recruited 6 food champions through an open recruitment process and ran from October 2013 – April 2014.

Aims of the project

The project identified the following aims:

- To build skills of local people to deliver healthy and sustainable food messages
- To create a network of food champions
- To enable local residents to better understand how to make the most of their food

The projects aims also linked to the following Communities Living Sustainable outcomes

Outcome 2:

Increase awareness of individual and communal energy consumption and increased commitment to its efficient management. Number of residents benefitting from a project to support energy efficiency = 20 (6 volunteers + 14 participants attending their training)

Outcome 3:

Increase involvement of the community in collaborative growing and greening projects. Number of residents involved as volunteers = 6

Outcome 4:

Increased opportunities of economic opportunities in the green economy, greater take up of training and jobs within it and creation of new job opportunities which contribute to sustainability. Number of unemployed residents in training = 6

The project

Partnership approach - The pilot project was developed through a partnership model with East Salford Neighbourhood Management Team, Health Improvement Team, Inspiring Communities Together and St Sebastian's Community Centre. Due to partners other priorities during the project the main commitment for the day to day delivery and management of the project came from Inspiring Communities Together and St Sebastian's Community Centre. The Health Improvement Team however provided some of the funding for the project. Salix Homes were not originally part of the project group but did provide some funding for the pop up café events as the project developed.

Lessons Learnt-

- In a partnership model be clear at the start what the commitment will be from each partner and ensure that the partners can make that commitment
- Be clear about who will lead the project and ensure partners deliver on their commitments
- Be open to inviting other partners once the project starts – It may not always be seen

as a priority for a partner at the start of a project however as the project develops this can change

Food champions - The food champions were recruited through an open recruitment process. 8 applications were received and 6 food champions recruited to take part in the project. The food champions committed to the six month project and were expected to volunteer for 6 hours per week, 3 hours each week were set aside for project development and the completion of a level one in volunteering qualification. In exchange for this commitment they each received an allowance of £20.00 per week to cover any out of pocket expenses and support them to be involved. Although 6 food champions started the project by the end only 5 completed the whole project. The sixth food champion felt that she needed to commitment more time to finding paid employment so left half way through the project.

Lessons Learnt-

- Open recruitment worked well and although targeted promotion was at a local level this approach meant that any one from outside the area could apply
- The one person recruited from outside the area found it frustrating during the development phase and in the end decided it was not for them
- Bringing together people with different skill levels and ideas can lead to frustration amongst the group – time was needed to manage this and enable the individuals to develop as a team before they could focus on the development of the model
- Trying to complete the level one volunteer qualification and develop the model was at times too much for some group members. This was due mainly to the level of literacy skills. A high level of support was needed to enable group members to feel confident to produce content for the qualification. Additional time has been given to the completion of the qualification past the end of the project.
- 4 of the group members are committed to completing their level one volunteering qualification.
- 4 members also completed a level 2 in food hygiene as part of the project.
- The £20.00 a week was a factor for encouraging group members to attend sessions although at the start of the project it was difficult to encourage group members to complete their 3 hours outside of the weekly group sessions.
- All 5 group members gave a big commitment to the project once it was clear what the group wanted to deliver. Each giving up a lot of their own time to support this work
- 4 of the group have gone on to set up a community group of their own and run a community café at a local community centre

The budget – A budget of £4,980 was secured from the partners to start the project as outlined below. The funding not used to cover the full cost of the 6th food champion was used to cover additional room hire costs to enable the food champions to meet on a weekly

basis for the full six months. The resource budget was used for printing material for the food champion volunteer qualification and providing drinks at the weekly sessions.

ITEM	COST	SOURCE OF FUNDING
Local Food Champions (£20.00 per week)	£500 per person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 posts covered by Community First Budget (budget already secured by St Sebastian's) 3 posts covered by Irwell Valley Sustainable Communities Project Health Improvement Team
Room Hire for delivery of training courses	£480 (2 hours per week x 24 weeks @ £20.00 per week)	
Asdan volunteer qualification	£1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met by Inspiring Communities Together
Resources for food matters training: Food Photocopying	£500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irwell Valley Sustainable Communities Project

A further budget of £6,180 was secured by the food champions through the Communities Living Sustainable project and Salix Homes to implement the project ideas developed by the food champions. This included running pop up cafes, piloting a spices to you club and meals to you scheme. The food champions also secured funding to run a celebration event which they plan to hold in the school summer holidays.

Lessons Learnt-

- The true cost of the project was not met by the funding secured. Inspiring Communities Together Coordinator and St Sebastian's Community Centre Manager provided a lot of time in supporting the group, running the weekly session and provide time to help with delivery of the activity.
- The £20.00 per week allowance was a good way to support group members who may not have been able to do so to take part in the project. This ensured those people who had child care, transport or additional out of pocket expenses could use the allowance without the need to provide receipts.
- The allowance was below the threshold for those on work seeking benefits and did not effect benefit payments
- Taking part in the project was classed as volunteering and back to work experience so enable people to reduce the hours spent on actively looking for work without the risk of sanctions

Project development – The food champions model was set up to enable the food champions to develop the ideas to achieve the agreed outcomes and aims of the project along side completed their level one in volunteering. The first couple of months of the project were therefore taken up with the food champions:

- Getting to know each other
- Trying to understand what the project was about
- Sharing ideas of possible ways of delivery
- Working on their level one volunteer qualification

Five of the food champions stayed committed to the project and agreed a collective way forward based on the themes outlined below:

Themes	Key messages developed by the Food Champions
Demonstrate the benefits of recycling household waste/ reducing food waste	reuse, stop throwing away food that could be eaten
Demonstrate benefits of buying seasonal and local	Taste verses cost – Stop, look, think and save
Demonstrate benefits of cooking large and freezing	Spend less, eat more
Demonstrate benefits of cooking more fresh food	Stay healthy
Demonstrate benefits of growing own	Start small, go large, make friends

The food champions developed a number of activities they would test based on their themes to see if they could achieve the outcomes and aims of the project. The tests of change included:

Activity one – Recycle reuse	
Theme – Demonstrate the benefits of recycling household waste	
The test of change – Can residents who shop in Tesco Supermarket be encouraged to leave excess packaging at the store rather than taking it home and filling their own bins with waste.	The Plan - Deliver a 3 hour session at Tesco Supermarket on Salford precinct. The session will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging people to leave their excess packaging at the store to help us fill a supermarket trolley • Take part in a questionnaire in store • Take part in a questionnaire once they get home • Help raise funds for a local food bank

Activity two – cook fresh stay healthy	
Themes – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate benefits of cooking large and freezing or sharing • Demonstrate benefits of cooking more fresh food 	
The test of change – Can people be encourage to use more fresh food by seeing what can be achieved with a bit of time and a few resources. By cooking large we will be able to demonstrate the value of	The Plan – To run a monthly pop up kitchen over a three month period using low cost ingredients including, those which people would usually throw away. Recipe cards will be produced to enable people to try ideas at home. Food cooked will be used to support a meal to you project in the neighbourhood to support local older people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging people to try something new • Encourage people to volunteer as meals to you

<p>sharing food and encouraging people to think about cooking large and freezing or sharing</p>	<p>helpers and promoting the benefits of fresh food can help you stay healthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing people that by cooking large you can also share with others or freeze for another day
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Activity three – Herb and spice cooperative

Themes –

- Demonstrate benefits of **reducing food waste**
- Demonstrate benefits of **growing own**

The test of change – Can people be encourage to join a cooperative to share cost of purchasing ingredients such as herbs and spices so they can try something new.

The Plan – To run a monthly cooperative as part of the pop up cafe providing small amounts of herbs and spices to enable people to try new things. The project will start to grow their own herbs but will purchase spices and herbs in bulk to start with and sell in small amounts.

- Encouraging people to try something new
- Encourage people to use new herbs and spices to create different foods
- Encourage people to share to help reduce cost
- To sustain a food cooperative

Activity Four – Food matters event

Themes –

- Demonstrate benefits of **cooking large and sharing**
- Demonstrate benefits of **growing own**
- Demonstrate the benefits of cooking more **fresh food**

The test of change – Can we demonstrate and encourage more people to get involved in the work the food champions have produced over the past 6 months.

The Plan – To hold a celebration event at a local community facility in the neighbourhood. The event will:

- Show case what the food champions have achieved
- Encourage people to sign up to the herb and spices cooperative
- Encourage people to become involved in the cook fresh, large and share

Lessons Learnt-

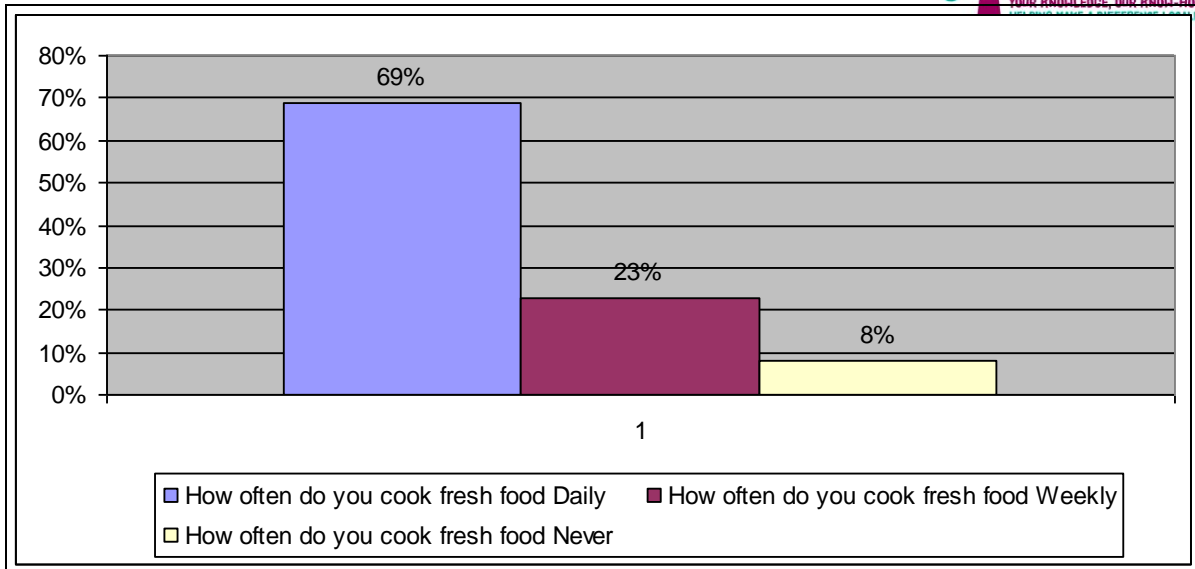
- The group developed an ambitious programme of activity which they were unable to achieve in the time allocated
- The process of developing the ideas was a good experience for the group as they had to negotiate and build their team approach to enable them to develop ideas
- Agreeing project leads enable all group members to take responsibility for a piece of work and develop their individual skills
- Although the recycle reuse test did not take place this was due to time taken to build a relationship with Tesco and confusion about when and if the test could take place. A group member did however start to build a relationship with Tesco and this test could still happen if partners were interested in building on the work done to date
- The 3 pop up café events were well supported by local residents with over 50 attendees across the 3 events. 2 events took place at St Sebastian's Community Centre and 1 event took place at the Lower Kersal Centre. Following the event at the Lower Kersal Centre the group have been able to negotiate to carry on running the

café on a volunteer bases.

- The pop up café events provided a healthy 2 course meal cooked by the food champions and enable the food champions to hold conversations based on their key themes.
- The events were used as a consultation with people attending completing questionnaires on their food use and the idea of developing a spice cooperative
- The Lower Kersal Centre work also includes cooking lunch for the children at the child care setting encouraging them to try something new
- The meals to you idea was tested during the pop up event at St Sebastian's. The group with support from Salix Homes carried out door knocking in the area. Although they identified a number of vulnerable people who were keen to have a chat the number of people wishing to receive a meal to you was very low. The group would like to further develop this in the future.
- The spice club was very positive with those who attended the pop up café. People however felt it would be better if recipe cards were included to encourage people to try something new. The group are now looking at developing this model further including providing recipe cards
- The group were commissioned to provide catering at 3 events towards the end of the project and this took up time when the group should have been working on their volunteer qualification.
- The feed back from the events was very positive and again provided valuable learning for group members as they needed to plan, shop and coordinate cooking at venues they had not previously used for large numbers of people (up to 200 at one event) as well as promoting the messages from the food champions to a wider audience.

Results of questionnaires

As part of the pop up café events the food champions spent time talking to those who attended to seek views on purchasing and using fresh food as well as asking about the development of the spice cooperative. The food champions also asked people if they would like to attend further popup café events across the area- 99% of those asked said they would like to see more pop up cafe events across the area.



When you cook fresh do you cook more than you need?				What do you do with the extra food you cook?		
Yes	No	Sometimes	Occasionally	Freeze	Use next day	Throw away
32%	15%	38%	15%	32%	61%	8%

What % of your weekly shopping is fresh food?		What % of your weekly shopping is frozen/packaged/ready meals?	
More than 50%	Less than 50%	More than 50%	Less than 50%
63%	43%	27%	73%

Do you think there are enough places in the local area of East Salford to purchase fresh food?		If there were more places would you use them?	
Yes	No	Yes	No
34%	66%	100%	0%

Would you join a spice cooperative?			Would you be happy to pay to join a spice cooperative?		Would you be happy to collect your spices from a local community setting?		
Yes	No	Maybe	Yes	Maybe	Yes	No	Maybe
50%	15%	35%	76%	24%	84%	8%	8%

Key achievements

Project helped to bring back some of the lost community spirit – I enjoyed the opportunity to take part in this project which was at times frustrating and challenging but at the same time very rewarding. I am glad I took part and would do it all again – Joanne Food Champion

This was pilot project was an idea developed by the partners which the expectation that the food champions would develop the model of delivery. The food champions invested a lot of energy in the project and were very commitment to make the project work.

The achievements of this style of working have been much greater than was originally expected particularly the personal journey the food champions have been on. Their individual and collective passion for food has produced a community organisation to the area which will be a valuable asset for the communities living sustainably (CLS) programme as well as for the neighbourhood of Irwell Riverside.

Project helped me to appreciate views and ideas of others. I at times found it difficult to share my ideas with the others in a positive way but now have made some very good friends – Imma Food Champion

Outlined below are some key achievements against the project aims and CLS outcomes

Project identified aims	Key achievements
To build skills of local people to deliver healthy and sustainable food messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ project development and delivery skills learnt ➤ Team building and negotiating skills ➤ agreed a set of key messages which they used during their activity ➤ Delivered a programme of healthy food activity to over 400 people (pop up cafe and events) ➤ Raised awareness with people about how they purchase and use food to start to encourage changed behaviour
To create a network of food champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The food champions have used their own networks to raise awareness of their project and key messages ➤ The food champions have developed a brand for themselves – Food Matters and have set up a Food Matters face book site to continue to promote their messages ➤ Food Matters is now a membership organisation and work is taking place to recruit members
To enable local residents to better understand how to make the most of their food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cooking large and avoiding waste ➤ Using spices to make basic food more exciting ➤ Pop up café events

Project identified aims	Key achievements
Outcome 2: Increase awareness of individual and communal energy consumption and increased commitment to its efficient management. Number of residents benefitting from a project to support energy efficiency = 20 (6 volunteers + 14 participants attending their training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Completed their own carbon count ➤ Key message including cooking large can reduce energy usage ➤ Completed carbon literacy training

<p>Outcome 3: Increase involvement of the community in collaborative growing and greening projects. Number of residents involved as volunteers = 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Visit to allotment project to understand how to have an allotment works ➤ Volunteer now working on planters at St Sebastian's community centre growing fruit and vegetables ➤ Encouraged people to start small including growing in their kitchen, using fresh herbs and spices ➤ Spices cooperative to encourage message that sharing can create new friends
<p>Outcome 4: Increased opportunities of economic opportunities in the green economy, greater take up of training and jobs within it and creation of new job opportunities which contribute to sustainability. Number of unemployed residents in training = 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Developed model for delivery of green messages ➤ Set up their own Food Matters group to continue the ideas developed ➤ Completed level 2 qualification in food hygiene ➤ Taken part in level one volunteer qualification ➤ Reopened a community café in a community centre which had previously been closed for over 2 years. This currently on a voluntary capacity but it is hoped this will turn into paid opportunities as the business grows

Things we could have done differently

- Build time into the programme for team building at the start of the project – The group completed a unit as part of their volunteer qualification on team building but this was latter in the programme.
- Develop a framework for the project against the aims and outcomes so every clear from the start what they need to be working to
- Be clear with partners what is expected of them and that the commitment to the project and the individuals is important.
- Build into the project the individual journey of food champions as this was a big part of the outcomes of this project
- Be clear about the actual cost of this type of project and the added value brought from the food champions (all gave more time to this project than was expected)