Healthy Food for All/*safe*food

Demonstration Programme of **Community Food Initiatives**

Final Evaluation Report

February 2013

Glossary of Terms

BBHF: Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum

Call Out: part of the evaluation methodology – an invitation to each CFI to report on challenges and successes in the previous quarter

CE: Community Education Scheme

CFI: Community Food Initiative

Cook-it Programmes: A community nutrition education programme that supports people who want to develop their cooking skills and who have an interest in healthier eating, particularly where cost is a consideration.

DKIT: Dundalk Institute of Technology

DPWG: Demonstration Programme Working Group

EBM: East Belfast Mission

Food Poverty: the inability of a person or household to afford to maintain an adequate intake of safe healthy food

HFfA: Healthy Food for All

HSE: Health Service Executive

KASI: Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative

Semi Structured Interview Schedule: An aide memoire or interview guide for interviews with stakeholders or participants of a project or programme containing topics, themes, or areas to be covered during the course of the interview, rather than a sequenced script of standardized questions

Taster Session: A short workshop or event designed to allow someone to try out a service being offered by a CFI such as a cookery or gardening course

NICHE (Northside Community Health Initiative):

VEC : Vocational Education Committee

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Executive Summary

This is the final evaluation report for the Community Foods Initiative (CFI) Demonstration Programme. It examines how well the programme as a whole met its key objectives and brings together some of the key learning provided by the programme.

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"[1].

The programme objectives were to:

- Provide funding for a limited number of 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

In 2008, HFfA was awarded funding from ***safe*food** to establish a Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) on the island of Ireland over a three-year period. In September 2009, seven projects located across the island of Ireland were selected for funding under this Programme. The programme was officially launched in Belfast in January 2010

In order for the programme to provide a testing ground for CFIs, support was provided through a programme approach, as distinct from a grant scheme, including technical support, regular networking and shared learning, and ongoing evaluation.

The evaluation was formative in Years 1 and 2 helping to generate an understanding of how the programme could be better implemented and involving regular contact with programme staff and CFI project workers. Interim reports were prepared at the

[1] CFI Demonstration Programme document

end of each six month period including feedback on programme level activities and their effectiveness.

Individual CFI projects were supported to think through the logic of their approach and the outcomes they might expect, and to establish methods to collect information about project activity.

A final (summative) assessment of how far the programme had succeeded against stated objectives was conducted from July to December 2012 including an interview schedule with a sample of participants and of external stakeholders.

Findings

Overall

Over the 3 years the programme resulted in:

- 8228 individual attendances at one off events such as food fairs, taster sessions or single workshops [2]
- 195 separate taster sessions, events or single topic workshops delivered across the 7 CFIs
- 1849 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 the garden
- 73 courses were held of typically 6 sessions each
- 1097 gardening sessions were held involving around 200 people
- 10 networking meetings involving around 20 people per event and detailed follow up reports

What CFIs Achieved

CFIs provided:

- Education and exposure to fresh food (in the kitchen, the garden, through short classes or talks)
- Training and skills development in gardening and cooking
- Support to vulnerable people
- Improved sense of community

[2] 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 help improve access to and affordability of fresh food by providing the skills and training to transfer to home or an allotment. They also included training courses for unemployed young people.

The majority of participants interviewed for the evaluation intended to grow some vegetables at home and to continue trying to eat healthily with the knowledge they now had

A strong message from across the evaluation is that food and the cultivation of food proved fundamental in helping people to re-connect in meaningful ways with one another.

A broad age range of people from very young children to older people engaged with a CFI which Home garden visits helped engage those uncomfortable with attending programmes at a centre

The other services provided by Host organisations were a key way for people to find out about the CFI and decide to take part

What CFIs need

CFIs Take Time

Most CFIs found running their projects took more time than anticipated. Getting a strong volunteer base for a community garden or for supporting the provision of activities and events was an important strategy

Confidence building and the development of trusting relationships was a crucial part of the work, paving the way for sustaining the project in the longer term

Partnerships and steering groups featured in all CFIs. Whilst this required time to properly establish, it also enabled stronger local mainstreaming of the CFI in regeneration

The period of support needed to establish a CFI on a long term footing is likely to go beyond three years. As progress toward social enterprise was limited in these projects, not least by the need to maintain efforts to be social inclusive, a long term basis for a CFI is likely to include integration into a wider strategy for health and regeneration; the direction of travel for some of the more resilient CFIs such as Niche or Footprints.

Programme Achievement Against Objectives

Objective 1: Funding CFIs

Objective 1 was fully achieved and as a whole demonstrated good value for money

- The programme enabled a high level of overall exposure to the idea of healthy food across the seven communities.
- The programme purposefully favoured better established organisations to ensure time and effort was directed to food initiatives rather than establishing a new group.
- Other groups outside of the programme who accessed smaller levels of funding were reported by CFIs to typically lack a gardener and outreach to the wider community was curtailed. The work required to encourage the engagement of vulnerable people in disadvantaged groups required considerable time across all the CFIs and cannot be underestimated
- Alongside the funding provided through safefood many of the CFIs applied for and got additional funding using their food project as a base
- Average cost per participant (dividing the funding by the total number of participants) ranges from £13 (BBHF) to £207 (Rehabcare). These figures look very reasonable if also set against the different needs of participants across the CFIs, although we are not aware of any comparable figures for food initiatives that could be used as a benchmark.

Objectives 2 and 3: Technical Support and Shared Learning

Overall, Objectives 2 and 3 were by and large delivered successfully.

- Formal training was for the most part well received, and informal networking was particularly successful where projects had commonality.
- The programme successfully created a space for shared learning that helped with the development of individual projects.
- CFIs recognised the benefits of support and the faster uptake of key ideas it helped to achieve.
- The main challenge was the limited time available within network meetings in seeking to also accommodate informal networking.
- The diversity of different CFI projects with different circumstances and development challenges restricted more specialised shared learning around community development work with particular social groups.
- More disciplined evaluation and reflective practice that could more fully capture learning for future CFIs or for use in influencing wider thinking was

much less successful. This sort of learning was for the most part dependent on the work of the programme level evaluators and development worker.

Objective 4,5 and 6 : Informing Practice and Policy

There was to date a partial achievement outcomes against Objectives 4 5 and 6 Distilling the learning from the programme and converting it into an ongoing advocacy and policy influencing agenda will continue and be better informed now that the programme has concluded its three years of work. Formal identification of models currently resides within the evaluation interim reports and this final report (Part 1), which can act as a resource.

- A more quantitative and more empirical evidence base showing the health benefits achieved would have been valuable but as this was not feasible within the current programme. CFIs did not have time or capacity to carry out the standard of work required, particularly with vulnerable people with fragile self confidence.
- There is a need to establish a shared understanding and the tools for consistent and effective collection and compilation of information arising from CFIs to use to inform practice and policy discussions.
- The stakeholder interviews show that the CFI Demonstration Programme has increased awareness of CFIs among key stakeholders across the island of Ireland in the general idea, but not yet in the detail.
- The CFIs demonstrated that more detailed understanding with wider stakeholders could be achieved at local level, and this should be a focus for future programme support
- Comments from external stakeholders interviewed in the evaluation suggests a clear opportunity to broaden and enhance awareness among key sub-regional, regional and national community development, anti-poverty and community development and health organisations and agencies in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland.

Going Forward

- The programme has made an important start in testing whether or not CFIs can make a real, distinctive and valuable contribution to food poverty. It has shown that CFIs can make such a contribution, but to do so requires a sufficient level of resource particularly for staff time than was available on this occasion, and for a period longer than the current programme period.

- The resource needs and sustainability of CFIs was a particular concern if they are to be rolled out across a wider area, given the various specialised and time consuming aspects a CFI needs to encompass.

- If the case still needs to be made and the potential strategic value of a CFI explored, then the programme needs to ensure research / evaluation and wider stakeholder engagement is fully developed in programme actions and processes, and determine how far research evaluation activity should involve CFI staff themselves. Consideration needs to encompass all stages of gathering, organising, interpreting and utilising evidence from projects on the ground and the role of a sub group such as the DPWG in considering policy and practice messages and how to convey them.

- The market place for food poverty is an increasingly crowded one and it is important that all players act strategically and openly in sharing their knowledge to achieve effective joined up approaches.

- CFIs as part of a solution to food poverty need to be located within a wider picture of how food poverty is caused and addressed at local level as well as nationally. This wider understanding requires collaboration and discussion with other community health organisations and key players such as councils, food providers, schools and community development organisations.

Recommendations

Informing Policy and Practice

If a future programme is to continue to act as a source of information to inform policy and practice thinking some considerations are recommended

- Review arrangements and expectations across all parts of the programme for the way different kinds of information are collected and used to inform policy or Practice.

- Ensure there is sufficient resource at programme level to collate and present information to a programme working group, HFfA management board or

safefood. Any use of additional research / evaluation support should be more clearly positioned and integrated into a future programme

- Ensure all requirements for monitoring and evaluation are spelt out as soon and as consistently as possible across all CFIs taking part. Pre-prepared forms and data collection tools might also be provided.

- As a relatively low cost option, use the Call-Out format introduced as part of this evaluation to structure commentary from CFIs on insights around food poverty, on what works or doesn't work (and why) and how the CFI is seeing wider linkages to other needs and initiatives in their local area.

- A Programme Working Group of the kind begun in this programme should use information collected to organise seminars or a conference enabling better understanding of the implications and possibilities for stakeholder organisations

- Consider the use of social media for policy influencing work but ensure clear linkages to further information resources

Building Common Purpose

- Ensure there is a clear shared understanding amongst CFIs of expectations beyond the delivery of their project around shared learning and evaluation / research.

- Ensure there is a clear rationale for each objective of a new programme and that each objective is addressed in the operational arrangements of the programme

Resourcing CFIs

A number of options arise with regard to matching resources to project and programme objectives:

- If CFIs are expected to contribute to policy and practice evidence, clear resources with budget headings and allocations for staff time are required

- Alternatively, clearly specify what a CFI is to include, with any further development solely the responsibility and choice of the Host organisation

- Rather than wait until CFIs experience difficulties, plan to accommodate flexibility from the start in the way funding is administered and ensure CFIs are aware of this

- Consider using three distinct types of funding support; start-up (which can assist weaker community organisations and broaden the range of disadvantaged communities that could be assisted to start a CFI), growth (approximately equivalent to the current programme funding) and sustainability (assisting in local mainstreaming or the development of a social enterprise)

Shared Learning

By shared learning we refer to the provision for CFIs to learn from each other and to receive appropriate training and signposting together or in specific sub groups based on target groups or approach

- Ensure the learning from this round of projects is made fully available to future CFIs as soon as possible

- Consider the possibility for current CFIs to act as mentors to increase capacity for tailored advice and support

- Introduce and establish online networking and collaboration to facilitate ongoing shared learning between all parties over the course of the programme in a more flexible manner

1. Preamble: Context and Programme Objectives

This is the final evaluation report for the Community Foods Initiative (CFI) Demonstration Programme. It examines how well the programme as a whole met its key objectives and brings together some of the key learning provided by the programme.

1.1 Overview

In 2008, Healthy Food for All (HFfA) an all-island multi-agency initiative[3] was awarded funding from ***safe*food** to establish a Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) on the island of Ireland to run over a three-year period. In September 2009, seven projects located across the island of Ireland were selected for funding. The programme was officially launched in Belfast in January 2010 and completed in December 2012.

The CFI Demonstration programme built on the approach taken in the 'Decent Food for All' (DFfA) initiative funded by ***safe*food**[4], and set out to explore how community development principles could assist in providing solutions to the provision of affordable and accessible fresh healthy food to people in low income areas. Its aim 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"[5]. Support to CFIs was provided through a programme approach, as distinct from a grant scheme, including technical support, regular networking and shared learning, and ongoing evaluation.

The programme objectives were to:

- Provide funding for a limited number of CFIs over a three-year period
- Provide technical support, collective training and facilitate networking between CFIs

[3] Healthy Food for All is funded by the Department of Social Protection, HSE and ***safe*food**.
[4] Tackling Food Poverty: Lessons From The Decent Food For All (Dffa) Intervention. Institute for Public Health Nov 2008
[5] CFI Demonstration Programme document

- 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

1.2 The Key Driver for the Programme: Addressing Food Poverty

The CFI programme was designed to test a possible way to address food poverty as an important component of both poverty and health inequality.

Dimensions of Food Poverty

The current definition of food poverty is still evolving. At its core; people are considered to be living in food poverty if they are unable to afford to maintain an adequate intake of safe healthy food. People living in poverty and social exclusion such as the unemployed, low income families, people with little formal education or poor skills, people living in poor housing or in high crime areas, are at higher risk of poor dietary intake and poorer health status.[6]

In 2010, 10% of the population in Ireland were in food poverty (almost 450,000 people), an increase of over 3% from 2009 and the largest rate of year-on-year increase since 2004[7]. Higher levels of unemployment and underemployment in the current economic climate, coupled with increasing food and energy prices, mean it is likely more households are in or at risk of experiencing food poverty.

Households experiencing food poverty cannot always comply with dietary recommendations. For Individuals and households with a low income, food expenditure is the only discretionary budget item and it is often reduced to avoid debt or to pay other household bills such as rent, electricity, and gas [8] The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice (VPSJ) (Collins et al) found, in its 2012 study on a

[6] Purdy J, McFarlane G, Harvey H, Rugkasa J, Willis K. Food poverty. Fact or fiction?: Belfast: Public Health Alliance of the island of Ireland; 2007.

[7] Carney C and Maître B, (2012) Constructing a Food Poverty Indicator for Ireland using the Survey on Income and Living Conditions, Technical Paper # 3, Dublin: Department of Social Protection

[8] Coakley A. Healthy eating: food and diet in low income households. Social policy and administration 2001; 49(3): 87-103.

minimum income standard, that the weekly cost of food is the most expensive area of expenditure for most household types examined. This was particularly true for households with children, and pensioners, and for lone parent households. A study in 2009 by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) found it was up to ten times cheaper to provide calories in the form of unhealthy foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar than it is in the form of protective foods such as fruit and vegetables and other important foods such as lean meat and fish[9].

Poor diet is linked with illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes as well as problems such as low birth weight, dental caries and increased fractures because of a lack of calcium.

The Irish Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey (2010) found that 21% of children report going to school or bed hungry because there is not enough food in the home. This was an increase from 16.6% in 2006 [10]. Children living in poorer households experiencing food poverty adopt unhealthy behaviours in early life. Poor nutrition can have a negative influence on the mental well-being of children[11] and over the longer-term can lead to childhood obesity and cancer and heart disease[12]

Food poverty is inextricably linked to issues of finance, education, transport, literacy, planning and retailing and as such its solution needs a multi-sectoral approach across all relevant Departments. Friel and Conlon[13] also highlight the social impact of food poverty. Those in food poverty may be lacking the means to participate in activities considered a cultural norm such as eating out or with friends and family, which acts to deepen social exclusion.

Food Poverty and Policy

A clear policy focus on food poverty had only relatively recently emerged at the time of the CFI Demonstration programme being first proposed in 2008. In 2004, Friel and Conlon (ibid) published an analysis of food poverty related data and policy in the Republic of Ireland. Following publication of their report, the Healthy Food for All

[9] HFfA Policy Briefing Oct 2009

[10] Irish Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children, NUGalway 2012.

[11] The costs of child poverty for individuals and society. A literature review. Griggs and Walker October 2008

[12] Case, A, Fertig R, Paxon C. From Cradle to Grave? The Lasting Impact of Childhood Health and Circumstance.NBER Working Paper No. W9788. Princeton: National Bureau of Economic Research; 2003.

[13] Food Poverty And Policy. Sharon Friel and Catherine Conlon. April 2004

(HFfA) initiative itself was launched with support from the Combat Poverty Agency, Crosscare, **s*afe*food** and St Vincent de Paul. ***safe*food** also commissioned the Public Health Alliance for the Island of Ireland (PHAII) to undertake a similar analysis for Northern Ireland. Their report, *Food Poverty: Fact or Fiction* was published in late 2007.

Since then food poverty as a policy objective has featured in some government policies of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, but not extensively. It is included in the obesity prevention strategy for Northern Ireland[14], which seeks to develop a coordinated approach to address food poverty. The strategy sets medium-term outcomes (2016 to 2019) that ensure local support, resources and facilities are available to those experiencing food poverty. The long-term outcomes (2020 to 2022) include ensuring that a greater proportion of adults are eating a healthy diet. The indicator to measure progress against this outcome will be the percentage of adults experiencing food poverty.

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 in the Republic of Ireland states that health promotion activities have to be further developed in partnership with the community, targeting specific topics including healthy eating.

Food poverty as an aspect of health inequality however has had to compete with a range of other health issues for attention, at a time when decisions about what public spending cuts to make has heightened efforts to lobby for different service needs.[15] The Combat Poverty document Tackling Health Inequalities – an all-Island Approach to Social Determinants, published in 2008, makes no specific reference to food poverty. *Lifetime Opportunities*, Northern Ireland's current anti-poverty and social inclusion strategy, refers to the reduction of childhood obesity but makes little reference to food poverty.

[14] A Fitter Future for All: Framework for Preventing and Addressing Overweight and Obesity in Northern Ireland 2012-2022

[15] See for example Clare Farrell, Helen McEvoy, Jane Wilde and Combat Poverty Agency (2008), Tackling health inequalities – an all-island approach to social determinants, Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency/Institute of Public Health, in which food poverty is not specifically mentioned.

1.3 The Community Food Initiative as a Tool to Address Food Poverty

The aim of this demonstration programme was to explore whether a community based approach could help improve the availability, affordability and accessibility of healthy food for disadvantaged groups. CFIs were envisaged to be a means to address at local level the complex factors linked to food poverty, in terms of health, education improvements, promoting healthy options, and improving access and availability of fresh food. By inviting those in need to be active participants in shaping local solutions, CFIs could shed more light on how best to tackle food poverty effectively. CFIs are seen as part of a larger strategy to address food poverty that includes national cross departmental policy around planning, food security, health, education, welfare, transport and services and so on as well as more upstream interventions such as national media campaigns.

The approach targeted disadvantaged groups and encouraged their involvement in tackling food poverty for themselves in their local areas with resources and technical support provided from the programme

The key features envisaged by the programme funders and management group [16] for a CFI included:

- Provision of support services such as nutritional education, skills development, and cooking classes, and/or provision of a community garden and food preparation or sale.
- A focus on low income groups at local level
- Use of a community development approach.

A community development approach as part of the CFI model included:

- Use of local assets and relationships to establish the knowledge and capacity to access and use healthy (fresh) food.
- Reaching out to local people lacking in confidence and skills, to be inclusive and to engage the community in developing the project
- Promoting participation, and providing local level community coordination and leadership.

[16]Drawing on HFfA's definition of Community Food Initiatives and a workshop run with the management committee for the CFI demonstration Programme. For more detail see Annex 2

The Approach Taken by the CFI Demonstration Programme

Seven CFIs were selected, four in ROI and 3 in NI, through a competitive application process. The selection process sought host organisations that were well established and had a proven track record of managing grants and projects so that there could be an immediate focus on developing the CFI itself rather than the organisation. It was also a pre-requisite of funding that CFIs were based in communities of disadvantage. The selected CFIs between them targeted significantly marginalised and disadvantaged groups, listed in Table 1.1 below[17]

Each CFI received funding annually over a period of three years to set up, manage and sustain their project, with ***safe*food** investing between £22,000 to £60,000 in each project. [18]

As a community development based approach, each CFI began with their own set of activities reflecting the needs they saw in their client group. The selected CFIs were supported by a Healthy Food for All Development Worker who provided technical support to projects and facilitated collective training and networking with the aim of encouraging shared learning among the participating projects. The role of the Development Worker also included coordinating the programme and assisting in raising awareness about the programme.

Host	Project title and focus	Location	Main target group(s)
Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum	Food for Life	Derry	The Triax ward, ranked sixth most deprived ward area in Northern Ireland (NI).
East Belfast Mission	Healthy Eating Education Programme	East Belfast	Homeless people, people experiencing drug and alcohol problems, people living on very low incomes
Footprints Women's Centre	Building a Transition Community	Colin neighbourhood Belfast	Women experiencing difficulties, Residents of the Colin Neighbourhood, placed in the upper 10% of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland

[17] A page profile of each CFI, their target groups and project objectives follows in the first main part of this report. More information is also provided in Annex 1

[18] Details of funding received are provided in Part 2 Section 2.1)

			(Noble Multiple Deprivation Index)
KASI (Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative)	The Community Garden	Killarney	Asylum seekers and refugees
Limerick Food Partnership	Seed to Plate Project	Limerick / Southhill	Among the 10% most deprived estates in the County Southill is known for its crime rate, which is contributed to by gangland feuds, turf wars, and poverty in the area.
NICHE (Northside Community Health Initiative)	Food Focus Community Food Initiative	Cork Northside	Knocknaheeny / Hollyhill is in the 'extremely disadvantaged' category for Cork city
Rehabcare Dundalk / Simon Community	The Food Garden Project	Dundalk	People with an intellectual disability, mental health issues and resettled homeless people

Table 1.1: Overview of Selected CFIs for the Demonstration Programme

1.4 The Programme Evaluation

The programme evaluation had three main roles. Firstly, it provided a formative evaluation for the first two years of programme implementation. During this time the evaluation helped in generating an understanding of how the programme could be better implemented. Interim reports were prepared at the end of each six month period including feedback on programme level activities and their effectiveness.

Secondly, the evaluation was required to assist the programme to coordinate the CFI projects in their own self evaluation activity. Each individual CFI was expected by HFfA to conduct its own self evaluation activities. CFIs could do this themselves or commission an external consultant to do it for them (2 CFIs chose to do this).

Individual CFI projects were provided with the following support:

- Making at least one visit to each CFI,
- Advising the projects on best self-evaluation practice
- Attending and helping facilitate the networking event on self-evaluation,
- Producing a guidance document on self-evaluation and
- Providing technical support to projects where necessary

The self-evaluation material from each CFI was subsequently collated to support the development of an evidence base, and to assist in the objective of shared learning.

The six monthly Interim reports included a review of patterns in the development of CFIs, looking for common issues or features as well as individual insights related to particular target groups.

Thirdly, the evaluation was required to provide a final (summative) assessment of how far the programme had succeeded against stated objectives (as listed above). In assessing the success of the programme the evaluation was required to:

- Look at the overall outputs and outcomes of the Programme
- Assess whether the Programme aims and objectives had been achieved.
- Assess the support provided to projects
- Assess networking and training outcomes
- Assess funding and administration aspects since commencement in June 2008.
- Assess the merits of the programme approach

The table below provides a timeline of activities and methods used by the programme level evaluation over the three years of the CFI Demonstration Programme.

Time Period	Main activity for the period	Methods / Tools
Jan - June 2010	Establish an effective, collaborative evaluation and learning framework	Workshop with CFIs using 'Theory of Change' [19]as a framework for defining intended outputs and outcomes across projects to assist self evaluation Production of support tools for continuing the Theory of Change exercise **(See Annex 2)** Workshop with Programme level Management Group to explore concepts and programme level Theory of Change (**See Annex 3**) 4 meetings with HFfA staff to review early stages (Open conversation)
July – Dec 2010	Programme level monitoring: progress in the development of CFIs and of	CFIs invited to complete call out exercises issued by HFfA on a 3-4 month basis from September 2010 to January 2012 (five in total) to check in with groups to gather feedback on developments that were rewarding, challenging or interesting over the period (**Example see**

[19] ActKnowedge: Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change

	programme support	**Annex 4)** These were augmented by monthly (shifting to bi-monthly) Skype calls in 2010 and 2011 with CFIs carried out by the development worker to continue to share updates on progress and learning – call outs and Skype call minutes were documented and stored for review. There were 9 sessions in total. 2 Check-in reflection meetings with staff on progress Piloting of 'four voices' framework for staff self evaluation enabling any emerging issues to be noted for discussion Design of Fourth network meeting to bring programme management group representatives and CFI host organisations to jointly review the policy significance of the work and how it might influence future policy thinking Presentation of the programme evaluation to the All-island Obesity Action Forum
Jan - June 2011	Individual CFI mid-term review and evaluation support	Review of content of Call-Outs and Skype Calls Half to one day sessions with each CFI coordinator and manager to explore : • Progress and issues around self evaluation with provision of bespoke solutions and tools collated and circulated with guidance for use to all CFIs (**See Annex 5**) • 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 Documenting of emerging practice and CFI models and Collation of programme feedback from CFIs in a midterm report – presentation and discussion with programme management group (Third interim report)
July – Dec 2011	Sustainability of CFIs and Third year exit strategies	Review of Call Out and Skype calls Assistance in the design of the sixth network event to explore concepts of sustainability and options for CFIs to develop in year 3 Documenting options for programme level support during year 3 (Fourth interim report) CFI Demonstration Programme Development Worker Reflection (informal meeting with the evaluator)
Jan - June 2012	Preparation for summative	Final call out Jan 2012 Introduction of common activity profile to be completed by CFIs

	evaluation	drawing on self evaluation data (See **Annex 6** for profile and **Annex 1** for completed tables) Collation and analysis of activity profiles for Years 1 and 2 across CFIs for fifth interim report Development of participant survey tool in consultation with CFIs and ***safe*food**
July – Dec 2012	Summative Evaluation	Development and implementation of participant interview tool based on a review of health survey questionnaires and work with CFIs (See **Annex 7** for interview tool and **Section 1.3** for findings) Collation of third year activity profiles Individual CFI de-briefings using semi structured interview schedule (See **Annex 8** for schedule and **Part 2**, programme evaluation for findings) exploring key learning from project work, wider influencing on policy and practice, and feedback on programme support. Stakeholder interview survey over October /November with 6 organisations (contacts suggested by Demonstration Programme Working group based on policy linkages (Health, Education, Poverty and Welfare) Interviewed one to one using a semi structured interview format exploring awareness, interest and understanding of CFI Demonstration Programme (See **Annex 9** for interview questions, **Section 2.3.4** for details of approach and findings)

5. The Final Evaluation Report

This report is structured into two main parts. Part 1, which follows, continues the role of the evaluation in collating learning and insights from across the individual CFIs toward the identification of good practice. It also helps to show what the programme as a whole has helped to achieve on the ground as a precursor to considering how far the programme met its objectives.

Part 2 reports on the summative evaluation and the assessment of the overall success of the programme against its stated objectives. The report then draws together the key insights arising from the programme to provide recommendations for future work.

Part 1. Learning from the Community Food Initiatives

This first part of the report includes:

1. A short profile of each CFI; its target groups, and key development achievements and challenges over the three years of the programme. A more detailed profile of the development of the CFI over each year of the programme is provided in **Annex 1.** These also include data provided by CFIs about numbers of participants across activities for each year, presented in a table at the end of each profile. The data provides an indication of the scope of activity and levels of engagement by the target community in each project. Compilation of these profiles draws on the Call Out exercises, which began in September 2010, and on monthly Skype calls held over 2010 and 2011.

2. A synthesis of the key learning emerging from across the CFI reports is then provided, using the information from Call-Outs and drawing on additional material provided from Semi Structured Interviews with each CFI toward the end of the programme in October 2012.

3. Finally, an assessment is made of the effectiveness of the CFIs in making a contribution to the health or wellbeing of the people they reached, drawing on comments provided by 44 participants during one to one interviews conducted by CFI project workers with the guidance of the evaluators as part of the evaluation[20].

[20] The participant interview schedule is provided in **Annex 7**

CFI Profiles

Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum: Food for Life

Partners: Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum (lead), Health Improvement Team (west), Youthfirst and Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir

Target: The Neighbourhood Renewal area of Triax in Derry city; the most deprived ward in the Western Trust area and sixth most deprived in Northern Ireland.

Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum is a community-led project well positioned to target and recruit from the hard to reach members of the community.

The project was originally focussed on delivering a range of healthy eating programmes around demonstration and practical cooking activities, education based activities and information, focussed mainly on post primary school teenagers. Following site visits with other CFIs through networking events however BBHF recognised the potential for a community garden and expanded the project remit to include one in the community centre grounds. Strong buy-in to the garden project was reported

Fifteen Food 4 Thought school cookery courses of six weeks each were run during Year 1 for a total of about 180 teenagers. This was augmented in Years 2 and 3 by two further shorter cooking skills courses for teenagers and for adults. The teenagers were benefiting from the recipes they were learning as a basis for preparing to leave home to go to university or life after school.

A five week summer healthy eating breakfast club targeted at families with children aged 4 – 16 years of age attended by 80 children each morning in Year 1 and 90 children in Year2. Partnership working and collaboration was found to be essential to the success of the Club.

A physical activity group was also run for local men which proved successful in involving men who were typically hard for BBHF to engage The men were reported to be starting to lose weight and learning about healthier lifestyles.

During Year 3 BBHF built on the community garden element of their project by setting up a partnership group, drawn from other groups and agencies within the area, to look at community growing schemes as a whole.

They reported in their January Call-Out having used the *sa*fefood money to lever in other funding and in kind funding such as land from the Housing Executive. The partnership approach enabled three sites to be included and developed as part of a wider social enterprise scheme shown in the diagram in **Annex 10**

East Belfast Mission: Healthy Eating Education Programme

Target: Residents and ex-residents of the homeless shelter.

The East Belfast Mission is committed to a community development approach and networks with a wide range of local community groups in order to better carry out its work for the people of Inner East Belfast. The Mission has development programmes and services for families, a café and Meal on Wheels service, based on a thriving social enterprise model.

The project aimed to provide a nutritious evening meal for 22 residents two evenings per week over the three-year period and provide health and diet sessions and cookery demonstrations to residents, ex residents, senior citizens and users of the family and community programmes on how to plan and prepare healthy food on a low budget.

EBM reported some difficulties getting started. Individuals wanted more choice in the evening meals offered to them, and there was some difficulty building participation in the information sessions. One of the most challenging parts of the programme in its early stages was how to engage with clients from EBMs homeless hostel.

The EBM worker reported that development of relationships had been key to the success of the programme. Cook-it sessions were reported to be valuable opportunities to talk and to include a wide range of individuals. Most clients were male and learning how to prepare fresh vegetables, cook and eat a meal together had helped develop relationships.

Year 1 was used to get a better grasp of what kind of issues people faced and how information sessions could be tailored to these issues as a means to communicate meaningful information about eating and health.

Year 2 saw significant growth in the project with more than double the numbers of people attending monthly information sessions. Whilst a success, it also placed

pressure on the staff member responsible in putting sufficient time and energy into making sure sessions ran well, and build up meaningful relationships.

The project attracted the interest of other groups and initiatives in the wider area including participation in a Health Forum for East Belfast, and interest from other hostels in the area

As one of the only CFIs not to have their own garden, EBM partnered with a local Going Green gardening project which included use of an allotment plot.

EBM reported surprise from their experience of information sessions at how difficult it was to change behaviour with regard to healthy eating and healthy lifestyles in general. There was still much to understand about the difficulties of life for lower social economic groups within the area in order to match education initiatives with the struggle to maintain basic needs such as money, emotional and mental stability

Footprints Women's Centre: Building a Transition Community

Target: Women, children and local residents Colin neighbourhood Belfast

Footprints Women's Centre delivers programmes and services to women and children including Children's Services, Training and Education, Healthy Living and Social Enterprise. Footprints has worked for some time on issues relating to food poverty, diet and nutrition, and prior to this project had formed a food policy steering group, with funding from Food Standards NI and Food Safety Promotion ***safe*food**.

The project focussed on the development of the grounds at Footprints Women's Centre to include fruit and vegetable growing. It offered food growing training to local residents who were encouraged to volunteer in the garden.

Produce grown in the garden was used by the Footprints Catering Services to contribute to income generation as a social enterprise. Footprints calculated the produce grown in the kitchen garden and used by Footprints Catering saved the business £300

Year 1 focussed on establishing a volunteer gardening group of 10 women. The group met on 42 occasions over the year. A steering group was established by October; however there was reluctance among the women taking part in the project to join the steering group or to travel to network meetings or site visits

By Year 2, however, the women were now working in the garden independently. And also met in the Centre kitchen to learn cookery and budgeting skills. The lack of confidence amongst the garden group to work in the garden without the contracted gardener or project leader was addressed by involving the women in the planning of the garden, developing an instruction manual and providing space for the participants to explore fears or issues

Protecting the garden and gardening provisions against vandalism was a concern carried over from Year 1. Whilst no instances of vandalism had occurred there was a difficulty obtaining insurance for the shed and equipment store

Raised beds were built beside the kitchen garden for 20 school preschool children to plant vegetables. Children's gardening equipment was purchased using other funds available to Footprints. Footprints was also securing additional funding to build a seating area and 2 compost areas, and raising awareness of the demonstration project among funders.

An application to the council to secure additional land adjacent to the kitchen garden was successful. This ground was used by the project to plant an orchard.

Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative (KASI): The Community Garden

Target: Refugees and asylum seekers Killarney area

KASI was set up in 2000 to support asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers and their families and to facilitate their integration into the community. KASI provides educational training information, advice, advocacy, practical support and social and cultural programmes relevant to the needs of their target group and promotes appreciation and celebration of cultural diversity

The project used a community garden to address the sedentary lifestyle for asylum seekers / refugees in direct provision (hostel accommodation or basic provisions), who are not allowed to work, which can cause isolation, depression and other mental health issues. As well as providing something meaningful to do, the garden was intended to facilitate interaction between the target groups and local communities in working together, sharing and exchanging ideas, skills, crops, food and culture. It aimed also to provide a space for migrant workers and their families to grow their own crops.

40 volunteers were recorded as attending some 70 gardening sessions over the first year, growing to 45 volunteers in Year 2, and 66 in Year 3. A programme of social events drew in additional volunteers with around 150-200 people recorded as attending in each of the three years of the project.

A recipe book project 'Recipes from Home' was developed during Year 3 that was found very rewarding. Benefit was reported in sharing and comparing cultural differences in how foods are grown and prepared in Ireland compared to the participant's countries of origin. As most of the volunteers were Muslim, Ramadam was also a significant factor to consider in a food initiative but also an opportunity for planning programmes of activity in the garden over the year.

A difficulty identified in Year 2 was in reaching asylum seekers further away from the garden site. The vast majority of those taking part came from two hostels nearest to the Garden. Those in a hostel about 5 kilometres away were difficult to engage There were some concerns about gender balance in volunteers, with a smaller number of women taking part. A women's group was established in Year 3.

KASI found their initial estimates for what would be required to run the project needed revising, not least, the requirement of a dedicated development worker. Other budget items were also based on estimates drawing on limited knowledge of what a CFI project might be like to run. A re-balancing of the budget was necessary and this was accommodated by *s*afefood.

KASI reported that for asylum seekers in direct provision, food was always an issue; They were not getting the food they want (as in food from their own country); the food was reported to be either overcooked or undercooked, bland or not spiced enough, and the same food all the time. However, KASI also noticed that they took big portions of everything, possibly using food to compensate for their insecurity, fear, and boredom.

Limerick Food Partnership : Seed to Plate Project

(PAUL Partnership, the St Munchin's Family Resource Centre and Southill Area Centre)

Target: All members of the local communities of St Munchins and Southill.

Between the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, the St. Munchin's Community Garden project and Southill Community Garden Committee were formed, with the aim of nurturing relations between the youth in the area and older people through positive interaction in gardening. Both communities had initiated projects relating to healthy eating and gardening,

The aim of the project was to promote healthy eating organic home-gardening practices to improve access and availability of fruit and vegetables in the two communities. Unlike other CFIs, the project encompassed two gardens, one in each community, and each with a part-time gardener. The project aimed to provide settings for community education.

The gardeners worked closely with the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) tutors and project workers to develop the skills of people in each community aimed at transferring the learning to participants own homes and lifestyles.

The project also aimed to help reduce isolation, providing meeting places for all members of the local communities and aiming to improve relations between older and younger people.

As well as community garden activities and training, individuals were assisted to establish gardens at home This was an aspect that was reported to be popular and relatively inexpensive to do, using plants grown in the community garden rather than having to buy in.

There was some limited take up of some classes in Year 1 but there was an increase in participants in Years 2 and 3. Numbers using the garden itself however remained low. Some low level vandalism was reported in the community garden. Community events were more successful, however, with 400 people recorded as attending the two events in Year 3.

The gardener's hours were reported as not long enough to complete all tasks required. An increase in the gardener's hours was introduced provided for by re-allocation of the Seed to Plate budget in 2011. The external evaluation

commissioned by Paul Partnership considered absence of a staff member in the Southill Area Centre in contrast to the gardener / coordinator provision at St Munchins, to be a missing factor in coordinating and driving the necessary development of the Community Garden.

Year 2 saw a shift in focus to building capacity in the community to sustain activity. The project coordinator reported attempting to engage with volunteers on a longer-term basis to avoid people tending plots for a short period and then losing interest. Cook It! Courses were popular and the coordinator saw an opportunity to run Train the Trainer courses so that locals in the community could deliver the courses with her support.

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

A broad-based partnership between the Community Health Project (lead), Health Service Executive (HSE) South Health Action Zone, Knocknaheeny Community Café, RAPID[21], HSE South Health Promotion Unit, Cork City Partnership, Le Chéile School Completion Programme, Geography Department University College Cork, and the local community.

The Project steering group assisted the project to filter into the agenda of wider policy/strategy arenas such as Cork Healthy City work, University College Cork Food Environment and Well-being Cluster and the Local Youth Network Forum.

Target: All local residents in the area "to create one community, and one message about healthy eating"

NICHE was established in 1998 to improve both community and individual health and well-being, with a particular emphasis on the use of a community development approach.

The project aimed to promote healthy eating through a variety of co-ordinated, strategic activities that were intended to offer people different ways to engage in a positive approach to food. The project was intended to provide a model for similar work across other areas on the North side of Cork.

[21] Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development

Niche started out their project without a community garden and so focussed on training workshops designed to help people see if they would like to start growing their own vegetables. They were reported by Niche to be extremely successful.

A Community Food Charter was developed with local people and other stakeholders, to communicate and share aspirations they wanted for themselves and their families for the quality and availability of the food provided within projects and public outlets in the community such as schools, health centres, community projects, food outlets and so on.

As with other projects, early challenges reported in Call Outs included finding enough time to organise all the different aspects of the project and gaining the engagement of other stakeholders in the community.

Niche was successful in getting a community garden included in regeneration plans for the area using land to be leased from Cork City Council. The Council were also directing funds made available from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to help with the development of this garden. The steps toward establishing the garden were reported by Niche to have been challenging; in co-ordinating meetings and work between the different organisations and interests and the fears and information needs of local residents. The size of the garden and its location within regeneration planning was viewed as a significant benefit but placed significant strain on the project as a whole in meeting all its objectives.

The formation of a Food Club using a local school kitchen facility was particularly successful in engaging individuals who took a strong ownership of the direction and ambition of the club. The club is likely to sustain and develop into a social enterprise to supply school breakfast and lunch clubs, with an additional potential benefit that children would engage better with local people and local food. The approach would also bring the income back into the community.

The Food Club is also starting a community cookery equipment store to provide shared equipment for cooking through a lending scheme overseen by the club - an interim step in developing their skills as a team and sharing knowledge.

Rehabcare / Simon Community: The Food Garden Project

Target: people with an intellectual disability, mental health issues and resettled homeless people, Dundalk area

The ethos of RehabCare and Simon Community is to promote personal development and independence for people from marginalised groups including those with an intellectual disability, and those with mental health issues. Partnership with the Simon Community included resettled homeless people within the project remit. Many of the participants had a dual diagnosis such as learning difficulties and mental health issues. They were typically aged between 30 and 60 years

The Food Garden Project sought to bring participants from both organisations together and provide practical activities and classes to support them to grow, prepare and cook a range of healthy organic fruit and vegetables throughout the year, providing them with underpinning knowledge around food safety guidelines and nutritionally balanced diets. There was also an emphasis on transferring these skills to their home life, establishing small gardens at home and using the cooking skills there.

Additionally, the project aimed to use the garden to provide a therapeutic stress free environment that could promote positive mental health, and to promote community integration, supporting the participants to sell excess food products to the local community through a stall in the local farmers market. Revenue from the sale of products was reinvested in the Food Garden

The project established the main elements of work early on, with a gardening group meeting four times per week for 2-3 hours and including 18 people. The group met 180 times over the course of the year. Rehabcare found the two clients groups mixed well and learnt from each other.

Timekeeping of participants, especially those from the Simon community was variable. The first six months saw people dropping out due to illness, and problems related to addiction and mental health difficulties. New people also started, the project was found to suit some individuals well, but not everyone.

Public Relations and relationship building was an early and consistent feature of the work. The project received coverage nationwide as well as in local papers. Contact and collaboration was made early on with the Dundalk Institute of Technology, (DKIT)

Visiting and assisting with the development of individual gardens at home was also an early feature, involving 4 gardens in Year 1, rising to 9 in Year 3 The development worker reported that this was enabling the project to engage with people who don't want to attend the programmes. This active support to establish a garden at home was also felt to be important in ensuring people were not walking away from a course and forgetting, but instead transferring skills to home

Whilst there was positive interest and support from senior managers of both partner organisations, funding was reported to be a real challenge and was addressed in part through a range of fund raising activities such as supermarket bag filling and invitations to local businesses to sponsor aspects of the project.

1.2 Distilling the Learning: What Worked / Didn't Work

What CFIs provided:

- Education and exposure to fresh food (in the kitchen, the garden, through short classes or talks)
- Training and skills development in gardening and cooking
- Support to vulnerable people
- Improved sense of community

All but one of the CFIs incorporated a community garden into their projects. The gardens help improve access to and affordability of fresh food by providing the skills and training to transfer to home or an allotment. They also included training courses for unemployed young people.

The majority of participants interviewed for the evaluation intended to grow some vegetables at home and to continue trying to eat healthily with the knowledge they now had

A strong message from across the evaluation is that food and the cultivation of food proved fundamental in helping people to re-connect in meaningful ways with one another.

A broad age range of people from very young children to older people engaged with a CFI which Home garden visits helped engage those uncomfortable with attending programmes at a centre

The other services provided by Host organisations were a key way for people to find out about the CFI and decide to take part

What CFIs need

CFIs Take Time

Most CFIs found running their projects took more time than anticipated. Getting a strong volunteer base for a community garden or for supporting the provision of activities and events was an important strategy

Confidence building and the development of trusting relationships was a crucial part of the work, paving the way for sustaining the project in the longer term

Partnerships and steering groups featured in all CFIs. Whilst this required time to properly establish, it also enabled stronger local mainstreaming of the CFI in regeneration

The period of support needed to establish a CFI on a long term footing is likely to go beyond three years. As progress toward social enterprise was limited in these projects, not least by the need to maintain efforts to be social inclusive, a long term basis for a CFI is likely to include integration into a wider strategy for health and regeneration; the direction of travel for some of the more resilient CFIs such as Niche or Footprints.

We can't be sure how much of the successes or difficulties reported by CFIs were a result of their particular circumstances of place and community or the approach they had taken. It is unlikely a perfect recipe for starting and developing a CFI can be arrived at, but the following were important factors to address and some of the solutions found by CFIs will be generally applicable. A list of ingredients for a CFI is provided in Annex 11 drawn from the learning gathered throughout the programme evaluation and interim reports

Developing the Community Garden and Physical Assets

All but one of the CFIs incorporated a community garden into their projects. Four did so from the start, 2 added gardens later. The exception (EBM) is planning to include one and collaborated with Going Green to use an allotment for a period. There was typically a learning curve in getting vegetables to grow and identifying the kinds of foods participants would be interested in eating, whilst bringing a wider range of fruit and vegetables to their attention to try (BBHF, EBM, KASI, Paul Partnership, Rehabcare)

BBHF encountered problems marrying up gardener and participant interests. The first gardener appointed did not give consideration to the types of vegetables participants from the area might like – such as carrots, potatoes, cabbage, and instead planted a great deal of rocket.

> *"There was a lot of waste, we threw away a lot of stuff, all the gardeners had different ideas so maybe it was difficult to prevent the waste. I think if it was better organised with more consistency, the waste could have been reduced*" (Participant, Paul Partnership CFI)

More consultation and sensitivity to local tastes helped bridge the gap to healthier eating and improved the engagement of participants.

Flowers and wreaths were often noted to be more popular than fruit and vegetables (BBHF, Paul Partnership), presenting additional challenges in maintaining a focus on fresh food.

Management of a garden required consideration of the potential for vandalism (Footprints, Paul Partnership), natural pests (all) or people taking produce unsupervised (Rehabcare). Fencing and gates, as well as strong equipment storage were some of the solutions.

Small differences, such as the use of a chiller cabinet, opened up wider possibilities for the kinds of foods that could be made available (EBM) Kitchens and spaces for cooking and eating were valuable places for building relationships between people (KASI, Footprints, Niche)

Separate provision for children in the form of equipment or a raised bed was included in at least two of the CFIs (KASI, Footprints) to enable links with schools / afterschool clubs and mothers with young children.

Budgeting for equipment and supplies was often hit and miss drawing on limited knowledge of what a CFI project might be like to run and required re-profiling of project budgets. This was accommodated by *s*afefood.

The community gardens represented a potential solution to the objective of improving access to and affordability of fresh food. However they were typically not big enough to address availability, in having limited capacity to produce vegetables in sufficient volume. They should be understood more as a basis for skills and training, These skills then need to go somewhere else, such as transferring to homes (Rehabcare, Limerick) or to an allotment (BBHF)

Home based gardens were a success for both Paul Partnership and Rehabcare. Paul Partnership was able to sell readymade raised beds. Rehabcare and Paul provided home visits to help 9 and 19 individuals respectively to set up and start growing their own fruit and vegetables. They provide an alternative means to establish capacity for growing which can be linked into a growing group working in each other's gardens to retain the advantages of social connection and shared labour.

Staffing

Most CFIs found running their projects took more time than anticipated. One CFI did not anticipate needing a development worker but discussions with *s*afefood via HFfA enabled a re-allocation of budget to support a worker for 10 hours a week. Most of the other projects found they needed to allocate more hours to their development worker or gardeners to meet the time requirements of their project. This was also accommodated. EBM raised the hours for their development worker from 8 to 12 and covered the extra hours themselves.

The hours allocated to gardeners also needed to be increased in some cases; to complete all tasks required in maintaining the appearance and productivity of a garden as well as helping with home visits or courses (Paul Partnership)
Time was needed to spend with people to understand their needs, building confidence and trust and then, importantly, staying in touch on an ongoing basis (KASI, EBM, Rehabcare).

Pressure arose in organising all the different aspects of the project, putting sufficient time and energy into making sure sessions ran well, dealing with practicalities such as transport and catering, Projects often found they needed to lay on more activities and support to enable participation (Afterschool clubs for example) or maintain interest. The BBHF breakfast club found unsupervised children attending, and unless organised activities were provided afterwards there was a drop in numbers attending. Good food alone was not a sufficient incentive to attend. KASI found mothers of young children only came only if there were activities in the garden, requiring additional planning and staff time.

Finally, time was needed to build relationships with other groups, organisations and institutions important to the wider success of the project and as a part of locating the project in the wider community (EBM, KASI, Paul Partnership, Niche)

Getting a strong volunteer base for a community garden or for supporting the provision of activities and events was an important strategy therefore to start as early as possible in the project. One of the key elements attributed by BBHF to the success of their breakfast club was the volunteers and groups from the local area who oversaw the running of the service. ‘Early adopters’ joining the food projects often had an interest in gardening, and often, these same individuals became important in assisting others with their knowledge and ideas.

Community Development in the CFIs

<u>Who Engaged ?</u>

Across all seven CFIs a broad age range of people from very young children to older people engaged with a CFI. Much depended on the age range of the client group of the CFI host organisation which was often typically middle to older age groups (KASI, Rehabcare / Simon, East Belfast Mission).

Families were also encouraged to take part. As the profiles of activities of each of the CFI show (Section 2.1) there was a strong theme of including younger children in the projects; either through working with families themselves (BBHF Active Families Parent & Teenage programme, or Paul Partnership Mother and Child Cook-it and Intergenerational classes), working with schools (Niche, Paul Partnership, KASI) putting on afterschool clubs (Paul Partnership, KASI) summer schools (BBHF, Footprints) or children's garden groups (Footprints) . Open days, held by all CFIs at least once or twice a year encompassed all age groups.

Young people (from around 12 upwards) and young adults (16-25) were catered for in two of the CFIs. BBHF ran two training courses for unemployed young people in horticulture skills in conjunction with the North West College, and a major part of its activity was the delivery of cooking skills courses for young people (Food 4 Thought, 180 young people each of the three years of the project, and a Teenage Cooking Course to 48 individuals). Paul Partnership ran VEC courses in gardening for young people in conjunction with Limerick Youth Service and with the Garda Youth Diversion Project.

With regard to gender there was no clear pattern. For Rehab / Simon the client group from which participants were drawn tended toward a higher proportion of men. KASI found it difficult to engage mothers of young children. Paul Partnership reported a tendency for more women to become involved from the nearby estates than men. BBHF found the project to offer ways to engage men who they had found otherwise hard to reach. Footprints was, by nature of its client group, almost exclusively engaged with women.

KASI, Niche, Paul Partnership and BBHF included specific men's groups or activities as a means to engage men (eg making raised beds / window boxes) and providing a safe space for men to talk KASI and Paul Partnership also included women's garden groups to provide an opportunity for women to engage in gardening activities themselves and again, as a safe space to talk. These approaches often arose from the wider context of physical and mental health difficulties many individuals were experiencing coming from severely disadvantaged backgrounds. It was necessary to be cognisant of the sensitivity of these personal problems which could often best be addressed through groups of men or women talking separately rather than as a mixed group.

CFIs typically catered for people close to their garden or main project centre – KASI found it harder to reach asylum seekers beyond the immediate area of their garden,

EBM found it difficult to engage hostel residents when they were moved temporarily to a location in South Belfast.

Home garden visits helped engage those uncomfortable with attending programmes at a centre, but maintained a sense of inclusion in encouraging members of the community to help each other set up and maintain their garden (Rehabcare, Paul Partnership)

How were they Reached ?

"*We literally won them over one by one*" (KASI project worker)

BBHF reported little difficulty getting started given the complementary nature of the project with existing activities. This was also an advantage for Rehabcare / Simon and KASI. Niche progressed through a broad based consultation and awareness raising process from the start building on pre-existing involvement in community health initiatives

The majority (75%) of participants taking part in the survey conducted for this evaluation by the CFIs reported finding out about the food project through contact with other aspects of the host organisations services; for example, KASI's drop in facility, the Niche Health Centres, Footprints women's centre activities, EBM's support services and so on. All participants were clients in the case of Rehabcare and Simon Community. This was a feature of the selection process that targeted well established host organisations, which in turn were already actively running a range of other services.

6 of the 44 participants interviewed by CFIs for the evaluation said they heard about the project through word of mouth, and 4 responded to a leaflet or an announcement in another setting (eg church) 10 joined because of an interest in gardening (5 already had a garden of their own) whilst 6 joined because they wanted to meet people, feeling isolated or having recently arrived in the area.

Other CFIs found they still needed to win the engagement of participants even with the benefit they had of contact in other projects. Paul Partnership perhaps struggled most to engage participants in Southill, a number of factors were identified as playing a part including lack of a local coordinator and the low confidence and self esteem and fragmentation of the Southill estates (External Evaluator).

In Southill (Paul Partnership) some of those involved came from outside the area although this in itself had the positive benefit of countering the poor reputation of Southill;

> *"Getting involved here has given me a very different outlook on Southill. Southill has a stigma. It has given me a very different outlook on it all".(Southill Participant)*

Building Confidence

In the early stages of engaging people, EBM and Niche highlighted the development of trusting relationships as key to the success of their projects. Cook-it sessions were reported to be valuable opportunities to talk and to include a wide range of individuals (EBM, Footprints, KASI).

Some participants were reported to be more difficult to engage than others and thought had to be put in to keeping people interested, getting people used to a routine and to commitment. (Rehabcare, EBM)

Striking a balance between informal and formal was important. EBM staff found it best to keep sessions informal, enjoyable, and informative and on topics that had a meaningful impact on people's lives. KASI on the other hand felt they needed to move from a fairly unstructured approach to cookery demonstrations and information sharing to a more structured one in order to fully realise its potential.

Footprints and Paul Partnership reported reluctance among participants to take on responsibility and to have concerns about what was expected of them. A key concern of the Footprints project worker was the level of dependence on the gardener and a general need to build confidence.

7 of the 44 participants interviewed for the evaluation noted how the presence of a gardener had encouraged them to 'give it a go' when they would not otherwise have felt confident to do so.

> *"I can't work without an instructor. Emma is great at explaining things, I need guidance. If Emma was gone in the morning, the garden might be gone too"* (Participant, Paul Partnership CFI)

Confidence building measures included Grow Your Own Workshops' designed to help people see if they would like to start growing their own vegetables.(Niche)
A member of the project steering group attending the weekly gardening group (Footprints) . Combining some 'class room time' or review and planning meetings. The latter enabled participants to explore fears or issues and to think about the tasks and materials needed for gardening (or cooking), so becoming more involved in planning and design work (KASI, Footprints, Rehabcare, Niche).

Empowerment

As time passed, there was a desire among participants to have more of a say in decision making.

> "*We were never asked what we wanted to grow; I would have liked to have been asked and given a choice. They were great teachers but they didn't ask. The whole summer there was no lettuce. I thought that there should have been lettuce"* (Participant, Footprints CFI)

Paul Partnership and Niche both shifted focus from recruitment to building capacity in the community in Year 2. This was reported as important to sustaining forward momentum in the project, engaging with volunteers on a longer-term basis to avoid people attending for short periods and then losing interest. Train the Trainer courses were run by Paul Partnership so that locals in the community could deliver Cook-it courses. Niche arranged for Grow Your Own workshops to be delivered by locally trained people so that they can continue in some form after the programme had finished. Niche also built ownership in planning and implementing different parts of the project, reducing the load placed on the Steering group.

EBM and BBHF reported individuals finding and adopting roles themselves based on their interests and particular talents, this needed an observant facilitator / coordinator to recognise and encourage.

4 of the participants interviewed (from Footprints, and Niche) felt they could help keep the project going in the future;

> *"If we still get funding it could continue. We could do it on our own and I would like it to keep going because we all have the knowledge now, so maybe we don't need the funding. If everyone else stayed at the class I would too".* (Participant, Niche CFI)

"I think we could do the gardening without the help of the gardeners now, we have been taught enough; the only problem would be buying the seeds and produce". (Participant, Footprints CFI)

Partnership

Partnerships and steering groups featured in all CFIs, either at community level (between schools, crèches, youth groups, other community groups and so on) or at interagency level. Niche arrived at the project having spent time developing methods for integration around Healthcare both within the community and with other organisations. On a practical level these linkages enabled use of wider resources such as school kitchens or helped in the way different funding was brought together (Niche).

Setting up and providing a role for a Steering group or partnership of stakeholders required careful thought and an investment of time in building relationships and working out appropriate roles and levels of responsibility. This needed to be revisited regularly if participants were becoming more confident to organise aspects of project activity themselves (BBHF, Footprints, Niche)

Simple one to one partnerships (DKIT and Rehabcare for example, or Footprints and Colin Glen Trust) were easier to develop than complex multi-stakeholder partnerships (Niche, BBHF) although the latter helped extend the project out into the local community and into wider development agendas assisting in developing the conditions for a longer term future for the project.

1.3 Ways in which CFIs made a difference to Participants and Communities

The evaluation was not designed to include quantitative measures of change in the uptake amongst participants of fresh healthy food, but the survey of participants across CFIs provides some insight to what difference they felt the projects had made for them.

Whilst likely to include some bias in the sample, (see methods notes **Annex 7**) all 44 of the participants interviewed for the evaluation by CFIs were very positive about their experiences in the project. All 44 wanted to continue. The majority also intended to grow some vegetables at home and to continue trying to eat healthily

with the knowledge they now had. All 44 said their attitude to fruit and vegetables had changed as a result of taking part. [22]

Most common was the insight into how fruit and vegetables could be grown, what they looked like and what they tasted like;

> *"From growing my own, I know they have a different taste, they're more fresh. Since I started I now make my own soup. I used to buy soup before. Now I make it from carrots and vegetables in the garden".(*Participant Paul Partnership CFI)

Almost half of those interviewed reported taking what they had learnt back to their homes (this was for the most part not possible for those taking part in the KASI project who were living in hostel accommodation)

> *"I hate buying lettuce now. I grow my own. Same for tomatoes and onions. They're easy to grow. I grew potatoes too. They're so much nicer"* (Participant Paul Partnership CFI)

> *"I do a lot more at home now. I use what I learned. I'm encouraged to do more – keep at it." (*Participant Rehabcare CFI)

> *"I keep telling my family or people I know who are unemployed – why don't you start a garden? You don't get that quality and freshness in a shop".* (Participant Niche CFI)

3 of those interviewed mentioned becoming more alert to food choices when shopping;

> *"HFFA has made me more aware about healthy eating and now I stop and think about what I put into my basket when out shopping. Cheap isn't always the best option".* (Participant Footprints CFI)

5 participants listed particular changes they had made in their diets

> *"I have been receiving 2 healthy meals a week now for the last year and a half and this has helped give me the kick start I needed to change my eating habits. I have now reduced my sugary drinks, swapped coke for water and I*

[22] A selection of additional quotes from participants is provided in **Annex 12)**

*have even made homemade chicken and vegetable soup. I feel that I have more confidence in trying new foods and making healthy meals. I have even tried foods that I normally would not have the opportunity to try for example pasta and herbs".(*Participant EBM CFI)

One or two participants referred to other health problems as a motivator or a benefit, such as depression, trouble sleeping, and diabetes and heart trouble. 2 participants reported losing weight, and this was also noted by Rehabcare, BBHF in their men's group, and Niche in their Food Club

"Some have lost a dramatic amount of weight from being on the programme there are a lot of success stories around healthier eating but it's a mixed bag and there's no one quick fix" (Rehabcare)

CFI staff and participants also noted significant mental health benefits, from gardening in particular.

Perhaps the single most consistent benefit noted by two thirds of participants was the sense of community it provided, from the simple fact of being together in a common space, to the sharing of ideas and information, to working together to solve problems and sharing resources such as tools, seeds, and plants. It has been a strong message from across the evaluation that food and the cultivation of food proved fundamental in helping people to re-connect in meaningful ways with one another, providing dignity in being able to bring something to an exchange with another person.

8 of the 44 participants interviewed mention engaging in wider volunteering activity as a result of taking part in the food project including some of their own initiatives;

*"I have been involved with volunteering for many of the projects run by EBM and I recently started my own project called Creative Collective" (*Participant EBM CFI)

Two examples of new enterprise ideas were also cited. One individual at Rehabcare wanted to be able to start his own enterprise by building and selling garden sheds. Two women participating in the BBHF project came up with the idea of soaps and creams for sensitive skin made using herbs grown in the community garden, an initiative being actively looked at as a means to provide affordable specialist skin care products to cancer sufferers. .

1.4 Conclusion: CFIs in a Bigger Picture

It is clear CFIs as an approach take time to become established and require a not insignificant amount of dedicated and specialised resource to achieve their potential, but they can also make a valuable contribution. The key supports provided by CFIs have been:

- Education (in the kitchen, the garden, short classes or talks)
- Training and skills development
- Sense of community (enabling cultural change, sense of belonging and inclusion, and improved mutual support and self help)

There is clear evidence from the interviews that participation does change attitudes to fresh fruit and vegetables, both from being involved in growing it, to taking part in discussions and classes, or by getting new ideas in the kitchen. That said, many of those interviewed arrived with a positive attitude to start with and would have been easy to convince. Wider uptake of healthy fresh food was reported by CFIs to be patchy. An important overall conclusion from this review of CFI experiences is that they may be most effective and sustainable if linked into a wider picture of provision around food and community development at local level. Two key trends point toward this:

First, food provision itself as an outcome of CFIs addressing access, availability and affordability was more limited. Whilst there is reason to believe this can be improved over time, provided there are enough volunteers, a large enough garden and a knowledgeable gardener on hand, an alternative may be to form alliances with other CFIs, food providers / growers within the social economy or indeed private sector providers; options beginning to be explored by some CFIs (EBM, Paul Partnership, BBHF).

Second, the period of support needed to establish a CFI on a long term footing is likely to go beyond three years. As progress toward social enterprise was limited in these projects, not least by the need to maintain efforts to be social inclusive, a long term basis for a CFI is likely to include integration into a wider strategy for health and regeneration; the direction of travel for some of the more resilient CFIs such as Niche or Footprints.

This view of CFIs in a bigger picture is an aspect we pick up again in looking at the evaluation findings for the programme as a whole in the next part of the report.

Part 2: Programme Level Evaluation

In this section we consider how far the programme was able to achieve its stated objectives and what opportunities there may be to continue to develop the programme approach in the future.

We draw on:

- Semi structured interviews with CFIs conducted toward the end of the programme in October 2012 [23] **Annex 8**
- Programme documents and the interim reports of the evaluation
- Participant observation notes (network meetings)
- HFfA Evaluation Feedback Sheets from Network Meetings
- Staff reflection and review meetings with the Development Worker
- Interviews with a sample of key stakeholders in statutory and community organisations with an interest in the programme **Annex 9**

This part of the evaluation report is organised to discuss programme objectives under three main headings:

2.1. Consideration of Objective 1: To provide funding for a limited number of CFIs over a three-year period

2.2. Consideration of Objectives 2 and 3, which refer to work with the CFIs
- Provide technical support, collective training and facilitate networking between CFIs
- Promote shared learning amongst CFIs on the island of Ireland

2.3. An examination of Objectives 4,5 and 6, which refer to the capture and use of learning arising from the programme to inform wider policy and practice:
- 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

[23] For the purpose of confidentially in providing feedback we have not included the source of individual comments in this section

2.1 Funding CFI Projects: Objective 1[24]

- Provide funding for a limited number of CFIs over a three-year period

The basic requirement of Objective 1 was achieved. The table below summarises the funding provided to the target number of seven CFIs

CFI	Amount Awarded [25]
Bogside / Brandywell Health Forum	£55,425/ €65,206
East Belfast Mission	£49,840/ €58,635
Footprints	£22,513/ €26,492
KASI	€55,154
NICHE	€74,997
PAUL Partnership	€72,620
RehabCare	€62,654
Total	€415,758

Table 2.1.1 Funding Awards by CFI

The largest amount awarded was €74,000 (£59,300 at current exchange rates) to Niche, the smallest was £22,000 to Footprints.

The demonstration programme has been an important opportunity to properly fund and develop locally based food initiatives. Prior to this programme, funding for community based food projects was reported by CFI host organisations such as Footprints and EBM to be not widely available. Some funding was reported to be available by Paul Partnership and Niche through regeneration programmes in the ROI, but in small, annual amounts.

In further considering this objective we looked at how funding was provided and whether this was conducive to the wider objectives of the programme. We considered, in turn; the application process, the funding period and the amount of funding provided, the flexibility of funding, and the capacity for CFIs to sustain

[24] ***safe*food** have commissioned a financial evaluation of the Demonstration Programme results of this evaluation are currently pending (05/02/13)

[25] €0.85 conversion rate based on average over 3 year period

themselves following funding. We also considered the value for money provided from the funding from the Public Interest perspective. We discuss each of these in turn.

2.1.1 Inviting Applications for Funding

There were some problems reported in how the funding was made available

"*The application process and contract phase was pretty awful - it was a pretty challenging process*" (CFI Project Worker, end of project interview)

Points that arose about the application process and contracting phase included:

- The application had to be completed twice
- It was not very clear for some applicants what CFIs could get funding for, which was reported to have changed between the two applications, so that for example, on the first occasion there was understood to be no money for staff, but on the second occasion that this was now possible
- Similarly, there was uncertainty across the CFIs about funding for evaluation activity; whether this was to be funded internally, supported at programme level or externally commissioned by the CFI "*I recall being told not to put in for funding because that would be done by safefood – but obviously they meant at programme level - you can tell the difference in understanding between CFIs because Limerick commissioned someone and we didn't* " (CFI Host Manager end of project interview)

On this latter point, agreement for Paul Partnership to include funding in their budget to commission an external evaluation came during initial meetings with successful projects as a request from Paul Partnership. The option was not offered more widely to other CFIs.

2.1.2 The Funding Period

All CFIs welcomed the three year funding period. Most still found three years to have been short, but also recognised that the period had enabled them to put in place the ingredients for continuing on, albeit at a lower level of activity.

"*It took a lot longer than we thought it would take – it takes time – the first year was all about hard graft, the second year was getting things growing and getting people into the garden; its only now really starting to get established – we could have done with another year or two to make a bigger change – we want to go on and find out if it really can make that difference*" (CFI Project Worker, end of project interview)

"*I suppose I thought we could change the world in a couple of years but we can't do it in a couple of years*" (CFI Project Worker, end of project interview)

Four or five years was felt to be a better timescale for funding if starting from scratch, however, as one CFI put it;

"*As we knew it was a demonstration project we knew the funding would end and I feel this helped us keep a real focus on how the project could be sustained when the funding ended. We were provided with all the tools/materials to continue*" CFI Host Manager, end of project interview)

We return to the issue of funding duration when considering the ability of the CFIs to sustain their work after programme funding

2.1.3 The Amount of Funding

Whilst CFIs were generally happy with the amount of funding provided for project materials and costs, they were in strong agreement that more staff time would have made a big difference in being able to cover the range of activities necessary. There were three main demands on staff time to consider.

The Community Development Approach to a Food Project

Most CFIs had considerably underestimated the amount of time a community development approach to food provision and education would require. As detailed in Part 1 Section 1.2, significant time was needed in maintaining the garden, organising events, and spending time with individual people in order to build relationships and understand their needs.

"I would've liked to employ gardeners more; we doubled their hours after Year 1 and would have doubled it again in Year 3, but that would have ate into the budget – the gardener at Southill stays for full days when she is only paid for half days. She has said that if we can't find any money she would be happy to volunteer once a week but I don't really want to do that" (CFI Project Worker, end of project interview)

Accommodating the programme level work around shared learning and networking

Whilst the shared learning aspect of the programme was valued, all CFI staff reported that it was difficult to find time to respond and engage with them properly

"*You need to make sure people know exactly what they are signing up for – none of the funding went toward my wage –you need administrators/ others who know it's*

going to be their responsibility and how much time they are going to need to allocate to it" (CFI Host Manager, end of project interview)

Administrative requirements (reporting, evaluation, record keeping) were estimated by one CFI to have required an average of 2-3 hours per week minimum, or between 10 and 20% of available resource. (As an aside, it is noteworthy that evaluation was included by the CFI under the heading of administration)

Despite work to tailor evaluation activity to the circumstances of each CFI (see Section 2.3) CFIs found it particularly difficult to divert time to evaluation activity.

Local Networking and Partnership Building

As we discuss in Section 2.3, CFIs were an important way in which the idea of CFIs spread to policy and practice in the immediate area. Interviews with CFIs revealed that many were being asked for information and advice from a range of other groups or organisations. Some CFIs had begun to develop partnerships to take forward aspects of their work in a wider context. Specific funding for this type of work was not included and was as such at the discretion of the host organisation in its local context.

Although understandable, it is likely some CFIs over extended themselves within their available budgets in attempting, within the three years, to respond to interest coming from other groups and initiatives and in particular to try to move from the project to a larger partnership approach to provision. The need to achieve a more sustainable footing for the project however made these efforts necessary.

2.1.4 Flexibility

Given the experimental nature of the programme it was important funding could be adapted and adjusted to reflect the learning by CFI staff about resource needs and how best to organise them. CFIs generally welcomed a flexibility shown by safefood in making necessary changes to the budget, but had found at the start that extremely detailed budget information for the full three years of the project had been required;.

"*a whole other layer of what when and how; it took hours, yet on a practical level it was going to change – this was very unusual in our experience*" (CFI Host Manager; end of project interview)

"It was hard to specify how we were going to spend the money – after a short while we needed to use money in a different way - we thought we knew what we were

*applying for but we really didn't – we had to make changes but felt a bit guilty and a bit stupid having to make so many changes all the time" (*CFI Host Manager, end of project interview)

Subsequent experience however was reported more favourably:

"*safefood were seriously easy to work with – we changed things throughout – you are going into this sort of thing blind and things change – a paragraph to explain was enough – I felt they trusted each group totally and that I was the expert on what was good for the project*" (CFI Host Manager, end of project interview)

The support of the programme development worker in getting projects established within the programme was welcomed and commented upon across the CFIs, but with regard to funding there was some frustration at times that changes had to be negotiated 'through an intermediary';

"It would've been better and quicker taking to the person making the decisions. Georgina has to deal with it as advocate for us when I just needed to be speaking to the financial controller at safefood" (CFI Host Manager, end of project interview)

There were also concerns from two CFIs about how agreed budget changes were subsequently updated into monitoring returns;

"I found the financials part of the project difficult to understand; they were laid out in a strange way and difficult to fill in it may in part be because of all the changes that we made – the same Year 1 budget was used for reporting without the changes that had been made – we were still reporting against equipment when we had shifted money to gardeners". (CFI Project Worker, end of project interview)

2.1.5 Sustainability

Whilst this was designed to be a demonstration programme exploring the feasibility of a CFI approach, longer term sustainability of a CFI model is an important test of its suitability and viability. If large amounts of funding must continue to be provided to each CFI, then their prospects as a solution amenable to policy makers and resource holders will either be small or require a stronger evidence base.

Sustainability was explored proactively by the programme for the third year. However the capacity of projects to achieve a sustainable footing for their projects has been patchy. Whilst the programme was viewed by all CFIs as having allowed some capacity and relationships to be put in place, in the majority of cases, CFI activity was being reduced, in one or two cases significantly.

Options for sustainability explored by CFIs are summarised in the table below

Option	No CFIs	Comment
Transfer into Home life	3	Home gardens mostly
Increase in voluntary work	3	Can be positive – lack of funding made volunteers more resourceful but it needed a base and a strong buy-in from participants
Fund Raising strategies	2	Included invitations to businesses to sponsor or provide in-kind support (eg surplus materials)
Host organisation Mainstreaming	1	Very limited – in the single case restricted to supporting the coordinator post for a further year – in one other case the idea was integrated into a project but with a different remit. without funds even where the benefits of the initiative were well understood the project could not be supported
Social Enterprise	6	Two CFIs were too small or restricted to consider this option. The remainder did and had some innovative plans for development, but again progress is likely to require additional funding.
Sharing Economy	2	Sharing tools, equipment (such as cooking equipment) or resources such as a greenhouse were examples

Table 2.1.2: Approaches toward Sustainability of CFI activity

The pattern across the seven CFIs can be summarised thus:

- There are insights into how sustainability could be achieved, or what it could mean, but for the most part there has not been time to fully understand and develop these ideas within the three year period and the time available to staff
- Those who made strong connections to other projects and decision makers during the three years have better prospects for winning additional resources and seeing the CFI concept embedded in wider regeneration work
- Those dealing with very vulnerable and marginalised people are less well placed to carry on with the food project except at a low level
- Most if not all the CFIs do intend to continue using the assets they now have even if at a low level

The need for a dedicated worker was a key factor across CFIs. Those with the potential to scale up (BBFH, Niche, EBM) needed someone who could dedicate time to the necessary development work. Those working with people at the very edge (KASI. EBM) or with specialist needs (Rehabcare ./ Simon) could not maintain the level of support required without a worker

2.1.6 Value for Money

In considering Value for Money we looked at whether some or all the activities shown by CFIs would have happened anyway without safefood funding,

Additionality

The programme purposefully favoured better established organisations to ensure time and effort was directed to food initiatives rather than establishing a new group.

Some CFIs had already been exploring access and availability, looking at provision through a participatory appraisal process (Paul Partnership / Niche / Footprints) which examined the number and types of shops in the area, and what had come and gone over the years. The Paul Partnership study included looking at school meals and entitlement to access free school meals and resulted in an initiative across the Paul Partnership of community groups to make and distribute free school meals which later expanded to include meals for the elderly.

NICHE has been innovative in the Irish context in developing a community health model. In 2004 it took part in a project designed to build capacity within the community to actively engage in healthcare issues as part of the ORCHID Project. The project involved collaboration with the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College Cork and the Department of Healthcare at Coventry University to develop the problem analysis capacity and competences of community groups working in Niche so that they could engage more fully as equal partners in addressing health issues in the area with Health Agencies. As part of the current CFI project Niche has again included links through its interagency group with Cork University Dept of Geography to carry out its food mapping exercise in partnership with community groups and to explore the idea of a Food Council with Cork County Council..

EBM, BBHF and Niche all had track records in addressing local health problems including running healthy food initiatives. Niche and BBHF had run Cook-it programmes and EBM and Footprints were already running a cafe as a social enterprise that for EBM included a Meals on Wheels service.

Food was always part of the culture and approach used at KASI; "*If you don't have a kitchen it's an office*" In any of the ten week courses KASI run, food is cooked by participants together at the start, middle and end, not only as a means to learn how, but also to share and build relations. KASI had found that the collective social opportunities of cooking and eating helped people to lose inhibitions and talk more.

KASI had just acquired a site for a community garden prior to the arrival of the programme. The garden would have been developed anyway but the funding *"helped a lot*" (CFI Host Manager)

Rehabcare / Simon were perhaps the only organisations not to have previously used food or a community development approach as part of their work.

In most cases, then, there was already in place a strong 'receiving infrastructure' for the programme. The difference made by the funding was to allow a sharper focus on how communities could become more involved in addressing and developing the deficits and possibilities around access to fresh food they had become aware of.

Informally, we looked at how other community groups had set up community gardens outside of this programme. In Leitrim / Fermanagh some village communities established gardens linked to the organic centre acting as a hub – the centre provided gardeners to help ensure gardens were properly established which otherwise tended to fail[26]

Others groups setting up gardens such as those in Limerick, were accessing different, usually smaller types of funding. And typically lacked a gardener or a larger scale of operation – one was restricted to a residents group for example. The ability of these gardens to consider including an outreach element was severely curtailed

Our view is that the funding was necessary, firstly to ensure that a garden, where included, was established properly, secondly, so that a gardener could be employed to be available to provide advice and guidance, and thirdly to enable the considerable amount of work required to win the interest, confidence and engagement of people in disadvantaged communities and to support an ongoing responsive programme of education – this latter was particularly strong across all the CFIs and cannot be underestimated[27].

[26] Growing In Confidence *Community Food Project* Health Service Executive and the Organic Centre, Rossinver, Co Leitrim 2006

[27] Note for example the current debate over the new traffic light labelling scheme for food to signal how healthy a food item is that cannot communicate the complexities of the nutritional value of different foods in a balanced diet – the CFIs have been able to offer detailed information and guidance in a manner that can be taken up and used by participants

The CFIs taking part in this programme all integrated food into wider often specialised health, wellbeing and educational services drawing on the resources provided for the food project itself. EBM, Footprints, NICHE and BBHF could 'tie in' a range of related classes and workshops in aspects of nutrition, health and wellbeing as well as household budgeting.

This happened naturally and explains a considerable amount of the wider development potential identified by CFIs. It is important to appreciate this in recognising the result; one in which social and mental benefits have been cited by the CFIs as equal if not more significant outcomes to any changes in behaviour or attitude around healthy food.

There was a risk the project was seen as a means to sustain an organisation and its existing objectives rather than introduce a new service. The conclusion of the evaluation is that the range of new activity reported on through Call-Outs and participant numbers does not support such a view.

Alongside the funding provided through safefood many of the CFIs applied for and got additional funding using their food project as a base (Footprints, Niche, Limerick, BBFH) EBM itself put its own money into its project, paying for additional hours for the project coordinator and for additional participants in some of the taster sessions above what had been budgeted for.

We come to the view that additionality was achieved through the programme.

Return on Investment

Table 2.1.3 below shows the amount of funding for each CFI together with the total number of participant attendances[28] for single and longer term activities

The programme clearly enabled a high level of overall activity and exposure to the idea of healthy food across the seven communities. The total number of people attending one event (a food fair, Christmas event, or workshop) was 8789 across the seven CFIs. In addition, 1335 individuals attended courses or gardening groups that involved regular sessions, typically one per week. It is likely from the comments provided by participants, that these individuals would also be taking information and knowledge back to their households and neighbours.

[28] It was not possible for CFIs to distinguish between participants attending more than one event or workshop, and as such numbers reported to us are likely to represent a smaller number of actual participants variously attending one or more opportunities

CFI	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	1380	1000	3240	180	272	287	739
EBM	£49,840	290	1000	805	2095	6	15	17	38
Footprints	£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	1255	24	30	10	64
PAUL	€72,620	376	300	438	1114	19	58	32	109
RehabCare	€62,654	53	53	65	171	35	34	35	104
Total		2314	3563	2912	**8789**	358	505	472	**1335**

Table 2.1.3 Funding and attendance numbers by CFI

Average cost per participant (dividing the funding by the total number of participants) ranges from £13 (BBHF) to £207 (Rehabcare). These figures look very reasonable if also set against the different needs of participants across the CFIs, although we are not aware of any comparable figures for food initiatives that could be used as a benchmark.

We believe the results justify an assessment of the programme as good value for money at CFI level.

2.1.7 Conclusion and Recommendations Arising

The core intention of Objective 1, to provide funding to a limited number of CFIs, has been met. The programme has successfully provided funding that has helped in the development of seven CFIs addressing a range of disadvantaged communities in ways that would not have been possible without the funding provided by the programme. Overall, a large number of people have engaged with the projects at least in attending a local food event if not more fully in attending classes or working in a garden.

Whilst three years was a significant commitment from safefood to supporting CFI's, there was clearly additional scope and significant potential for them to continue to develop. Most CFIs felt they had only really begun to actually impact on healthy eating. Projects had without exception not reached a point where they could be more

self sustaining at any significant level of activity, but wider possibilities had become clear to the projects for local integration.

Recommendations Arising

Flexibility from the Start

It is clear from the CFI reports that flexibility is needed in the way funding is taken up by a project as it more fully understands local needs and circumstances and the best way to develop and run a CFI. This may not be as significant as factor for CFIs following on in new programmes if the learning from this programme is made available to them in a timely manner, but some flexibility is likely to remain necessary and this needs to be signalled from the start. CFIs suggested an annual forecast of expenditure which provides an opportunity to adjust and reallocate funding in the light of experience. A focus on organisations with a track record in managing projects and project funding should allow more trust to be given to the host organisation to decide how best to utilise funds.

Amount and Purpose of Funding

The amount of funding, and what is expected for the funding, needs to be clear if the same model combining project development and shared learning is to be used again.

CFI staff need to be able to cover the time required to apply community development and physical development work to the realisation of a CFI, the time needed to gather evidence and review progress as part of shared learning, and the time needed to develop wider relationships necessary to achieve longer term sustainability. Together, these could easily represent the equivalent of three part time posts; a gardener, a coordinator with a strong community development background, and a researcher / evaluator. The case could also be made for a need to contribute to time spent by CFI host organisation managers in brokering partnership linkages.

An alternative approach may be to focus CFI resources only on project development work, and address research / evaluation work at programme level only. A third option discussed in our conclusions and recommendations section is to fund defined key CFI Development Stages separately, for example, start up, growth and wider integration. Each funding pot could include guidance on the types of actions associated with each stage, drawn from the learning provided from this programme. In this approach an overview would be drawn up of all development stages to provide a better understanding for any applicant as to the development planning that is required and how that can be supported step by step, enabling a stronger focus on

each stage. Such an approach has the advantage that it might also enable communities with weaker community infrastructure to take part (see Section 2.3).

Recommendations

- Ensure the learning from this round of projects is made fully available to future CFIs as soon as possible

- Consider the possibility for current CFIs to act as mentors in this regard

- Plan to accommodate flexibility in the way funding is administered and ensure CFIs are aware of this from the start

- If required from CFIs, clearly identify budget headings and resource allocations for staff time addressing project, evaluation and wider partnership building

- Alternatively, clearly specify what a CFI is to include, with any further development solely the responsibility and choice of the Host organisation

- As a further option, consider structuring funding awards to reflect different development stages of a CFI, from early start up, to growth, to wider integration.

2.2 Development and Learning Support: Programme Objectives 2 and 3

- Provide technical support, collective training and facilitate networking between CFIs
- Promote shared learning amongst CFIs on the island of Ireland

"*we started out as strangers and now we are friends*" (CFI project worker)

Objectives 2 and 3 were addressed through the ongoing support of a dedicated development worker, the support for self evaluation provided by the evaluators, and a series of tri-annual network meetings combining formal training and exchange of learning amongst CFIs.

2.2.1 Development Worker Support

Support from the Development Worker was viewed very positively across all the CFIs. The regular visits and ongoing contact conducted by the development worker are likely to have contributed to the sense CFIs reported in our Semi Structured Interviews of being part of a programme not working in isolation, and meant challenges and difficulties arising as projects moved forward could be dealt with quickly, taking some of the burden off individual project staff members.

"*Georgina's role as compared to other funded programmes was quite unique in my experience. We have had project managers/link people with whom we have built good relationships who have been of great assistance but the level of Georgina's involvement in the project was different eg she met with volunteers over the years and Centre staff and management. Probably it was the personal touch which I would also say about other HFFA staff. They all seemed genuinely interested in the person and in the project and had a real dedication and passion for the projects"* (CFI Project Worker, End of Project interview)

2.2.2 Support for Self Evaluation

The support from the evaluators for self evaluation included input to network meetings (including one dedicated to self evaluation) one to one visits, and the production of a number of tools and guidance (**Annexes 2,4,5,6 and 7**). Attitudes to this support however were mixed. The support itself was generally welcomed. The self evaluation methods offered to CFIs was kept simple and easy to apply. Nevertheless, for the most part CFIs did not employ the methods offered, despite regular encouragement and an open offer of support if needed.

Nor was there evidence of CFIs using other internal self evaluation arrangements; other perhaps, than feedback sheets on the quality of workshops[29]. A request was made by the Development Worker and evaluators following the Self Evaluation Network meeting in May 2010 for CFIs to share forms and tools they were using for others to consider. This did not result in any tools being shared. Requests for simple quantitative information in 2012 regarding numbers of participants proved difficult for CFIs to meet, indicating that this sort of data was not being collected. Although the evaluators were not originally expected to be involved in the generation of self evaluation reports, strong leadership was required from the evaluators during the

[29] Exceptions included Paul Partnership, who commissioned an independent evaluator for the full three years of the project, and Footprints Women's Centre, who commissioned a short midterm review exercise

third year of the project to gather information about numbers of participants and the experience of participants.

Call-Outs, introduced as part of the programme evaluation (See Introduction section 1.3) requesting CFIs to report on challenges and successes in developing their project, were completed. Skype calls were held monthly to allow more exchange of learning and news updates between network meetings but with varying levels of participation. During one to one visits by the evaluators mid way through the programme, CFIs complained about the time Skype calls were taking to do and in some cases found it hard to use.

A key to the difficulty in getting CFIs to carry out self evaluation activity was the absence of a clear requirement to do so in early material about the programme. Application guidance did not specifically mention self evaluation. Subsequent site visits to clarify funding and project plans with successful applicants also did not communicate the requirement for self evaluation. The programme goal of shared learning needed CFIs to move away from the familiar arrangements of grant based programmes to simply provide output based monitoring returns. Whilst every effort was made subsequently, by the evaluators and HFfA to communicate the inclusion of evaluation as part of the shared learning concept of the programme this didn't stick.

The conclusion is that despite a consistent effort on the part of the evaluators and development worker to cultivate the idea of shared learning assisted by evaluation, evaluation remained seen as a favour done for the evaluator if time permitted and not the responsibility or a benefit for the CFI. Interestingly, a similar problem was encountered and reported in *s*afefood's previously funded Decent Food for All Evaluation*; "the primary role of a community worker – to serve the local community – sometimes conflicts with the role of an evaluator – to maximise learning".*[30]

[30] Tackling Food Poverty: Lessons From The Decent Food For All (Dffa) Intervention. Institute for Public Health Nov 2008

2.2.3 Network Meetings

"*The training was really good and did seem to fit in with the project development. Volunteer training, evaluation and PR were particularly helpful to me*" (CFI Project Worker)

The concept of shared learning most embraced by the CFI's took place during network meetings. The programme held nine networking meetings in total, three per annum. These were held in different locations, including one hosted by each of the seven CFIs. Each meeting combined a formal training element and opportunities for informal networking, including a project site visit. The majority of CFIs attended all network meetings, and typically brought volunteers or management representatives with them. *S*afefood and HFfA also attended. CFIs were regularly invited to make suggestions for content of meetings. Meetings in Year 3 around sustainability included a strong steer from CFIs as to direction and focus.

The table below summarises the meetings

Date	Focus	Location	Attendance
March 2010	Hopes for the Demonstration Programme	Cork	?
May 2010	Self Evaluation	Dundalk	18
Sept 2010	Media and Communications	Limerick	22
January 2011	Influencing Policy	Dublin	31
May 2011	Volunteering	BBHF	20
Sept 2011	Sustainability	Footprints	25
Feb 2012	Social Enterprise 1	Dublin	22
May 2012	Social Enterprise 2	KASI	19
Sept 2012	Celebrating CFI Achievements	EBM	18

Table 2.2.1 Programme Network Meetings

Network meetings were followed up by a full report capturing both training content and the ideas and key points shared by CFIs. The documents as a whole provide a valuable resource from the programme that could usefully be 'mined' for additional key learning or discussion papers for wider consumption.

Reports were often accompanied with additional follow up materials, including self evaluation, volunteer management and policy, assessing sustainability, and planning

a social enterprise. Again these provide valuable resources going forward, although much of the information will be communicated better through an interactive workshop format.

2.2.4 Formal Training

Formal training topics set for each meeting were linked to the development stages and needs of the projects over time. Typically, four learning objectives were set for each meeting.

Feedback forms from CFIs collected after each event invited an assessment of how far each of the four learning objectives had been met (fully, partly or not at all). As a gauge of the general success in meeting objectives for each meeting, the table below shows the least well achieved and most successfully achieved objective based on the proportion of respondents recording it to have been fully met. (In no case did respondents record an objective to have not been met at all)

The table shows that in 5 of the 9 meetings all objectives were fully met for more than half the CFIs. In other meetings results were more varied.

	% of respondents stating learning objectives has been fully met	
Network Meeting	Lowest case	Highest case
Hopes for the Programme	79	100
Self Evaluation	44	56
Media and communications	56	82
Policy Influencing	19	56
Volunteering	70	100
Sustainability	8	34
Social Enterprise 1	50	79
Social Enterprise 2	56	45
Celebration	-	90

Table 2.2.2: The Feedback Results from CFIs for the Achievement of Learning Objectives

Particular cases where learning outcomes were not evenly met included Policy Influencing and Sustainability, followed by self evaluation and social enterprise. These topics tend to be ones with a higher level of conceptual material to process in the time available. The challenge of sustaining a CFI was given additional time

through a further meeting of 17 people in November 2011 in Dublin. Self evaluation was given additional support through one to one meetings with CFIs. CFIs generally felt policy influencing on a national scale was outwith their capacity, both in terms of time and resources, but also in having the knowledge of who best to try to influence.

The Semi-Structured Interviews held with CFIs in October 2012 (end of Year 3) showed that the value of formal training also varied according to the circumstances of each CFI:

"Technical support wasn't so useful – investment in local / regional networking support would be better as a basis for longer term links rather than national networking" (CFI Host Manager, End of Project Interview)

"*Training wasn't so useful toward the end – there was a lot of focus on social enterprise which wasn't really relevant to us*" (CFI Project worker End of Project Interview)

2.2.5 Informal Shared Learning

Informal networking was undoubtedly the most welcomed aspect of the programme for CFIs. Feedback sheets following network meetings consistently called for more time for networking and sharing between CFIs. CFIs very much welcomed the opportunity to meet each other, visit projects and share ideas. Comments from the Semi Structured Interviews underline this;

"*Top of list is the learning that came; I don't think anybody realised how much we would learn from each other – ideas constantly flying back and forth - annual food events and gardens were two examples of practices that spread across CFIs*" (CFI Project worker End of Project Interview)

"*There were a lot of people in those rooms with a lot of skills and a lot of knowledge you could do a lot more networking"* (CFI Host Manager, End of Project Interview)

There is evidence that a key result of informal shared learning was to speed up the development of some projects either by helping to solve problems or to see the benefits of what other projects were doing as detailed in Section 1.1.. Examples include BBHF shifting to include a community garden as part of their project resulting in a significant new line of development for the project, or Rehabcare adopting the idea of annual food events. Other areas mentioned by CFIs in which shared learning influenced their thinking included working with schools, training in dealing with

alcohol and drug abuse, information on developing a social enterprise, garden management, and recruitment of participants.

For others however, the mix of different CFIs made it more difficult to get the full benefit of support and networking;

"It would've helped if projects had been selected that were more similar to one another. There would have been more opportunities to share and strengthen the projects. While the diversity of the 7 projects was really interesting I wouldn't feel that we could have much impact on each other whereas projects quite similar could explore eg sharing produce, policies etc Projects could form a forum with an agreed mission which could be endorsed by their organisations. This would provide a stronger voice to actually influence policy and raise the awareness of food poverty on to the agenda of varying organisations" (CFI Project worker End of Project Interview)

"*I really liked networking with the other projects – I always felt motivated when I came away – but it was a bit more a feel good factor rather than the ability to follow up afterwards – tips and ideas yes but the local contexts were very different in which the different projects had developed so I could only get so much from this*" (CFI Project worker End of Project Interview)

2.2.6 Cost of Networking

The main problem identified by CFIs with regard to this element of the programme was undoubtedly the time it took. It also tended to be seen as an add on to existing workloads rather than an equal part of the Demonstration Programme concept

To put this into context, the hours CFI projects were working to are shown in the table below

CFI	Weekly Hours: Project Worker
BBHF	20
EBM	12
Footprints	10
KASI	10
NICHE	23
PAUL	15
RehabCare	20

Table 2.2.3 CFI Project Worker Weekly Hours

Attendance for some CFIs required extensive travel and an overnight stay because of the distances between the seven project locations across the Island of Ireland. Given these weekly hours available to staff, the two days away to attend a network event was significant, representing a gap in the support available to the project and participants for what could amount to a full week, rather than the actual share of time used up by network events[31]

2.2.7 Conclusion and Recommendations for Objectives 2 and 3

Overall, Objectives 2 and 3 were by and large delivered successfully. Formal training was for the most part well received, and informal networking was particularly successful where projects had commonality. The programme successfully created a space for shared learning that helped with the development of individual projects.

CFIs were a relatively new concept for all involved in the programme. Networking allowed individual projects to become connected to a larger pool of practice and to gain confidence and practical help in moving forward. CFIs recognised the benefits of support and the faster uptake of key ideas it helped to achieve.

The provision of formal training within a network meeting worked best when it was focussed on practical, project level issues, and was less successful in conveying more abstract and less immediate ideas such as formal evaluation, policy influence, and sustainability. There was also a view amongst CFIs that too much attention had been paid to social enterprise. The main challenge influencing these outcomes was

[31] we estimate that on average, over the year networking events will have accounted for around 4-5% of project time.

the limited time available within network meetings in seeking to also accommodate informal networking.

Beyond the basic ingredients of garden, volunteers and events, however, a weakness may have been the diversity of different CFI projects with different circumstances and development challenges meaning the programme was less able to facilitate shared learning relating to the community development aspects associated with working with particular social groups.

Moving beyond the shared learning provided from networking, more disciplined evaluation and reflective practice that could more fully capture learning for future CFIs or for use in influencing wider thinking was much less successful. This sort of learning was for the most part dependent on the work of the programme level evaluators and development worker.

We feel the overall constraints on time, both in networking meetings and at project level, meant it was not possible to develop the more technical elements of programme activity (more detailed training, deeper reflection, more systematic collection and interpreting of information) with a carry over into the final set of programme objectives; that is, the ability of the programme to convey the effectiveness of the approach to policy and professional practice.

Recommendations Arising

The following areas and choices for developing a further CFI programme arise from the evaluation findings.

Purpose of Programme Level Support

It is important to ensure there is a clear and shared understanding across both CFIs and programme level staff / managers of the roles and intended outcomes with regard to learning and evaluation. This relates also to the ability of the programme to address its policy and good practice objectives (discussed in the next section)

Training and Networking

One of the emerging insights to models of practice has been the different focus of CFIs on either a community-wide process (Niche, Limerick, BBHF) or a more focussed approach on a target group (Footprints, KASI, Rehabcare). EBM demonstrate a little of both. Training and development support might look at accommodating and targeting these two main models rather than attempt to apply the same training in the same way to both.

To build capacity for the diversity of CFIs and their different approaches, we would recommend exploring ways in which existing CFIs could be retained as mentors on the programme, perhaps via an additional funding pot. Payment might be done on the basis of mentoring provided rather than as a grant, but also include capacity to attend networking events and share learning Indeed, networking events could include mentoring sessions.

Finally, whilst Skype calls to check in between network meetings were not well regarded, social networking sites and collaboration platforms do offer increasing utility for ongoing communication if introduced and encouraged early on; even a facebook page could be sufficient.

Recommendations

- Establish clarity around the expectations and role of CFIs between project development and building an evidence base

- Ensure all requirements for monitoring and evaluation are clearly explained as soon and as consistently as possible across all CFIs taking part.

- Pre-prepared forms and data collection tools might also be provided rather than leave this for CFIs themselves to undertake, ensuring consistency and timeliness in the way data is collected.

- Introduce and establish habitual use of a collaborative platform to facilitate ongoing shared learning between all parties over the course of the programme in a more flexible manner

- Consider utilising existing CFIs as mentors to enable an increased capacity to address needs with regard to the physical planning and development and community development and relationship building aspects of a CFI.

2.3 Policy and Learning Objectives at Programme Level

- 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

It is useful to look at the last three of the CFI programme objectives together. The first is about drawing learning from CFI activity and the next two are about conveying it into wider policy and practice thinking. As noted in the introduction to this report, Food Poverty as a policy issue was just beginning to be taken more seriously as the programme commenced but has not yet achieved a strong position within policy objectives, certainly not in a cross Departmental form reflecting the complex factors contributing to food Poverty. CFIs as a solution to Food Poverty illustrate some of these cross-cutting issues and offer a valuable vantage point for developing joined up solutions. .

The evaluation looked at these three objectives by reviewing documents and meetings organised by HFfA and carrying out a number of interviews with a sample of key stakeholders to gauge their awareness and understanding of CFIs relative to their own work. The table below lists the main actions carried out by the programme:

Date	Action	Outcome
Jan 2010	Launch Conference	Introduction of the programme to statutory and community sector representatives
August 2010	Workshop with HFfA Management Board to review the theory of change behind funding the programme	Clearer definition of Community Food Initiatives as a distinctive approach (**Annex 3)**
Jan 2011	Influencing Policy Network Meeting (Statutory and CFI attendance)	CFIs confident about getting food onto the agenda of community groups and communities, and making links to local councillors or political representatives, which was already and has continued to be a strong feature of CFI activity

		CFIs less confident about Mainstreaming or extending the reach of CFIs. Regionally. HFfA to provide lead in policy influencing
March 2011	Follow up meeting between the evaluators and the programme management group re Policy Influencing	The possibility of targeted policy briefings around five to six distinct areas These are listed in **Annex 13**
Sept 2011	CFIs Assessment exercises with regard to sustainability in Network Meeting 6	Recognition of the diversity of needs and circumstances regarding the ability of each CFI to achieve sustainability
Sept 2011	Establishment of A Demonstration Programme Working Group (DPWG)	Identification of a number of dissemination actions
Dec 2011 – Dec 2012	6 Meetings of the DPWG	Continued development of dissemination documents

Table 2.3.1 Programme Actions Relevant to Capturing and Communicating Emerging Practice for CFIs

2.3.1 Identifying Models of Best Practice

Some of the key learning and ingredients for an effective CFI and the benefits it was possible for CFIs to provide around health, education and wellbeing were explored in Part 1 of this report. A main strand of work supporting Objective 4 within the programme were the interim reports from the programme evaluation and the final stage of the evaluation conducted over the period July to December 2012 (Section 1.4)

Network meetings and regular site visits by the development worker provided additional opportunities to discuss how CFIs were developing and build a picture of CFI activity, along with Call Out and Skype calls with CFIs to capture learning as it arose during project development. These points of contact helped identify support needs on an ongoing basis as projects developed.

Interim evaluation reports were provided on a six monthly basis which included a summary of trends and patterns in the development of CFIs and so helped in identifying the models of practice that were arising.

Some reflection time was built into HFfA management meetings during the second year of the programme drawing on interim evaluation reports and the most recent network meeting or a completion of site visits by the development worker, however with the exception of two meetings this was part of a busy wider agenda and not a dedicated space.

2.3.2 Raising Awareness and Identifying policy issues

Awareness raising and influencing work was facilitated through regular updates posted to the HFfA website, the formation by HFfA of a specific demonstration programme working group, and the attendance at network meetings of the HFfA project coordinator who was responsible for HFfA's wider policy influencing work. .

The Fourth CFI Network Meeting focussed on Policy Influence in a manner relatively unique within funding programmes. It invited HFfA Management Board and *safe*food representatives to share their thinking on the CFI concept, and invited CFI representatives in turn to offer their thinking on how practicable it was to address these through their work within community settings. The network meeting highlighted how CFIs were unsure how to influence policy thinking themselves given their limited resources. A key message from the session was a desire to get a better grip on policy influencing and mainstreaming through concrete actions led by HFFA. (Source: Fourth Network Report)

The Demonstration Programme Working Group of five (HFfA (2), safefood (1) and 2 community sector representatives) which was established in September 2011 was intended to;

"help ensure that lessons learned from the Demonstration Programme are shared with a broad audience; develop policy messages and a strategy to embed the model of CFIs into the broader community infrastructure on the island of Ireland." (Working Group Minutes 23rd Sept 2011)

A number of dissemination actions were developed including

- Guidelines '10 Ways to Start a Community Food Initiative"
- Preparation of a list of benefits to starting a CFI

- Development of briefing notes around mental Health and the benefits of community gardens
- Exploring possible links to Horticulture Colleges around community horticulture
- Developing Links with the National Youth Council of Ireland
- Contacting an Economist to identify economic benefits of CFIs:
- Representing the programme at key events and emerging networks

The group met 6 times during 2011/2012, and is planning to continue and to expand its work as part of the new programme for 2013 – 2015. The minutes show that the majority of the action points suggested from the meetings were to be taken forward by the Development Worker.

Between them, the Development Worker and Project Coordinator at HFfA attended a number of events and networks in order to contribute information arising from the programme. Examples include:

Policy Work

Launch of the Guide to Community Food Initiatives with Minister Carey in attendance

Meetings with Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton, with work in motion to influence future funding possibilities for CFIs

Speaking at the Institute of Public Health Conference October 2012

Community Sector

- Encouraging Business in the Community to take forward ideas for a Community Growers Fund
- Exploring greater involvement of young people in CFIs with the National Youth Council of Ireland
- Meeting senior managers or boards of organisations hosting CFIs
- Links with Community Food and Health Scotland
- Membership of networks such as Dublin Community Growers, Grow it Yourself and the Community Garden Network

2.3.3 Local Influence CFIs as Demonstration Projects

As well as those at National level there were also a number of key stakeholders relevant to Objective 5 at County and District Council level. As touched on in previous sections of this report, a number of the CFIs developed wider links at this

level resulting in raised awareness and engagement with the CFI model and with the issue of Food Poverty. For example:

- CFIs were typically getting a number of calls from other community groups both locally and across the country, including some looking for advice in applying to the new round of programme funding rolled out earlier this year (2012)

Paul partnership for example, already had links across a number of other community groups supplying free school meals to schools. During the food project four communities set up community cafes with one more in the pipeline at time of writing. The same was the case with community gardens *"when we started ours there were hardly any in the city and now nearly every community that we work with has a community garden of some sort.... everybody has cottoned on that food is the hub that a community can work around to get people involved and into the community centre. If one community hadn't done it then others may not have followed suit – the partnership acts as a good conduit for disseminating the idea"* (Paul Partnership)

- EBM, Footprints, BBHF and Niche all included or were linked into area strategy / steering groups or partnerships at interagency level. This proved important in raising awareness of the potential role of CFIs in thinking around health and regeneration.

The East Belfast Health Partnership for example, on which EBM is a key partner, is considering changing its focus on health and wellbeing to become more proactive, EBM feel the food project has been an important influence *"we have opened up their imaginations as well"*

Niche also report significant progress in influencing wider thinking. This was helped substantially by establishing an interagency advisory group from the start for their project. The group includes, amongst others, representatives from HSE, Neighbourhood Regeneration, Cork Council, University College Cork, schools and local residents. The group has maintained a strong interest and vision for the project throughout, such that it continues to see a role for itself going forward and a wider ambition for food and regeneration. The ownership established of the project by the interagency group has helped in them championing the project idea, including:

- Influential links into the regeneration planning process for the area which encompasses over 600 houses being demolished. A garden area is to be incorporated into the rebuild and Niche is being consulted on how to do this.

- The possibility of a Food Policy Council at city level made possible through links to Cork University and Cork's Healthy City status; "*This is still a concept that has arisen as a result of the work so far and new vision – we don't know yet if it will actually happen"*

KASI formed links to schools and to different voluntary and community organisations, so that the project was very well networked, but it was not also possible to influence policy; in part this was because of the nature of the work. The direct provision system for refugees and asylum seekers is national. Although KASI explored supplying food to the hostels the expectations for the way vegetables would be provided (vacuum packed, chopped and peeled) were not within the scope of KASI to do

Paul Partnership also found there was limited independent interest shown by their council "*We tried to involve limerick council as much as we could from the start but they tend to do their own thing. We have some links lower down but we need to get higher up"* The council was at time of writing holding meetings to discuss ideas for community gardens but not specifically inviting input from Paul partnership or utilising the garden as an asset

2.3.4 Key External Stakeholder Interviews

A component of the overall demonstration programme evaluation process was to identify and assess the views and opinions of those organisations who were perceived to be key stakeholders for the programme. Interviews with these stakeholders helped to assess how far the programme had managed to increase awareness of CFIs among key stakeholders across the island of Ireland.

A list of key stakeholders to approach was invited from the DPWG. The organisations identified for consultation were as follows:

1. Food Safety Authority (NI)
2. Community Development and Health Network (NI)
3. European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland
4. Health Service Executive
5. Institute for Public Health
6. *safe*food
7. PHA (NI)

8. Department of Health NI
9. Department of Health RoI
10. University of Ulster
11. NUI Galway
12. Department for Social Protection
13. Food Safety Authority (Ireland)
14. Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network

All of the organisations were given three weeks to respond to the initial questionnaire (15 Oct to the 13 Nov), following which a follow-up phone call and email was used to seek an appointment for the evaluation interview either in person or by phone. Of the 14 organisations which were approached, 6 agreed to participate[32].

It is notable that it took a considerable effort to get the involvement of the six (bar one), as well as establish the non-participation of the other organisations[33]. There was a surprising lack of interest, especially among some organisations we might have expected to have been much more predisposed to being involved, given their interests vis-à-vis the focus and outcomes of the demonstration programme.

The Approach to the Key Stakeholder Interviews

A semi-structured survey instrument was drawn up (**Annex 9**) and approved by HFfA and **safefood**, including the following key components;, awareness and understanding of the Demonstration Programme; level and nature of interest in the Demonstration Programme; Desire to learn more in relation to the policy and practice of CFIs on the Island of Ireland in respect to their role in addressing food availability and accessibility, and finally; their likelihood of taking policy or practice actions in light of the learning and understanding developed through the CFI Demonstration Programme.

In all instances, the organisations were initially emailed requesting their participation in a semi-structured interview, along with permission for the evaluator to make contact thereafter with them by phone to discuss an appropriate location, day and time to conduct the semi-structured interview. All of the potential organisations were given the opportunity to meet with the evaluator in person; the preferred format for

[32] In order to honour and respect the commitment and agreement as regards maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, the specific 6 organisations which responded are not individually identified.

[33] A response from one organisation arrived mid January, some 4 months after the invitation was issued. The respondent expressed a preference not to take part.

conducting the semi-structured interview on the part of the evaluators. Of those organisations who did participate, only one agreed to meet in person with the evaluator. The remaining organisations felt given their level of knowledge and awareness of the demonstration programme, combined with their competing demands (for instance, the outbreak of E. Coli which the Food Safety Authority (Northern Ireland) was in the throes of managing), they could not merit a face to face semi-structured interview.

Awareness and Understanding

The majority of the key stakeholder organisations were aware of the *safe*food/ HFFA Community Food Initiative and applauded their work in exploring and testing a community development approach to addressing issues of food poverty and access to healthy food within socially and economically disadvantaged communities. It was noted by many of the key stakeholder organisations, however, that it was a *"crowded marketplace"* in terms of initiatives focusing on poverty and food on the Island of Ireland.

The importance of the advocacy aspect of the initiative in terms of promoting the potential for CFIs across and amongst policy-makers within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was also praised. It was felt that the "dual purpose" of the Demonstration Programme was critical and in a number of the discussions with key stakeholders was seen as vital in the development and testing of a programme of this nature.

Critical to the development of their awareness and understanding of the CFI Demonstration Programme and its work was their direct involvement and participation in key fora such as the All Island Anti-Poverty Network and the All Island Obesity Action Network, of which *safe*food and Healthy Food for All are seen as key partners. The majority of the key stakeholder organisations were aware through information shared through these fora.

"We are co-members of the All-Island Food Poverty Network alongside safefood, Healthy Food for All and others. We work to the shared agenda of ensuring there is a co-ordinated approach to address food poverty in Ireland. Through our joint working we are aware of the organisation, Healthy Food for All, and its community food initiatives demonstration programme. In addition, we have attended one of the regional (Belfast) community food initiatives demonstration workshops."

In terms of how their levels of awareness and understanding could be improved, the majority of the key stakeholder organisations felt that the CFI Demonstration

Programme was doing a relatively good job in this respect, mainly in regard to enabling a broad grasp of the nature, purpose and performance of the programme. It was generally the case that the key stakeholder organisations could speak to the broad canvas of the programme, without a detailed understanding per se of the nuances of the individual constituent seven projects.

In considering and reflecting on the advocacy role of the initiative in terms of trying to gain the attention of policy makers and government on the Island of Island, the key stakeholder organisations were more likely to be of the opinion that *safe*food/ HFfA could strengthen its performance in this respect. This was not presented as a criticism, but as an issue which could be seen to naturally follow-on from a pilot programme of this nature. A number of the key informants felt that the Programme could strengthen its communication capacity and capability with a dedicated resource, focused on getting the message out to the multiplicity of audiences, be they local communities who could benefit from the development of a CFI, through to the government ministers and their key advisors whose backing and support will be critical in determining the future mainstreaming and sustainability of any kind of community food type initiative.

"Anything that is new has to start from somewhere. The potential is greater now than it was at the outset of the Programme. It hasn't promised the earth, but it has grown steadily."

A number of the key stakeholder organisations suggested that *safe*food/ HFfA could make more use of social media, a channel which policy makers are increasingly using to identify and to be informed about the latest policy and practice thinking. Any such social media initiative should contain links to further details for policy-makers should they wish to access more detailed information.

The importance of conferences, seminars and workshops for policy makers was also emphasised, especially amongst those key stakeholder organisations who were not as directly involved in the All Island Anti-Poverty Network or the All Island Obesity Action Network. This was particularly pertinent in relation to non-statutory community development infrastructure organisations who saw the initiative as being of enormous interest and benefit to them and the learning and insights coming through from it in informing their future work. These tended to be the key stakeholder organisations with the lowest levels of awareness of the initiative,

The importance of the message and branding and how they are seen was critical. One comment related to the prominence of *safe*food on the communication which has taken place over the duration of the programme. One of the community

development infrastructure organisations from Northern Ireland stated that it would not have thought from its perspective that *safe*food would have been involved in leading CFIs with a community development approach. From this organisations perspective, *safe*food did exactly what its title suggests, "safefood". They felt it was associated with promoting safe cooking and ensuring that people didn't get food poisoning.

Interest and Relevance

At a general level and in principle all of the key stakeholder organisations believed that CFI Demonstration Programme was of huge interest and relevance to them. They all felt it was likely to have a some role to play in progressing their strategic aims and mission. All of the stakeholders expressed a strong desire to learn more in relation to the policy and practice of CFIs on the Island of Ireland..

Half of those interviewed however felt that they lacked a sufficiently clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of the programme to be able to see better how it could directly link to their particular work. The interviews highlighted an opportunity for added value to be introduced to the demonstration programme through stronger links to community development and health agencies and organisations perhaps as part of a forum or by expanding the DPWG.

Action on Policy and Practice

Many of the stakeholders interviewed talked of the bigger picture in addressing food poverty and access to healthy food. It was suggested by 3 of those interviewed for example that *safe*food/ HFfA could seek to also engage with and influence retailers and producers of food. A suggestion was that a future CFI programme could seek to engage with sectoral representative bodies such as IBEC, which has a Food Division. *"Advocacy through this body can make a huge difference. There appears to be an ill-founded fear of engaging with such an organisation. I feel they would be pushing more so at an open door. These organisations are aware of the concerns of people around obesity and access to healthy food.*" (Stakeholder, Statutory sector))

There was felt by some of the key stakeholder organisations to be significantly more potential within *safe*food to raise awareness and understanding around the role and potential of CFIs within policy-making circles at the highest level. Many of the organisations stated that *safe*food has become a very powerful player within the field of food on an All Island basis. It was recommended that *safe*food press harder at the governmental and policy level, but also, that *safe*food should endeavour to

strengthen the style, nature and depth of partnership with other sectors in presenting the case for CFIs on the Island of Ireland.

Likelihood of taking policy or practice actions in light of the learning and understanding developed through the *safe*food/ HFfA Community Food Initiative Demonstration Programme

A number of the key stakeholder organisations emphasised that it was not their role or responsibility to undertake policy or practice actions directly, prohibited by their particular legal format and mandate. However, they felt it was critical for others who are in a position to drive change in terms of policy and practice to continue to strive for the adoption of community food approaches to food poverty and food accessibility. It was felt that organisations such as CrossCare and other voluntary and community organisations who are independent of government, are best placed to lobby and push for this change, supported by safefood.

The resources and effort put into programme evaluation was applauded by all of the key stakeholder organisations. The importance of the evaluation in raising awareness of the potential of CFIs on the Island of Ireland was seen as a significant step forward, as well as beginning to help leverage greater policy and governmental interest and investment. Two of the stakeholders interviewed recommended a greater focus on evaluation, including through linkages with the universities and academia, in order to include a stronger empirical strand to findings. It was acknowledged that whilst the current focus of academia was on "evidenced based practice", that any future CFI programme could provide enormous opportunities for "practice based evidence." It was recognised that this would require greater investment at a programme and project level in terms of undertaking evaluation research. However, it is felt that this is an important development to be enacted following the pilot programme.

The majority of the key stakeholder organisations were somewhat surprised at the continuation and roll-out of the Demonstration Programme prior to the conclusion and presentation of the final evaluation report. All of the key stakeholders urged that the time and space be taken to fully consider what does and does not work, as well as how the programme might be improved were it to run again in the future.

Approach to Programme Delivery and Implementation

All of the key stakeholders very much approved of the programme approach to the testing of the CFI, and the exploration of social enterprises as a means of strengthening sustainability. The learning and exploratory nature of the programme

was applauded, especially in regard to the way in which safefood/ HFfA gave individual projects a high degree of discretion in defining and directing their interpretation of what a CFI meant within their community. This "loosely" defined approach at the level of the project was seen to be very beneficial and that it would hopefully shed light on what things work and what doesn't and why within the realm of community food.

The requirement for projects to be located within an existing community organisation with a worker[s] was also felt to have been a sensible and purposeful approach to testing the individual CFI approaches. Many of the key stakeholders felt that initiatives of this type, especially when they are new in nature and are been tested, require the support of a stronger and more resilient parent. Without this back-up, many of the key stakeholder organisations felt that individual projects could run out of steam very quickly, especially if being led entirely by volunteers. They referred to the burden of managing and accounting for finances, employing and managing project and seasonal staff, as well as delivering the outputs of the projects if these were being handled by an entirely volunteer led organisation.

It was felt that the support of a parent organisation reduced the risk for the individual projects through the organisational resources and support they could call upon, as well as potentially facilitating a more enabling environment within which the individual projects might achieve sustainable status, especially beyond the life of the programme.

"*You have the confidence and reliability of organisations that are not going to go tomorrow. When they have confidence enough, they can expand within their own immediate community, as well as providing a central resource for the support and development of the approach to other satellite areas within their wider communities. Building a central capability in this way makes sense*." (Stakeholder, Community Sector)

One concern which was raised in respect of the above programme approach to the delivery of the 7 projects was that it might well have run the risk of "not taking a risk." One community development infrastructure organisation felt that favoured those organisations seen as good service deliverers and with a proven track record of winning funding support, might not reflect the real resource needs of getting to other communities who may not have the same degree of proven experience and professional community development infrastructure but who still have need in terms of food poverty and access to healthy food.

A concern raised by half of the key stakeholders interviewed was the nature of food poverty and the complexity surrounding it. They felt that the programme could be based within a wider picture and understanding of the determinants of food poverty within communities in order to truly leverage change. A future programme should seek to develop a more "*comprehensive model of community development*" and draw upon a "*systems framework*." For example, the CFI could be seen as a valuable exercise even if it falls short in respect to long-term sustainable community food. There was a strong feeling that the CFI will have brought many people together who would not ordinarily participate in community action. As a result of getting involved in the array of activities which have constituted the output of the Programme, this may well inspire them to address the wider determinants of their food poverty and lack of access to healthy food in the first place e.g., jobs, environment, planning, education and retail and so on, the wider system within which community development is located.

As an example, one of the anti-poverty stakeholder organisations referred to the lack of space within many new social housing developments which have been developed through Public Private Initiatives. They were seen to be leading to high density developments at the expense of open green space, which prohibited the development of community gardens and the cultivation of their own healthy foods.

"*Community food initiatives have a tremendous role to play in developing community spirit, especially within marginalised communities*." (Stakeholder, Community Sector)

Another important feedback point from many of the Key Stakeholder Organisations was that "*food is seen as a negative, and that you have to be poor to look at food*." This was felt to be stigmatising and running contrary to the current understanding of the experience of obesity on the Island of Ireland, where fifty percent of those persons who could be described as obese are to be found within "middle-class" communities. Four of the stakeholders interviewed pressed for CFIs to be for everyone, recognising that it is an issue affecting everyone regardless their background.

"This is not a class issue, it's an Irish issue. There must be a change in the relationship Irish people have with food. We're not breaking the barrier"
(Stakeholder, Statutory Sector)

Continuation of the *safe*food/ HFfA Community Food Initiative

The vast majority of the key stakeholder organisations were strongly in favour of the continuation of a CFI programme, whilst a number were pressing that time should be taken to consider the feedback and output from the experience and evaluation of the

first phase of the pilot programme in order to ensure that the present vehicle for delivery was indeed the right one. Many of the stakeholders were keen that the programme was subjected to real scrutiny, particularly in light of the need to ensure that public funds were achieving their intended targets and return on investment in terms of a reduction in food poverty, access to healthy food and a higher profile for CFIs within and across all sectors.

2.3.5 Conclusions and Recommendations Arising for Objectives 4-6

Our assessment of outcomes against Objectives 4 5 and 6 then, points to a partial achievement at this stage, with a number of learning points that can strengthen this aspect of work going forward. That said, we recognise that distilling the learning from the programme and converting it into an ongoing advocacy and policy influencing agenda will continue and be better informed now that the programme has concluded its three years of work.

Formal identification of models currently resides within the evaluation interim reports and this final report (Part 1), providing a resource for the production of papers, revisiting the guidance documentation for CFIs prepared alongside the programme by HFfA, using the information in designing training and planning for CFI development, and preparing targeted policy briefings.

A more quantitative and more empirical evidence base showing the health benefits achieved would have been valuable but as was discussed earlier this was not feasible within the current programme. CFIs did not have time or capacity to carry out the standard of work required, particularly with vulnerable people with fragile self confidence. However there remains a task, as noted earlier, in establishing a more consistent and effective means to collect and compile information arising from CFIs to use to inform practice and policy discussions.

The stakeholder interviews show that the CFI Demonstration Programme has increased awareness of CFIs among key stakeholders across the island of Ireland in the general idea, but not yet in the detail. More detailed understanding and application was being demonstrated at local level, an aspect that could in itself be an important focus for the programme to understand, allowing the bigger picture of CFIs and food poverty solutions with wider community development and food provision systems to be considered and developed. .

The limited sample of key stakeholders we interviewed does not allow a full appraisal of the scope of influence at National level with certainty, but comments from those who did take part suggested a clear opportunity to broaden and enhance awareness among key sub-regional, regional and national community development, anti-poverty and community development and health organisations and agencies in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. Many key stakeholder organisations felt that there is a need to expand the experience and expertise which oversees the design, roll-out and performance management of a programme such as the CFI Demonstration Programme. Similarly, including retail and food producers in influencing work would be worth considering

It was stressed time and time again, that the market place for food poverty is an increasingly crowded one and that it is important that all players act strategically and openly in sharing their knowledge in order to maximize the learning and return on investment, as well as to ensure that the right organisations and communities are involved using the best possible approaches to inform their policy and practice.

Recommendations Arising

As noted earlier, we make a general recommendation for establishing a clear and shared understanding of the overall purpose of the programme as a basis for ensuring all parts of the programme are working toward common outcomes. This encompasses not only the CFIs themselves, but the role of development worker, HFfA staff and the DPWG.

A low cost option for informing policy and practice might be to use the Call-Out format to invite commentary on insights from CFIs around food poverty, on what works or doesn't work (and why) and how the CFI is seeing wider linkages to other needs and initiatives in their local area.

The information collected should be received and collated for use by the DPWG or its successor and to inform the content and organisation of seminars or a conference to invite stakeholder organisations to explore application to their own work and implications for joined up approaches.

The DPWG itself might be expanded to provide a forum for a wider number of key stakeholders to respond to information arising and offer ideas.

Information collection and collation needs to be properly resourced at programme level. It would in our view be difficult for the Development Worker to include this work alongside administrative and support work with projects. Any use of additional research / evaluation support should be more clearly positioned and integrated into a

future programme, with clear linkages and expectations for handling and processing the information produced.

Finally, a number of the key stakeholder organisations suggested that *safe*food/ HFfA could make more use of social media, a channel which policy makers are increasingly using to identify and be informed about the latest policy and practice thinking. Any such social media initiative should contain links to further details for policy-makers should they wish to access more detailed information.

Recommendations

- Review arrangements and expectations across all parts of the programme for the way different kinds of information are collected and used to inform policy or Practice.

- Ensure sufficient resource at programme level to collate and present information to the DPWG, HFfA management board or *safe*food

- Any use of additional research / evaluation support should be more clearly positioned and integrated into a future programme

- Use the Call-Out format to structure commentary from CFIs on insights around food poverty, on what works or doesn't work (and why) and how the CFI is seeing wider linkages to other needs and initiatives.

- The DPWG should use information collected to organise seminars or a conference enabling better understanding of the implications and possibilities for stakeholder organisations

- Consider the use of social media for policy influencing work

2.4 Overall Conclusions

Drawing on the findings of Part 1 regarding the effectiveness, resource needs and sustainability of CFIs as a solution, and Part 2 regarding the success of the programme itself as an approach, the following comments can be made by way of summarising and concluding the findings of the evaluation.

Key Points

The evaluation concludes that the programme as a whole has demonstrated good value for money

Programme level support of shared learning and networking helped to speed up the ability of each CFI to develop confidently and progressively toward significant initiatives. All the CFIs noted how little they knew at the start, and how much they felt they knew now.

Drawing on the current CFIs as potential mentors would add capacity for training and development and maintain a larger network of CFIs going forward.

A more complete achievement of the purpose of the programme to demonstrate the potential of CFIs needed a clearer shared understanding of what the programme as a whole was about, and what CFIs would be funded to do.

Funding for CFIs might be better aligned to key development stages such as start up (which may also be designed to assist communities with weaker community infrastructure) growth (matching what many of the current CFI tranche did based on existing services and resources) and sustainability (supporting work to integrate into wider provision or to develop a social enterprise) each with clear technical support and guidance.

A view expressed by key stakeholders was that CFIs should be located within a wider picture of how food poverty is caused. This point is reinforced both in the constraints reported by CFIs themselves in being able to address food poverty effectively, and the linkages CFIs were starting to make in order to achieve a stronger and more sustainable impact.

2.4.1 What Has Been Achieved So Far

The analysis in Section 2.1.6 concluded that the programme as a whole has demonstrated good value for money both at the level of each CFI and with regard to provision for programme level support.

The amount of ongoing activity, development work, and outreach that was achieved within the small number of hours of time that was funded was significant, and the programme level support helped to speed up the ability of each CFI to develop confidently and progressively toward significant initiatives. The use of existing host organisations has helped in this regard, many of which had already been exploring and laying the ground work for CFIs, but not the practical solutions supported during this programme. All the CFIs noted how little they knew at the start, and how much they felt they knew now. The ideas and ambitions they described are an additional testament to this and are an inspiration for others that should be actively shared and ideally assisted. The programme team are to be commended in encouraging and nurturing this significant step in the work to address food poverty.

In general, the programme has made an important start in testing whether or not CFIs can make a real, distinctive and valuable contribution to food poverty. It has shown that CFIs can make such a contribution, but to do so requires a sufficient level of resource a little above what was available on this occasion, and for a period longer than the current programme period.

The resource needs and sustainability of CFIs was a particular concern if they are to be rolled out across a wider area, given the various specialised and time consuming aspects a CFI needs to encompass, from effective relationship building through to tailored education, information and training, to establishing and running a productive and tidy garden.

The key principles of shared learning and networking have enabled a confident and progressive development of CFIs in this programme and have the potential to do the same in a further widening of project activity, perhaps allowing more to be achieved within the same timescale. Drawing on the current CFIs as potential mentors would add capacity for training and development and maintain a larger network of CFIs going forward.

2.4.2 Programme Remit

A general point raised throughout the evaluation of the programmes success against its stated objectives was the need to establish a clearer shared understanding of what the programme as a whole was about, and what CFIs would be funded to do.

Options at CFI level included considering a two or indeed three stage funding provision, covering start up (which may also be designed to assist communities with weaker community infrastructure) growth (matching what many of the current CFI tranche did based on existing services and resources) and sustainability (supporting

work to integrate into wider provision or to develop a social enterprise) each with clear technical support and guidance. This would address the two key problems at either end of the current support for CFIs; that they were not able to achieve sustainability and would need further support to do so, and that the current models miss important communities that need more support earlier to establish capacity to run a CFI.

At programme level it is also important to agree whether the programme as a whole must continue to act as a demonstration of the possibility of CFIs as a solution to food poverty, and who the demonstration is for. If the case still needs to be made and the potential strategic value of a CFI explored, then the programme manager and coordinator need to ensure research / evaluation and wider stakeholder engagement is appropriately embedded in programme actions and processes. The management board and Safefood should inform this, in particular, by deciding how far research evaluation activity should involve CFI staff themselves. Consideration needs to encompass all stages of gathering, organising, interpreting and utilising evidence from projects on the ground and the role of a sub group such as the DPWG in identifying policy and practice messages and how to convey them.

A view expressed by key stakeholders was that CFIs should be located within a wider picture of how food poverty is caused. This point is reinforced both in the comments and constraints reported by CFIs themselves in being able to address food poverty effectively, and the linkages CFIs were starting to make in order to achieve a stronger and more sustainable impact. This wider understanding requires collaboration and discussion with other community health organisations and key players such as councils, food providers, schools and community development organisations, informed by a clear articulation of how a CFI is established, run, and what outcomes it provides of value to others as a collective strategy.

2.4.3 Key Recommendations

Overall, the following represent the main recommendations suggested by the evaluation for application to future CFI support programmes.

Informing Policy and Practice

If a future programme is to continue to act as a source of information to inform policy and practice thinking some considerations are recommended

- Review arrangements and expectations across all parts of the programme for the way different kinds of information are collected and used to inform policy or Practice.

- Ensure there is sufficient resource at programme level to collate and present information to a programme working group, HFfA management board or safefood. Any use of additional research / evaluation support should be more clearly positioned and integrated into a future programme

- Ensure all requirements for monitoring and evaluation are spelt out as soon and as consistently as possible across all CFIs taking part. Pre-prepared forms and data collection tools might also be provided.

- As a relatively low cost option, use the Call-Out format introduced as part of this evaluation to structure commentary from CFIs on insights around food poverty, on what works or doesn't work (and why) and how the CFI is seeing wider linkages to other needs and initiatives in their local area.

- A Programme Working Group of the kind begun in this programme should use information collected to organise seminars or a conference enabling better understanding of the implications and possibilities for stakeholder organisations

- Consider the use of social media for policy influencing work but ensure clear linkages to further information resources

Building Common Purpose

- Ensure there is a clear shared understanding amongst CFIs of expectations beyond the delivery of their project around shared learning and evaluation / research.

- Ensure there is a clear rationale for each objective of a new programme and that each objective is addressed in the operational arrangements of the programme

Resourcing CFIs

A number of options arise with regard to matching resources to project and programme objectives:

- If CFIs are expected to contribute to policy and practice evidence, clear resources with budget headings and allocations for staff time are required

- Alternatively, clearly specify what a CFI is to include, with any further development solely the responsibility and choice of the Host organisation

- Rather than wait until CFIs experience difficulties, plan to accommodate flexibility from the start in the way funding is administered and ensure CFIs are aware of this

- Consider using three distinct types of funding support; start-up (which can assist weaker community organisations and broaden the range of disadvantaged communities that could be assisted to start a CFI), growth (approximately equivalent to the current programme funding) and sustainability (assisting in local mainstreaming or the development of a social enterprise)

Shared Learning

By shared learning we refer to the provision for CFIs to learn from each other and to receive appropriate training and signposting together or in specific sub groups based on target groups or approach

- Ensure the learning from this round of projects is made fully available to future CFIs as soon as possible

- Consider the possibility for current CFIs to act as mentors to increase capacity for tailored advice and support

- Introduce and establish online networking and collaboration to facilitate ongoing shared learning between all parties over the course of the programme in a more flexible manner

Annexes

Annex 1 : Detailed CFI Profiles

Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum: Food for Life

Partners: Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum (lead), Health Improvement Team (west), Youthfirst and Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir

Target: The Neighbourhood Renewal area of Triax in Derry city; the most deprived ward in the Western Trust area and ranked sixth most deprived in Northern Ireland as a whole.

Background Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum is a community-led project tasked with bringing together many different groups and agencies in order to enhance the health and well being of the people in the Bogside & Brandywell area. The partners involved came from the local community sector, statutory health groups and General Practitioners.

The Health Forum was already active in running Cook-it and family health projects and was able to tie these in to the CFI project to provide a range of related classes and workshops in aspects of nutrition, health and wellbeing as well as household budgeting.

The Forum was also well positioned to target and recruit from the hard to reach members of the community. Over the past number of years the group had put health on the local agenda and is known throughout the community for its holistic approach to health.

Project : The project was originally focussed on delivering a range of healthy eating programmes including demonstration and practical cooking activities, education based activities and information, and focussing mainly on post primary school teenagers. Following site visits with other CFIs through networking events however BBHF recognised the potential for a community garden and expanded the project remit to include one in the community centre grounds.

Key Stages in the Development of the Project

Year 1

BBHF reported little difficulty getting started given the complementary nature of the project with existing activities. Fifteen Food 4 Thought school cookery courses of six weeks each were run during Year 1 for a total of about 180 teenagers. The

teenagers were benefiting from the recipes they were learning as a basis for preparing to leave home to go to university or life after school.

In addition, BBHF introduced a five week summer healthy eating breakfast club targeted at families with children aged 4 – 16 years of age and attended by 80 children each morning. in Year 1 and 90 children in Year2 The Breakfast Club provided participants with a range of healthy foods on a daily basis over the summer period including wholegrain cereals, fruit, whole meal toast, milk & pure juices. The clubs were used as an opportunity to give healthy eating demonstrations for families on four occasions after the breakfast clubs.

The club was organised in partnership with a range of local community groups and youth summer schemes. One of the key elements in the success of the club was the volunteers and groups from the local area who oversaw the running of the service. Partnership working and collaboration was found to be essential to the success of the Club.

Year 2

As a result of attending network meetings BBHF reported in their December 2010 Call-out recognising the value of having a community garden. By Year 2 BBHF had received approval from ***safe*food** to make the requested changes to allow them to include a community garden and they were planning to implement a 'Grow your Own' project that included two Autumn/Winter gardening programmes & Spring/Summer programmes. Strong buy-in to the garden project was reported from the Health Forum and the local community. Fruit and vegetables were grown in Year 2, which involved a steep learning curve in planning what to grow to suit resident's tastes and the soil / climate in the area. This later moved to include flower planting and selling in Year 3.

The Food 4 Thought cookery courses for schools continued in Year 2 and were augmented by two further shorter courses; Back 2 Basics; a Teenage Cooking Course over 4 weeks run four times during the year, and a Cook It course for adults running over 6 weeks on two occasions during the year.
A physical activity group was also run for local men. Men were typically hard for BBHF to engage in projects and this was reported in the February Skype call to be proving very successful. It included healthy eating as part of the programme. The men were reported to be starting to lose weight and learning about healthier lifestyles.

No real difficulties were reported by BBHF for Year 2 in running the courses or developing the garden, but the breakfast club found unsupervised children attending, and unless organised activities were provided afterwards there was a drop in numbers attending. Good food alone was not a sufficient incentive for young children to attend.

Year 3

By Year 3 BBHF had built on the community garden element of their project by setting up a partnership group, drawn from other groups and agencies within the area, to look at community growing schemes as a whole.

They reported in their January Call-Out having used the *sa*fefood money to lever in other funding and in kind funding such as land from the Housing Executive. The partnership approach enabled three sites to be included and developed as part of a wider scheme; the original Gasyard community garden, a larger site within the neighbourhood renewal area of the Triax called Westway, and a site proposed for allotments through Derry City Council who invited BBHF to manage the site.

BBHF continued to run the Food 4 Thought and Adult Cook-it classes during Year 3 and reported similar numbers participating in these courses to Year 2. The Breakfast Club and an Active Families Parent & Teenage programme of 16 sessions (24 attending) were also delivered during the year.

BBHF hoped to develop their three sites into a significant social enterprise and training provision, as shown in the diagram in annex xx. The Gasyard site would continue to act as a training centre for adults or teenagers who might then go on to take up an allotment at the Council allotment site, or become involved in the more commercially oriented Westway site.

At the time of writing however, staff involved in the project had left BBHF and it was uncertain how these initiatives would be taken forward. Staff worked part-time on the CFI project alongside other responsibilities. BBHF felt a dedicated worker was a key factor who could dedicate time to the necessary development work and this was not available.

Profile of Activity: Bogside and Brandywell

Type of Programme or activity	Number of sessions / events			Number of people who Attended once (relevant to one off events)			Number of people who attended for duration (e.g. course or garden club)		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Taster sessions									
One-off events	14	5	3	860	1380	1000			
Training workshops (single)									
Training workshops (course of 2 or more classes or sessions)	Food 4 Thought schools cookery course 15 x 6 wk courses	Food 4 Thought schools cookery course 15 x 6 wk courses Back 2 Basics – Teenage Cooking Course - 4 x 4 wk courses Cook It for Adults 2 x 6 wk courses	Food 4 Thoughts – Young peoples cooking 15 x 6 wk courses Cook It for Adults 2 x 6 wk courses				180	180 48 24	180 24
Volunteer scheme		52	52					2 Volunteer gardeners	2 Volunteer gardeners
Gardening group		40 (4 x 10wks)	50					20	58
Allocation of Garden plots to groups or individuals		3						25	
Community Planning group		6	6					8	8
Other (please describe)	Sunrise Breakfast Club 5 wks daily (80 children year 1, 90 children year 2) Active Families Parent & Teenage programme: 16 sessions 24 attending								

East Belfast Mission: Healthy Eating Education Programme

Target: Residents and ex-residents of the homeless shelter.

Background The East Belfast Mission is committed to a community development approach and networks with a wide range of local community groups in order to better carry out its work for the people of Inner East Belfast. The various projects of the mission make contact with several thousand people within the local community each week, many of whom are in need of support of various kinds, sometimes as basic as human contact. The Mission has development programmes and services for families, a café and Meal on Wheels service, based on a thriving social enterprise model.

Project : Many residents of the Mission were seen as struggling to live on low incomes and there was a need to help them to eat well and eat healthily. The Healthy Eating Education Programme started out aiming to provide a nutritious evening meal for 22 residents two evenings per week over the three-year period and provide health and diet sessions and cookery demonstrations to residents and ex residents on how to plan and prepare healthy food on a low budget. Information and advice sessions were also planned for local residents, senior citizens and users of the family and community programmes giving advice and support on how to prepare and cook healthy meals on a low income. By educating those involved in the programme, it was hoped the knowledge would be taken back to home and family and used to continue to cook and eat healthily at a low cost.

Key Stages in the Development of the Project

Year 1

EBM reported some difficulties getting started. Individuals wanted more choice in the evening meals offered to them, and there was some difficulty building participation in the information sessions. 6 information sessions were run in Year 1 with around 15 attending each one, and two 6 week Cook It programmes. One of the most challenging parts of the programme in its early stages was how to engage with clients from EBMs homeless hostel.

This was reported by EBM as partly due to one client in particular who became a ringleader who was anti program and also to clients feeling a lack of inclusion in the decision making process. This was resolved by having a number of meetings with clients, chefs and all other stakeholders.

Two separate sessions were organised for any information evening topic to capture as many people as possible. A range of topics were covered including a health fair, community Cook-it, hostel Cook-it, physical activity (including walks), safety in the home, and mental health awareness.

Despite the teething difficulties, EBM reported in their September Call-Out that they had gained new volunteers as a result of the program and were seeing a high level of enthusiasm from existing volunteers and staff. By the end of the year EBM found themselves over subscribed for the healthy meals and had a waiting list for people to come onto the program.

The EBM worker reported that development of relationships had been key to the success of the programme. Cook-it sessions were reported to be valuable opportunities to talk and to include a wide range of individuals. Most clients were male and learning how to prepare fresh vegetables, cook and eat a meal together had helped develop relationships.

It was also seen by EBM staff as important that sessions were enjoyable, informative and had an impact on people's lives. Year 1 was used to get a better grasp of what kind of issues people faced and how information sessions could be tailored to these issues as a means to communicate meaningful information about eating and health.

EBM also reported how valuable a glass chiller cabinet had been, got as part of the project funds. Participants of the program and other groups including meals on wheels clients, elderly, children, staff and other customers of the cafe, were, as a result, able to receive healthy salads, yogurts, fresh fruit salads and other healthy chilled produce on an ongoing daily basis.

Year 2

Year 2 saw significant growth in the project with more than double the numbers of people attending monthly information sessions. Whilst a success, it also placed pressure on the staff member responsible in putting sufficient time and energy into making sure sessions ran well, and a need to get more people involved with the

practicalities such as transport. The staff member also reported finding it more difficult to keep in contact with people and build up meaningful relationships. *"Sometimes I wonder if groups can actually be too big to be effective*".(EBM Worker, July Call-out)

Later in the year EBM report in their July Call-out that participants were finding and adopting roles themselves based on their interests and particular talents – from writing articles to providing music at information events to signing for the deaf.

The project began to attract the interest of other groups and initiatives in the wider area during Year 2. The project worker was invited to join a Health Forum for East Belfast, and interest was shown from other hostels in the area in attending monthly sessions. A local community group asked assistance in running a healthy food, health education and exercise programme for young people, and EBM's cross community women's group also asked for help in running an 8 week 'Health for Life' course to include cooking demonstrations.

As one of the only CFIs not to have their own garden, EBM partnered with a local Going Green gardening project which included use of an allotment plot. Sessions were run on growing vegetables in an urban environment with two participants in the programme facilitating who had some knowledge in this area. An application for funding for the Going Green Garden project was made to try to expand this aspect of the project. Going Green provided input on green spaces in the design of a new large scale building project. In 2013 this will see a community garden become available to EBM.

Year 3

EBM reported maintaining similar levels of activity to Year 2 over Year 3, having arrived at capacity given staff resources and budget. A new build project nearing completion with opportunities to enhance the provision of the community cafe and kitchen and integrate support services more fully also competed for attention.

EBM reported surprise from their experience of information sessions at how difficult it was to change behaviour with regard to healthy eating and healthy lifestyles in general. Despite the time spent working with clients and residents EBM felt in their January Call out that there was still much to understand about the difficulties of life for lower social economic groups within the area in order to match education initiatives with the struggle to maintain basic needs such as money, emotional and mental stability.

Profile of activity

Type of Programme or activity	Number of sessions / events			Number of people who Attended once (relevant to one off events)			Number of people who attended for duration (e.g. course or garden club)		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Taster sessions	6 info sessions [34]	12 information Sessions [35]	12 information sessions. [36]	A range of clients to a maximum of 15 participants per session	30 to 45 approx per session	30-45 per session	.		
One-off events such as a Christmas fair or seed swop	Health fair including health checks	Health Fair in May Christmas Fair	Action Cancer Big Bus health checks Celebration of success of project for clients.	Approx 200	Approx 300 Approx 200	Approx 300			
Training workshops (single)		1 x 8 week course to youth and children. [37]	1 x 8 week summer cookery demo sessions in Refresh exploring the positive & creative side of cooking, tasting sessions.		10 to 20 participants	25			
Training workshops (course of two or more classes or sessions)	2 x 6 week Cook It programmes delivered to Hosford House and	1X 8 Week courses aimed at local community groups Mums and Tots [38]	1 x 8 week courses aimed at EBM's Men's group including Cookery				Approx 3 to 6 people per session.	12 to 15 Participants each course plus	15-20

[34] Mental Health Awareness,/Safety in the kitchen/Benefit of physical activity/Walk/Health Fair/introduction to Cook it

[35] Vitamins and Minerals Cookery demos Grow your own food/How to look after your feet. Making winter chutneys. Mood Matters. Christmas Cookery demos.

Coping with stress, Cookery Demos, Food waste and saving money, fruit and veggies matter, Herbs for Health, Making Eder flower cordial, Celebration of wild harvest,

[37] Theme of course was ways to increase health and wellbeing. At sessions with older children we had a theme of alternative snacks and had an alternative snack table, other sessions included the importance of physical activity, confidence building through physical activity. Education on food waste and recycling. Cancer, alcohol and Smoking

	ex residents.		demos and health related sessions and health checks.					children.	
Volunteer scheme	yes	yes	yes						
Gardening group	Hosford House gardening group	Yes affiliated to Hosford House	Affiliated to Hosford House						
Allocation of Garden plots to groups or individuals	Knockbracken Health Care Park	Knockbracken Health Park	None at the moment						
Community Planning group									
Other (please describe)	22 meals twice a week to Hosford House and ex Hosford House clients recently moved in to community.								

[38] Cookery Demos, health education, stress and relaxation, cancer awareness and self esteem. Healthy lunches and alternative snacks for children provided at each session for young children and carers.

Footprints Women's Centre: Building a Transition Community

Target: Women, children and local residents Colin neighbourhood Belfast

Background: Established in 1991, Footprints Women's Centre delivers programmes and services to women and children across five key areas of activity; Support, Children's Services, Training and Education, Healthy Living and Social Enterprise. Footprints has worked for some time on issues relating to food poverty, diet and nutrition, and prior to this project had formed a food policy steering group, with funding from Food Standards NI and Food Safety Promotion ***safe*food**. It conducted extensive research also which examined access to fresh fruit and vegetables so that the group had already explored and developed its thinking on access, affordability and availability and used this term when applying for funding and in informing its organisational strategy. A Healthy Living Project already provided a range of programmes including social, recreational, training and accredited courses, aimed at developing a skills and a knowledge base around nutrition, diet, cooking and budgeting.

CFI Project: The project focussed on the development of the grounds at Footprints Women's Centre to include fruit and vegetable growing. It offered food growing training to local residents who were encouraged to volunteer in the garden. A local gardener was hired to oversee the development and training of the volunteers. through a service level provision with Colin Glen trust (who had employers liability insurance) The Trust supplied the gardening mentor and organised materials, and were paid monthly from the project funding

Produce grown in the garden was used by the Footprints Catering Services to contribute to income generation as a social enterprise. Any supplies surplus to requirement were directed to schools in the neighbourhood. Skills learned by the volunteers could be transferred to their gardens at home throughout the Colin neighbourhood.

Key Stages in the Development of the Project

Year 1

Footprints reported in their September Call Out that their garden was now a visible presence in the grounds of the Centre, with produce being used in the kitchen and by volunteers at home. The project was officially launched in October 2010.

Year 1 focussed on establishing a volunteer gardening group of 10 women. The group met on 42 occasions over the year. A steering group was established by October; however there was reluctance among the women taking part in the project to join the steering group. There was also reluctance to travel to network meetings or site visits, and some concerns about what was expected of the volunteers. A key concern was the level of dependence on the gardener and a general need to build confidence.

Footprints reported in the December Call-Out that there was a growing awareness amongst the Board of Directors and Centre users as to the full scope of the project with regard to the strategic objectives of the Centre, including both its potential to influence food policy and its links with environmental issues/agencies.

By the end of Year 1 links had been made with the Nutrition & Physical Activity programmes at Footprints, and externally, with the Health Promotion Agency and Community Health Development Network NI.

Year 2

The gardening group (which at one point reached 17 in number but later settled at 14) met 38 times in Year 2, but the women were now also working in the garden independently. Gardening sessions were added to by a small number of taster sessions and workshops. The women also met in the Centre kitchen to learn cookery and budgeting skills.

Protecting the garden and gardening provisions against vandalism was a concern carried over from Year 1. Whilst no instances of vandalism had occurred there was a difficulty obtaining insurance for the shed and equipment store and a suitably strong steel container for the equipment store was expensive. Re-profiling of the project budget enabled the store to be purchased.

Raised beds were built beside the kitchen garden for 20 school preschool children to plant vegetables. Children's gardening equipment was purchased using other funds available to Footprints. Footprints was also securing additional funding to build a

seating area and 2 compost areas, and raising awareness of the demonstration project among funders.

A small problem was competition for ground around the Centre with other aspects of Centre activity; however an application was in place with the Council to extend the grounds of the Centre to take in additional adjacent waste ground.

The lack of confidence amongst the garden group to work in the garden without the contracted gardener or project leader was addressed in two ways. Firstly, a member of the Board of Directors and/or a practice leader from childcare started attending the weekly group. These women were also on the steering group. Secondly, The gardening sessions were added to with ‘class room time’ to enable the women to be more involved in the planning of the garden and recording in a manual the steps that would need to be taken in Year 3 when there would be a reduction in the gardeners hours. A review session gave a space for the participants to explore fears or issues and was felt to have improved communication and the direction of the project. The willingness of the volunteers to attend network meetings and site visits had also improved by this time.

Year 3

The gardening group met 30 times along with independent work by women taking part in the project. 10 volunteers took part, a mix of original and new. Activities for children and families were also a feature of Year 3 following on from Year 2

A new part of the grounds was developed, raised beds were built and fruit bushes planted. A herb garden was also planted and a demonstration area was laid (flagstones and gravel paths) The application to the council to secure additional land adjacent to the kitchen garden was successful. This ground was used by the project to plant an orchard.

8 women went on a site visit to The Food Garden and Rehabcare, Dundalk. Travelling was a big step for some of the group and Footprints reported that they had been greatly motivated and inspired by the visit. The gardener contracted from the beginning of the project moved to a new job. However Colin Glen Trust assigned another gardener to complete the service provision contract and Footprints reported that the garden group had adapted to the changes much better than anticipated.

Footprints calculated the produce grown in the kitchen garden and used by Footprints Catering saved the business £300

Profile of Activity

Type of Programme or activity	Number of sessions / events			Number of people who Attended once (relevant to one off events)			Number of people who attended for duration (e.g. course or garden club)		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Taster sessions		4 cookery demonstrations			45				
One-off events such as a Christmas fair or seed swop	Launch of project	1-tree planting		30 adults 28 children	19 adults 15 children				
Training workshops (single)		1-Composting 1-Recycling			10 4				
Training courses									
Volunteer scheme									
Gardening group	42 sessions supervised by gardener	38 sessions supervised by gardener 30 occasions individuals working in the garden independently	30 sessions supervised by gardener		1		10	14	10
Allocation of Garden plots to groups or individuals									
Community Planning group		1 action planning 1-review meeting 6 steering group meetings			16 10				
Other (please describe)	Children's Garden Group (10) 1 self evaluation focus group (12) Distribution of food supplies donated to East Belfast Mission and shared with Footprints (140 families) Visit to FWC from Co Cavan group to see the project (21)								

Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative (KASI): The Community Garden

Target: Refugees and asylum seekers Killarney area

Background KASI was set up in 2000 to support asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers and their families and to facilitate their integration into the community. KASI provides educational training information, advice, advocacy, practical support and social and cultural programmes relevant to the needs of their target group and promotes appreciation and celebration of cultural diversity

Project : The sedentary lifestyle for asylum seekers / refugees in direct provision (hostel accommodation or basic provisions), who are not allowed to work, can cause isolation, depression and other mental health issues. KASI acquired a site on the outskirts of Killarney town from Killarney Parish for a community garden project. The aim of the garden was to provide a form of activity through volunteerism for asylum seekers, growing crops and developing the garden. As well as providing something meaningful to do, the garden was also intended as a means of facilitating interaction between the target groups and local communities in working together, sharing and exchanging ideas, skills, crops, food and culture. It aimed also to provide a space for migrant workers and their families to grow their own crops.

Key Aspects in the Development of the Project

<u>Year 1</u>

KASI reported a good start to their project in their September Call-out, recording an enthusiastic set of volunteers looking after the garden and polytunnel and taking fresh produce from the garden. 40 volunteers were recorded as attending some 70 gardening sessions over the year.

A number of social events such as BBQs attracted 120 or so people and an organic cookery demonstration course for 45 people in total introduced a range of recipes including peppermint tea, pesto made with fresh basil, courgette bread, tomato sauces, greens and salads.

Benefit was reported in sharing and comparing cultural differences in how foods are grown and prepared in Ireland compared to the participant's countries of origin. As most of the volunteers were Muslim, Ramadam was also a significant factor to consider in a food initiative but also an opportunity for planning programmes of activity in the garden over the year.

There were some concerns about gender balance in volunteers, with a smaller number of women taking part. A planned solution was to form a women's group to meet on a monthly basis. KASI identified a need in particular to enable women with young children not yet in school to take part. A parent/toddler group was considered as one solution but this needed planning and staff time. The development of a child-friendly area within the garden was also needed. An Afterschool club and Nature club were formed in Years 1 and 2, (although the Nature Club was designed with special needs children in the school next to the garden in mind) A women's group was established in Year 3.

KASI found their initial estimates for what would be required to run the project needed revising, not least, the requirement of a dedicated development worker. Discussions with safefood via HFfA enabled a re-allocation of budget to support a worker for 10 hours a week. Other budget items were also based on estimates drawing on limited knowledge of what a CFI project might be like to run. A re-balancing of the budget was necessary and this was accommodated by safefood.

A fairly unstructured approach to cookery demonstrations and information sharing to date was felt by KASI to require more structure in order to fully realise its potential; both for developing knowledge and skills but also in encouraging interaction between participants and local people. The need for a strategy to ensure that more asylum seekers would be recruited as volunteers was also recognised.

Year 2

The garden volunteer group increased from 40 to 45. KASI sought to strengthen ownership amongst participants of the garden project by holding a garden planning and mapping workshop to collect ideas for the longterm design of the garden. KASI used an external facilitator for the exercise which allowed them to take a step back and look at the bigger picture with some outside expertise and objectivity. The gender imbalance in volunteers was reported again in the July Call-out, and attributed to mothers needing to care for young children.

Some 17 social events were held to draw in additional volunteers with over 240 people recorded as attending (including from the wider community). A more structured programme of training and demonstration sessions was also delivered.

A difficulty identified in Year 2 was in reaching asylum seekers further away from the garden site. The vast majority of those taking part came from two hostels nearest to the Garden. Those in a hostel about 5 kilometres away were difficult to engage. Ideas around transportation were explored such as a Bicycle Loan Scheme using recycled bicycles donated by the Gardai. Outreach and pre-development work was also required, and a specific area in the garden and weekly session for the more distant hostel were also considered. A further difficulty was the transient nature of asylum seekers – one local hostel was closed during Year 2 with residents transferred away from the area to Cork or Kerry.

Year 3

The number of volunteers recorded by KASI as working on the garden was now 66. A recipe book project 'Recipes from Home' was developed during Year 3 that was found very rewarding. Recipe ideas were collected from individual participants and tried and tested, and KASI reported that this had provided a fun way to share food and get to know others.

The Women's World women's group of 8 participants met 12 times over the year, but KASI reported in their January Call Out that the problem of attracting women volunteers in the garden remained a challenge. Making the garden child friendly by having a particular spot for a play area to entice mothers to bring their children didn't seem to work. Women came only if there were activities in the garden, requiring additional planning and staff time.

KASI reported that for asylum seekers in direct provision, food was always an issue; They were not getting the food they want (as in food from their own country); the food was reported to be either overcooked or undercooked, bland or not spiced enough, and the same food all the time. However, KASI also noticed that they took big portions of everything, possibly using food to compensate for their insecurity, fear, and boredom.

Profile of Activity [39]

Type of Programme pr activity	Number of sessions / events			Number of people who Attended once (relevant to one off events)			Number of people who attended for duration (e.g. course or garden club)		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Taster sessions	0	3 Peer Health Grp Coolgrane Grp fo Garden Tour NS Pre-School	1 CFI Network Mtg & Garden Tour 2 NS Pre-School visit 1 Communities in Bloom mtg w judges		39	21 34 12			
One-off events such as a Christmas fair or seed swop	7 Harvest Party End of Ramadan 4 Barbecues	9 Mens Group BBQ Garden Summer Party Harvest Party Recipe Bk Launch 5 Barbecues	BBQ 14th July Eid end of Ramadan BBQ 3 Plant & Veg Sales	128	247	48 53 61			
Training workshops (single)		3 Garden Planning Tree Planting Tunnel Irrigation	Zumba dance wshop Willow Dome wshops Hedge planting and tree pruning wshop		27	21 20 17 12 13			

[39] The numbers attending can be erratic or attendance can be for a shorter period of time before being transferred, moving away or receiving a change in their status such as being granted leave to remain or receiving a deportation order, reflecting the chaotic and transient nature of their lives.

			Tile mosaic wshops Chutney making w/s						
Training workshops (course of two or more classes or sessions)	2 Organic Gardening Cookery demo's	2 Cookery demo's Men's Supper Club	2 Cookery Demo's Men's Supper Club				45	37	15
Volunteer scheme	??	4 Coolgrane Centre Organic College Tus Scheme St John of Gods	1 Tus Scheme				11	12	3
Gardening group	Met every Weds and Sat from March –Nov 70 sessions approx	Met every Weds and Sat March to Nov 70 sessions approx	Met every Weds and Sat late Feb – June 35 sessions approx				39	45	66
Allocation of Garden plots to groups or individuals	3 plots to 7 asylum seekers (2 individuals and 1 family)	3 plots to 7 asylum seekers	6 plots to 9 a/seekers/ refugees						
Community Planning group	1 Garden Subcommittee	1 Garden Subcttee	1 Garden Sub-c'ttee				5	6	7
Other (please describe)	10 sessions of Nature Club (26) Afterschool club (12 regular attendees) 1 Outing to Gortbrack Organic Farm, Tralee (51) 12 sessions Women's world (8) Attendance at 2 Transition Kerry events in Tralee (7 and 6)								

Limerick Food Partnership : Seed to Plate Project

(PAUL Partnership, the St Munchin's Family Resource Centre and Southill Area Centre)

Target: All members of the local communities of St Munchins and Southill. Key people : older people, local families and residents, Limerick Youth Service, After School Clubs, the Garda Youth Diversion Project and the Family Resource Centre

Background: Between the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, the St. Munchin's Community Garden project and Southill Community Garden Committee were formed, with the aim of nurturing relations between the youth in the area and older people through positive interaction in gardening. Both communities had initiated projects relating to healthy eating and gardening, A Health Service Executive (HSE) Health Impact Analysis of the vision document on Limerick Regeneration areas identified that certain areas of high density urban communities would benefit from community gardens and growing spaces.

Project : The aim of the project was to promote healthy eating organic home-gardening practices to improve access and availability of fruit and vegetables in the two communities of St Munchins and Southill. Unlike other CFIs, the project encompassed two gardens, one in each community, and each with a part-time gardener. The project aimed to provide settings for community education. The gardeners worked closely with the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) tutors and project workers to develop the skills of people in each community in organic home-gardening practices aimed at transferring the learning to participants own homes and lifestyles. The project also aimed to help reduce isolation, providing meeting places for all members of the local communities and aiming to improve relations between older and younger people.

Key Aspects in the Development of the Project

Year 1

Year 1 saw Paul Partnership start out with a wide range of activities on offer including open day events in each garden twice during the year, and a number of classes and training courses. A gardening group was established in St Munchins (7 individuals), and plots were allocated to a diverse mix of user groups from an afterschool club to a Ladies Group, as well as Limerick Youth Service and a Garda Youth Diversion Project. A plot in each garden was allocated for the VEC teaching course, and three plots were allocated to individuals.

In addition 7-9 local residents' gardens were enhanced/established in the St Munchens area[40] with the help of the gardener and in St Munchins a community education worker. This was an aspect that was reported to be popular and relatively inexpensive to do, using plants grown in the community garden rather than having to buy in.

Despite this range of activity, Paul Partnership reported mixed results for Year 1 in their September and December Call-Outs in engaging members of the communities. They reported reaching their target number of community members for year one, and experiencing strong participation in a public events such as a Garden Festival and 'Volunteer Saturday' early in the year and a Harvest festival later that year. The development worker reported camaraderie amongst those who became involved in the garden to be good, including making friends, sharing ideas and information and providing support to one another. There was also early interest from groups outside of the communities to use the garden.

Limited take up was reported in a number of other areas however, such as assistance for individuals to develop their own garden spaces at home, limited take up or interest for VEC classes, low take up for a Men's Sheds element of the project, and a disparity of interest amongst groups with plots in the garden so that some plots were more developed then others. Keeping the interest for some groups in the winter also needed thinking about when the weather made people less inclined to want to work outdoors

[40] The activity table reports 7, whilst skype calls refer to 9

There was also some low level vandalism in the community garden and a difficulty managing the spread of weeds, the gardener's hours were reported as not long enough to complete all tasks required.

Year 2

The range of training and user group activities established in Year 1 was sustained into Year 2 and Paul Partnership reported an increase in participants. Two gardening groups now had 12 participants, whilst training classes were better attended. Paul Partnership report engagement from mental health groups, and a homeless hostel in their March Call out, although it isn't clear in the activity table data where this engagement took place.

An increase in the gardener's hours was introduced provided for by re-allocation of the Seed to Plate budget in 2011. The 2011 evaluation commissioned by Paul Partnership[41] reports wide acknowledgement of a huge improvement in the Southill garden's appearance and productivity in 2011, and this was largely attributed to the gardener's work. Similar improvement in St Munchins was also recorded as a result of the work of the gardener and a number of Community Education scheme workers to enhance the physical space as well as the range of activities and services offered in the garden. The project continued to experience vandalism however including damage to the poly tunnel in Southill.

Year 2 saw a shift in focus to building capacity in the community to sustain activity. The project coordinator reported attempting to engage with volunteers on a longer-term basis to avoid people tending plots for a short period and then losing interest. She planned to work with the community gardeners to build capacity and support the volunteers to participate for longer. Cook It! Courses were popular and the coordinator saw an opportunity to run Train the Trainer courses so that locals in the community could deliver the courses with her support.

Paul Partnership reported home gardens to be a popular option, although the majority of these home gardens were based in the St Munchins area. Eight more gardens were established at individual's homes, typically using raised beds rather than attempting to use a rotivator to turn over the soil as originally planned.

[41] This was the only CFI to commission its own external evaluator as part of self evaluation

The project received a large amount of publicity over the year and attracted the interest of three other communities in the city in the process of building community gardens who approached the project to link in on the learning from it. .

Year 3

Activity was maintained along similar lines in Year 3, with similar numbers attending Classes and training. The external evaluation commissioned by Paul Partnership reported the number of participants from the local community utilising the gardens on a repeated basis to have remained small (27 in total across both gardens) with the majority of these users tentative about deeper engagement with the project.

Community events were more successful, however, with 400 people recorded as attending the two events in Year 3. Paul Partnership again reported strong participation in the events which included a community picnic and community cookery demonstration. The latter saw community attendees getting involved in the cooking and taking home left over ingredients to try out the recipes themselves.

The external evaluation comes to the view that absence of a staff member in the Southill Area Centre in contrast to the gardener / coordinator provision at St Munchins, who could coordinate and drive the necessary development of the Community Garden made a difference. The report concluded that a number of developments that would benefit the garden (such as the provision of water) would possibly be in place if there was a locally based coordinator. In addition, the extra time required for the Seed to Plate Coordinator to organise committee meetings, events etc. on a local level was viewed by the report to have had an impact on other Project activities.

Profile of Activity

Type of Programme or activity provided	Number of sessions / events			Number of people who Attended once (relevant to one off events)			Number of people who attended for duration (e.g. course or garden club)		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Taster sessions			Cookery Taster Session for a Women's Group			9			
One-off events such as a Christmas fair or seed swop	4 events: (Southill Open Day April Southill Garden Festival September St Munchins Garden Festival September Father and Son Day in St Munchins March)	3 events: (St Munchins Open Day/ Southill Open Day/ Trip to Bloom in Dublin)	2 Events: (Southill Open Day St Munchins Open Day) Trip to Ballymaloe Trip to Bloom in June)	360	250	400 13 16			
Training workshops (single)	1 x Jam and Chutney Workshop December 2 Days Training Irish Seed Savers June	4 x Women's Group Classes in St Munchins Christmas greenery decoration Class in Southill using garden produce.		10 6	40 10				
Training workshops (course of two or more classes or sessions)	Cook It – Cookery and Nutrition Training September/October 6 Weeks VEC Gardening Class September/October	VEC Gardening Classes in each Community After Schools Class St Munchins 6 classes x 6 weeks Garden Classes in	Gardening Classes in both Gardens x 2 (6 weeks each) After Schools Class in St Munchins planned for 4 weeks in October Intergenerational				6 6	16 6	14 6

		Southill and St Munchins x 4	gardening class in St Munchins – 5 weeks					24	9grandparents 7 children
Volunteer scheme	6 Weeks Dell Volunteer Day Southill Community Volunteer Day in Southill	Southill Volunteer Day Bulb Planting days in both gardens/areas		20 15	25/35				
Gardening group	1 x Weekly Gardening Group on Tuesday	2 x Weekly Gardening Groups on Tuesday and Thursday	2 x Weekly Gardening Groups on Tuesday and Thursday				7	12	12
Allocation of Garden plots to groups or individuals	11 After School Club Community Crèche Limerick Youth Service Ladies Group Local Residents Group Garda Diversion Project VEC Class x 2 3 Individuals in St Munchins	7 After School Club Community Crèche Limerick Youth Service Ladies Group Local Residents Group VEC Class x 2	7 After School Club Community Crèche Limerick Youth Service Ladies Group Local Residents Group VEC Class x 2				55	45	45
Community Planning group	Monthly for each garden (2 groups)	Monthly for each garden (2 groups)	Monthly for each garden (2 groups)				12	10	10
Other (please describe) Establishment of food gardens in local participants gardens	Using the Garden as an amenity/for recreation: average of 200 people across the two sites each year Establishment of food gardens in local participants gardens: 7 local residents' gardens were enhanced/established year 1, 8 local residents gardens were enhanced/established, and last year's 7 were checked in on in year 2. Year 3 4 local residents' gardens were enhanced/established, and other year's gardens were checked in on Raised Bed Project. 15 raised beds sold and set up for residents								

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

Partnership: a collective project between Community Health Project (lead), Health Service Executive (HSE) South Health Action Zone, Knocknaheeny Community Café, RAPID[42], HSE South Health Promotion Unit, Cork City Partnership, Le Chéile School Completion Programme, Geography Department University College Cork, and the local community.

Target: All local residents in the area "to create one community, and one message about healthy eating"

Background NICHE was established in 1998 to improve both community and individual health and well-being, with a particular emphasis on the use of a community development approach. A number of small ad-hoc initiatives were already taking place in the Knocknaheeny / Hollyhill area and a lot of ground work had been carried out to identify gaps, highlight ways of making connections and identify work that should take place to ensure positive food and healthy eating.

Project : The Initiative aimed to promote healthy eating through a variety of co-ordinated, strategic activities that were intended to offer people different ways to engage in a positive approach to food. It gave people the choice to decide whether they would like to grow their own food, help develop and sign up to a food charter, learn about budgeting and planning, volunteer at a food event, purchase wholesale or direct, or become involved in the planning of the project as a whole. The project also included development of a food resource map of Knocknaheeny. The project was intended to provide a model for similar work across other areas on the North side of Cork.

[42] Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development

Key Aspects of Project Development

Year 1

Niche started out their project without a community garden and so focussed on training workshops. ‘Grow Your Own Workshops’ were designed to help people see if they would like to start growing their own vegetables. They were reported by Niche to be extremely successful, with 162 people taking part during Year 1, and a waiting list for more which they felt their budget may not allow for. Unfortunately Niche did not provide data on how many people were able to go on and start their own garden or other means of growing. Two six-week Healthy Food Made Easy courses were also run with the HSE in the local school opposite NICHE. Again these were reported to have gone well, with a good tutor, and were therefore scheduled to run again in Year 2

A Community Food Charter was developed with local people and other stakeholders, supported by the Community Dietician. Children developed the logo and the winner got a prize. The Charter was a means for the community representatives taking part to communicate and share aspirations they wanted for themselves and their families for the quality and availability of the food provided within projects and public outlets in the community such as schools, health centres, community projects, food outlets and so on. The completed Charter was put it up in schools, community centres and anywhere that might provide a means to influence healthy eating.

As with other projects, early challenges reported in call outs included finding enough time to organise all the different aspects of the project and gaining the engagement of other stakeholders in the community. The development worker also commented on a lack of help and support from the steering group in the early stages but this was later resolved. Niche reported that it had been important to the effectiveness of the group to establish a clear vision and role for it.

Toward the end of Year 1 Niche anticipated success from work to influence regeneration plans for the Knocknaheeny area to include a Community Food Garden, using land to be leased from Cork City Council. The Council were also directing funds made available from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to help with the development of this garden. The steps toward establishing the garden were reported by Niche to have been challenging; in co-ordinating meetings and work between the Cork City Council, two horticultural project managers, local community groups, the NICHE board and the community in order to overcome a number of hurdles and obstacles. These hurdles included

finding the right site, addressing insurance issues, health & safety on the site, invoices for capital equipment, and understanding design and planning practice. Working with local community groups and residents was also necessary to allay fears about how the garden would impact on local life and win their support.

Year 2

Niche reported in their January call out that the Steering Group had become very engaged in the project. The development worker felt that this engagement was assisting the project to filter into the agenda of wider policy/strategy arenas such as Cork Healthy City work, University College Cork Food Environment and Well-being Cluster and the Local Youth Network Forum.

At community level a garden committee had been established with roles and responsibilities nominated and training and development support underway. Grow your own workshops were to be delivered by locally trained people so that they could continue in some form after the programme had finished. By the July Call out Niche reported participants bonding well and taking on more responsibility for delivering and planning aspects of project activity, with a growing number of local people volunteering to get involved in the larger events. This growth in responsibility meant some of the load could be taken from the steering group as the driver of the project.

As a result of their involvement in Year 1 Grow Your Own workshops, the local Creche and Pre-school were reported to be sourcing some small funding for ongoing support and maintenance for integrating growing into their programme.

The development of the Community Garden from within the wider regeneration plans for the area meant the CFI project coordinator needed to invest time building relationships across a wide range of stakeholders in order to deal with legal, financial and voluntary aspects underpinning the garden. Niche were particularly concerned that the success of getting the garden would not detract from the wider range of activities planned as part of the CFI project. The Steering Group were seen as central to ensuring this was achieved.

In their July Call Out Niche were dealing with significant delays in the release of funding to enable progress with development of the garden, not least the need to continue to engage local residents. The size of the garden and its location within regeneration planning was viewed as a significant benefit but risked meaning the project did not have its own garden before completion of the project in Year 3

Year 3

Little progress had been made by the January Call Out in establishing the garden but later in the year monies were released for the garden to be developed and by the end of Year 3 it had been established and some planting had begun. The Development worker hours were increased from 17 per week to 23 to reflect the anticipated level of work required to achieve the objectives of the food focus plan.

Year 3 saw a delayed food mapping exercise completed which was conducted in conjunction with the University of Cork. It also saw the formation of a Food Club in St Mary on the Hill National School.

Using their new kitchen facility, the club met on Wednesdays. 15 individuals including both men and women were reported to be attending[43]. Some of the women taking part were local cooks; some were good at budgeting, or at growing. They had been part of the project from the beginning as a group of women who came together in local school kitchen to attend a cookery demonstration by local cooks. They then began to cook themselves and demonstrate ideas to each other, sharing information on discounts and deals. They went on to work as a team to prepare food for a food event, and later in Year 3 were reported to be baking for the school and doing other charitable work involving baking.

The club is likely to sustain and develop into a social enterprise looking at ways in which the club could contribute toward community food provision. As with Paul Partnership, schools were contracting external food suppliers for breakfast and lunch clubs. The aim was to bid to supply through a social enterprise staffed by local residents, with an additional potential benefit envisaged that children would engage better with local people and local food. The approach would also bring the income back into the community.

The Food Club is also starting a community cookery equipment store to provide shared equipment for cooking through a lending scheme overseen by the club - an interim step in developing their skills as a team and sharing knowledge.

[43] Niche do not appear to have included this group in the activity profile below

Profile of Activity

Type of Programme or activity provided	Number of sessions / events			Number of people who Attended once (relevant to one off events)			Number of people who attended for duration (e.g. course or garden club)		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Taster sessions	2	3	2	28	52	22			
One-off events such as a Christmas fair or seed swop	1	2	2	250	250/40	270			
Grow your own Training workshops (single)	6	4	3	30/28/17/ 26/30/30	22/20/22/ 18				
Training workshops (course two or more classes or sessions)	2 Healthy food Made Easy 6 wk cookery course	1 Healthy Food Made Easy 6 wk cookery course					24	16	
Volunteer scheme	1	1	3	5	11		6	18	14
Gardening group		2	3					14	10
Allocation of Garden plots to groups or individuals									
Community Planning group	2 meetings garden committee	4 meetings garden committee	6 meetings garden committee				24 dropped off to 12 over time	11/10	8
Other (please describe)	Development of Food Charter – 8 Sessions, one for each of 8 groups Food Mapping Research - Focus groups/vox pops/events - 130 participants in research								

Rehabcare / Simon Community: The Food Garden Project

Target: people with an intellectual disability, mental health issues and resettled homeless people, Dundalk area

Background The ethos of RehabCare and Simon Community is to promote personal development and independence for people from marginalised groups including those with an intellectual disability, and those with mental health issues. Partnership with the Simon Community included resettled homeless people within the project remit. Many of the participants had a dual diagnosis such as learning difficulties and mental health issues. They were typically aged between 30 and 60 years

Project : The Food Garden Project sought to bring participants from both organisations together and provide practical activities and classes to support them to grow, prepare and cook a range of healthy organic fruit and vegetables throughout the year, providing them with underpinning knowledge around food safety guidelines and nutritionally balanced diets. There was also an emphasis on transferring these skills to their home life, establishing small gardens at home and using the cooking skills there.

Additionally, the project aimed to use the garden to provide a therapeutic stress free environment that could promote positive mental health, and to promote community integration by supporting the participants to sell excess food products to the local community by setting up a stall in the local farmers market. Revenue from the sale of products was reinvested in the Food Garden

Key Aspects of Project Development

Year 1

The project established the main elements of work early on, with a gardening group meeting four times per week for 2-3 hours and including 18 people. The group met 180 times over the course of the year. Classes included pickling chutneys to sell at market and providing tips on cooking, making use of herbs in the garden and ideas on what to grow next year.

Rehabcare commented in their September Call-out how well the two clients groups were mixing and learning from each other, and how they could be an inspiration to each other. Some participants were reported to be more difficult to engage and thought had to be put in to keeping people interested, getting people used to a routine and to commitment. Timekeeping of participants, especially those from the Simon community was variable. The first six months saw people dropping out due to illness, and problems related to addiction and mental health difficulties. New people also started, the project was found to suit some individuals well, but not everyone.

Public Relations and relationship building was an early and consistent feature of the work. The project received coverage nationwide in the Irish Times, as well as in local papers. Contact was made early on with the Dundalk Institute of Technology, (DKIT) with the project worker giving a talk on the garden and sustainability issues. DKIT were setting up their own garden and intended to link in with the Food Garden on composting and exchange of learning around best practice. RehabCare were prepared to give access to DKIT to use their greenhouse and DKIT students could volunteer in the garden in return.

A stall was set up at the Dundalk Farmers Market selling surplus veg/fruit, garden boxes, crafts and wreaths. This was found to help raise awareness around the project and integrate the target group with the community.

Visiting individual gardens at home was also an early feature, involving 4 gardens in Year 1, giving a hand in each case to get started growing at home.

Year 2

The gardening group continued to meet four times a week outside of the winter months but during the winter sheds were varnished and raised beds were maintained. Participants were also being encouraged to take on more responsibility with growing and choosing crops.

An increased number of cookery classes (from 6 in year 1 to 12 in year 2) were the main activity over the winter and into the summer which were well attended and focussed on simple, low budget recipes. Over the spring and summer the recipes incorporated vegetables grown from the garden. The project worker reported a plan to obtain funding from the National Lottery to produce a calendar with the recipes for general use and selling at the market. The calendar was produced during Year 3.

Timekeeping and variability in attendance due to ill health continued to be a concern primarily with Simon service users Pigeons eating brassicas was another problem,, and on rare occasions, people that were not part of project “helping themselves” to vegetables were also documented in Call Outs.

Visiting participants to help them set up and be self-sufficient in their homes continued and now included 6 gardens. The development worker reported that this was enabling the project to engage with people who don’t want to attend the programmes. Participants visited the home garden, had tea and a chat and worked in the garden together. It gave the participants a chance to see where others live and what could be done in a home garden.

This active support to establish a garden at home was also felt to be important in ensuring people were not walking away from a course and forgetting, but instead transferring skills to home As a group, going out to see and be inspired by each other’s gardens was an additional way to keep them motivated and feeling part of something even when continuing the gardening in their own homes

Wider Public Relations and relationship building continued, and saw Niall Mulligan, CEO, Dundalk Simon indicate support for the project. There was a continuing exchange of ideas and support between the project and DKIT.

Year 3

Garden group activities continued with 18 individuals meetings four times a week. Year 2 and 3 saw a significant amount of produce planted and grown, making full use of a greenhouse both for the project garden and the DKIT raised beds. A raised bed was built in the green house and was reported to be a significant success, enabling vegetable growing throughout the winter including Pak Choi, spinach, cabbage, rocket, and onions. It also prevented pigeons eating the cabbage.

Visits to home gardens continued, increasing to include 9 gardens. Cookery classes also continued but were back to 6 classes from the 12 held in Year 2

Problems with participation were not reported this year, but there were continued problems with people pulling vegetable plants in the garden on a Saturday unsupervised. A gate was built to stop people from walking into the Food Garden on Saturdays.

An increased interest in and support for the project was reported in the January Call Out from committee members of the Simon Community Dundalk after a presentation

of the project and the benefits it provided to Simon participants. Introducing healthy eating into the RehabCare service and its wider service users, however, was not expected to take place, partly due to lack of funding. Generally, finding future funding was reported to be a real challenge and was addressed on part through a range of fund raising activities such as supermarket bag filling and invitations to local businesses to sponsor aspects of the project.

Profile of Activity

Type of Programme or activity provided	Number of sessions / events			Number of people who Attended once (relevant to one off events)			Number of people who attended for duration (e.g. course or garden club)		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Gardening sessions	4 per week=180	4 per week=180	4 per week=180	0	0	0	18	17	18
Once off events (craft fair)	1x	1x		Public attending approx 50	Public attending approx 50			N/A	N/A
Cooking Classes	6	12	6	3	3	0	17	17	17
Market Stall	8	0	6	0	N/A	1	5	N/A	10
Visit People's Gardens	4 gardens visited regularly	6 gardens visited regularly	9 gardens visited regularly	NA	NA	NA	4	6	9
DKIT visits	2	4	8	0	0	0	8	14	12
GIY visits	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	12
Allocating plots/ planters to people	16	16	16	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other (please describe)	Woodwork Classes (8 sessions, 16 participants) Sonairte visit (2 visis, 10 participants Visitors to Seatown (location of food garden project) (10 visits 48 people)								

Annex 2: CFI Support: Theory of Change Exercise

Developing Your Project Evaluation and Learning

Follow up notes from the Evaluation Network Meeting in Dundalk, 26th May, 2010

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INTRODUCTION

The following notes are designed to help you develop an effective approach to evaluation. They begin from the work done at the networking event, which will give you the framework for developing a simple but effective evaluation which is true to your project. We then offer suggestions about how you can add indicators and ways of showing the difference made so that you can assess progress and monitor outcomes.

Please try out these guide notes and let us know what you think so we can develop our support to you as we go.

FIRST THINGS FIRST: WHY BOTHER?

Evaluation will help you and enhance the development of your project. First of all it invites you to be clear about what you are actually doing. A clear idea of what you are trying to achieve helps you to

1. Learn by doing - develop your skills and know-how to be able to do things better
2. Explain what you are doing and what you have achieved to others
3. Show what can be achieved to help convince funders and decision makers see why they should support community food initiatives in the future

Having a clear idea what you **want** to do and **trying** to do it can tell you a lot about the people you are trying to help. It can also bring to light any issues of community food initiatives you maybe had not realised were there. Remember, **there is no such thing as failure, only better understanding.**

Don't just react and panic, plan and learn!

Ok, so what was all that about with the Flip Chart sheets at the Network Meeting?

It was about building your project story, defining its aspirations, the work you are doing, the thinking you have behind it and clarifying its significance. The project story sets the scene for defining the indicators you use in the evaluation, but it also includes the assumptions you are making about what will work and why, which you can revisit in the light of experience.

Using the flip chart sheets we showed you how you can build up your project story. Doing this carefully, thinking about the words you use, you can become very clear about how the things you are doing or plan to do will add up to achieving the aspiration of your project (its aim). This means you then have a 'map' you can use to work out where you have got to and where you are trying to go over the coming years. You could change it or add to it in the light of experience and see how the story you write at the end of your project differs from the one you had at the start.

The different steps in the story and the words you use to describe them will be the basis for identifying outputs, outcomes and impact indicators which you can measure. They also help you to think about how you can report the significance of your work to HFfA and ***safe*food**.

REVISION: HOW TO THINK ABOUT WRITING A PROJECT STORY

There were five steps to writing the story which we worked on:

1. The Aim of the project
2. What achieving that aim could mean for policy makers and the public good
3. What the main Areas of Work are that make up your project
4. What Immediate Benefits each area of work can contribute
5. What longer term (Consequential) benefits they will provide, all being well

Using these guide notes and some exercises to help you revisit the words you used at the meeting and see whether you are happy with them.

An important Skill to Work on: **Being Clear**

The project story should be able to describe what you are doing in such a way that you (or anyone else) can easily decide if it has happened or not. A good test is to imagine yourself presenting your project to a class of primary school children – how would you explain it to them so they appreciate what you are doing?

Hints: Stick to one thing at a time – don't mix ideas together. Also, ask 'will I be able to tell if I've achieved this or not'? This is a good test of being down to earth in what you are describing.

Each time you write something ask:

- Will someone else be able to understand this easily?
- Am I talking about the same thing or are ideas getting mixed up?
- Will I be able to tell if I've achieved this or not?

Step 1:Building the Story &The Project Aim

Ok, so thinking about being clear as a key skill. if your **project aim** is

"To help everyone eat better"

Will you be able to tell if you've succeeded or not? Does it mean eat better food or be better behaved at the table?

How about this one?

"To provide healthy food to the people who use our services and support them to include it in their daily diet"

This one is clearer – it specifies who you are aiming at and what you want them to do. By the end of the project it should be easier for you to judge whether you did it or not

Look again at the aim you came up with at the meeting – is it possible to improve on it to be absolutely unambiguous?

Step 2: The Public Value of your work: Linking what you do to what others have done

It can be difficult for a small project to show how important it is. Policy makers usually only really sit up and take note when they think a project will address their priorities – for example, reducing heart disease or suicide rates, obesity, diabetes etc.

You probably can't prove that you have done this yourself but you can show that what you do is likely to contribute. How?

HFfA can help you to identify research and evidence done by others that can show that by increasing access to healthy food there is a reduction in these major health problems. By referring to this work you can help people understand the significance of your contribution.

Next time you meet Georgina ask her to give you some suggestions. Or ask Jason or myself.

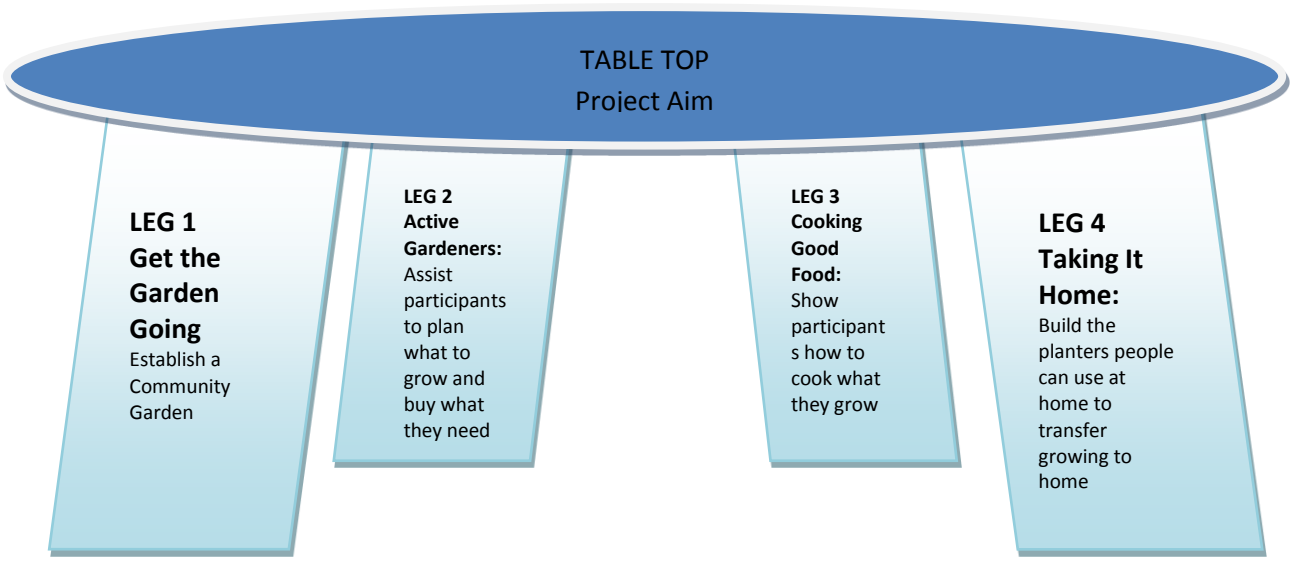
Step 3: Identifying the main Areas of Work.

In designing your project you have thought about what the important building blocks are that will achieve your overall aim; not just for today but in the longer term. To capture these key building blocks or Areas of Work (rather than thinking about all the small tasks you will be doing

to make each one actually happen) think of a chair or table and its legs. Unless each leg is in place, the chair or table might wobble or fall over when it is put to use, or not stand up in the first place! What are the legs on your chair? How do they support your target individual? (Hint: Imagine that person now – think of them in the community garden, cafe, community room). Note: you may have more of a bench than a chair, with perhaps 5 or 6 legs!! The main thing is there are no 'strays' – area of work which don't contribute to achieving your project aim – strays could cost valuable time and energy so look out for them!!

Exercise: Describe each leg as a distinct area of work. It is helpful to give each area of work a title

An example taken from the Network Meeting included:



STEP 4: THE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS (RESULTS OR OUTCOMES)

Each area of work can provide some immediate benefits to participants. If you deliver a training workshop for example, it can immediately provide participants with a new skill, some new knowledge or insights, and maybe some increased confidence to go out and do things differently.

Hint 1: Testing the Story – Catching the Strays

Try converting your 'Legs' into a single story and telling it to someone else out loud.

Do your 'legs' come together to support the chair? Try telling the story of how your key actions work together. The immediate benefits of each one should come together to form the support of the seat of the chair, (the seat might be your project aim). Here's an example from one of the Network meeting flipcharts:

> *A food audit (which is made available to everyone) ensures people in the target community or neighbourhood know where they can get healthy affordable foods or the knowhow and materials to grow their own. Training in how to cook healthy food encourages them to include it in their daily diet and to go out and buy it knowing it tastes good. Training them to grow their own food gives them another way to access affordable food if they have more time (and less money). A food charter builds support across the community to help everyone feel they are working together in building healthy food into their lives.* ***This all adds up to reducing food poverty in Knocknaheeney and Hollyhill (Project Aim)***

So, do <u>your</u> actions fit together easily into a logical story or do you find some seem to sit by themselves? Do you struggle to explain why an action is there? Alternatively, are there any gaps? This is a good way to spot them.

Do your actions and their benefits / consequences naturally lead you to your project aim? If the aim seems too abstract can you make it more concrete? If the aim is different from the outcomes do you have the right aim or the right actions?!

<u>Hint 2: Being Clear</u>

Remember that early plea to test your clarity? Here are a couple of examples – each will be very clear to the project leaders but less clear to the general public

<u>Example 1</u>

Area of Work: Put healthy eating on the agenda

Immediate benefit: awareness and knowledge

Comment: Who's agenda is healthy eating being put on? Who will have the awareness and knowledge? How will this all be done? This is a valuable objective but it isn't yet set out in practical terms to be able to evaluate it.

Recommendation: Look at your areas of work and see if any could be made more concrete.

<u>Example 2</u>

Area of work: **Healthy Eating Policies in Community Settings**: Put in place healthy eating policies in community settings / set up a steering group with relevant groups / agencies -

Immediate benefit: Reduction in consumption of unhealthy food / groups have the opportunity to engage in a partnership approach

Comment: In this case there are two 'benefits' achieved from one area of work which is fine – very good value! It would benefit from showing how each combine into one area (rather than two tasks) e.g. "Bring together community groups and agencies to draw up healthy eating policies which can be used in community settings"

Of the immediate benefits, the first (reduction in consumption of unhealthy food) does not immediately follow – it may be more of an impact (longer term) – what about "groups are able to promote healthy eating more effectively and consistently in their settings with the people that use their services". The second benefit is fine.

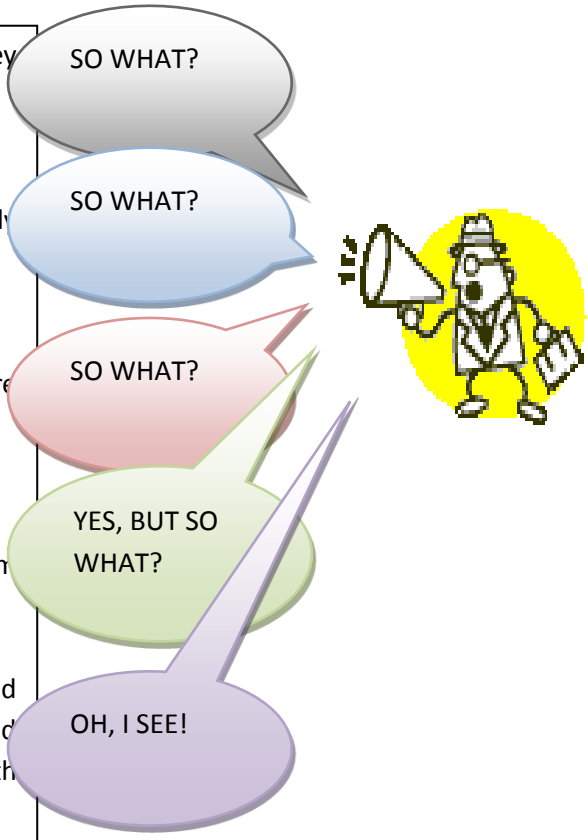
Recommendation: Make sure to show how distinct separate parts to an area of work fit together and watch out for 'Strays'!! :

STEP 5: THE CONSEQUENCES (**IMPACTS**) AND INTRODUCING THE 'SO WHAT?' TEST

Each of the immediate benefits you deliver across your key areas of work can have a longer term consequence. So for example, learning new skills in cooking can mean a person can go on to cook healthier food more often.

You can extend this thinking as much as you like by using the 'SO WHAT ? Test. It goes like this

- Participants learn how to cook the food that they grow.
- So they can now use the food confidently in their daily meals.
- So they will have a healthier diet which includes more of their 'five a day'
- So they will be less likely to gain weight or suffer from ill health!
- So they will put less pressure on health services and save money (indeed, every case of diabetes caused from too much sugar in the diet costs the health service x euro / pounds!)



As you can see, doing the 'So What?' Exercise should at the end bring you to your policy implications which you looked at in Step 2. Taking the SO WHAT trail should bring you right

through from your key Areas of Work to your overall contribution to the public good thus making your aims and objectives clear and focused.

Hint : Realising the longer term 'consequential benefits' of each step in the SO WHAT trail will quickly take you outside of your projects ability to influence – ok, so you taught people how to cook good food, but do they then go on to use it at home really? You might want to add in an extra action or two which try to ensure consequential benefits are realised – for example, setting up a cookery club so that people continue to support and encourage each other to cook in the longer term, until it becomes a habit.

SO YOU GOT YOUR STORY RIGHT, NOW WHAT? WHEN DO WE GET TO THE EVALUATION PART?

Your project story provides the frame to hang your indicators from – rather than have them sit on their own, you can now tie them to the beanpole of your project story so that they can bear fruit (or beans, whatever you like). Here's how it works:

Take one area of work

Add a target number to turn it into an Output

For example, if the area is cook-it training workshops, decide how many workshops you hope to give, and how many participants you hope will attend each one, e.g.

6 workshops with a total of 50 people attending (about 8 different people attend each workshop)

Or

20 people attend all of 3 workshops on establishing, managing and then harvesting from a community garden

Next, Add your indicators

Look at the immediate benefit and consequential benefits you described for this area of work. You can use them as the basis for your indicator. Here's an example:

Area of Work	Immediate Benefit	Consequential Benefits
Joining Forces (Using the food garden to) Increase inter-generational activity linking youth and the elderly	Break down barriers between young people and older people	Reduces isolation for older people Allows young people to learn from older people Better relations between older people and younger people which strengthen community
Indicator :	Number of younger and older people observed working together (see descriptor scale below)	Number of older people who feel less isolated (use short questionnaire) Number of young people who have learnt something from older people Attitudes of young people and older people to one another

Next, think about the best way to **test** your indicator. In the above example, how isolated people feel **before and after** the project can be tested by asking a short set of questions e.g.

1. How often do you spend time with people other than your family? (every day / once or twice a week, once or twice a fortnight, once or twice a month, hardly ever)
2. How often do you meet and chat with younger (Older) people? (as above)
3. Do you feel you can call on someone if you need to?
4. Do you ever feel lonely? (never, rarely, now and again, quite often, all the time)

Similarly, you can ask about attitudes to younger or older people, for example by using clichés

Do you agree or disagree with the following?

- Young people today do not have the same respect for their elders we used to have
- Young people don't know how to do practical things like repairs or making things
- I feel afraid of young people when I see them on street corners
- Most young people don't care

Repeat the exercise after the project and adjust the wording:

Thinking about the young people you have met during this project, **do you agree or disagree with the following?**

(as above)

A Descriptor Scale

Descriptor scales are a handy way to capture subtle changes in behavior that you can observe, and which can help show your work is making a difference. For the objective of encouraging interaction between younger and older people in the above example, look at the scale below. It describes a gradual improvement in the level of interaction that is being achieved by this area of work over the course of the project.

Young people and older people do not mix at all	Young people and older people both attend training or gardening sessions but do not mix	Young people are willing to work with older people if paired up during formal training or gardening sessions	One or two young people and older people are seen working together outside of formal sessions	Young people and older people are frequently seen working together in the garden or in managing produce
0	1	2	3	4

You can make observations periodically or after key events. That way you can begin to see which of the ideas you try out under this area of work make the biggest difference.

For example, you might have run two or three sessions but young people and older people are still pretty much keeping themselves to themselves. So you put on a Barbeque using produce from the garden and maybe a storytelling session and music as well – the barriers are broken and thereafter you see much more interaction – make a note to do that again next time, or to tell others!

THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT!

Here's another example to help you think about your own Areas of Work and indicators – here we have offered alternative ways of wording the benefits to make it easier to add indicators – it also continues our theme of 'being clear'!

Area of Work	Immediate Benefit	Consequential Benefits
Active Gardeners: Support participants to draw up plans on what to grow in the community garden and provide training in how to grow it	Learning how to grow produce (or) participants gain the skills and confidence to grow their own produce	Gain confidence in growing their own veg (or) participants take active responsibility for growing their own produce NB: there are other potential outcomes you might aim for in this sort of work, such as reducing isolation; building the capacity of the community to be self sufficient; or improving the local environment
Indicator :	Participants feel confident they have the skills to grow their own produce Participants intend to grow more produce in the coming year	Number of participants who produce plans and take forward production of their own vegetables (in the community garden?) NB: there is in some projects another area of work aimed at helping people to grow food at home – this might be important because it may be impractical for them to continue to use the community garden if others need the opportunity to learn - if you aren't doing this it might be worth thinking about the practicalities
Measures:	Ask participants to score how confident they feel either to grow food or perhaps break down the skills eg how confident would you be to plan / purchase / grow / harvest / cook - this set of questions can cover other 'Legs of the chair' and could be asked rather than expect participants to write.	Monitor / check in with participants to see if they have produced a plan / grown produce if at home, or monitor who does so in the community garden by getting people to 'book' a space NB: some sort of follow up might help ensure this happens

FINALLY…

Once you have your indicators and measures identified for your Areas of Work think about and plan when you need to measure. Ideas might be:

- Measure at the start to get a baseline (eg for changes in attitude or knowledge)
- Measure after key events
- Measure after an area of work comes to an end
- Measure every 3 months (eg health benefits or things which are achieved gradually such as weight loss or sense of wellbeing)

Annex 3

What is a Community Food Initiative ?

The core concept of a CFI as an intervention model needs to replicable, so that it can be shared and potentially mainstreamed. Defining what is and isn't a CFI during a session with the Management Committee for the Demonstration Programme helped to build understanding of the distinctiveness of the approach in comparison to other existing food initiatives.

What is can include	What it should not include
Asset-Based : using local assets to achieve the key foundations for change. Needs assessment and the creative use of assets	
Supply side measures	
Collective food buying and /or growing / Engaging local retailers to enhance positive food choices	Not profit taking – profits should be based on a social enterprise model and re-invested into the sustainability of the project. Not direct food provision only (meals on wheels) Not food banking
Complementary Demand Side Measures	
Nutritional education skills development, cooking classes (but not on its own) Promoting the enjoyment of cooking and eating together (food based social enjoyment	Not 'Demand Side only (eg Cooking classes) but both supply and demand Not about throwing out information Not stand alone one-off events
Community Development Approach A supportive structure to encourage collective engagement	
Using an inclusive community development approach which engages the community not judges them, does with not for, promoting participation, providing within community coordination and leadership.	Not Agenda-led – not tied to other religious or social causes

Annex 4: Call Out Exercise

Name of CFI: _____

Things which have been rewarding – a problem solved, a benefit realised, growth in project take up, etc.	**Things which have been challenging – ideas that didn't work out, barriers that had to be addressed, difficulties engaging people, etc.**	**Things which were interesting (neither good nor bad) but which gave insight and an opportunity for shared learning**

Annex 5: CFI Self Evaluation : Guidance on Data Collection Methods

Determining the Right Focus for Evaluation: Three Parts

First and foremost

What are you doing ? What (new) connections are you making ? What ideas are you having ? What new insights are you getting ? Keep a log !

Second

Use the following questions to determine the right blend of tools / approaches for your project

1. What is the relationship between the project provider and participants?

Is it Person centred or Community Level change?

Eg is the main objective

- helping individuals (providing a support service or training)
- eg assisting individuals to improve individual health and wellbeing and lifeskills ?

These represent a **person centred** approach

And/or

- building community capacity (for sustainable food production / distribution / consumption provision)
- Encouraging people / participants to take on responsibility for the project?

These represent a **community level** approach

2. What is the Project approach?

Eg Group approach or individual learning as main focus?

For example, Group: Main approach is working with a group to take forward a project such as the community garden

Individual: Main approach is delivering training to individuals. This can apply even if they are part of a group if the group does not work collectively over a sustained period of time / succession of sessions

If Individual /Person Centred

If individual learning is the main focus, and individuals are able, employ **end of session / end of course self assessment method**

Do participants help determine goals / tasks of the project at periodic intervals ? If so, **incorporate self evaluation into the exercise**

A **personal record or file** might be kept with each new participant, noting from an initial conversation the context of that person and their possible issues / needs and then following their progression into the project in terms of time spent in activities provided by the project / attendance at workshops / training, volunteering activity.

Individual assessment can be combined with elements of group assessment also

Individual Changes within a Group process

Can staff / tutors observe the group and individual participants on a regular basis and at close hand?

Is what they can observe relevant to the changes intended by the project ?

If so use observed behaviour / conversation tool

If not organise plan and review sessions with the group and self assessment exercises

Observable changes that can be tracked through diary records or self assessment include:

- **Calming** (calmer disposition) and building capacity for coping / resilience
- **Skills / Dexterity** ,
- **Confidence** – eg opening up, sharing, helping / teaching, initiating, planning
- **Relationship building and empathy,** understanding (with whom ? eg within group, between groups, wider community)
- **Making connections**, drawing on own knowledge "my mother used to do that" or Applying skills elsewhere
- Add New observed benefit?

Tracking participation over time in groups or training will also be important. Example templates are provided. At the end of this document

Community Level Assessment

Are numbers of people participating in activities monitored? Could they be?

If yes, design monitoring form to capture key information. For example,

Include information on how they arrived into the project and where they go next to show progression routes

Apply a classification to the activities they do in terms of the role and function and level of responsibility on the basis that more engagement and responsibility indicates greater incorporation of food activities into a person's lifestyle

The types of activity so far identified include

- Events, One-off (taster) Workshops, Talks (fairly passive engagement; 'Listen and Go')
- Volunteering in gardening or training programmes over a longer time period (Participant)
- Sub groups or steering groups planning and developing specific areas of activity (Specialist leaders)
- Groups taking on larger planning and delivery activity (project leaders)

There is also scope simply to **name and describe new groups** formed in response to the project as a means to better understand underlying need. The nature of groups however, particularly those that prove robust over time, reveal patterns of underlying interest as opportunities are created by the project and developed

Monitoring volunteer time would be a valuable source of evidence about the effect of the project. The difficulty is there is less consistent contact with volunteers to be able to monitor the amount of time they actually spend engaged with the project.

The solution here may also offer additional development possibilities, and that is to introduce a **timebank** to volunteers. In its simplest form, volunteers are encouraged and enabled to record the time they spend in the garden (or in workshops or other activities) through a record sheet held at a central point such as the community centre reception area. When a certain number of hours have been accumulated these could be traded in for a place on trips organised by the project

The **gender and age characteristics** of people engaging in different activities will also be important and relatively easy to collate.

A valuable additional capacity would be to be able to **identify specific individuals** and track their level of engagement over time.

<u>Third</u>

Case Studies

In all cases the ongoing evaluation can help guide selection of case studies for more detailed elaboration of the significance of the changes to the lives of the people taking part.

Suggestion for Rehabcare Food Garden Project Recording Template : Monitoring attendance in group activity over time

Month :

Background	New (initials) or Returned	Continuing (initials)	Left (reason)
Rehabcare			
Simon			

Key Activities this month

Gardening

Cooking

Market or Event

Other

Notes

Completed monthly in line with review meetings. Initials allow tracking of individuals to allow case study potential. Individuals may drop out for a variety of reasons such as ill health or other life circumstances, or because they actively do not wish to continue – this is determined and recorded

Kasi Community Garden Project Recording Template

Month :

Project : (Garden / Cooking Workshops etc)

New (initials) or Returned	Continuing (initials)	Left (reason)

Notes

Completed monthly. Using initials allows tracking of individuals to allow case study potential. Individuals may drop out for a variety of reasons such as ill health or other life circumstances, or because they actively do not wish to continue – this is determined and recorded

Annex 6: Activity Tables

Activity Year :

Programme / activity	Number of sessions / events in Year 1	Number of people who Attended once (eg event)	Number of people who attended for duration (eg course) or for short time (eg limited stay)	Attend regularly (eg garden / club)
Taster sessions				
One-off events such as a Christmas fair or seed swop				
Training workshops (single)				
Training workshops (course)				
Volunteer scheme				
Gardening group				
Allocation of Garden plots to groups or individuals				
Planning / user groups				
Other (please describe)				
Other (please describe				

The Difference it makes

	Differences noted	Evidence for this ? eg observation, log, feedback sheets, behaviour, conversations)
What changes has participation in your CFI programmes made to participants dietary habits?		
What other benefits have come from participation in the CFI programmes?		

Annex 7: Participant Interview Schedule

Photograph decided by participant

Name

Age

Gender

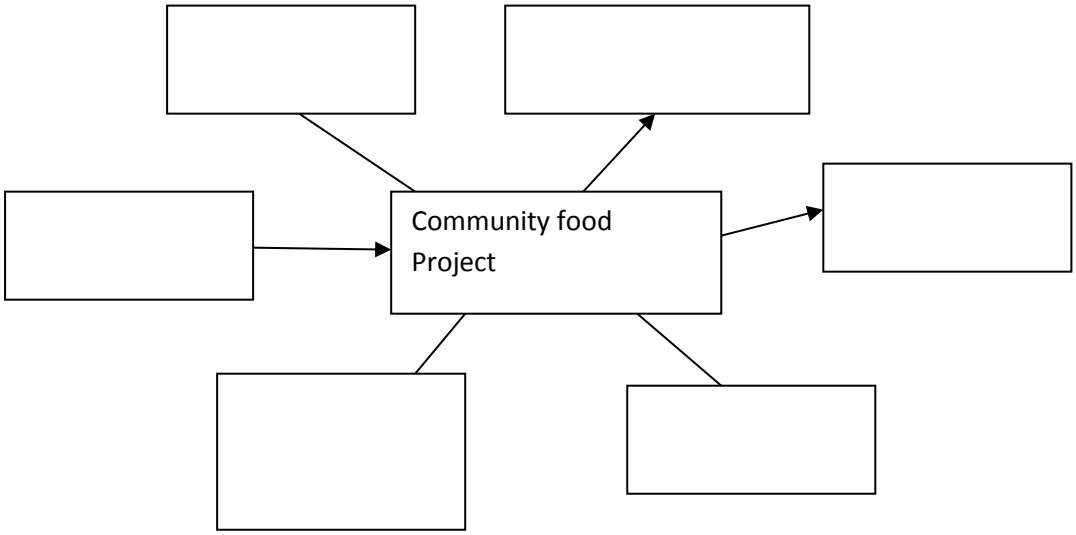
Any other significant information ? eg Cultural background / personal circumstances

Profile of Involvement This is adapted from the previous template we completed in June – the information shows how an individual person has taken part and for how long.

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Number of Taster sessions tried			
Number of One-off events attended			
Number of single session Training workshops attended			
Number of training courses (more than one session) attended			
Number of times acted in a volunteer role			
number of times attended Gardening sessions			
Allocation of Garden plot or garden established at home ?			
Number of times attended Planning / user group sessions			
Other (please describe)			

Linkages / Integrated support

Use the Diagram below to fill in support services provided by you/your organisation and so be able to show how the person came to join the food project (arrow in) and what other services they have accessed as a result of the project (arrows out)



Reflections

Use the following 6 questions as a loose life story and to gather the experience of the person of the project. Each topic should begin by open conversation and then if needed, progress by introducing any observations of your own.

1. How did you arrive into the garden / project? What did you find helpful in coming?

2. Attitudes to Fruit and Vegetables / Salads / Herbs: Knowledge / attitude to / use of: Has being involved in the community food programme made any difference to how you look at or use vegetables and fruit ?

3. Have you noticed any other changes / differences in yourself as a result of taking part?

4. What might you do next ? eg how do you see your involvement developing / do you have any personal interests or ideas you are going to take further ? May not have thought about it, in which case need to simply record that. Alternatively, introduce any observations of them for example talking about plans or ideas previously

5. What will help you to stay involved ?

6. Is there anything about the food project that you would have done differently ? observations might be around difficulties, barriers, patchy attendance, challenges

Annex 8: CFI Project Staff De-Brief Semi Structured Interview Schedule

1. General Reflection

What did Access, availability and affordability mean to you at the start, likewise food poverty ?

What do they mean to you now ?

Do you think your project has improved **access** to healthy fresh food for the people you have been targeting ? (grade – a lot, a little, not really or for many, for some, for a few

2. **Activities** – what they were about

Which of your activities was the key to your success ? / got you best leverage / made the biggest difference (which was) ? Tell us what you did and why it was important

For individuals:

- Who did you set out to engage ?
- As a guestimate, who actually engaged ?
- If there is a difference, why do you think that was ?
- What did people have to learn before they could get fully involved ?
- Could it have worked the other way around, eg start with individuals using their gardens and then set up a community garden ?

3. Impact on food ?

How much difference do you think it has made to people's use of fresh food in the household ? / in what ways have you noticed it typically manifesting itself ?

What balance would you say there is between impact on food and impact on social or personal benefits ?

4. Wider Actions

At community level – what actions did you take that were important at the level of community as a whole ? How important were they?

At wider level – who else have you been working with, who have you been able to influence, and how ?

5. Food Culture

How important is the prevailing culture and attitude to food to individual behaviour ?

How would you describe that prevailing culture ? / Attitude ?

Are there sanctions or penalties for someone to deviate from this ?

Was group identity important – ie feeling part of a new 'we' together ?

6. The difference made to your organisation

Has it brought food/healthy eating onto the agenda of

- your organisation (eg senior management team) more than it was before ? In what way?
- other groups you work with community groups in low income areas ?
- Other organisations in the area you work in ?

What are your plans now for food in your work ? what would help you ?

7. **Programme learning**

What have been the key lessons from your experience of having participated in the Healthy Food for All/ safefood Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives?

Views on the following

- Provide funding for a limited number of CFIs over a three-year period – was it enough funding? Was it the right funding?

- Provide technical support, collective training and facilitate networking between CFIs – was there enough support? Was it the right support?

- Promote shared learning amongst CFIs on the island of Ireland. Was there enough shared learning? Was it the right shared learning?

What advice would you give to the Healthy Food for All/ safefood Demonstration Programme Steering Group in order to improve the potential impact and difference their programme could have on the ground?

If you knew then what you know now, would you apply for a similar type community food initiative programme?

Annex 9: Key Stakeholder Questionnaire

Introductory note:

Emphasise confidentiality and anonymity. No comment shall be attributed to any individual and or organisation, unless the individual or organisation expressly wishes to have their opinions explicitly recorded and presented.

Can you please tell me a little bit about your area of policy focus and activity?

Awareness

Are you aware of the Healthy Food for All/ safefood Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiative?

How did you become aware of the initiative? What drew your attention to it?

(if haven't heard of Healthy Food for All / Safefood initiative) are you aware of community based food initiatives more generally ?

What are the most effective means of building your awareness and understanding of community food initiatives?

Understanding

What do you understand in relation to the area of community based food initiatives generally and what they are trying to achieve?

What do you understand the Healthy Food for All/ safefood Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives to be about?

Interest and Relevance/ Potential Policy Strategic Fit

Have you had an interest in the Healthy Food for All/ safefood Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiative?

If yes, why? If no, why not?

Does the approach represented by the Healthy Food for All/ safefood Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives have merit in potentially addressing your organisations policy aims and objectives? If so, how?

Has your organisation ever thought of using 'food' as a policy instrument? If so, how and why?

Where did the initial impetus come from? (International to national, etc.)

What do you see as the key barriers/ challenges to adopting a community food initiative approach to address your particular policy concerns and interests? (From knowledge of CFI to more generic concept.)

What do you as the opportunities/ enablers which could facilitate your organisation adopting a CFI approach? (From knowledge of CFI to more generic concept.)

Action on Policy and Practice

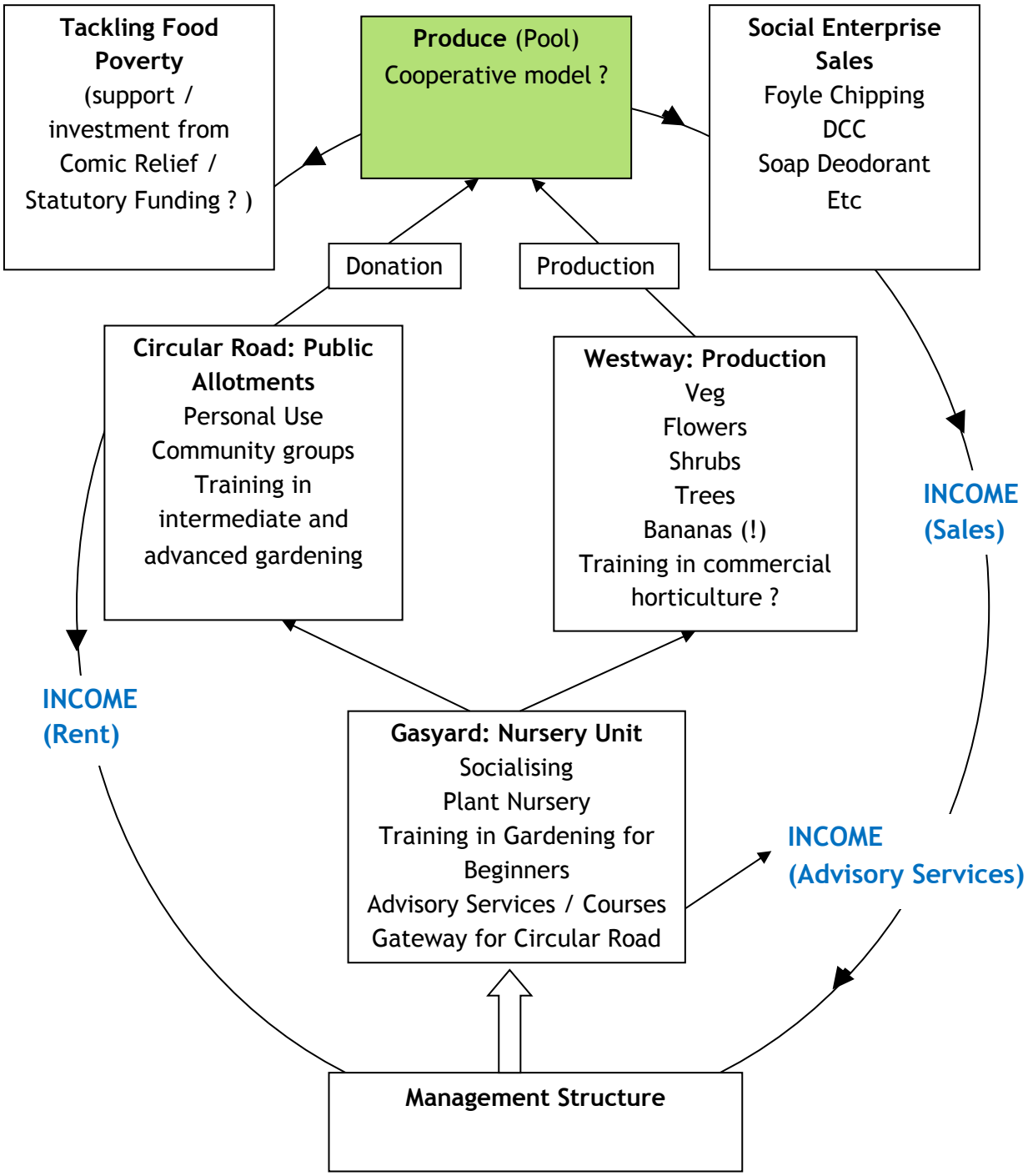
How best do you think community food initiatives as a policy and practice should be organised and implemented on the Island of Ireland?

Are current activities and initiatives aimed at raising the awareness and understanding of the potential role of community food initiatives on the Island of Ireland amongst key policy makers and government effective? If not, what advice would you give in order that awareness and understanding is effectively developed?

Any other comments?

Thank you.

Annex 10: BBHF Development Plan for City-Wide Community Food Model



Annex 11 The Ideal CFI ?

Given the learning established from this programme, what should a community food project be aiming for in starting out ?

Good consultation and awareness raising across the community provides a valuable support base for a food initiative seeking to operate across a neighbourhood or local area

Network with other initiatives, groups, institutions – from the local college or school to the Council, Regeneration initiatives, family resource centre, community groups, gardening groups, GIY, tidy towns local markets and so on, for mutual support and exchange of ideas, as well as joint initiatives.

Consider how the project assets can be of benefit to other users; an afterschool club, those running courses such as Vocational or adult Education Courses, Eco schools Employability training, Mental wellbeing, and Healthy eating

Establish a steering / advisory interagency group to help

Install a good gardener with community development skills or a willingness to work with participants to respond to their interests and needs, The presence in a garden of a skilled gardener able to advise, direct and reassure was important in encouraging people to have the confidence to use and engage with the garden. It was not simply a matter of providing a garden, but assisting people to become comfortable in using it.

Ideally, this person would have good inter-personal skills, and opens up the idea of ‘community horticulturalists’ able to combine skills in food growing with community development and training skills. Such a career option might usefully be explored with colleges, just as it is for community artists with art colleges as a distinct career option. Using work placement schemes is another option, making links with a horticulture course or employability scheme

Include someone to oversee and strategically develop the project and its linkages – selling it / connecting it/ planning ahead and liaising with the community

Use a variety of informal tasters and opportunities to engage with the project for the first time – don’t sell it as a healthy eating project and use an informal, homely setting and approach

Start simple – for example, using window boxes to overcome people's belief that growing things is difficult and to provide an opportunity to engage in something simple that leads to something else

Look out for and encourage emerging project leaders from early adopters with strong interests and skills attracted to the project

Encourage and support community members to take on roles and responsibilities for different aspects of the food initiative – from food club to garden committee to event planning

Include some form of easy but consistent monitoring system – noting numbers taking part by gender and age for example, differences in behaviour, patterns in development

Consider how resources could be connected together to form the basis for a social enterprise – eg links between kitchen and garden, training of individuals to build raised beds , planters, window boxes

Get access to a kitchen – an ideal place to start cooking and sharing that has proven significant for a number of the CFIs

Get a Garden All but one CFI established one small or large. It has proven valuable in a number of different ways:

- As a visible, transformative symbol for the project and the wider community, changing waste ground from nothing to something vibrant and living. (Bogside and Brandywell, Limerick, Cork)
- As a hub, or base, enabling the growing of food to be extended out into individuals own gardens (Limerick, RehabCare for example)
- As a way for people to volunteer, including harder to reach groups such as unemployed men or migrants. (KASI, Limerick)
- As a means to regain self-worth – e.g. Rehab care have observed Simon community people who experience homelessness recognising they have something to offer when spending time with people with learning disabilities in helping them with tasks. They see that despite their disabilities they are living full and happy lives, which can help them to feel more positive also.
- As a social space, designing in "spaces for hanging out" and interacting (Bogside Brandywell, Limerick, Footprints, KASI)
- As an important way to encourage people to try fresh vegetables "if they grow it they are more likely to taste it" (all CFIs)

- As a means to generate surplus that can supply cafes, a market stall or a food coop (all CFIs)
- As a means to raise awareness and interest in the wider environment agenda and wildlife
- As a means to build confidence and capacity – for example to enable individuals to go on to take up opportunities for allotments being provided increasingly by councils (e.g. Footprints, Limerick, Bogside Brandywell).

Annex 12

Quotes from Project Staff and Participants

Project staff

Awareness and Choice

"We are trying to give them options / choices; early intervention is important...We opened them up to a range of vegetables and fruit they would never have tasted" (Paul Partnership)

"Showing them how you could be making 20 soda breads for £3; they were excited to see how they could do this – then going home and trying it" (EBM)

"Some from Simon started and then said no it's not for them whilst others we wouldn't have expected to start did so – those that stuck at it loved every minute" (Rehabcare)

"we opened that (foraging) up to them – they need a bit of support – exposing them to it and then taking the next step; you need to go with them to get them over the next step". (EBM)

"Cooking the veg that they've grown down the garden for themselves for their dinner...the kick I get it that 9 people have grown food at home – that's the sustainability bit - it flowed very easily" (Rehabcare)

"If everybody is eating healthily here (They spend a lot of time in here) then it will travel home as well" (Rehabcare)

"We are creating a community around food and introducing that connection back to food" (EBM)

"*Some people had never tasted vegetables – some people even had phobias around the look of them. For some their parents have been alcoholic so for supper many a night they would get a bowl of cereal"* (EBM)

*It's a very gradual process, it takes years. Even when women started to make changes to their diet and shopping patterns physical activity was a complete no go (which is where the garden made a difference)"(*Footprints*)*

"The women were not judged or lectured they did not have the knowledge or skills and we were showing them an alternative" (Footprints)

"As behaviour change (The Food Club) *has proved very strong there are changes in food practice for themselves and their families and it is starting to influence the wider community*" (Niche)

Affordability

"Affordability remains the biggest barrier – unless it's affordable it doesn't matter what we do or say to them it won't make a difference to people's lives ... at the moment it's cheaper to buy poor quality processed food for £1 from Iceland than fresh" (EBM)

"*We are trying to have some influence over the local food supply to help people make different choices - we now have an acre site in the community that wasn't there before – the possibilities are now there for dramatic change in the food environment* " (Niche)

Tesco's was already half a mile away and now it's gone – services closing down doesn't help people" (EBM)

"*A lot find it difficult to transfer skills to home – they may never really do it no matter what you do – because Anna facilitated setting them up at home this helped – physically helping, and then going out as a group to visit the gardens – this brought in a whole social thing – John wondering what cake he was going to buy – to have a group of people coming out to visit him in his home, having tea in his kitchen etc for a person with mental health problems – this was a huge boost*". (Rehabcare)

"*The volunteers are getting a lot of free stuff such as topsoil (worth 2k). Scaffolding planks are being left for raised beds; local businesses may be able to offer small things like cardboard / materials for art projects. The volunteers are finding this exciting; not having the funding makes people think and become more resourceful - there is always the question if you took the money away would it create stronger outcomes ? It may do but only when you have a base*" (Niche)

Participants

Awareness and Choice

"Yeh the food was nice but it's not for people on the road" – they have no exposure to different kinds of food"

"The chance to see how food is grown - know where it is coming from – children see the plant not just the food – they know it doesn't come from a tin"

"Yes it has definitely made a difference to how I view vegetables. My range of vegetables was very limited but since being involved with programme I have been able to try lots of different fruit and vegetables. At home me and my partner now use lots of different vegetables when cooking".

"*You go into Aldi or Lidl and you look at the food. You know its not fresh. You can tel"l.*

Knowledge and Confidence

"We learned many different aspects of gardening, from veg growing, fruit trees, herbs, flowers, cutting back, seed sowing, pruning of plants, recycling of waste"

"I do find fruit and vegetables expensive and I try to grow as much as I can in the shared yard at my apartment. I would love to have my own allotment but there are not many about and there are long waiting lists".

"regularly takes home fresh produce he grows in the garden and uses it in cooking at home or prepares a salad from raw ingredients" (Rehab, staff observation).

"They talk about it to their friends or family and its a cool thing to be doing" (Rehab Staff observation)

"I learned a lot of things that I can pass on to other people – about growing things. I can pass it on".

"I keep telling my family or people I know who are unemployed – why don't you start a garden? You don't get that quality and freshness in a shop".

"I grew my own cabbages this year, but they got eaten by caterpillars. I grew potatoes, spring onions, carrots. I gave them around to the neighbours"

"I've enjoyed learning how to grow vegetables and taking it home. I've even got my neighbour doing it".

"I think my attitude to eating healthy has definitely changed over the last 2 and ½ years. I made sure that I took salads, yogurts, and fruit for lunch and I also swapped my morning fry for porridge. I have been particularly inspired by 3 talks this year. 1) Talk about the value of eating organic vegetables and what a co-operative is. 2) Herbs for Health 3) Making elderflower cordial".

"I have made a conscious effort to make changes to my diet such as taking porridge and muesli for breakfast and swapping fizzy drinks for cordial such as lemon, cranberry and prune which are much better for you".

Health Benefits

"Caroline has lost weight since she started the project. She is physically more active" (Rehab, staff observation)

"I struggle with depression and it was through the HFFA programme that I found out that what I eat can affect my mental health."

"Sessions have been educational especially the one about looking after your feet as my partner suffers from insulin dependent diabetes and it is good to know what to look out for such as infections".

"I have had a heart problem for the last few years and I really need to look after myself now. That is my main motivation for trying to keep myself healthy and eat well now."

"I was spending too much of my time drinking but now I can occupy myself here – I'm now sleeping better and looking after myself better with more physical activity and a better diet"

Social Inclusion and Wellbeing

"HFFA programme helped me engage with other people living in the local area and has given me a sense of community".

"Being a country person here, I felt very isolated. I didn't know people. People I worked with were not from the community. I was scared to come in here because of the reputation".

"There's so much lovely people here. There's so much going on in this building here. I never knew it existed".

"It's lovely to see all ages in the garden – small children, the 80yr olds, teenagers, people with problems. It's very therapeutic to be able to participate, Its very good for the mind and body".

"Its brought very different cultures together. There's a nun. It's my first time ever working with a nun "

"We all worked together to solve problems (team work)"

"We learned from one another and exchanged knowledge about our garden"

"It takes you out of yourself. It gets you meeting and talking to others. It gets you out of the house. I find it very peaceful here. You get time to think. The mind goes clear. You mix with young people. You mix with all ages when they're there".

"we had the benefit of a stress free zone, a healthy environment"

"I saw self achievement, creativity, imagination for myself (and) It brought creativity, colour, knowledge to Southill"

"*The garden has given Sean structure and was a positive activity for him to focus on" (Rehab staff observation) .*

I enjoy coming, I mean...I really enjoy it, it's better than doing housework! And I feel good because it is doing something for someone else.

“The garden project has given me great initiative to become more independent, to have the enjoyment and be rewarded by the planting, cultivating and harvesting of garden vegetables”.

“The whole centre – they do loads of courses here – computers, crafts, card-making, digital photography. I would not have known about it if I hadn’t been here for the garden Its only a mile from my home”.

“Michael’s attendance of Seatown house has increased and so has his contact with key workers and people in the house” (Rehab staff observation).

Annex 13 Potential Policy Areas and Messages

Theme	CFIs	Policy Stakeholders	Other support actions?
Low Cost Living	Potentially all of them, particularly Cork, Footprints	Mike Neary of Bord Bia (and Una Fitzgibbon?) DSP, FG, VPSJ Social Protection Sustainable Development	Look at wider trends and initiatives to link up with around common agenda e.g., GIY / Green Party 'Get Ireland Growing' etc. Adequate living standard on diminished resources; ***safe*food** (consumption patterns). What's minimum essential budget etc. Localise food growing and consumption. Socialisation of food consumption, e.g. food co-ops.
Social Inclusion / Marginal Groups	KASI (Ethnic) Dundalk (Homeless, Learning Difficulties) EBM (homeless)	Simon HSE Children Poverty (DSP)	Improve capacity of evaluation to capture benefits
Migrant workers / Refugees / Asylum Seekers	KASI	MRCI Etc.	Improve capacity of evaluation to capture benefits
Employment and Training	Limerick, Footprints	DEL FETAC, VEC	Third Level linkages – Horticulture Colleges - twofold Gardens can link in with work placements. Labour market training. Also volunteering and community development – accreditation for volunteers? Assist in identifying career opportunities for college students

			also in community based food initiatives
Production / Social Economy	Cork Limerick Footprints EBM	Food Authority – focus on smaller producers Bord Bia, community supported agriculture	Some overlap / linkages with training / employment – perhaps combine into a 'enterprise and personal development' theme
Regeneration	Cork Limerick (Bogside?)	Local authorities Hogan/FG for LA's regeneration?	Doc forwarded by Niall Mulligan
(Mental) Health	Dundalk EBM KASI Footprints Potentially all of them	HSE Action Mental Health	Multiple health benefits. Patterns of engagement – how people are coming to organisations. Some CFIs have started to keep diaries (one tool of evaluation as suggested by NM) that show signs of calmer disposition, increased skills/dexterity/confidence, relationship building and empathy, making connections. Prevention of disease, obesity etc. Benefits huge and being realised. **Improve capacity of evaluation to capture benefits**