

Notes from the roundtable discussion on 'fruit in schools'  
that took place in the Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow  
on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2001, organised by  
the Scottish Community Diet Project

The meeting consisted of practitioners from around the country, some of whom had experience of setting up and operating 'fruit in school' schemes and others who had been charged with establishing such initiatives. Some worked with a specific school but the majority served a number of schools. There was experience with both primary and secondary schools. There was also experience and interest in not only fruit handouts at school but also fruit tuck shops and fruit as part of school meals.

A key point from the whole discussion therefore was the importance of recognising the experience that already existed in this area and ensuring that experience was available to assist others, in an appropriate form and when required.

Discussions raised a number of factors crucial to effective initiatives.

- 1) Fruit had to be delivered to the young consumer in an **attractive** fashion. Cutting up fruit, fruit salads, avoiding bruising and getting the portion size right were all raised. This also entailed ensuring **variety**.
- 2) Delivery systems had to be **sustainable**. New schemes needed to think beyond initial funding arrangements and schemes built on to existing systems, often reliant on volunteers, had to have their capacity invested in. Young consumers were seen as the most likely to detect adult hypocrisy if schemes were short-lived and flavour of the month.
- 3) Similarly it was felt that 'fruit in schools' had to be **consistent** with other school activities around food (in the classroom/dining room/vending machine) to ensure the greatest impact.
- 4) Ensuring **added value** from the delivery of fruit was also recommended (e.g. activities, competitions, events) and seen as beneficial in the longer term as the fruit itself.
- 5) The **involvement** of all stakeholders (teachers, parents, children, janitors, etc) was recognised as important in identifying the need, developing/marketing the scheme, and ironing out unforeseen difficulties. The benefit of individual school/community involvement in the planning of schemes viz a viz local authority-wide schemes was also discussed.

The issue of **charging** was raised with some charging because they had no choice, others not charging because they could afford to not charge and some charging at a reduced rate after local consultation.

The experience of many was the need to find the right **suppliers** and to ensure quality is maintained and reliability guaranteed by whoever gets the business.

Another issue raised was the availability of not only fruit but also **fruit juices** (eg in Ferguslie Park, Paisley).

**Seasonality**, particularly in relation to costs, was another factor touched on.

As mentioned earlier, a key area of discussion was access to the research, resources and experience that already existed.

This was recognised as coming from within Scotland (e.g. Snack Attack, Edinburgh<sup>i</sup>; Fast Fruit, Aberdeen<sup>ii</sup>) but also outwith Scotland (e.g. National Fruit Scheme, England<sup>iii</sup> ; Fruit Tuck Shops, Wales<sup>iv</sup>).

A publication signposting existing resources, sourcing options, collating research findings and highlighting good practice was identified as required as quickly as possible, as well as the facilitation of networking amongst those undertaking such initiatives.

The Scottish Community Diet Project committed itself to address these needs as soon as possible.

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<sup>i</sup> Snack Attack Pack, Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, 0131 467 7326

<sup>ii</sup> Fast Fruit, Food Co-op Network North East Aberdeen, 01224 212 924

<sup>iii</sup> National Fruit Scheme, [www.doh.gov.uk/schoolfruitscheme](http://www.doh.gov.uk/schoolfruitscheme)

<sup>iv</sup> Fruit Tuck Shops, Food Standards Agency, Wales

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**Participants List**  
**Fruit in Schools Round Table Discussion**  
**8<sup>th</sup> May 2001**

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