



We must avoid strategies that disempower

Its not all about new activity its also about supporting existing activity

# TABLE MANNERS

You need action as well as talk

It is important to remain optimistic



We must promote the validity of diversity

You shouldn't assume everyone is familiar with the process

**A report from the Scottish Community Diet Project's seminar on building food partnerships and developing local strategies, held on Wednesday 27th October at the Municipal Buildings, Stirling**



*Table Manners was advertised as “An opportunity to share experiences and explore future options with others involved in establishing, or contributing to, local collaborative approaches to highlighting and tackling issues around food”*



# ***introduction***

Bill Gray, National Project Officer at the Scottish Community Diet Project welcomed all the participants and highlighted the wealth of experience that had gathered. Participants had come from around the country, from different levels within a variety of statutory and non-statutory agencies, many professional, others lay workers or volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusions of a recent study into a range of partnerships were highlighted,<sup>2</sup> for comparison with the experience of those tackling food poverty.

<b>Critical Success Factors</b>	<b>Common Weaknesses</b>
<b>Clear objectives and commitment to an agreed strategy</b>	<b>Inappropriate interaction between individuals</b>
<b>Focusing on The people in Partnerships</b>	<b>Cultural differences between partners leading to stereotyping</b>
<b>Results oriented Procedures</b>	<b>Refusing to recognise that partners compete as well as collaborate</b>
	<b>Heavy demands on people who will not be sufficiently motivated or rewarded<sup>2</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> See participants list at end of report.

<sup>2</sup> Working in Partnership: Lessons from the Literature  
Jo Hutchinson/Mike Campbell, Policy Research Institute,  
Leeds Metropolitan University  
ISBN 085522 788 7, June 1998

## ***the national perspective***

***“partnerships are  
about people”***

***“each neighbourhood  
has different  
concerns, different  
needs, different  
ideas...we must  
promote the validity  
of diversity”***

Jacqui Webster from the Food Poverty Network at Sustain gave participants an overview of national developments in the field of building partnerships and developing strategies around food.

Jacqui began by explaining the recent coming together of the National Food Alliance and the SAFE Alliance to form Sustain and cover food issues from ‘the plough to the plate’ or ‘the field to the fork’. Jacqui went on to explain how so much of Sustain’s work involved building partnerships and particularly within its Food Poverty Network.

The Food Poverty Network had existed since 1986 and recent lottery funding had allowed it to develop its work around the UK. As well as collaborating with the SCDP in Scotland they were also involved with local agencies in the development of a food and nutrition implementation strategy in Northern Ireland and the establishment of a network of groups and agencies tackling food poverty.<sup>1</sup>

In England the Food Poverty Network has developed partnerships with local agencies to run food poverty seminars, paid for by Sustain but organised locally and reflecting local agendas.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Eating and Health – A food and nutrition strategy for Northern Ireland’ was published in Nov 1996 and an implementation strategy is nearing completion. Further information on the above and the development of a food poverty network is available from Ruth Sutherland, Project Director at the Community Development and Health Network, Ballybot house, 22 Cornmarket, Newry, Co Down, N. Ireland. tel: 01693 64606

<sup>2</sup> Sustain initiated five ‘Community Food Project Seminars’ with funding from the Department of Health through the Health Education Authority. They were held in Barnsley, Brighton, Chorley, London and North Tyneside. A report summarising

***“partnerships take time”***

Jacqui also highlighted their work in the field of developing local food strategies through the training of local people in participatory appraisal techniques. A technique, used widely in developing countries, which enables people to analyse their own situations, identify possible solutions, and highlight what would be needed to implement them <sup>3</sup>

Looking at the lessons to be learned from their involvement around the country Jacqui highlighted that all activity around partnerships or strategies had to be people centred. She highlighted the need for local communities to not only feel involved but to feel a sense of control. Local concerns had to be both listened to and acted upon and diversity between neighbourhoods respected and not responded to in a uniform and inflexible manner.

Jacqui concluded by stressing that partnership working was not easy and often clashed with long established cultures within organisations and agencies. However, she felt progress on tackling the barriers to food security would be difficult, slow, and in many cases impossible without genuine consultation and effective partnerships.

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the issues arising from the seminars is available from Sustain (see inside back page for contact details)

<sup>3</sup> 'Community Mapping' has been supported in partnership with Oxfam and Development Focus in Brighton, Coventry and Leicester. Apart from local reports Sustain intend producing a national report documenting lessons to be learned from both the findings and the process. A seminar is planned for London early next year at which the national report will be launched.

## ***the local perspective***

***“you shouldn’t  
assume everyone is  
familiar with the  
process and has  
been involved in  
this kind of work  
before”***

Stirling had been chosen as the venue for ‘Table Manners’ due to the range of partnership activity around food in the town and surrounding area.<sup>1</sup>

Anne Rennie, Depute-Manager, and Jeannette McCormick, Food Poverty Development Worker, both from Stirling Health & Wellbeing Alliance (SH&WA) gave an insight into some of the local activity and its reliance on partnership working to have arrived where it is today.

The alliance itself was highlighted as a partnership, in terms of its origins, management, funding and in the way it operates.<sup>2</sup>

The planning and running that went into last year’s one-day ‘Food Wise Food Fayre’ was similarly described in terms of partnership activity, with a fundamental contribution being played by local communities.<sup>3</sup>

The ‘Food Forum’, established last May to look at “access, affordability, quality and public awareness of food poverty” was a direct outcome of the ‘Food Fayre’ and the inclusive manner in which it had been organised.

A month earlier the SH&WA had been able to appoint a Development Worker on Food

***“you need action as  
well as talk”***

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<sup>1</sup> The most recent manifestation is ‘Food Futures’, involving a range of local agencies and the Soil Association. Further information available from Angela Heany, Stirling Council, Environmental Services, Viewforth, Stirling, FK8 2ET Tel: 01786 442 996 Email: heanya@stirling.gov.uk

<sup>2</sup> Stirling Health and Well-Being Alliance is a company limited by guarantee registered in Sept 1997. It is managed by representatives from local communities, Stirling Council, Forth Valley Health Board, Central Scotland Primary Care Trust, and a private Therapy Centre. (see inside back page for contact details)

<sup>3</sup> Held in November 1998, the Food Fayre brought together local and national organisations, private and public sectors and local communities.

*“it feels like  
going on a  
journey,  
learning as  
you go”*

Poverty to build on the work so far. This had been possible due to funding from another local partnership dealing with urban regeneration.<sup>4</sup>

One outcome of this appointment has been the development of an Easy Cook Roadshow.<sup>5</sup> This will involve volunteers, many already involved in community cafes and the like, receiving training, in order to lead sessions themselves.

Anne and Jeanette were confident of building on current success if the support of partners was maintained and any strategy was founded in genuine local concerns.

Throughout their presentation Anne and Jeannette stressed three main points.

- The first was the importance of working together, however hard that may be at times.
- The second was the crucial contribution to any strategy from local communities, and an appreciation that they may hold different perceptions and have different priorities on diet and food than statutory agencies.
- the third was the recognition that strategies could be developed alongside ‘doing something’ and that postponing activity could be detrimental to maintaining interest and participation from other partners.

## ***what’s going on?***

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<sup>4</sup> Post funded for one year by Stirling Partnership for Urban Regeneration (SPUR).

<sup>5</sup> Funded by a grant from the Scottish Community Diet Project.

***“you need  
do’ers on  
strategy groups  
not talkers  
...partnerships  
must be action  
oriented and  
people oriented”***

The first workshops were designed to extract from participants what partnerships were being built and strategies developed around food and what role they played in them.

Each of the four workshops was led by an experienced practitioner, who began each session by outlining their current involvement in partnership building and strategy development.<sup>1</sup>

The vast majority of those attending were involved in partnerships around food at various levels and with differing partners. Some were developed for a specific piece of activity while others were intended to generate local food strategies or ‘mini diet action plans’.

Geographically, some covered a local authority or Health Board boundary others a single community, a city, a cluster of villages or islands.<sup>2</sup>

Some participants serviced existing food strategy groups, others had been assigned the task of establishing one, while others were members of partnerships in either a paid or unpaid capacity.<sup>2</sup>

Some participant’s interests were focussed on particularly excluded groups such as the homeless while others were driven by a range of agendas (health, environment, anti-poverty).<sup>2</sup>

Several common themes came out of the workshops.

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<sup>1</sup> Joy Chekaoui, Health Promotion, Dumfries & Galloway  
Elspeth Gracey, Clydebank Health Issues Group  
Elaine Welch, Glasgow Healthy City Partnership  
Fiona Smith, Ayrshire & Arran Primary Care Trust

<sup>2</sup> See participants list at end of report



***“food strategies must complement existing activity as well as identify new activity”***

***“strategies must be about moving forward, we can’t look back in ten years and discuss the same issues”***

- Any strategy had to be about stimulating action and achieving change rather than identifying an ideal world.
- Ironically, organisational change was highlighted as a common barrier to achieving strategic changes. Staff changes, boundary changes, changes in agencies priorities were all identified as hindering effective partnership working.
- Few participants felt they had engaged with the private sector as effectively as they would have liked. Not only retailers but also food producers and processors were recognised as key players in much of the food agenda being addressed by local strategy groups.
- Many of the paid staff complained that their participation in partnerships is given inadequate priority within their allotted workloads and often treated as an ‘extra.’
- Most participants appreciated central government support for ‘working together’ but felt that they had to be accompanied by realistic expectations and timescales.
- It was noted that new potential partners constantly arise as specific issues are dealt with (eg community police) or as new initiatives arise (eg primary care co-ops)
- A common theme was how many food partnerships/strategies were part of wider strategies/partnerships (eg S.I.P.’s<sup>3</sup>) and how food invariably criss-crossed many other strategies.

## ***where’s it going?***

The afternoon workshop concentrated on where participants felt, or hoped, the food

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<sup>3</sup> Social Inclusion Partnership

partnerships and strategies they were involved in would be in the future.

***"I'd like the community food mapping we are undertaking to have been completed and most importantly for its findings to have attracted the serious attention of relevant parties"***

When asked to explore what they would like to have achieved in the next twelve months a number of themes arose.

- Most would like to be involved in joint working that was more solid, trusting and positive.
- Others felt similarly but could not guarantee to be around in twelve months and therefore prioritised securing longer term funding.
- Relinquishing some control, particularly to communities, was recognised as an indicator of progress.
- Most prioritised the need to be 'doing something' and building on current research, debate and consultation.
- Increasing the work with particularly excluded groups (eg homeless, refugees) was given as another indicator of progress.
- Avoiding volunteer burn out by not asking for too much too soon from the least resourced partners was a particular priority for those who had experienced it.

When participants were asked to look five years<sup>1</sup> ahead, some of the comments were similar to the short term outlook while others differed.

- Even more people were unsure as to whether they would have a job.
- Many felt that by 2005 we will see the benefits of the current government ethos of encouraging partnership working (eg

***"working in isolation was the norm only a few years ago...you were frightened others would steal your ideas"***

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<sup>1</sup> 2005 is the date set for the achievement of the dietary targets set by the James Report in 1993 and adopted by the Scottish Diet Action Plan in 1996

healthy living centres, community schools) in all aspects of social policy.

- Others hoped the current partnership rhetoric did not prove in five years time to have been a fad.
- Those from outwith SIP areas hoped that in five years all areas would have food strategies in place and operational.
- Many felt five years was not the long term but only the medium term and the problems faced by many trying to access a healthy diet would require strategies covering a longer timescale.

*"I'd like to see food treated as an issue of human dignity"*

## ***summing up***

The summing up was carried out by Christine Reilly from Ferguslie Community Health Project and Helen Scammel the

**“money is not enough...volunteers must be valued”**

***“it is essential to work in partnership but it is a long fraught process”***

Health Development Officer with West Dumbartonshire Partnership.

Christine had experience of partnership working as a volunteer and as a paid worker and currently had responsibility for helping to establish a Renfrewshire Food Strategy Group.<sup>1</sup>

Christine highlighted the need to value volunteer participation and warned against tokenism. She emphasised the need to develop effective and appropriate structures and processes.

She stressed volunteers would feel a genuine partner when they saw change in the current imbalance in support and resources available.

Helen was currently responsible for developing a strategic framework around food and health in one of Scotland's new S.I.P.'s.<sup>2</sup> She had previously managed a Community Health project in the east end of Glasgow and been involved in devising local strategies and planning.

Helen felt partnership working was the way forward but that it meant involving the right people at all levels. She highlighted the need to seek out the views of the most excluded groups as well as community representatives.

She also felt it important to recognise tensions between different agendas as much as seeking consensus. Younger and older members of a community may differ in what they would like with regards local food provision just as local authority's might have differing priorities between departments

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on Ferguslie Community Health project and the Renfrewshire Food Strategy is available from Christine at Ferguslie Community Health Project, Tannahill Centre, Blackstoun Rd, Paisley PA3 Tel: 0141 887 9650

<sup>2</sup> Helen is Health Development Officer with West Dumbartonshire Partnership.

never mind from other agencies or the private sector.

Most importantly she felt any partnership working or food strategies had to be inherently empowering and not contribute to volunteer burn out.

Both contributors agreed that everyone had a lot to learn regarding 'working together' and that local communities had as much to teach others as to learn themselves.

***"the challenge is to get communities to feel trusted"***

# Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Town
Andy	Moir	North Lanarkshire Council	COATBRIDGE
Angela	Blair	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	LONDON
Angela	Heany	Stirling Council	STIRLING
Anne	Rennie	Stirling Health and Well-Being Alliance	STIRLING
Bill	Gray	Scottish Community Diet Project	GLASGOW
Catriona	McLean	Highland Council	ISLE OF SKYE
Christine	Reilly	Ferguslie Community Health Project	PAISLEY
Christine	Hamilton	PHIG	POLBETH
Ciara	Farrell	NEAR	EDINBURGH
Claire	McCormack	Scottish Community Diet Project	GLASGOW
Debbie	Gardner	South West Community Health Project	GLASGOW
Dorothy	Morrison	Greater Glasgow Health Board	GLASGOW
Eileen	Murray	Greater Glasgow Health Board	GLASGOW
Elaine	Welch	Glasgow Healthy City Partnership	GLASGOW
Ellen	Hurcombe	Healthy Eating Group - Chewing	GLASGOW
Elsbeth	Jaap	Food Connections	Nr OCHILTREE
Elsbeth	Gracey	Clydebank Health Issues Group	CLYDEBANK
Fiona	Smith	Primary Care Trust	IRVINE
Gilbert	Feron	Cambuslang Food & Health Project	CAMBUSLANG

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Town
Gordon	McAlonan	Renfrewshire Community Diet Strategy Group	PAISLEY
Hazel	Broome	Tayside Health Promotion Centre	DUNDEE
Heather	Middleton	Perth & Kinross Council	PERTH
Helen	Muir	Foxbar Resource Centre	PAISLEY
Helen	Scammell	West Dumbartonshire Partnership	DUMBARTON
Helen Louise	Douse	Vale of Leven Health Promotion	DUMBARTON
Ian	Doctor	Environmental & Contract Services	ALLOA
Ivy	Siegfried	Generation Partnership South West Forum	GREENOCK
Jacqui	Webster	SUSTAIN	LONDON
Jan	Cresswell	Greater Glasgow Health Board	GLASGOW
Janet	McComb	SWD	OCHILTREE
Janet	Cameron	Healthy Islands Partnership Food and Health Group	ISLE OF LEWIS
Janette	McCormick	Stirling Health and Well-Being Alliance	STIRLING
Janey	Brown	Forth Valley Primary Care NHS Trust	LARBERT
Jean	Smith	Food Connections	CUMNOCK
Jo	Farrington	Calderdale Health Promotion	OLDHAM
John	Dunn	Phoenix Health Project	GREENOCK
Joy	Cherkaoui	Health Promotion	DUMFRIES
Kirsty	Aird	Scottish Consumer Council	GLASGOW
Linda	Davidson	Health Promotions	ABERDEEN

First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Town
Linda	McGrath	Perth and Kinross Dietetic Services	PERTH
Linda	Boodhna	Fife Primary Care Trust (Nutrition & Dietetics)	CUPAR
Lizanne	Hume	Scottish Community Diet Project	GLASGOW
Lorna	Hall	Borders Primary Care NHS Trust	MELROSE
Lynn	Brennan	Cambuslang Food & Health Project	CAMBUSLANG
M.	McMillen	ALLIES	KILMARNOCK
Mary	Atkinson	Yorkhill NHS Trust	GLASGOW
Maureen	McGowan	Ferguslie Health Forum	PAISLEY
Moyra	Burns	Lothian Health Board	Edinburgh
Pat	Blythe	ECFI	Edinburgh
Paul	Yallop	Food Connections	NEW CUMNOCK
Roslyn	Grant	Vale of Leven Hospital	ALEXANDRIA
Ruth	Brown	ALLIES	KILMARNOCK
Ruth	Tweedie	Lanarkshire Health Board	HAMILTON
Sheila	McMahon	Community Development and Health Project	DUNDEE
Tom	Stockdale	McCarrison Society	DUMFRIES
Vivienne	Davies	Breakfast for Homeless	EDINBURGH

**THANK YOU** to the informative speakers, efficient workshop facilitators, meticulous note-takers, excellent summer-uppers, all the enthusiastic participants and the staff of the Municipal Buildings for looking after us so well. Particular thanks are due to Claire McCormack, the SCDP Administrator for whom this was her last event before leaving the project.





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