



Fact Sheet

JUNE 2011

The impact of investing small amounts of funding in community food and health organisations

Summary

In January 2011, Community Food and Health (Scotland) or CFHS provided community food retailers with small amounts of funding to promote their activities, with the aim of increasing their sales of fruit and vegetables.

- Eighteen community food initiatives were awarded a total of £5700
- Over 50 fruit and vegetables outlets (co-ops, stalls and community shops) benefitted from the funding.
- Many reported the funding had made a positive impact on their organisations, including an increase in sales and customers.

What can we learn from this funding programme?

The feedback from applicants reaffirms that small amounts of funding can enable community food retailers to deliver new activities that increase their customer numbers or sales.

“the funding has enabled us to promote our co-ops at a time when they were struggling and has helped to ‘bring them back to life’”

The feedback highlights that community retailers are aware of the importance of running promotional activities, but may lack the resources to do so, or as often as they would like.

However, the feedback also indicates that organisations are willing to invest in promoting their services, if they have the resources.

The feedback also highlights that the applicants understand the communities they work with and their food and health needs, as demonstrated by the range and types of promotional activities that they ran.

Why offer this funding?

CFHS is committed to supporting the sustainability of community food initiatives. This has included working with the Scottish Grocers Federation’s ‘Healthyliving’ programme (SGF HL) to deliver its training and resources to community food retailers in order to increase sales of fruit and vegetables.

To date, this has included the delivery of nine of the programme’s training sessions, a ‘training the trainers’ session and long-term loan of 45 display stands.

The Scottish Grocers Federation’s ‘Healthyliving’ programme is a Scottish Government funded programme that works with convenience stores, with the aim of increasing access to fruit and vegetables, particularly in low income areas.

In January, the SGF 'Healthyliving' programme ran a 'Healthy Living' fortnight with many of the convenience stores that are participating in the programme. The retailers were encouraged to promote fruit and vegetables and a range of other healthier foods (including, low fat yoghurts, wholegrain breakfast cereals, porridge oats, wholemeal bread, 1% milk and fish) and were provided with branded point of sales materials.

CFHS wanted to provide community food retailers with an opportunity to promote their activities at the same time, in order to increase their income through greater sales of fruit and vegetables. Community food retailers that had taken part in one of the SGF HL training sessions were invited to apply for between £150 and £900 to run promotional activities during January, depending on number of community food co-ops and outlets they were running or supporting.

Eighteen organisations applied for the funding, who between them were planning to run activities in over 50 fruit and vegetable co-ops and outlets. Appendix 1 contains a list of the organisations, the activities they delivered and the amount of funding they were awarded.

In February and March, applicants were asked about their promotional activities and how successful these had been, including any feedback they had had from their customers. They were also asked if they intended to run any similar activities in the future. Responses were received from every applicant.

What did they do?

Every organisation used their funding differently. However, the types of

activities run can be clustered into the following:

- producing / purchasing publicity materials
- selling fruit and vegetables at reduced costs
- encouraging customers to try new / alternative fruit and vegetables
- publicising new fruit and vegetable co-ops

Some applicants used their funding for more than one of the above.

Nine of the applicants ran one fruit and vegetable outlet (co-op, stall or shop). Nine managed or ran two or more outlets. One applicant (Volunteer Centre Fife) supports groups that are setting up or running co-ops in the West Fife area but does not manage or run any.

Producing / purchasing publicity materials

Nine of the organisations used some or all of the funding awarded to produce publicity materials, including leaflets, posters and banners. Two used the funding to meet some of the costs of producing and distributing newsletters, one in a local area, one local authority-wide. For example:

Broomhouse Health Strategy Group produced a winter newsletter which was distributed to the 1500 households in the Broomhouse area of Edinburgh. The newsletter included a 'Buy One Get One Free' voucher, redeemable at the Group's shop.

"we had excellent feedback, with many customers coming back through the week to try other varieties of soup"

Selling fruit and vegetable at reduced cost

Nine of the organisations used the funding to subsidise the cost of selling items of fruit and vegetables. Some

subsidised the cost of particular types of fruit or vegetables, others the costs of all the produce on sale for a set period of time. For example:

Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership used their funding for a half-price week in all of the co-ops they support.

The **Sunflower Nursery** in Lochgelly provided a free healthy snack pack for every child attending.

Encouraging customers to try other fruit and vegetables

Twelve of the organisations ran tasting sessions and three ran cookery sessions, all with the aim of expanding the range of fruit and vegetables that their customers buy. For example:

Co Chommun Eirisgeidh on the island of Eriskay ran a cookery and tasting session open to everyone living on the island. Around 25% of the island's population (35 people) took part.

Lets Make it Better in Stirling tied their activities in with National Breakfast Week. Their 'breakfast around the world' sessions were run over several weeks with the clients from several local groups that they work with. Produce from their fruit and vegetable stall was used to make different breakfast juices and drinks for their customers to try.

Uig Community Co-operative Ltd on the island of Lewis provided a free salad bar and fresh fruit for the local primary school for two weeks, as well as more unusual vegetables for the school cook to incorporate into the school meals.

Promoting new food co-ops and outlets

Three organisations applied for funding to promote a new food co-op.

What was the impact?

The applicants were asked for feedback about how their activities had gone. They were also asked about feedback from their customers.

Increased sales

Seven of the applicants offering subsidised fruit and vegetables stated that their sales had increased during the period when their promotional activities ran. One organisation reported an on-going increase in sales. One applicant that ran taster sessions stated customers had purchased fruit and vegetables as a result of taking part. For example:

During the week that they ran their promotional activities, **Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership** reported an increase in sales of 40%.

East Lothian Roots and Fruits reported a dramatic increase in both sales and the number of customers using their co-ops. The increase in sales is continuing.

Tullibody Fruit Barra sold 169 soup bags and 184 fruit bags, more than anticipated. **Broomhouse Health Strategy Group** expected to sell 90 soup bags but sold 132.

Edinburgh Community Food use of a SGF 'healthyliving' programme display stand at Inchpark Food Co-op increased the amount of sales.

"there was a real buzz around the food co-ops....the volunteers from the food co-ops....were extremely happy to be given this opportunity to increase their salesand attract new customers.

This gave them a much needed morale boost during a difficult sales period"

Increasing range of fruit and vegetables purchased

Some of the organisations that ran tasting or cookery sessions reported that their customers were purchasing a bigger range of fruit and vegetables.

Working with others

Six of the organisations delivered their activities in partnership or with the support of other organisations. For example:

Tullibody Fruit Barra and Uig Community Co-op ran their activities with the support of the staff in their local primary schools.

Co Chomunn Eirisgeidh worked very closely with a health promotion officer, the local volunteer centre development worker and the primary school to plan and deliver their event. The primary school children were involved in preparing some of the dishes.

“the day was a great success...”

Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society used a local social enterprise printer to produce their promotional leaflets and posters.

“your grant funding has enabled us to show the community that positive changes can happen, slowly but surely...”

What next?

Ten of the organisations stated that they intended or hoped to continue to run promotional activities. For example:

- Tullibody Fruit Barra is hoping to build partnerships with the Parent Teachers Associations in the four local primary schools, in order to sell fruit and vegetables through the schools.
- Uig Community Co-operative will continue to supply a free salad bar

to the local primary school once a week.

- Broomhouse Health Strategy Group’s volunteers agreed to continue to provide a wider range of soup packs for sale.
- Co Chomunn Eirisgeidh was planning to run another cookery and taster event for the island’s Over 60’s club.
- East Lothian Roots and Fruits is continuing to run a weekly ‘special offer’ promoting a fruit or vegetable that sells well.
- North Glasgow Community Food Initiative and Utheo Ltd are hoping to run further tasting sessions.

“We are running a promotion this week....we are inundated with customers! It works!!”

How had the funding impacted on the applicants’ organisations?

The funding enabled the organisations to run promotional activities while removing or reducing the financial risk.

It also enabled some of them to run new or additional activities, enhancing the range of services they offered.

One organisation reported that running the promotional activities reinforced their need to keep the experience of shopping at their co-ops varied and interesting, to retain existing customers and attract new ones. They added that customers attracted to the co-ops because of the special offers realised how competitive the prices were compared to local supermarkets.

Other organisations reported that

- the co-ops they support used the activities to encourage customer feedback about their services

- the funding enabled them to promote their co-ops at a time when they were struggling, and that it helped 'bring them back to life'
- their promotional activities rewarded the volunteers involved in running a food co-op they supported
- the funding had enabled them to show the local community that positive changes can happen, if slowly

Challenges

Seven applicants were unable to deliver their activities they had planned, or were unable to do so when they intended. The reasons cited included staffing restrictions, delays with moving to new premises and issues with a partner organisation that stopped the activity going ahead. For example:

East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op had originally intended to use their funding to produce publicity for a new co-op being opened in another town. They were not able to proceed with the new co-op as they hoped. After discussion with CFHS, the funding was used for a newsletter.

Because of higher demand than anticipated, three applicants used some of their funding intended for other activities to provide more subsidised fruit and vegetables.

What now?

Some of the organisations funded reported increased sales or customer numbers, with some of these indicating that these increases continued when their promotional activities ended. To measure the longer term impact of the funding, the community food retailers

will be contacted in late summer/autumn 2011.

Others were unable to demonstrate a similar short-term impact because of the type of activity they ran, or because of delays in delivering their promotional activities. These organisations will also be contacted at the same time to ascertain if the activities have resulted in an increase in sales.

Appendix One

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITES RUN	WHAT FUNDING WAS USED FOR	AMOUNT AWARDED
Broomhouse Health Strategy Group	Ran a 'winter soup week', selling a range of soup bags for half-price (50p). Promoted the week in their winter newsletter, circulated to every household in the area. Newsletter included a voucher for a half-price soup bag.	Purchase produce for 90 soup bags; producing and distributing newsletter	£150
Cambuslang and Rutherglen Community Health Initiative	Piloted a new food co-op in the Burnhill area of Rutherglen	Purchase of stock for the co-op; volunteer expenses	£150
CFINE West Lothian	Subsidised special offers for the co-ops they support (4) , and in the co-ops that they run themselves (2). Also ran 'too good to be true' offers. Offered tasters at the co-ops. Bought 6 PVC advertising banners.	Subsidising purchase of fruit and vegetables; production of banners	£900
Clydesdale Community Food Market	Ran a half-price day, alongside a cookery taster session.	Purchase of produce for session and soup packs; production of recipes	£150
Coalburn Miners Welfare Charitable Society	Produced leaflets about the fruit stall (600) for distribution throughout the village, and 6 posters. Used a local social enterprise to produce the materials	As stated	£150
Co Chomunn Eirisgeidh Ltd	Ran a cookery and taster session, with support from a health promotion officer and the volunteer centre development worker. School pupils assisted with preparing some of the recipes.	Purchase of fruit and vegetables; hall hire; production of recipe cards; bus hire (to take participants to hall)	£150
Cumbernauld and District Community Food Co-op	Ran a promotional day with a local voluntary organisation, and two within the local further education college. Provided fruit tasting.	Purchase of fruit	£150
East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op	Produced a newsletter about EDFC which was distributed throughout the local authority area.	Part-funded cost of producing newsletters	£300
East Lothian Roots and Fruits	Ran smoothie making and fruit and vegetable tasting sessions. Ran soup bags & '5-a-day' promotions, and special offers. Produce recipe sheets. Also bought two promotional banners	Purchase of fruit and vegetables; purchase of smoothie maker; purchase of banners	£450

Edinburgh Community Food	Ran taster sessions, provided 'welcome back' soup packs offer. Linked events in with delivery of Scottish Grocers Federation's 'healthyliving' programme training session (Inchpark Co-op) and a session on pricing (Gate 55).	Production of advertising leaflets and recipes; purchase of exotic fruits and soup bag ingredients; volunteer expenses	£450
Getting Better Together Ltd	Ran two fruit tasting sessions at a voluntary organisation's food co-op that they supply with fruit and vegetables. Also ran a half-day basic cookery session in Shotts Healthy Living Centre.	Purchase of produce; production of recipe cards	£150
Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership	Ran a 'half-price week' at all the co-ops and fruit stalls they support or run (12), including those that had not taken part in a SGF 'heathyliving' training session.	Purchase of produce; production of recipe cards	£750
Lets Make It Better	Ran 'breakfast around the world' sessions in the Sunlight Cafe, offering a range of breakfast juices and drink to clients from other organisations that were using the cafe. Used the range of produce that is normally sold from their fruit and vegetable stall	Purchase of produce	£150
North Glasgow Community Food Initiative	Ran tasters at the co-ops and stalls that they run. Linked this into a customer survey.	Production of promotional leaflets and recipe cards; purchase of sundries required for tasters (plates, cups); sessional staff costs	£450
Utheo Ltd	Ran taster sessions	Purchase of produce for soup packs; production of promotional fliers, poster and recipe cards	£150
Tullibody Fruit Barra	Sold half-price soup and fruit bags through four local primary schools. Used a pre-order system.	Purchase of produce	£150
Uig Community Co-operative Ltd	Provided a salad bar for two weeks for the local primary school. Also provided fresh fruit for the children to taste, and more unusual vegetables for the school cook to use	Purchase of produce; staff cost to prepare the produce; production of promotional material	£150

<p>Volunteer Centre Fife</p>	<p>Worked with four co-ops that they support.</p> <p><u>Benarty Food group</u> ran a taster session and sold more unusual fruit and vegetables.</p> <p><u>Sunshine Nursery</u> in Lochgelly provided a free healthy snack pack for every nursery child and ran a 'buy one get one free' offer on all the produce they sold for one week.</p> <p><u>Kincardine Activities and Social Group</u> used the funding to produce promotional materials for their opening week, and to subsidise the cost of 'buy one get one free' soup packs</p> <p><u>Inverkeithing Community Family Group</u> provided smoothies at a local event</p>	<p>Purchase of smoothie-makers; production of promotional materials; subsidising the cost of purchase of produce</p>	<p>£750</p>
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