Not only . . . but also

Celebrating the contribution of community food initiatives towards developing local outcomes

About CFHS

Community Food and Health (Scotland) or CFHS aims to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity, ability and confidence to access a healthy and acceptable diet for themselves, their families and their communities. We do this by supporting work with and within low-income communities that addresses health inequalities and barriers to healthy and affordable food.

Barriers being addressed by community-based initiatives are:

Availability – increasing access to fruit and vegetables of an acceptable quality and cost

Affordability – tackling not only the cost of shopping but also getting to the shops

Skills – improving confidence and skills in cooking and shopping

Culture – overcoming ingrained habits

Through our work we aim to support communities to:
- Identify barriers to a healthy balanced diet
- Develop local responses to addressing these barriers, and
- Highlight where actions at other levels, or in other sectors are required.

We value the experience, understanding, skills and knowledge within Scotland's community food initiatives and their unique contribution to developing and delivering policy and practice at all levels.

Acknowledgements

The authors of this report would like to thank everyone who provided information. This information has allowed an analysis and celebration of the contribution community food initiatives make to delivering and designing local outcomes across Scotland. In particular we would like to thank those who helped provide illuminating case studies from across the country.

Community Food and Health (Scotland) would like to acknowledge the work of the Scottish Community Development Centre in delivering this research on behalf of CFHS. It would have been difficult to have had a more appropriate body undertaking the study, and we appreciate the depth of knowledge and understanding they brought to this piece of work

Contents

Foreword

"What's the point?", is the exasperation felt by many individuals, families and communities experiencing the consequences of austerity and facing uncertainty in many aspects of their lives. It is also the question many local authorities and NHS Boards ask themselves as they make decisions on how best to apply ever scarcer resources. Community food initiatives, their management committees, volunteers, and employees are also concerned that there is a point to their efforts and that they are making a difference.

This report builds on a previous study that looked at the contribution of community food initiatives to delivering national outcomes by focussing on the design and delivery of local outcomes around food and health. What has been compiled is a picture of the contribution currently being made, alongside an identification of the opportunities available and the challenges to be faced.

I would like to think that the following report both informs and inspires. It certainly confirms that there is a point to work being undertaken at a community level, a point to work involving communities themselves, and a point to ensuring that community food initiatives are adequately invested in.

Marieke Dwarshuis
Senior Director, Consumer Focus Scotland

Background

In 2010 Community Food and Health (Scotland) published 'Celebrating Outcomes', to highlight the contribution that community food and health initiatives make across Scotland. This publication made it clear that not only were these initiatives of great benefit to the people they worked with, but were also directly contributing to the achievement of the national performance framework, **Scotland Performs**.

Scotland Performs sets out 16 national outcomes that the Scottish Government seeks to achieve as part of its wider ambition to,

"...focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing economic sustainable growth".

Single Outcome Agreements have been drawn up in each local authority area, by Community Planning Partnerships and agreed with Scottish Government. These were a great opportunity for the various interests across local government, health services, the community and voluntary sector and others to set out how they would interpret the national performance framework locally to respond to their key concerns and priorities. Reports on progress for all 32 Single Outcome Agreements can be found at the Improvement Service website.

The thinking underpinning an outcome-led approach includes the ideas of partnership and collaboration, recognising that only by working together can many of the outcomes become achievable. The idea is that we should envisage a future, more advantageous, state of affairs and design work to attain this, rather than simply doing things because the funds are available, or because they have always been done that way.

Encouraged by this change in direction, policy makers and practitioners are increasingly turning to ways of doing things with people, rather than for them. **Community engagement**, **co-production** and **asset-based approaches** are all examples of this shift in perspective. In the wake of the Christie Commission report, public services are being reformed with a greater focus on prevention, collaboration and on working with people and communities. It could be argued that community food initiatives have always worked in this way, and perhaps this is why they have a wealth of experience from which others can learn.

(Please note that the terms highlighted in bold are explained in more detail on page 23).

What is this report about?

The earlier report, Celebrating Outcomes, showed how community food initiatives were contributing in particular to five of the outcomes in the national performance framework:

• Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
• Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
• We live longer, healthier lives.
• We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
• We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

For this report we focus on more local matters.

Community food initiatives are increasingly adopting an outcome-driven approach in their planning and activities. Sometimes this is because their role is recognised in the single outcome agreement or in one of the more specific policies that it encompasses. Elsewhere, initiatives have introduced or contributed to discussions at community level on the outcomes important to the community, and are now working to help bring about these changes.

In this report community groups highlight their role in designing and achieving local outcomes using their knowledge and experience of community organising and engagement with other sectors. They also highlight the impact they have on much more than food.

Because their work has this wider impact on the environment, on mental health, and community wellbeing, community food initiatives are key players in health improvement. The more they have a profile and recognition locally, the more they will be able to offer their local communities in future.

How did we do this?

We invited initiatives to contact us through the CFHS Fare Choice newsletter, CHEX–Point Snippets and at the 2011 CFHS annual networking conference. We also contacted initiatives whose work had previously been profiled in Fare Choice, at earlier conferences, and in other publications.

We visited six initiatives and contacted others by telephone and email. We asked all these initiatives about:

Understanding of local outcomes
What they understood to be meant by 'local outcomes', and whether they considered that their work contributes to such local outcomes. How do they contribute, and who benefits?

Setting local outcomes
We asked about the ways in which local outcomes were identified and agreed, and what role the initiatives have in this process. We also asked how the process was shaped and led, and who plays a significant role.

The outcomes they are working towards
We asked about how initiatives see the future, and what their vision is.

How they were helping achieve the outcomes
The initiatives were working in different ways and in different circumstances. We asked how they organise themselves and plan their work.

How they would know whether their outcomes had been achieved
Knowing whether outcomes have been achieved, and learning lessons, are both important. We asked how each initiative evaluates its work .

The strategic and policy context
We explored the local and national policies relevant to each initiative, and how these inform practice.

Each of the initiatives has confirmed that the way they are described accurately reflects their position at the time of writing (March 2012).

We also checked the Single Outcome Agreements from every Scottish local authority to find out the extent to which they specify outcomes relating to food and health, or describe activities that contribute to those outcomes.

Who did we hear from?

Harbour Howff - a community café run by a mental health charity rooted in its Fife community, established on a social enterprise model.

Broomhouse Health Strategy Group in Edinburgh, a neighbourhood-based initiative that promotes healthy lifestyles by providing access to affordable food, and raises awareness of health issues.

Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership, which supports a network of food co-ops and leads on several action areas in the Single Outcome Agreement.

East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op, a recent initiative with its origins in the community planning partnership.

Edinburgh Community Cafés Network, which demonstrates the value of networking and sharing skills and experience between initiatives of a similar type.

SAGE, a partnership based in the Greater Glasgow area promoting community growing, influencing policy on community and food issues, and supporting local food activities.

Cassiltoun Housing Association and **Wellhouse Community Trust**. Both these Glasgow-based initiatives are examples of the ways in which community-based housing associations are developing a wider role in their communities: seeking to create employment, develop skills, encourage enterprise and improve community facilities. Cassiltoun has established a 'craft café' to involve older people in crafts, and is setting up a community garden, while the Wellhouse Trust has an allotment with 10 plots, for local families and people with disabilities.

Stepping Out, a mental health initiative in East Lothian that makes use of a small garden in Musselburgh to grow produce for Stepping Out's lunch and supper clubs. As with Stepping Out's other activities, the aim of this work is to improve mental and physical wellbeing.

What did we find?

Community groups and organisations across Scotland are doing inspiring food work. They are encouraging local supply and production, encouraging healthier eating, making better quality food more affordable, and bringing people together in local communities. On the following pages we see how some of these things can and do happen.

All the initiatives find that thinking about outcomes is helpful to them, and we discuss how this works in practice later on. It encourages a clear sense of purpose, and highlights the importance of collaboration and community-wide activity.

We found that there are two ways of looking at outcomes. One is the 'official' statement of intended outcomes written into a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). We analysed SOAs for every Scottish local authority and found that most include local priorities around food and health. Some of these refer explicitly to food, mainly in relation to tackling obesity, particularly obesity amongst children. A few SOAs refer to the need to make healthy food, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, more affordable and more easily available at a local level. By and large, very few SOAs refer directly to community food growing. The only clear exception to this is the Western Isles, which advocates, as a means to improving health, the establishing of "community croft/allotment schemes to encourage local produce" and making "Growing food locally [...] a sustainable option."

Food initiatives are able to demonstrate that their work contributes to achieving these outcomes, and in some cases initiatives have been able to help shape and design the outcomes.

Other initiatives also work towards local outcomes, but these outcomes have been agreed by a range of community interests that have come together, rather than by a local authority or health board. These are less official, but may be closer or more useful to the community as there will have been more involvement in discussions and plans.

When we looked more closely at the contribution made by the initiatives, we came to the conclusion that they were making a significant contribution locally to at least two further outcomes in the National Performance Framework that were not highlighted in the earlier report. These are:

- We have strong resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

As we shall see, community food initiatives are very much part of the network of activities and organisations that, taken together, play an important role in making communities more resilient and supportive. Where they take responsibility for delivering public services in partnership with public bodies, they do so in a way that is often more efficient and more responsive than would be the case with a traditional 'top-down' approach.

In addition, respondents cited other impacts that relate to the national outcomes for employability by providing routes into work, reducing the environmental impact of production and consumption by encouraging local growing and sourcing of produce, and in many cases helping people maintain their independence as they get older through lunch clubs, community cafés or food distribution. These impacts illustrate the close relationship between local outcomes and the national vision, but it is the local impact that matters most to the organisations we spoke to.

The Meldrum Café
MMB was formed after a Planning for Real Exercise had been carried out where the community had identified several projects that they believed would improve the experience of living in Oldmeldrum but there was no vehicle to action them.

"We have been open now for nearly five years. The café is in Meldrum Town Hall, which was the admin centre for the town before local government reorganisation. The building had become run down and, despite its central location, poorly used. We have gone on to take over the management of the whole Town Hall building as a venue for community events. Throughout we have had the full support of a range of community groups including the Community Council and Aberdeenshire Council who let us have the premises for a nominal rent on a long lease.

The refurbishment of the Town Hall is now complete and we have seen a significant increase in usage already with, for example, craft fairs, children's parties, fencing, yoga, photography classes, dance classes etc. We also provide catering for away-day style functions.

The café is the only one in the town and has provided a very widespread social benefit. Our volunteers (50-60) have been very stable with men and women, under 18s, and special needs groups all represented. We have kept prices low but still have enough cash reserves to give grants to local groups and subsidise the hall operations should that prove necessary.

We provide work experience, a friendly informal place to meet, an information exchange, an informal help desk'(we now also give free access to Citizens Advice outreach workers). We have a substantial new build housing programme with a 50% increase in population ongoing. The café/ town hall aims to integrate newcomers and has had a number of volunteers wishing to get to know people.

We are a Community Interest Company with four Directors - all unpaid. The refurbishment has proved difficult with the effort required to co-ordinate both our own workmen and those of Aberdeenshire Council who were doing some external works - and keep the café on track. However the good outcome has been that some of the café volunteers have stepped up to take over more of the café management which I had previously undertaken."

Recognising the contribution …

We found that outcomes can be identified at various levels and we have selected case studies that represent this diversity. Outcomes can be specific to individuals, such as the members of Harbour Howff. Expanding outwards, outcomes can relate to a defined neighbourhood, such as with the Broomhouse Health Strategy Group. We can also think of local outcomes in terms of those agreed within networks – Edinburgh Community Cafés network is an example. SAGE has developed outcomes in terms of the development support it offers across a regional area. Finally, local outcomes can be understood as being set at a local authority level. Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership and East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op both work explicitly towards such outcomes, one as a community-run social enterprise, the other as an initiative of the Council itself.

Community organisations can and do play a wide range of roles in helping achieve outcomes: building skills and confidence, understanding local needs, designing and managing services, or bringing people together.

We discovered that initiatives often find themselves put into outcome boxes decided by others. For example they may be seen (and funded) as contributing to better mental health, or to improving diet and tackling obesity, or improving circumstances for a particular group

such as older people. Yet most initiatives we talked with spoke of a much wider impact on a range of things – their complaint was that the added value of this wider impact was rarely recognised or valued.

This wider impact includes:
- contributing to community empowerment through stronger community organisations and networks;
- helping different cultures understand each other better;
- learning new skills, self-confidence and self-belief;
- enhancing employability;
- providing informal social care and support;
- bringing often excluded groups such as people with mental health problems into the community; and
- influencing the provision and enhancing the value of public services.

Finally, we found that most of the initiatives survive due to the energy and enthusiasm of people in the communities in which they work. Sometimes we found a visionary leader; more often we found a lot of hard-working volunteers. But in all cases, there was a concern about how to fund core operational costs to ensure good management, compliance with regulations, and good recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers alike.

Growth and development

Harbour Howff is a community café run by ENeRGI Enterprises. Located on the Fife Coastal Path by St Monans harbour, it is a social enterprise and community café, and focuses on supporting people with mental health and/or substance misuse difficulties to re-engage with social interaction and a working environment.

ENeRGI has three main activities: Drop-in, based in St Monans but open to users from across north-east Fife and providing outreach and accompanying services, as well as the drop-in centre; a Housing Support service, providing support and information for people in their homes funded by Fife Council and centred on the East Neuk villages; and the Harbour Howff itself.

The main purpose of the Howff is to provide a local community venue, good quality food, and to offer support in training and life skills through volunteering, training and work placements. Some of the volunteers have mental health difficulties and are referred either through ENeRGI's services or other agencies such as Elmwood College. Some have learning difficulties or mental health difficulties and are in process of 'moving on'. The base in the community makes it accessible to mental health service users when compared with institutional settings. Being a

"Small local things often work better than big bureaucratic things ... the more chronic the social needs are the better community services work."

social enterprise helps break down barriers and reduce stigma - it was found that when an information card was produced to inform café visitors of the purpose of the café, it generated great interest, and had a positive impact generating discussion, support and donations.

Recognising local outcomes

Relevant local outcomes are documented in the Fife Community Plan, and in the National Framework for mental health policies and are interpreted by Glenrothes and North-east Fife Community Health Partnership. The community plan has six main themes and these are referred to in applications for funding to demonstrate how the initiative contributes to outcomes related to each theme. Although the primary purpose of the Harbour Howff is to support vulnerable people to re-engage with society, in doing so it also improves health and wellbeing;

enhances employability; and provides good quality food in the community at an affordable price. It has a Community Card that allows people a 50% reduction in price. As part of the East Neuk economy, it fills gaps that would otherwise exist.

The Manager represents the voluntary sector on the local health partnership and has an established working relationship with Fife Council's locality manager and a wide range of other agencies.

The impacts of the café are that it helps reduce stigma and challenges stereotypes. The advantage of a café setting for people with mental health difficulties is that they have to meet others and work with them; there is also the positive experience of being part of a staff team. The café is used by several local groups as well as by individual customers, and it provides good, wholesome food.

There has been some expansion in recent months: ENeRGI secured Climate Challenge funding to establish a gardening project in the village, and also succeeded in recently taking on two café assistants through the Community Jobs Fund – this being the first dedicated funding for the café itself.

Observations

The local outcomes approach embeds a philosophy of normalisation and inclusion, not isolation or institutionalisation in working with people with mental health difficulties, as well as providing mental health services where they would otherwise not exist.

As a social enterprise it was originally hoped that the café would contribute funds to the parent organisation, but there have been difficulties in maintaining this business model. The board has faced the challenge of balancing business needs against its charitable aims. Even now it just breaks even financially despite being dependent on a high level of voluntary effort. Recruiting people with mental health difficulties can be challenging - they may not always be well enough to be fully involved, and this calls for sensitive management and substantial support.

The café is rented from Fife Council but participation in the 'Comfort Break' policy (by which the Council pays companies to make their toilet facilities available to the public) meets ¾ of the rental cost.

Broomhouse Health Strategy Group (BHSG)

Growth and development

BHSG originated as a food co-op established by local volunteers almost 20 years ago. The fruit and veg co-op is still the core service but many other activities and projects have been added.

They include:
- A partnership project with the Broomhouse Centre to establish a health hub through a joint bid for health inequalities funding.
- Employing a community development worker to raise awareness of health services and how to access them.
- Community-led identification of needs and gaps: production of a local and city-wide map of services of potential benefit.
- A drop-in service for support and signposting (on non-medical health issues).
- Setting up new services in response to gaps – for example Fit n' Healthy which combines cooking and aerobics targeting obesity.
- The initiative runs tasters, open days, recipes and cooking classes and a cooking drop-in service. It brings in skills from the wider world - for example Mexican cooking.
- It is well meshed in to a large number of local and city-wide networks, partnerships and relationships including community learning and development, nutrition students, schools, the medical centre and dieticians.

- The adjacent one-stop shop does a lot of advice work and refers people to BHSG – a reciprocal relationship.
- BHSG is part of SW Edinburgh health inequalities group, itself a sub-group of the city-wide Health Inequalities Standing Group.

Recognising outcomes

The key outcomes for the initiative are not so much to do with accessibility and affordability of food, but are to do with,

"Empowering people – we are building confidence and self-esteem through cooking."

The community development worker attends and contributes to the South-west Area Neighbourhood Partnership, which oversees and 'claims' outcomes, and also links to the health inequalities group. The latter provides for information exchange, collaboration and avoiding duplication of services. The group is also a member of Lothian Community Health

Projects Forum and South-west Edinburgh Voluntary Sector Forum.

Needs are identified in several ways: they can be based on health needs assessment carried out by the NHS; surveys of customers; open days; and talking to people during groups sessions or at the drop-in. The group aims to be responsive to community wants and needs. Currently there are plans to work with the local walking group and give them a disposable camera so they can film issues and needs and provide a direct personal perspective.

Having said all that, it is important to recognise that,

"Things evolve – we can't be too prescriptive. As a community organisation we can be flexible and responsive and funders are almost always happy with this."

Some observations

In addition to the outcomes in relation to food, health and empowerment, there are also gains for individuals: the volunteers benefit directly, and many of them have health issues and are disabled.

BHSG has survived and grown by building complex and rich relationships locally and across the city. It recognises that success breeds success, better reputation, more funding and more recognition. An earlier strategy based around counselling was discontinued once it was realised that it tended to individualise and separate service-users from the community, rather than mesh them into the community. Volunteering, when well supported, is much more effective in 'bringing people on'.

It also helps to be able to deliver services on behalf of the NHS and others. For example, local professionals are hard pressed when it comes to tackling obesity (a HEAT target), yet the strategy group can work to this outcome at low cost and to good effect.

Nevertheless, success is absolutely dependent on the motivation and enthusiasm of key staff, good volunteers, and an effective management committee. When this is all in place there is a virtuous circle of development and change.

It is beneficial to the initiative and the community for staff to participate in the various neighbourhood partnerships that establish priorities, co-ordinate effort and manage outcomes. Nevertheless these activities are unpaid and are a cost to be borne by an organisation with tight budgets.

Edinburgh Community Cafés Network

Growth and development

The main aim of the network is to bring community cafés from across Edinburgh together to support each other. Following on from a capacity building programme for community food initiatives funded by CFHS, with five member community cafés, the Network continued to exist on its own after an open meeting established that there was still a real appetite amongst cafés to be joined up. Quickly, the Network began to grow and, altogether, there are now around 30 cafés in the Network.

Although there are no strict criteria to be part of the group, cafés tend to have a charitable or community-oriented purpose. They range from cafés that are part of a family centre with a community development approach (Dr Bell's Family Centre in Leith), to those that are the heart of a local church community centre (the Bridge Community Café in Wester Hailes). Across Edinburgh, the Network sees itself as helping to bring together diverse groups – which benefits communities as well as individuals.

The cafés and the work of the Network fit in with various community development-related approaches. For instance, there is a strong social enterprise dimension to the work of community cafés. The work of some members fits with an asset-based model, in that they have being looking into what material, individual

In addition, there is a spirit of 'co-production' within the Network, with many cafés being set up and run with help of service users or members. More people are engaged locally as a result, and community members can contribute to cafés at various different levels, from simply completing evaluation forms to attending meetings.

Recognising local outcomes

The group meets every six weeks or so to chat about where they are going, however there is no co-ordinated approach, with each café having its own individual aims and objectives. These include the following:

- Being sociable
- Supporting people to develop skills
- Being independent
- Being inclusive and welcoming
- Promoting healthier eating
- Providing fair-trade, ethical and locally produced food
- Being efficient, professional and modern
- Combating isolation
- Encouraging volunteering

Very few of the cafés are funded, making them less likely to think of their work in terms of meeting outcomes. Furthermore, unless they are specifically health initiatives, most cafés will not know what outcomes are set by local planners. Indeed, health is not necessarily a priority for the cafés, although some are starting to see it that way.

Instead, cafés tend to be more focused on inclusion and social cohesion. This is achieved through initiatives such as lunch clubs, volunteering opportunities and, importantly, through staff, volunteers and customers being able to chat together. In this way, the community cafés act as a first step into the community. Therefore, without explicitly focusing on locally set targets, community cafés contribute hugely to local outcomes, in terms of health, local economic growth, social wellbeing and integration.

Sow and Grow Everywhere (SAGE)

Growth and development

SAGE is a partnership between founders Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership, the public arts charity NVA and ERZ landscape architects, along with eight local authorities in the Glasgow city region, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Environment Trust. Established to promote community growing, influence policy around community and food related issues and support local food activities, SAGE acts as a hub for community food growing organisations in this region. Individuals and organisations can come to SAGE for information; networking; funding advice; and knowledge and learning. SAGE also provides a Community Growing Kit, which is a flexible wooden apparatus ideal for turning derelict land into growing spaces in urban surroundings.

The organisation's beginnings can be traced back to a survey in 2009 of community food growing in the Glasgow and Clyde area. This found numerous challenges to growing food in urban areas, including a lack of funding, infrastructure and learning support in addition to the difficulty of overcoming bureaucracy. The report argued that with so much derelict land in Glasgow – especially in deprived areas – much more should be done to support communities to grow their own food.

The initiative grew out of this report and sees its own outcomes as:
1 To stimulate local food growing.
2 To engage communities in growing as a social activity.
3 To open up more land for food production.

Recognising local outcomes

The benefits of community food growing are immense and extremely varied. Some of the benefits are quantifiable, such as improved physical health, mental wellbeing and increased community activity and engagement. Much of the positive impact of such work is shown qualitatively, such as through self-assessments. People are able to show how beneficial food growing has been for their community at many different levels and, therefore, SAGE views qualitative evaluation as very important.

SAGE contributes significantly to the actual shaping of local and national agendas on food growing. The report into food growing from which SAGE emerged has influenced thinking in this area, and had an impact on related policies. In addition, its campaigning has helped to make community food growing more of a priority at local levels.

SAGE is a strategic partner for growing projects with NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and believes that such a partnership is important as it can lead to 'agile and versatile' local outcomes.

Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership

Growth and development

Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership (LCFHP) is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It has local/community management with five board members nominated by the food co-op network that it supports, who direct organisation policy and priorities. It provides a wide range of support and services from this base, including:

- The core activity of supporting 37 food co-ops across North and South Lanarkshire – this was the original purpose of the organisation.
- High Five for Fruit – a contract with North Lanarkshire Council Learning and Leisure Dept providing free fruit to every nursery child in 126 locations weekly, with a nutritionist delivering cookery classes for children, parents and carers.
- Bee Healthy – one of eight healthy weight community pathfinders – managed on behalf of North Lanarkshire Council for Scottish Government.
- Two nutritionists providing cooking and nutritional advice working with community groups.
- Fruits and Roots – a social enterprise that sells fruit to companies, some of which are involved in Healthy Working Lives on a commercial basis, and cross-subsidises core work

in disadvantaged areas.
- A recently started home delivery/referred delivery service.
- £97k from enterprise growth fund to improve resources to provide and supply local grown fruit and vegetables: employ a Commercial Manager, driver and vehicle to maximise income.
- Produce is bought from local growing projects when in season – and they specify local produce from wholesalers (17%).
- Runs catering for local authority, NHS and other events.

Recognising local outcomes

Working within North Lanarkshire Council's food and nutrition policy, LCFHP leads on several of the outcomes stated in the SOA. The policy covers all aspects of food and nutrition both in schools and in the community. It is managed through a working group of which LCFHP is a member, and which enabled it to help establish priorities and shape policy. In this way the outcomes identified by the LCFHP Board could be aligned with those in the food and health policy and local community plans.

Whilst this is positive and helpful, one issue of concern is that as far as public bodies and funders are concerned, LCFHP is in the 'food and health' policy box, which means its impact on other outcome areas such as employability, volunteering, mental health and social inequalities is not properly recognised or valued.

LCFHP has developed an innovative approach to evaluation. Every summer three students from Glasgow University conduct separate evaluations as part of their dissertations. Students have also helped to develop a Healthy Eating toolkit, a useful source of information and ideas for community based workers.

A logic model is in preparation showing how each of the activities described earlier eventually leads to outcomes stated in the National Performance Framework. It is interesting to note that the outcomes LCFHP are most interested in are the ones it can have a direct, local impact on and which are therefore much more immediate that those in the national performance framework.

Some observations

LCFHP is a good example of a community-led social enterprise that covers a NHS board area and two local authority areas. As a social enterprise, it illustrates some of the hard choices that have to be made to maintain balance between core mission and need to generate income. One long standing debate at the board is to get the correct balance between income-earning and meeting the core purpose – defined as 'supporting low-income communities to make positive decisions about diet, by providing access to high quality fruit and veg, and access to the means of preparing and cooking it.' As a social enterprise that must generate income to survive and to be able to deliver services to low-income communities it is important that it understands why its business has succeeded and grown. The main factors identified are that it is trusted and has a known track record, its wealth of experience and expertise and its ability to be flexible and innovative, making it relatively risk-free and good value to public service commissioners.

East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op

Growth and development

East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op was launched in March 2010 in response to local NHS and Community Planning Partnership surveys that showed that only 40% of respondents consumed at least five portions of fruit and/or vegetables per day.

East Dunbartonshire contains high unemployment and social inequalities. The food co-op gives people access to good quality, low-cost, fresh fruit and vegetables with the aim of improving health, and also offer volunteering opportunities where individuals can develop new skills for future employment.

A partnership between East Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership and Hillhead Housing Association, the co-op was developed in thorough consultation with local residents following the National Standards for Community Engagement.

This grassroots approach has overcome initial apathy – people in the Hillhead area had an attitude of, "We've seen all this before" due to years of projects starting and stopping. It took a lot of convincing, but residents now have full ownership of the initiative.

"Without the volunteers and their dedication, passion and commitment, the project would not have worked."

The first food co-op was launched at Hillhead Community Centre on 1st March 2010. Since then a further five food co-ops have been set up locally, with more planned dependent on funding and capacity of staff. Ongoing evaluation has shown that, since its launch, 11,000 customers have purchased £73,000 of fruit and vegetables from the food co-ops and 6,400 hours of voluntary work have been carried out by 28 volunteers.

Recognising local outcomes

In terms of local outcomes, the Local Authority, CHP and partners have made commitments in their 2009-2011 Joint Health Improvement Plan (JHIP) to work in partnership to improve health and wellbeing and to reduce health inequalities locally. For instance, 'nutrition' is one of the 14 JHIP topics, containing objectives of providing "better access to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables" using "volunteer based outreach community food co-op[s]".

Another JHIP objective is "to increase the capacity of local communities to deliver healthy eating programmes and messages" through "local people with the knowledge and skills in delivering healthy eating programmes to areas where the uptake of five portions of fruit and/or vegetables daily is low."

The food co-ops have other benefits in addition to these health outcomes. Volunteers learn transferable skills and qualifications that can add to their employability as well as their general confidence and self-esteem. Moreover, by focusing and building on the diverse assets of volunteers by working with them as 'co-producers', the initiative aims to improve the wider wellbeing of the community. A volunteer evaluation conducted by the local CHP[1] found that volunteers had benefited in terms of acquired skills, physical and mental health, confidence and self-esteem, and social capital.

Volunteer quotes

"It's a great link to the community and as a TEAM we all gel together and support one another. I get loads of satisfaction from volunteering – as much as someone would get from playing a sport."

"If I hadn't been ill I would never have attended 'conditioning management' which directed me to the volunteering project. This project has directed me back into part-time employment after more than 20 years so GOOD can come out of BAD."

"It has been a good experience. It has given me more confidence. It has helped me to work as part of a team."

Other insights

In order to continue to meet local outcomes, it was suggested that it was necessary for public agencies to work co-productively. It was recognised however, that the task of taking on and supporting a food co-op can sometimes be daunting, and public bodies taking this forward need to be reassured that their investment will lead towards clear and measurable outcomes for everyone involved.

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1   Volunteering Evaluation East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op 2011

Selected outcomes and how initiatives contribute

Food availability, affordability, and quality
This is of course the main purpose of most community food initiatives: the outcome is that people have access to good quality, healthy and affordable food, and are more skilled and confident if cooking classes, recipe sharing or food-growing initiatives are part of the mix.

Volunteering, mobilising, and community capability
Most community food initiatives depend on voluntary work for their continued activity – indeed, having good volunteering policy and practice in place is seen as critical by most. Over time, such community activity can reach into other local issues and interests so that a local community can become stronger – ensuring a better quality of life.

Inequality and exclusion
Initiatives tend to be found where they are most needed; where people would otherwise have difficulty in affording and sourcing the foods they need. So they can be seen as playing their part in combating inequality, and seeking to include people who might otherwise be left out: eg. they often include people with learning difficulties or mobility problems.

Mental health
Several mental health projects today see growing and preparing food as an important part of rebuilding confidence and engagement for people recovering from mental health problems. Initiatives that are community based and provide opportunities for volunteering, employment, meeting others and building links within the wider community are particularly successful at supporting recovery.

Community economy, local sourcing, environmental and ecological issues
A further dimension is the move towards more sustainable, resilient communities based on making the most of the assets they have, and emphasising the value of locally grown and locally sourced foodstuffs. This is seen as having environmental benefits by reducing 'food miles', as well as encouraging local economic activity to counterbalance the ever-increasing influence of the hypermarket culture.

Community and social enterprise
Community food initiatives may be set up as community or social enterprises. This means that they develop as a business that trades or contracts to provide services, and uses the income generated to subsidise activities that would otherwise lose money and therefore be vulnerable. This route also contributes to the local economy while also encouraging employability or creating local jobs.

Community networking and social interaction
Some initiatives, especially those based around cafés or skills, have an invaluable role in bringing people together. Meals and food are often the glue that brings families together: the same can be said of their role in bringing people together in communities, combating isolation, encouraging contact and providing mutual care and support.

Thinking logically: logic models and local outcomes

Logic models are being developed as a graphic way of showing how local initiatives connect and build with each other. This is done through a chain of actions and outcomes illustrating how they ultimately contribute to outcomes in Single Outcome Agreements. Here is an example of a logic model that shows how it works.

This is a helpful aid to understanding, and does demonstrate the important role that community initiatives can play in achieving local outcomes within a broader policy context. However, such models can also underestimate the range of outcomes that initiatives may have, but which are not recognised in that particular logic model. In the example shown, the role of the initiative is defined in terms of its contribution to making food more affordable, itself part of the national outcome that 'we live longer, healthier lives'. It is seen as one of many activities leading towards this outcome, but its other outcomes go unrecognised because they are not in the chain of interest.

To remedy this, we can turn a logic model on its head to demonstrate the wider range of outcomes that an initiative may encourage, as below:
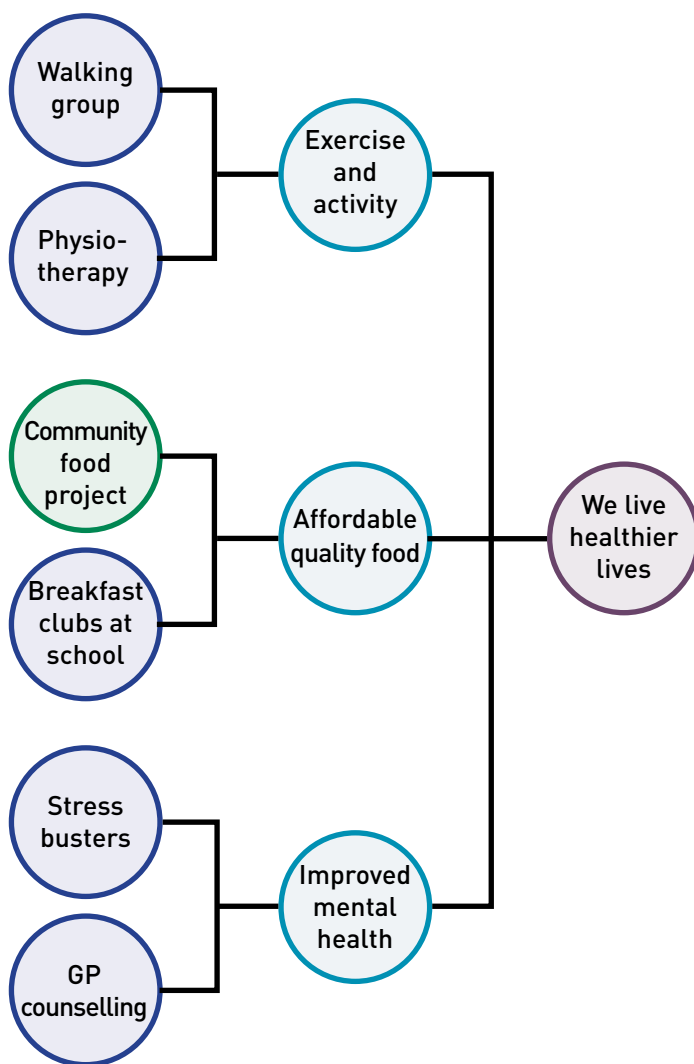
This example illustrates the way in which community food initiatives do not only have an impact on food availability and affordability, but also have many other impacts in their community and contribute more widely that would otherwise be unrecognised.

Outcomes and practice

We have argued that local outcomes are important and shown why we think this is so. But how can projects and initiatives adopt an outcome focused approach? Here are some pointers:

Encourage discussion and debate locally between people and with local officials. What is the place of food in the community? What are the good things and the bad things? How would we like things to be in future?

Engage widely so that as many people and interests as possible are involved and have their say.

Back it up with local research.

State the issues, needs and opportunities.

Specify the outcomes to establish a vision and a sense of direction.

Get buy-in, whether this is a community-led or public body-led initiative.

Think about evaluation from the start so that people will know when the outcomes have been achieved.

Decide how to proceed, considering what actions are possible and think through how likely they are to achieve the outcomes.

Use assets wisely and with focus.

Keep everybody informed of what is happening, what has been achieved, and how to get involved. Make sure public bodies know all about it, not just the community itself.

Food, community development and local outcomes

Community food initiatives are often part of an important network of projects and activities within a neighbourhood. They can include community councils or neighbourhood associations, environmental action groups, youth clubs, housing associations, faith groups, social clubs and many others. Where such a rich network of activity is in place we are likely to see a vibrant, active and healthy community, one that protects and cares for its people and one that encourages wellbeing.

Such a community is likely to display many of the characteristics sought within policy: it will have material and social assets and make best use of them; it is likely to engage with decisions on services and development; it will have the capacity to be active and to respond to opportunities and deal with challenges; and it is likely to have a vibrant local social economy as well.

Food is a particularly good issue to mobilise communities around; it is practical, tangible, visible, cross-generational, appeals to almost everyone, and has often been the catalyst for initiation and development of more formal community health projects.

Being part of this mix is where community food initiatives play an important role in community development. Food is important to communities, and the closer people can be to growing, distributing, preparing and sharing food, the more explicit this importance will be.

Local outcomes are therefore important. Most community initiatives are understandably most closely concerned with them, and with the wellbeing of the community or neighbourhood they connect with. While these outcomes may well be consistent with wider policy outcomes nevertheless it is at the local level that they are most important.

Local outcomes are the expression of a bottom-up approach to change, led by people and organisations at local level. As such they are likely to be well understood and widely valued. They become part of a developmental approach that recognises and builds on the assets that communities have, whether those assets are social financial or lie in the energy and motivation of people to do things themselves. Building on assets in this way encourages people to take more control or responsibility over their lives and to relate better to others. This helps build communities that are friendlier, safer and more stable - which is what people want as well as what policy makers desire.

Such communities are best placed to work with public bodies to generate workable solutions to recognised problems. This way of working, which can be described as co-production, involves both in a shared endeavour to find the best way to meet needs as well as engaging people in doing so. This in turn helps communities become more resilient and more sustainable.

Perhaps all this means that, taken together, the outcomes from community food initiatives when looked at alongside other community projects and services such as youth groups, local colleges, housing associations and other activities of all sorts, are not as clearly recognised by planners and managers in the public services as they should be. These public services (and charitable funders) do recognise that relatively small amounts of funding can deliver great results if steered through a well-run community organisation. What they have yet to recognise is that, taken together, the funds steered to the network of projects and initiatives in a given area (especially an area of deprivation) multiplies the overall value and impact of the funds.

Such recognition is anticipated in the debates around public service reform. The next challenge is to make this network of value more clearly visible to community planning, community health partnerships and all the others that seek to improve people's lives while at the same time trying to save money.

Finding out more: useful websites and references

National outcomes
Celebrating Outcomes; celebrating the contribution of community food initiatives towards meeting national outcomes for Scotland, was published by CFHS in 2011.
www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/cfhscelebratingoutcomes-8255.pdf

The National Performance Framework and Single Outcome Agreements
The National Performance Framework and explanation of the key themes can all be accessed via:
www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms
Single Outcome Agreements for 2009 onwards can be found at:
www.improvementservice.org.uk/library/577-single-outcome-agreements/681-phase-2-single-outcome-agreements-2009-onwards/view-category

Community engagement and empowerment
Lots of information, advice and practical approaches can be accessed from
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/engage

Co-production
Communities working in partnership with public bodies to design and deliver services together is being advocated as a beneficial way to improve public service delivery. For more information go to:
www.scdc.org.uk/co-production-scotland

Community assets
Food projects can be seen as an asset-based approach to community development. More information can be found at www.scdc.org.uk/assets-scotland/ and at www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/getattachment/aedb15fb-a64a-4d71-a2d6-e8e6e865319b/Appreciating-Assets.aspx

Logic modelling
NHS Health Scotland advocate logic models to demonstrate and evidence the connections between actions and outcomes. Further information at: www.healthscotland.com/OFHI/index.html.
CFHS, working with Evaluation Support Scotland (http://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/index.asp), assisted community groups working on food and early years to logic model.
www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/cfhseysecstagethreereport-7469.pdf

CFHS has also logic modelled the contribution of community food initiatives to the Scottish Government's Preventing Obesity Route Map.
www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/fileuploads/cfhsfactsheetobesityroutemapmarch2011-2700.pdf

Outcomes and practice
SCDC recommends an outcome led approach to planning and evaluating all sorts of work involving communities. Further information about the LEAP and VOiCE resources is available from
www.scdc.org.uk/what/LEAP

More information on the case study projects
The Harbour Howff / Energi: stmonans.org.uk/blog/?p=918
Broomhouse Health Strategy group: www.healthstrategygroup.org.uk
Edinburgh Community Cafés Network: www.edinburghcommunitycafes.org.uk
Sow and Grow Everywhere (SAGE): www.sowandgroweverywhere.org
Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership: see article at www.fhascot.org.uk/Resource/a-very-fruitful-partnership
East Dunbartonshire Food Co-op: see presentation at www.phru.net/Promoting%20Volunteering%20in%20Health%20Improvement/Overview%20of%20Food%20Co-op.pdf

General resources for work on food and community-led health
These are available from Community Food and Health (Scotland), Community Health Exchange (CHEX), and the Scottish Healthy Living Centre Alliance
www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk , www.chex.org.uk , www.shlca.co.uk