

Note of Community Food SEN Morning Session, Wed 7th March '18, Grassmarket CP, Edinburgh.

Sustainability (including procurement)		
Issues identified	Solutions suggested	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some activities / services can't generate income and income generation isn't always a key aim of a community food initiative. • Tension between charity and social enterprise, i.e. balancing social mission / servicing a community with income generation can be very difficult. • Limited or restricted organisational capacity • We are not ready for tendering • Aligning income generation to core service provision • Fear of competition • Lack of trust prevents collaboration • Time taken looking for funding impinges on time that can be used for development, and affects planning and project timescales • Accessing advice and long-term guidance on building a sustainable, self-funded social enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide if income generation / enterprise is part of what you do. • Annual review of social mission/business objectives • Keep in touch with service users • Put in place a short term working group and call on external expertise if required. • Identify the dream, where you want to be, what we do now, who does it? • Take time out to dream big and think outside the box. • Forward plan your next 3-5 years (use stages) and develop an Action Plan • Identify the strengths you need to build & do a skills analysis within the organisation • Assess and review capacity regularly • Make use of different partnerships to help carry the load and to ease funding and resource flow. • Adaptability e.g. making use of FareShare, communities, growers, etc. • Make use of networks, DTAS, development trusts and transition movement. • Explore different business models, considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cash flow - Income mix 	<p>Identify Community Learning Exchange opportunities (Senscot)</p> <p>Explore potential Community Food SEN session with P4P (Senscot)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social investment a priority - Breaking even - Commercial perspective • Study visits to see different financial business models and how they operate. 	
Business Growth / Planning		
Issues identified	Solutions suggested	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties increasing customer base • Potential developments identified but limited capacity of organisation prevents this being progressed • Need to develop business skills to & capacity to build enterprise • Limited / restricted capacity of organisation (funding & staff) • Trying to avoid being funding led and mission drift • The Board not understanding operational issues, priorities or need for business growth • Not sharing good practice for fear of losing out on funding / resources to others • Community food groups often focused on own sector and not considering the associated areas of work. • Traditional charities / community food groups resistance to become more enterprising. • Volunteer development & support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding & identifying clients. • Use of cold calling / knocking on doors to increase customer base. • Assess and review capacity regularly • Acknowledge when there's a lack of skills & limitations so it can then be addressed & supported. • Exploring & developing pricing systems that can run alongside one another e.g. meal / soup packets can have two different pricings, one for community and another for SE, plus a pay it forward to subsidise. Flexible approach here is vital. • Bring in skills and expertise from 'outside' (e.g. appoint board members from organisations with knowledge, or pay for external support from for other organisations / consultants) • Asking for help and tapping into support that's out there <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership for Procurement - Just Enterprise • Exchange knowledge and experience 	<p>Identify Community Learning Exchange opportunities (Senscot)</p> <p>Explore potential Community Food SEN session with P4P (Senscot)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to use food as a core element & expand to other associated services. E.g. recognise & promote contribution to improving health & wellbeing etc. • Understanding & planning the contribution of volunteers in a way that fits with business growth. E.g. Is there a template to calculate contribution? 	
Marketing		
Issues identified	Solutions suggested	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of marketing budget and uncertainty on how to resource marketing or training for this • Marketing skill set is needed • Promotional work e.g. cold calling and knocking on doors can be time intensive. • Lack of commercial awareness • Need a better understanding of the consumer • Marketing is not the same as communications... only use social media if comfortable doing so and can use it appropriately • Collaboration still needs a lead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of ‘people stories’, many consider this the most effective marketing. • Ask for help to maximise & tap into what’s already out there. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use networks (social enterprise networks & beyond) to maximise your investment & returns - Healthy Living Awards (Healthy Working Lives) - Pre-existing public engagement by the SE can be used to promote projects - Potential for local community anchor organisations to lead, e.g. community development trusts. • Collaborate to develop approaches to marketing, benchmarking and pricing. E.g. Glasgow Community Food Network – membership makes it powerful. • Collaboration through social media, awareness raising, festivals, etc. to maximise the human interaction and ‘buzz’ of social media. 	<p>Identify Community Learning Exchange opportunities (Senscot)</p> <p>Explore potential Community Food SEN session with P4P (Senscot)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider CSR of big companies, social & environmental responsibility and the different ways of showing this, make it relatable and consider what will motivate people e.g. tax deductible, health benefits. • A branding for community food. • Change the language used in any branding to get 'buy in' from potential customers / stakeholders. • Learn from successful models elsewhere <p>Top Tips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative engagement and consider 'what's in it for me? What's in it for the client?' - Presentation is key - 2 photos and / or video along with fewer words will engage the audience - Use taglines and link to something to retain the audience - Use the press, radio to sell your story - Knock on doors to raise awareness - promotional & relatable videos for public - Use strong visual information around a site, use of seasonal events 	
Resources (staffing, funding, premises, equipment)		
Issues identified	Solutions suggested	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core funding threatened • Funding for start-up core staff capacity • Challenge of sourcing funding for charitable work and social enterprise • Need for match funding for income generation officer post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of funding needs to change, with a need for longer term funding to support & increase organisational capacity. • Evaluation – use this to influence content of LOIPs / convince public sector / other funders to support community food initiatives. 	<p>Identify Community Learning Exchange opportunities (Senscot)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer recruitment, retention and reliability • Managing & supporting volunteers is resource intensive and affects organisational capacity • Workforce not having the right skills set • Very small or no training budgets • Sourcing affordable training for staff and volunteers • Lack of access to rentable and affordable growing and kitchen space for our pop-ups • Lack of suitable storage space / equipment • Unsuitable physical environments • Securing quantity in terms of supply e.g. fruit for offices • Dependence on big food markets and difficulties in moving towards smaller, local and organic suppliers • Affordable coffee shop supplies • Cooperative growing community supported agriculture • Different experiences, including quality issues in using surplus food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit a broader & more diverse volunteer base, making this easier to manage if/ when volunteers move on. • Learn from successful models, make use of expertise and resources from across sector and collaborate where possible. 	
Policies & procedures		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting the right policies, procedures and insurances in place to ensure we can work with a diverse range of young people • Sheer number! • GDPR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring in skills and expertise from 'outside' (e.g. appoint board members from organisations with knowledge, or pay for external support from for other organisations / consultants). E.g. GDPR 	
Impact		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to capture data on social impact • Success stories • Volunteers 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End user experience 		
Start up		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing proposals without data around social impact yet as my social enterprise has just started • Funding for start-up core staff capacity, • Core start up to be used for 'assets' • Collecting data 		