



PROPAGATE
RETHINKING LOCAL FOOD



Grow Cook Eat

End of Project Evaluation Report

Cooking and Growing Food Project – Lockerbie & Moffat
Delivered by DG Community Food Network - Propagate
Funded by DG Council - AE Tackling Poverty Fund

The funding we received was to pay for:

- the rental of rooms with a kitchen
- Course session delivery
- Co-ordination
- Cooking ingredients
- Equipment
- Growing materials – compost, seeds, tubs (many recycled) etc

- Practical sessions on growing - what can be grown in a small space or windowsill on a budget
- Education on nutrition and how to eat healthily on a budget
- Practical sessions on cooking with the healthy produce that can be grown and sourced locally on a budget

What We Delivered

We received 75% of our funding and so we had to reduce what we could achieve slightly and delivered two 6 week courses in Annandale and Eskdale, one in Moffat and one in Lockerbie.

Working partnership with NHS Health Improvement team who helped with recipe ideas and resources and local organisations helped us to stretch the budget. Lockerbie Old School sent a volunteer to help with the growing sessions and **Upper Annan Church** also sent a volunteer to help and allowed us to use their kitchen for the classes. We paid for the Town Hall room and kitchen in Lockerbie.

The Sessions were designed to provide people with the skills to cook simple and nutritious meals on a budget. We cooked together, looking at how to make positive food

choices and how to make things stretch. At the end we provided each participant with a recipes and resources booklet for you to take away and a certificate of completion.

Part of the course was also to get hands on with some basic food growing. Each week taught the participants how to grow some of the ingredients used in the cooking part of the session. Every week they took home the things they had planted to grow on and eat when harvested.

Numbers and Impact/Outcomes achieved

People attending

- Lockerbie - 15 participants completed the entire course
- Moffat – 8 participants completed the entire course
- Total people directly benefitting was 23
- Wider impact – 17 people out of the 23 participants had families and so the impact of these people learning to feed their families nutritious food and reduce food poverty reached another 42 people including children.
- Total direct benefit – 65 people

The project aimed to support the follow Annandale & Eskdale Area Committee priorities and we can say that through the success of this project we did meet all of these outcomes:

Food Insecurity:

Education on ingredients and how to use them, how it saves money and improves health. Growing food is a great way to reduce food insecurity and inequality. Quality vegetables and fruit can be expensive and growing your own using recycled materials can be a way to access healthy food cheaply - these session taught the skills to achieve this and inspired people to continue to not only cook and grow the recipes supplied but also to start researching for themselves.

Child Poverty:

Teaching parents and guardians to feed families healthily can have an impact on the poverty (food and life quality) of children in the house. If money is saved on the food budget then there will be funds left over for children's other needs in the household – the project supported 23 households that included a total of 14 children who were directly benefited from the skills their parent or guardian learned during the course. Out of the households that had children 70% were single parent families. On top of this through a participant talking about the course at her child's nursery the staff have approached Propagate to see if we can run something like this for the children there.

Upskilling:

The session delivered training in both growing and eating, both of these skills are extremely beneficial to individual well-being, reducing poverty and improving health but can also lead to employment in hospitality or gardening.

Increasing Dignity/Self Esteem:

Eating more healthily has a big impact on health physically and mentally increasing self-esteem and body image. Knowing how to buy or grow quality food that is affordable can reduce the need for crisis food giving more dignity to food choices, being part of a community growing group also addresses this and our wider project supports people to get involved with local growing groups – this was definitely achieved through our project.

Supporting Independent Living:

Knowing how to cook is a big part of being independent and the skills our activities delivered improved confidence in cooking and eating well on a budget. After trying many of the recipes people were already making better food choices and working out how to batch cook making them more resilient and independent.

Whilst these were the priorities we aimed to address, the impact of the project has had a big social impact as well as the increase in people being able to feed themselves nutritious food through learning to cook and grow. Throughout the sessions both groups bonded really well and started to make friends. The unexpected outcomes of this project were:

- People exchanging phone numbers and continuing to cook together at each other's homes. This was especially beneficial for some of the individual people living alone as they were eating socially outside of the course and sharing the cost and time to batch cook and share these meals for their freezers.
- Growing was very new to some of the participants and the joy they got from reporting back each week how their seeds were coming on was wonderful and very encouraging to know people were growing more at home because of the courses. One older person had formed a new bond with her teenage grandson who was helping her to grow on the things she had planted at the course.
- Seed sharing was another lovely outcome that was not anticipated. Some people on the course had less cooking skills but did have some growing experience and they soon started to bring their own saved seeds along to the group to share.
- After a couple of weeks the group were looking for other recipes for healthy easy meals to cook and started to share their findings at the sessions. At the end the Lockerbie group formed their own chat group to continue to swap recipes and growing tips.

Through educational sessions and a non-judgemental environment we have started to break down the societal stigma around food insecurity, whilst providing information and resources on nutrition and diet.

What have we learned?

The importance of word of mouth – when people share their positive experiences and recommend the food project to others, it builds trust and credibility. This has encouraged others to attend and the pilot we ran prior to this project increased that credibility as 5 people returned to attend this course who had been on the pilot last year. On top of this through a participant talking about the course at her child's nursery the staff have approached Propagate to see if we can run something like this for the children there.

Increased understanding – engaging in these conversations has help individuals gain a better understanding of a healthy diet and began conversations between the group. This show people taking responsibility for their own health through their food choices.

Raised confidence in cooking at home. Increased interest and confidence to have a go at growing a little food at home.

Personal reflection – discussing food has led to personal reflection on food habits. It prompts individuals to contemplate their values, priorities and goals encouraging them to eat healthier.

Feedback has been excellent

Feedback and Evaluation

At the end of the course the participants were asked to complete a monitoring and evaluation *questionnaire*:

- 1. Did you enjoy the sessions? – 100% answered Yes**
- 2. Do you feel more confident in preparing and cooking new healthier foods? – 100% answered Yes**
- 3. Do you feel more confident in planting and growing vegetables? – 91% said Yes. The two people who answered No had some vulnerabilities with using gardening tools.**
- 4. Do you feel more aware of healthy lifestyle choices? – 100% answered Yes**
- 5. Do you feel more confident about shopping, menu planning and budgeting? – 100% answered Yes**
- 6. Would you attend other courses if they became available? – 100% answered Yes**

Feedback and Comments from Participants

“Feel more confident to just try other foods and fruits”

“I thought I hated beetroot but I am now going to make the Beetroot Brownies and the Beetroot coleslaw will be the one I choose! Very surprised and glad I tried”

“Lovely group, we got tips and ideas from each other as well as from Dawn”

“Brilliant course, organised and knowledgeable”

“I have been inspired to grow my own food and cook with it hopefully”

“Lovely group, really enjoyed it, thank you!”

“The ladies delivering the course were so friendly and approachable, enjoyed the sessions”

“Would love there to be more sessions, you always learn something new”

“Thoroughly enjoyed the sessions”

“Discovered you are never too old to learn”

“Would like more cooking courses”

“Thanks so much Dawn. My next recipe will definitely be the beetroot coleslaw. Hopefully we can get together for more sessions soon.”

“Thanks Dawn, will really miss the classes.”

“Don’t know what I am going to do with myself next week, have loved this course and the group!”

Rolling this Out

As part of the co-ordination of this project we have created a “Resources” pack that contains session plans, recipes, growing instructions, motivational resources and marketing materials so that this 6 week course could be rolled out using this model.

Given the feedback and evaluation in this report we hope to secure more funding to roll out more Grow Cook Eat courses across Dumfries & Galloway.

Photos:

Here a few of the many photos we took over the 6 weeks, however more can be found at our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/DGCommunityFood>

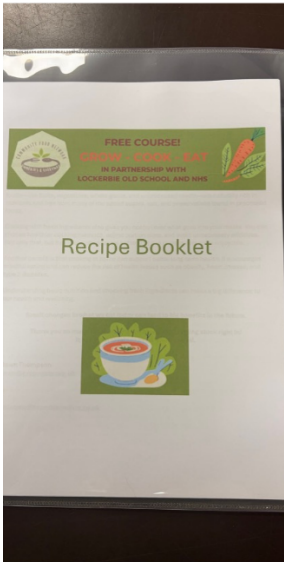
Growing



Cooking



Eating



This link takes you to our project page:

https://www.dgsustainablefoodpartnership.org/community_food

This links shows examples of the groups we support that get shared by the Sustainable Food Partnership of which we are a member representing Community Food Groups:

<https://www.dgsustainablefoodpartnership.org/community-food-projects>

This link is to our Facebook Page where we share similar activities: