

Evaluation of the Community Food Initiative Programme 2013–2015



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Foreword

Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) are all about putting healthy eating on the agenda of local communities. Many people in our population find healthy eating, especially on a budget, a daily challenge. We know that citizens living in areas of socio-economic deprivation tend to eat less healthily and suffer greater levels of diet-related ill health as a consequence.

Recent analysis on the island of Ireland has estimated that one in ten households are experiencing food poverty (1). This report summarises the evaluation of a three-year **safefood**-funded programme, delivered by Healthy Food for All, of ten CFIs based in areas of social deprivation across the island of Ireland. This follows a demonstration programme of seven CFIs that was conducted between 2010 and 2012 (2).

The report highlights that the practical community-based approach is valuable and worthwhile. Within a supportive programme the CFIs grew and delivered a range of activities in their communities that promoted the development of healthy food skills. It showed how, with a supportive network focused on food, local communities can work together to develop solutions that will improve health and tackle inequalities. Communities and individuals engaged with food and healthy eating in a way that was meaningful and relevant.

It is intended that this report will help shape future CFIs as well as influence policy.

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1 Background

What is food poverty?

Food poverty is “the inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet”. It impacts on health, culture and social participation. It is a complex issue, with no single cause. It is part of the poverty experience and is linked to a variety of factors. These include awareness of nutritional needs, self-efficacy (belief in a person’s own ability to do something successfully), and access to, affordability and availability of food.

Food poverty on the island of Ireland

Food poverty is a reality for many people on the island of Ireland (IOI). Thirteen per cent of households in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) were found to have experienced food poverty in 2013 (Department of Social Protection (1)). This is a three per cent increase since 2010. In Northern Ireland (NI) the number of individuals in absolute poverty (before housing costs) has increased from 20 per cent in 2012–2013 to 23 per cent in 2013–2014 (approximately 409,000 people) (3).

Community Food Initiatives

One way to address food poverty is through *Community Food Initiatives* (CFIs). They are local projects that use a community development approach to promote good health. They make it easier for people to make healthy food choices by promoting greater access to and availability of healthy and safe food in low-income areas. In 2010 **safefood** funded *Healthy Food for All* (HFfA), to establish and manage the Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives, 2010–2012, involving seven projects across the island of Ireland (2). Based on the learning from the demonstration programme, the current programme of CFIs was established and focused on supporting families with children.

Evaluation of the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015

This document summarises the key findings from the evaluation of the Community Food Initiatives Programme, which began in April 2013 and concluded in December 2015. In 2012 **safefood** provided HFfA with funding to establish the programme. The objectives of the programme were to

- Fund ten community-based food projects across the IOI, over a three-year period (2013, 2014 and 2015)
- Provide technical support and collective training and to facilitate networking

- Encourage projects to consider long-term sustainability from the start
- Promote shared learning amongst CFIs on the IOI
- Identify policy and best practice lessons from the programme and increase awareness of these among key stakeholders across the IOI.

In April 2013 10 locally based projects (Table 1) were given funding under the programme, following a competitive tendering process that took place at the end of 2012. (Details are provided in Appendix 1, “Guidance on programme for Community Food Initiative applicants”.) At the start of the programme each project set out a work plan and budget up to December 2015. The programme was officially launched on 11th April, 2013.

Table 1 Projects participating in the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015

CFI	Host Organisation	Location	Main Target Groups
Family Growing Project	Ballybeg Community Development Project (in partnership with Barnados)	Ballybeg, Co. Waterford	Families living in the Ballybeg estate
Eat Wise Project	Mayo North East LEADER Partnership Company Teoranta and Mayo Travellers Support Group	Ballina, Co. Mayo	Residents of local authority housing estates in Ardnaree and Parkside, Ballina
Dublin 15 Good Food Network	Blanchardstown Area Partnership	Blanchardstown, Dublin 15	Marginalised communities
Incredible Edibles Project	Cloughmills Community Action Team	Cloughmills, Co. Antrim	Cloughmills village
CHANGE	Doras Buí	Coolock, Dublin 17	One-parent families living in the north-east side of Dublin city
Grow it, Cook it, Eat it	Dunmanway Family Resource Centre	Dunmanway, Co. Cork	Disadvantaged families in Dunmanway
Fatima Food Project	Fatima Groups United	Fatima, Dublin 8	Residents of Fatima, Rialto and Dolphin
Growing Community Roots	Fettercairn Community and Youth Centre	Tallaght, Dublin 24	Local community
Community Seasonal Eating Project	Owenkillew Development Company	Gortin, Co. Tyrone	Local community
Food for Thought Project	Windsor Women’s Centre	Broadway, South Belfast	Women and their families in the surrounding area

Projects were funded up to a maximum of €45,000 or £35,000 over the three-year period. Funding was provided at six month intervals to each project directly from **safefood**. HfFA liaised with projects and **safefood** on budgetary change requests.

Healthy Food for All's role in managing the programme was to help projects share information and best practice by providing technical expertise as required, hosting two or three networking events, providing training each year and promoting the programme. Healthy Food for All recruited a development worker for this role.

2 Methodology

The CFIs were evaluated using information gathered from a number of different sources.

Questionnaires completed by Community Food Initiatives

Each CFI completed quarterly questionnaires (Appendix 2) and an annual questionnaire (Appendix 3), which documented their activities and progress. These questionnaires gathered a range of qualitative and quantitative information about different aspects of the projects, including

- The total number of participants that engaged in a range of CFI activities
- On-going activities organised by the CFI
- One-off events organised by the CFI
- Networking opportunities and training provided by the CFI
- The sustainability of the project
- Experiences of shared learning
- Technical support the CFI received from the programme
- Challenges to and successes of the project
- What were perceived to be the main “learnings” of the process?

(“Qualitative” research relies on observations and insights drawn, for example, from discussions with stakeholders. “Quantitative” research produces measurable data, for example a survey to find out the number of participants in each project.)

Site visits

The CFIs were each visited twice, first in year one and again in the final four months of the project. The purpose of the visits was to observe the development of the projects and to collect qualitative data on a range of issues including feedback from participants as to what worked well. During the visits, the CFI management were interviewed and focus groups were conducted with volunteers. The main purpose was to understand and validate the information provided in the quarterly and annual questionnaires, to identify the main themes that emerged from the discussions, and to record comments made about people’s attitudes and experiences.

Collation of feedback from the development worker

The evaluator and the development worker met on five occasions throughout the project to discuss the progress of the programme. They also exchanged emails and telephone calls on diverse aspects of the evaluation.

Stakeholder views

Fifteen members of the All-island Food Poverty Network were contacted by email in November 2015 and asked to respond to a short survey on different aspects of the programme. Six people responded to the survey.

Five additional stakeholders working in senior health and community development positions in NI and the ROI were asked for their views by phone and email in November 2015. Three of these individuals took part in a telephone interview with the evaluator.

3 Key findings

Work of Community Food Initiatives

Types of activities conducted by Community Food Initiatives

The main types of activities conducted by CFIs with the general public were

- Gardening and growing activities
- Activities that help develop cooking skills, for example cooking classes, using left-over food, running “Healthy Food Made Easy” or “Cook It!” courses, and cooking demonstrations
- Healthy eating activities such as barbeques using produce from the garden, food-tasting sessions, nutrition courses, fun events for children and social events for the family (for example “pizza night”)
- Activities that help to develop practical food skills such as meal planning, budgeting and shopping.

Other activities conducted by the CFIs include summer school, supermarket tours, distributing health information at public events, fitness programmes and social coffee mornings.

Reach of the programme and public engagement

How many people participated

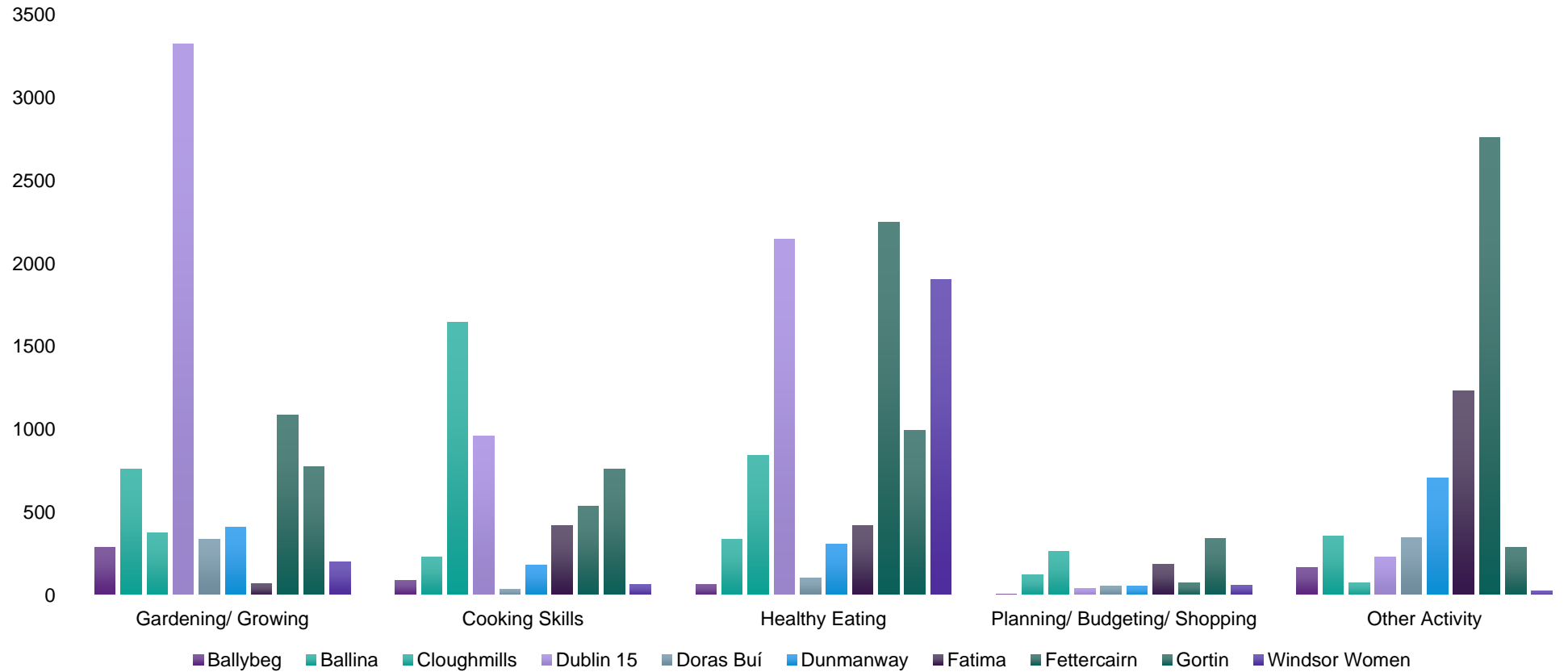
During the three years of the programme almost 30,000 individuals took part in a CFI activity, including

- 9,381 individuals who took part in healthy eating activities
- 7,635 individuals who engaged in gardening or growing activities
- 4,940 individuals who took part in activities related to learning cooking skills.

Although smaller numbers of people took part in activities that promoted food skills such as meal planning, budgeting or food shopping, participation had begun to increase during the final year of the programme. (A breakdown of the number of people participating in CFI activities in each project and in each year is provided in Appendix four). Appendix five and Figure one show the total number of people engaging in various activities across the 10 CFIs during the programme.

The numbers of participants involved across the CFIs varied (Figure 1) and this reflected differences in local population sizes and their needs relative to the target population for the CFI. Some of the locations were urban and others rural.

Figure 1 Participation in Community Food Initiatives activities by project, 2013–2015



“One-off” participation versus regular participation

An average of 82 individuals participated regularly (at least once a month) in each of the CFIs during years two and three, compared with 79 individuals in year one.

Many of the people who engaged in a CFI activity during the three years of the programme did so occasionally, for example for a “one-off” school or community event. Others engaged more regularly in a CFI core activity, such as gardening, cooking or healthy eating.

Who took part?

A majority (60 per cent) of the people participating in CFI activities were female but men were well represented at the activities also (Table 2).

Table 2 Gender and age profile of participants in each Community Food Initiative, years 1–3

	Gender		Age				
	Male %	Female %	1–12 years %	Teens %	Young Adults %	36–60 years %	Over 60 years %
Ballybeg							
Year 1	53	47	34	0	39	27	0
Year 2	36	64	75	0	0	25	0
Year 3	48	52	89	0	0	11	0
Ballina							
Year 1	53	47	15	5	25	47	8
Year 2	70	30	30	0	30	20	20
Year 3	67	33	16	8	31	31	14
Cloughmills							
Year 1	44	56	30	6	29	32	7
Year 2	50	50	23	15	3	54	7
Year 3	29	71	20	7	16	41	15
Dublin 15							
Year 1	34	66	90	2	4	4	0
Year 2	50	50	90	0	7	3	0
Year 3	48	52	88	0	2	10	0
Doras Buí							
Year 1	7	93	17	5	2	73	2
Year 2	30	70	26	0	38	36	0
Year 3	48	52	22	0	41	36	0
Dunmanway							
Year 1	38	62	0	0	3	92	5
Year 2	24	76	40	0	1	59	0
Year 3	28	72	6	6	20	66	2
Fatima							
Year 1	45	55	27	0	4	63	5
Year 2	32	68	0	0	13	80	7
Year 3	36	64	0	0	10	78	10

Fettercairn								
Year 1	33	67	66	0	18	16	0	
Year 2	37	63	70	4	4	22	0	
Year 3	49	51	50	38	0	12	0	
Gortin								
Year 1	50	50	51	0	17	28	4	
Year 2	20	80	40	0	0	24	36	
Year 3	50	50	0	0	27	60	13	
Windsor								
Year 1	32	68	53	0	15	9	23	
Year 2	38	62	63	0	0	8	28	
Year 3	16	84	46	0	0	38	16	

Values presented are rounded and as a result the total is not 100% in all cases.

Reported impact on food in communities

Target population

Community Food Initiative staff in all of the projects reported they had noticed significant changes in relation to the food habits of the participants. Changes in attitude and behaviour were self-reported (that is, described in their own words) by both the participants and CFIs. Some of the main changes reported were

- A reduction in salt, sugar and fat intake
- A general interest in different foods
- Experimenting with food never eaten before
- Replacing some convenience food with healthy food
- A greater awareness of health issues
- Enjoying growing food.

Below are some quotes from staff and participants in CFIs, which illustrate these changes.

Families involved in the CFI are now eating more fresh and simply prepared food and have gained a very positive appreciation of what is involved in growing and eating locally produced food. (CFI staff member)



When I started this course, everything was ready-made. Now I think twice about what I eat. It took two years for it to get through to me. My children are asking me for healthy food. It is a different way of eating. There is increased interest in eating the produce of the garden. There is also increased confidence in cooking for community events.

(CFI Participant, ROI)



Several of the men who attended the cookery course said that they were greatly enlightened by the new ideas, methods and innovative use of garden produce learned through the course.

(CFI Staff, NI)



Role of healthy food in community work

Most of the CFIs believe that “healthy food” is more central to their work in the community than it was prior to the establishment of the programme. One CFI said it was “much more central”, illustrated by the quote below, while another CFI was undecided.

It is definitely more central now. The CFI programme has allowed for healthy food to be brought out into the community more and has really given it a visual presence in the community. The CFI has also allowed for the issue of healthy food and food poverty to be put on the agenda of local councillors, stakeholders and organisations. (CFI staff, NI)



Local stakeholder engagement

The benefit of cooperating with a range of local stakeholders was reported by most projects. The types of local stakeholders that they engaged with included community organisations, statutory agencies, colleges, commercial bodies and individuals trained in gardening or cooking. Appendix six lists the key stakeholders identified by each CFI, for example those mentioned here.

Working with Barnardos and St. Saviours NS has enabled us to develop a programme that focuses on children learning cooking and growing skills that will have a long-term impact.

(CFI staff, ROI)



Working with the Community Health Workers has been really helpful to the work of the CFI as part of their role is to address cardiovascular health. It has enabled us to access more families through outreach (visiting families door to door), to promote the CFI programmes and topics on healthy eating on a budget.

(CFI staff, ROI)



The garden is currently used by a local pre-school, and Community Council initiatives are planned. We are well placed within the community to foster links already made with schools, training services, businesses and community groups.

(CFI staff, ROI)



Recruiting families

Attracting families to participate in the projects, and maintaining that participation, was challenging for most projects. Strategies found to be successful for engaging families included

- Providing childcare support when targeting local families, and using local facilities for learning programmes, by working with other local providers.
- Engaging with and running courses in collaboration with services and groups that are already working with families, such as parent and toddler groups and playgroups.
- Working with children and parents through schools.
- Organising interesting events and programmes that appeal to all – not just children or adults but the whole family.
- Being as child-friendly as possible by including play areas in the garden and running family events such as an Easter egg hunt, parent and child seasonal events, and so on. It is important to be mindful of family needs when planning events, for example the time of day, duration and age-appropriate activities.
- Encouraging social enjoyment of and sharing of food.
- The welcoming and open nature of garden space.
- Giving food packs and gardening materials to people as part of courses, which allows people to try things at home.
- Encouraging participation from individuals from other community groups.

Sustainability

The long-term sustainability of projects was only considered by most CFIs in the final year of the programme. This occurred even though the issue was raised by the development worker in the first year of the programme during networking events.

Most of the CFIs have “mixed feelings” about the sustainability of their projects. While most of them are reasonably hopeful that their project will survive, albeit probably less well resourced, they identified a number of barriers to sustainability including inadequate funding for staff and the maintenance and promotion of the project.

Funding process

The majority of CFIs were satisfied with the funding process and the flexible response from **safefood** to requests. Most CFIs felt that the **safefood** funding process was easier than for other funding streams. One CFI stated,

Yes, at times the lines are tight but we have found flexibility where we needed it. (CFI staff, ROI)



Conversely, two CFIs were dissatisfied by what they perceived as a slow and inflexible response to their requests, particularly in the first year of the programme:

*It is difficult to predict activities and costs three years in advance and while changes do happen we need a more prompt decision-making process from **safefood**.*

(CFI staff, ROI)



Key learnings

The CFIs were asked to identify what they perceived to be the main successes and challenges of their participation in the programme. Their self-evaluations constituted the primary source of data for the evaluation of the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015. A number of learnings were identified by the CFIs for each year of the programme (see Appendix 7) and these helped inform the key successes and challenges listed here.

Successes

- Ten CFIs were funded and established across the IOI. A number of projects said that the funding provided by **safefood** enabled the work of the CFIs to take place.
- Most of the objectives identified by the 10 projects in their initial proposals were achieved.
- A lot of work was undertaken by the CFIs with limited resources. For example, community gardens were established, and courses and public events relating to diverse aspects of healthy eating were successfully organised in different localities. Many of the events hosted by the CFIs proved very popular and were well attended.
- Appropriate administrative and budgetary structures for the projects were put in place.

- Training courses organised by the development worker for the CFIs were well attended and there was positive feedback from participants.
- Projects engaged with local community organisations, schools, statutory agencies, commercial companies and so on.
- People volunteered to work in a CFI. A good dynamic developed between the volunteers in the CFIs in most cases.
- Community Food Initiative staff observed changes in eating behaviour and more positive attitudes to healthy food consumption amongst their volunteers and some members of the public. Overall, there was enhanced awareness of the positive health benefits of eating healthy food.
- Valuable practical advice given by specialists, such as gardeners, nutritionists and chefs, helped with the development of gardens and the promotion of healthier eating habits.

People are participating in the project and gaining opportunities to learn, share, explore and practice healthy ideas and skills together. The steering group learned about issues and needs relating to food and health through involvement in the project.

(CFI staff, NI)



We raised awareness of healthy food and became a catalyst for action on food poverty. People are asking questions and wanting to find out more. We established a school garden and a community garden, and this made healthy food available, affordable and accessible.

(CFI staff, ROI)



Challenges

- Recruiting participants or engaging the target group for the project (see Section 3.1.5)
- Motivating the volunteers and managing interpersonal relations and volunteers' expectations
- Limited time and resources to plan, work and develop the project
- Concerns around the sustainability of the project when funding stops
- Insufficient number of dedicated staff, limited resources and the competing demands of other tasks
- Coping with the challenges of different seasons, especially winter, in gardens
- Insufficient community engagement and networking with local organisations and agencies
- Managing tight budgets, and the flexibility of the funding process for some projects; for example, applying for budget adjustment
- No funding to pay a gardener or any other specialist to advise, and to coordinate volunteers' work.

The main challenge was the recruitment of volunteers for the gardening group. The weather, family responsibilities and a lack of confidence in growing things are all contributory factors to this challenge. Funding is a major issue in sustaining the project.

(CFI staff, ROI)



One of our main challenges has been retaining the interest and attendance.

(CFI staff, ROI)



Technical support, collective training and network facilitation

Technical support, collective training and facilitation of networking was organised by the development worker. The CFIs were very satisfied with their support.

Role of the Healthy Food for All development worker

Activities that took place

Healthy Food for All recruited a development worker to help deliver the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015. The activities carried out by the development worker are summarised here.

Site visits

Almost 50 site visits to the projects took place during the three years of the programme. Each CFI received at least one visit per year. Fourteen visits took place in year 1, 19 site visits in year 2 and 15 visits in year 3. During site visits updates on HfFA activities and **safefood** campaigns were given. Projects were encouraged to provide input and to share information.

Site visit updates were posted on the [HfFA website](#) and Facebook page to share learning about activities and the progress of the CFIs with a wider audience. During site visits videos were taken of the participants engaged in CFI activities and were later released as a series to promote the work of the CFIs _____ They were showcased on the HfFA website, Facebook and Twitter, to **safefood** and to the CFIs.

Ongoing support

Monthly Skype meetings were held with the CFIs and relevant information was shared through social media and email. Support was also provided when budgetary changes were requested.

Networking events

The following networking and training events took place.

- The Programme Launch in Belfast (April 2013). This gave CFIs an understanding of the programme and of each other.
- A workshop for CFIs in Fettercairn: “Hopes and Expectations for the CFI Programme 2013–2015. The Way Forward”.

- The HFFA National Conference on Food Poverty in Dublin (November 2013). Community Food Initiatives were invited to represent their projects to a wider range of national stakeholders and to advocate (that is, to present their case) for future support.
- A training session on Exploring Community Engagement hosted in Dunmanway (March 2014).
- A workshop, “Sustainability of Community Food Initiatives”, hosted in Belfast (June 2014).
- A workshop, “Sustainability: Strengthening Collaborative Approaches Locally”, hosted in Ballybeg (November 2014).
- The HFFA National Conference on Eradicating Food Poverty Among Children and Young People in Ireland, held in Dublin (April 2015).
- A workshop entitled “The CFI Programme: Celebrating how far we have come”, hosted by Cloughmills (October 2015).

Promotion of Community Food Initiatives

Presentations

The Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015, was presented to a wide range of groups and organisations. The presentations shared the learning and experiences of being a CFI on the IOI and outlined the benefits and challenges of the projects. They also outlined how the CFIs were addressing food poverty and what might be done to ensure CFIs’ sustainability after the programme finished.

Presentations were predominantly made at events held in the ROI. Examples include the Healthy Food for All annual conference, Dublin City Council Social Inclusion Week, Ballymoney Borough Council (Cloughmills CFI partner) and Dublin Bloom Fringe Festival. A presentation was also made to the Mayo Local Community Development Committee.

Conferences

The development worker attended various conferences such as those hosted by the Institute for Public Health; Children and Young People’s Services Committees; and the Nutrition and Health Foundation. The development worker either gave input on food poverty and CFIs from the floor, or was invited to present the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015.

Other activities

Other activities of the development worker include

- Producing an article, “Community Food Initiatives Benefit Children and Young People”, for the Children’s and Young People’s Services Committees’ (CYPSC) e-zine.
- Meeting with the Irish Cancer Society and the Irish Heart Foundation to discuss the benefits of CFIs.

- Attendance and participation in a consultation with members on the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People with the Children’s Rights Alliance.
- Updating the HfFA website and social media channels about activities.

Meetings

Healthy Food for All and **safefood** held six-monthly meetings to discuss Community Food Initiative Programme updates and activities, as well as food poverty-related activity and opportunities to collaborate and share information. In addition monthly phone meetings were held between the development worker and **safefood**.

Within HfFA the development worker regularly attended team meetings to discuss CFI work and links to other HfFA activities and food poverty policy. They also attended Board of Management meetings to give an update on Community Food Initiative Programme activity, and Policy and Communications meetings to link CFI evidence to policy positions.

The development worker also met with the programme evaluator as necessary.

Views of stakeholders

A number of national and regional stakeholders gave their views on the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015, which are summarised here.

- Stakeholders perceived some of the key elements of the programme to include
 - Helping to create awareness of food poverty and the organisations that are working to reduce food poverty Emphasising the importance and value of eating locally produced food
 - Focusing on healthy food
 - Creating a link between eating healthy food and shopping “smart” within a budget
 - Highlighting the difficulties that many people living in marginalised areas have in gaining access to healthy food.
- The respondents felt that the most effective way of building awareness of the Community Food Initiative Programme was to target people at both local and national levels.
- A number of respondents felt that the CFIs play an important role in raising and maintaining awareness about healthy eating, and sustaining local involvement.
- When asked what they regarded to be the key benefits of the CFIs, the respondents mentioned
 - Children and parents cooking together in a fun way
 - That the CFI addresses local needs using knowledge and expertise

- Positive health and wellbeing outcomes
- That the CFI can lead to community and social cohesion
- That, above all, programmes such as this “show the way” for what can be done.
- The stakeholders believe the programme has merit in addressing food poverty by building capacity and resourcefulness.
- The stakeholders perceive the programme to have the potential to address some elements of food poverty, such as budgeting.
- Two respondents felt that the programme could be more effective if it was more aligned with existing structures and services.
- Most of the respondents said that they believe the Community Food Initiative Programme has already influenced policy.

4 Discussion

Did the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015, meet its aim and objectives?

The programme was successful in meeting its objectives. Three of the five objectives that underpinned the programme were implemented successfully and were viewed positively by CFIs: the funding and establishment of the 10 CFIs, the provision of technical support and collective training, and networking and shared learning. However, the success of encouraging CFIs to consider long-term sustainability was challenging, and is discussed in Section 4.4.

The objective of influencing policy is a long-term objective and it is not possible to say at this stage to what extent this will be successfully achieved. Nevertheless, a number of policy and best practice recommendations did emerge:

- Community Food Initiatives are best supported through a programme approach which provides a platform for accessing technical expertise, networking and training opportunities.
- Simplify and offer flexibility in governance structures for local projects e.g. simplify forms and allow flexibility to make small budget changes.
- It is very important that CFIs link up with local stakeholders and existing structures.
- Strategies for recruiting families with children are essential.
- Sustainability must be addressed from the start of any project.

Their implementation into practice can only be viewed in the long-term.

Did the Community Food Initiatives benefit from being part of a programme?

Most of the CFIs benefited from the programme approach, which is a similar finding to the demonstration programme (2). While each of them found it challenging to attend events and network, they also found the experience to be rewarding for themselves and their target groups.

The support provided by the development worker was helpful and stimulating to their work. The projects acknowledged the importance of the development worker in bringing experience and coordination to the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015.

Did the Community Food Initiatives have a broad reach within their communities?

The programme reached almost 30,000 individuals, and more than 80 people participated regularly (at least once a month) in a core activity at each of the CFIs.

The current programme targeted families with children in the general population, compared with the demonstration programme during which some CFIs targeted groups with very specific needs. This broader approach and the inclusion of three more projects will have contributed to the threefold increase in reach seen in the current programme, compared with the demonstration programme.

Most CFIs reported that their work impacted positively on the lives of their target group, for example by raising awareness of healthy food amongst people that had previously not considered it an option or a priority. Some disappointment was felt regarding the low number and relatively narrow profile of the participants by some CFIs. This outcome is due in part to the difficulties associated with attracting families and teenagers to their projects. A number of key helpful strategies for recruiting families e.g. providing childcare, were found in the programme and shared among CFIs for future activities.

By the end of the current programme, each of the projects had carried out a substantial amount of work in the development of community gardens and providing courses on diverse aspects of healthy eating. In their opinion the gardens offer people an opportunity to understand and grow healthy food, and a community space that benefits mental health. Garden development was a main focus for most CFIs in the first year and, as the projects progressed, food and cooking skills related activities grew.

Did the projects consider sustainability?

Long-term sustainability was viewed as more problematic by the CFIs, especially if the project did not have sufficient funds to continue the employment of dedicated staff or to promote itself in the local neighbourhood. Most of the projects did not focus on sustainability until the final year of the programme because they considered other issues to be more urgent during the set-up and early developmental phase.

By year three most CFIs had recognised the importance of sustainability and identified a variety of strategies to address this, including

- Identifying alternative sources of funding for maintaining and showcasing community and school gardens
- Organising special public events, for example barbecues, themed evenings and so on

- Encouraging volunteers, for example by providing appropriate training, giving them time to become familiar with the project and allowing them to consume the produce grown in the garden
- Targeting adults and children separately
- Networking and building relationships locally
- Recruiting the right people to lead the project, and having access to specialist staff or advisors such as a gardener, nutritionist or chef
- Not allowing the memories or experience gained during the programme to fade
- Developing links with other local organisations and existing structures.

At the end of the programme there were “mixed feelings” about the sustainability of the projects. In addition to funding issues, the CFIs identified a number of other barriers to sustainability, including not having enough dedicated staff or volunteers; difficulties maintaining public interest in their projects; and the reality that many of their target groups lead relatively marginalised and sometimes chaotic lives which are a barrier to participation in the programme.

Role of stakeholders and sharing of policy and best practice

At a local level stakeholders played an important role in helping CFIs to run activities, especially with recruitment of participants and provision of local expertise. Some CFIs acknowledged that engagement of local stakeholders was a challenging aspect of their project but it was clear they were aware of the potential benefits.

Most of the CFIs reported positive relationships and experiences of shared learning with external stakeholders, for example other local organisations and statutory agencies. The CFIs were active in sharing best practice among each other and often with local stakeholders.

The stakeholders interviewed in this research provided a positive view of the Community Food Initiative Programme approach and some stated that it had already influenced policy. The development worker and **safefood** promoted the CFI approach to relevant policy makers but, given that influencing policy is a long-term objective of this programme, it may be a few years before we see an outcome in this area.

5 Recommendations

There are three key recommendations from this report:

- Continue to sustain and develop the Community Food Initiative Programme approach on the IOI by providing dedicated support and resources.
- Address long-term sustainability by considering how to support CFIs after local programmes finish.
- Increase awareness of the potential of Community Food Initiative programmes among key stakeholders across the IOI with a view to effecting policy change.

6 References

1. Department of Social Protection. Social Inclusion Monitor 2013. Dublin: Department of Social Protection, 2015. http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/SIM2013_rpt_Final.pdf
2. **safefood**. Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives 2010–2012 Evaluation Report. Dublin: 2013
3. MacMahon B, Moloney N. What is the cost of a healthy food basket in Northern Ireland in 2016? Dublin: safefood, 2016.

Appendix 1

Guidance on programme for Community Food Initiative applicants

1. What types of projects are suitable for funding?

The CFI Programme follows on from a previous three-year programme, the ‘Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives’, which provided a testing ground for CFIs, with the aim of identifying the resources and supports necessary for their development on a sustainable basis.

For the new programme, local community groups will be targeted via Community Development Projects, Family Resource Centres, Local Development Groups and Voluntary and Charitable organisations. While applications will **NOT** be accepted from profit making or trading companies, individuals, local authorities or statutory bodies, collaboration with such groups during the course of the programme is welcomed e.g. HSE dieticians/Health Promotion officers, Teagasc. The funding is to support innovative projects and not solely to support an existing activity.

Here are examples of the types of projects that could be funded under the new programme:

- Buying equipment for a kitchen, e.g. pots and pans or garden e.g. gardening tools/seeds.
- Renting space to carry out training and education initiatives.
- Education, training in skills development programmes e.g. cooking, food safety and hygiene, prevention of food wastage, shopping and budgeting.
- Buying the time of a professional, e.g. part-time nutrition expert to work with groups and give classes advising on food purchasing, preparation and safe cooking practices and/or horticulturist to work with groups on community garden projects.
- Establishing and supporting food access initiatives such as community cafés and local food co-ops.
- Supporting groups to develop food related micro businesses e.g. fruit tuck shops in school/food co-ops.
- Community Supported Agriculture projects which help develop sustainable local food economies through supporting local networks.

2. What are the essential and desirable eligibility criteria to be considered for funding?

The essential criteria are as follows:

- a) Your organisation is with/within an established organisation with a proven track record in collaborative, community based projects.
- b) The target audience for your CFI has a low level of income.
- c) The focus will be on:
 1. Adults who are responsible for food shopping and meal preparation in their family and/or
 2. Children.
- d) The CFI follows a community development approach.
- e) The CFI will influence positive eating habits among families addressing some or all of the following:
 - awareness and knowledge of healthy eating
 - cooking skills, food safety and hygiene
 - prevention of food wastage, budgeting and planning skills
 - growing food
 - improving the availability and access to safe and healthy food in the community¹.

¹Please note that the more activities that the CFI plans to engage with, the more points will be awarded at the Expression of Interest and Application stages.

- f) There will be access to a space for meeting and training and other facilities such as a kitchen and/or garden if needed.
- g) Your organisation has a senior member of staff to dedicate time to the programme (this is approximately five hours per week or more depending on particular needs and will cover duties such as co-ordination of the project, attending events, completing reporting requirements, sharing learning, preparing accounts etc.).

The desirable criteria are as follows:

- h) Your organisation has an understanding of evaluation through previous experience.
- i) Your organisation has a demonstrated capacity for work planning and financial management.

3. What projects will not be funded?

The CFI Programme is looking to fund projects which are based on the eligibility criteria outlined in section two. It is important to emphasise that the funding should not be used entirely for existing work or used exclusively for employing staff, but it should help the CFI in positively influencing the

eating habits of families in the community. We are not looking to fund the following individual activities:

- Organisations that were previously successful in securing funding through the Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives.
- Salary costs for core staff, although hiring part-time staff, for a particular aspect of the project, by your organisation can be funded under the programme.
- Profit making or trading companies, individuals, local authorities or statutory bodies.
- Work that has already taken place.
- Capital costs such as a large piece of equipment or a vehicle.
- A group's on-going project or running costs: The CFI Programme is looking to invest in innovative projects piloting new practices. The funding is not solely to support an existing activity. Proposals would need to demonstrate the addition of a new component that satisfies these criteria.

4. What is meant by a 'Community Development Framework'?

The Combat Poverty Agency defined Community Development in an anti-poverty context as “the long term process whereby people who are marginalised or living in poverty work together to identify their needs, create change, exert more influence in the decisions which affect their life and work to improve the quality of their lives, the communities in which they live and the society of which they are a part”¹.

5. What is meant by 'A Programme Approach'?

Within the context of the Community Food Initiative Programme, support for CFIs will be provided through a **programme approach, as distinct from a grant scheme**. This means that projects must be able to meet the following requirements:

- a. Nominate a senior member of staff to coordinate the CFI, organise the reports and attend networking events etc.
- b. Nominate an additional member of staff to help coordinate the CFI, attend networking events etc. Please note that while salary costs for core staff will not be funded, hiring part-time staff, for a particular aspect of the project by your organisation, can be funded under the programme.

¹ Combat Poverty Agency Strategic Plan 2002-2004.

- c. Attend a networking event every four months at one of the CFIs in various locations on the island of Ireland, which will require travel and possible overnight stays (expenses will be covered by the programme budget).
- d. Give presentations on your CFI to update the other projects.
- e. Host one of the networking events (organised and co-ordinated by the development worker).
- f. Submit financial reports every six months (template to be provided).
- g. Submit all receipts at the end of each six month spending period.
- h. Submit an operational report every six months to demonstrate the progress and activities of the CFI (template to be provided).
- i. Collect and provide **qualitative** and **quantitative** data for CFI evaluation using relevant tools and methods.
- j. Host, if required, other project visits to facilitate learning.
- k. Be open to other requirements as the programme progresses and develops.

A development worker will coordinate the CFI Programme and will work with the projects to ensure that they are supported in achieving these objectives. The advantages of a programme approach are: enhanced prospects of long-term sustainability; provision of technical support; opportunities for networking and shared learning and wider dissemination of policy and practice implications.

6. How many projects will be funded?

Between seven and ten CFIs will be funded over a three-year period. The successful CFIs will form the Community Food Initiative Programme. As the programme has an all-island focus, a minimum of two projects will be selected from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

7. How long will the projects be funded for and how much will each project receive?

Each CFI will receive funding annually over a period of three years to set up, manage and sustain a project. Projects will receive up to €45,000 (£35,000) maximum over the three years and the actual budget will be decided upon at the final stage of the selection process. The budget will remain within **safefood** and the fund will be paid directly by **safefood** to the projects. In addition, all participating projects will be required to submit a progress report, financial report and a budget forecast every six months to HFFA.

8. How do applicants apply for funding?

Applicants must first complete an “Expression of Interest” form available on the HFFA website _____ or from cfi@healthyfoodforall.com. Based on the information provided in

the Expression of Interest Form, a shortlist of projects will be drawn up and these shortlisted projects will be requested to complete an official application form.

Expressions of Interest forms must be completed and e-mailed to cfi@healthyfoodforall.com before 12 noon Friday October 19th 2012

9. What is the selection process for the CFIs?

Projects will apply directly to Healthy Food for All for funding via the Expression of Interest Form. An Assessment Committee will produce a list of short-listed applications from the initial Expression of Interest applications. Short-listed CFIs will be invited to complete an application form, which will be sent to them by HFfA, and may then be asked for further information and/or a visit arranged to meet key staff and partners. A selection board will make the final decision on the chosen projects. As the programme has an all-island focus, a minimum of two projects will be selected from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

10. What level of support will be provided to the successful CFIs?

HFfA/*safefood* has appointed a development worker who will be responsible for the coordination of the programme throughout the three-year period. The development worker will work in partnership with the selected projects to identify needs and technical supports over the duration of the programme. They will also be responsible for networking between the projects and facilitating collective training and dissemination and transfer of learning among the projects.

HFfA has developed a Good Practice Guide for Community Food Initiatives, which will be used to support the selected projects. _____ In addition, learning will be drawn from the Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives and will be applied to the new programme. The development worker will also develop links with CFIs around the island of Ireland and in other countries and ensure best practice is implemented during the development of the programme.

Appendix 2

Sample Community Food Initiative Quarterly Report Form

April – June 2014

CFI PROJECT (Write in): _____

FORM COMPLETED BY/ PHONE NUMBER/

EMAIL (Write in): _____

Section 1: total participants

Q1. Please write in the total number of people that participated in a CFI activity during the three-month period, April – June 2014. This should include on-going and one-off events.

*DO NOT INCLUDE ANY INDIVIDUAL MORE THAN ONCE.

April – June 2014	Number of participants
April	
May	
June	
TOTAL IN QUARTER	

Q2. Please write in the total number of people that participated in different activities during this three-month period. You may count individuals more than once if they participated in more than one activity.

CFI Activity	Number of participants in each activity
Gardening/Growing Food	
Cooking Skills	
Healthy Eating	
Planning and Budgeting	

Shopping skills	
Other (write in)	
TOTAL IN QUARTER	

Section 2: one-off events

Please record details for all one-off events that were organised as part of your CFI for the period under review.

Date	ACTIVITY (e.g., cookery classes) (give brief description)	Total number of participants attending	Total number of CFI staff attending	Rate value of activity for the CFI project. Score 1–7 ²

Section 3: on-going events

Please record details for all ongoing events that were organised as part of your CFI for the period under review. The numbers should relate to the participants (excluding any CFI staff).

Start/End date	ACTIVITY (brief description)	Total number of participants this quarter	Male/ Female %	Age range %	Success rates ³ number	Rate value of activity for the CFI project. Score 1–7 ⁴
			M	1–12 years	Joined	

² This is a seven-point scale, where 1 represents the lowest score and 7 the highest. You can also choose any number in between. This rating is based on how successful you believe the activity was, based on feedback, your targets for the event etc.

³ How many people joined the project during the quarter; how many left during the quarter, how many people remain engaged with the project, and how many completed the activity?

⁴ This is a seven-point scale, where 1 represents the lowest score and 7 the highest. You can also choose any number in between.

			F	Teenagers Young Adults 36–60 years Elderly	Left Remaining Completed	
			M	1–12 years Teenagers Young Adults 36–60 years Elderly	Joined Left Remaining Completed	
			F	1–12 years Teenagers Young Adults 36–60 years Elderly	Joined Left Remaining Completed	
			M	1–12 years Teenagers Young Adults 36–60 years Elderly	Joined Left Remaining Completed	

Section 4: other CFI activities

Please record details of any other activity not already recorded above.

Activity	Description of activity	Total number involved from CFI	Rate value of activity for the CFI project (Score 1–7 ⁵)
Networking			
Training			
Sustainability of project			
Project Management			
PR/ Advertising			
Other (write in)			

SECTION 5: OVERVIEW

Q1. What are the **main challenges/problems** you encountered this quarter?

Q2. How did your programme resolve these issues?

Q3. What are the **main successes** you achieved this quarter?

Q4. What are the **main 'learnings'** for your project this quarter?

Q5. What changes (if any) have you noticed in relation to food habits and learning from your participants, e.g. have they reported any changes in the foods they eat or attitudes to food (please give specific examples, if possible)?

Q6. Anything else?

⁵ This is a seven-point scale, where 1 represents the lowest score and 7 the highest. You can also choose any number in between.

Appendix 3

Sample Community Food Initiative Annual Questionnaire, year three

A. CFI MANAGEMENT

Q1. Why did you apply to join the Community Food Initiative Programme? What did you hope to gain or resolve? Your rationale etc.?

Q2a. Overall, how satisfied are you with (a) the progress of the CFI Programme and (b) your experience in being part of the programme?

(Prompt: Did you achieve what you expected in the way you expected?)

	Progress of CFI Programme	Being Part of CFI Programme
Very Satisfied	1	1
Satisfied	2	2
Mixed Feelings	3	3
Not Satisfied	4	4
Very Unsatisfied	5	5

Q2b Why do you say that? What would have made it a better experience? Reference to other programmes he/she involved in.

Q3a Overall, how satisfied are you with (a) the **progress of your CFI project** and (b) **your experience in being part of** the project?

(Prompt: Did you achieve what you expected in the way you expected?)

	CFI Project	Being part of CFI project
Very Satisfied	1	1
Satisfied	2	2
Mixed Feelings	3	3

Not Satisfied	4	4
Very Unsatisfied	5	5

Q3b Why do you say that?

Q.4 Overall, how satisfied are you with the progress of your CFI for each of the following areas?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Mixed feelings	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Overall progress in meeting your objectives	1	2	3	4	5
Number of participants	1	2	3	4	5
Profile of participants/ families	1	2	3	4	5
Range of activities and events	1	2	3	4	5
Support from local community	1	2	3	4	5
Funding process	1	2	3	4	5
Support from development worker, e.g. budget changes etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Technical support from <i>safefood</i> e.g., sharing campaign information etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Sustainability of the CFI	1	2	3	4	5
Shared Learning	1	2	3	4	5

Networking Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Engagement with local stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
Capacity of your CFI to resolve difficulties	1	2	3	4	5

Q.5 In your opinion, what has **worked well** in your CFI project?

Q.6 What has **not worked well** in your CFI project?

Q.7 What do you see as the **main ‘learnings’** from your CFI project?

Q8a To what extent do you believe your work in the CFI made a worthwhile impact on the lives of your target group?

	CFI project
High Impact	1
Some Impact	2
Mixed Feelings	3
Little Impact	4
No Impact	5

Q.8b Why do you say that?

Q.9 What are the **main challenges/problems** you encountered during (a) being part of the CFI Programme and (b) running a CFI project? Please give examples, stating how your CFI addressed these problems.

CFI Programme

(b) CFI Project

Q.10 Did you achieve all your **expected outcomes** as set out in your proposal document? If no, please explain why not and what you and/or *safefood*/HfFA could have done differently to have achieved your objectives.

Q.11 Looking forward over the next two to three years, what would you (a) hope and (b) expect your CFI will achieve in the next year or so?

Hope:

Expect:

Q.12a Did you find it relatively easy or difficult to attract families to your project?

	Very easy	Quite easy	Mixed experience	Difficult	Very difficult
Engaging families	1	2	3	4	5

Q.12b What were your most successful strategies for engaging families?

Q.13a To what extent, do you believe that ‘healthy food’ is more central to community work than prior to participation in the programme? Please give examples.

	Much more central	More central	Mixed views	No change	Less central
Healthy Food	1	2	3	4	5

Q13b Why do you say that?

Q.14 Has the funding approach for this programme been more challenging than any other funding streams? Please give examples.

Q.15a What do you understand by the term “sustainability” within the context of your CFI? Please give examples.

Q15b What strategies have you found most successful in making your project sustainable?

Q.15c What have you found to be the main barriers to sustainability?

Q.15d How confident are you that your CFI will continue operating in the next year or so?

	Sustainable project
Very confident	
Confident	
Mixed feelings	
Not confident	
Totally not confident	

Q15e Why do you say that?

Q.16 Can you give any examples of shared learning between your project and other CFIs and also with other community initiatives?

Q17 Did you find the following networking and training events beneficial?

	Yes	Don't know	No
Programme launch in Belfast (gave CFIs understanding of the programme approach and welcomed them and introduced them to each other)			
Hopes and expectations for the CFI Programme 2013–15 ... The way forward! in Fettercairn (opportunity to feed into development of the programme from the outset)			
HFfA National Conference on food poverty in Dublin – (CFIs were invited to represent their projects to a wider range of national stakeholders and advocate on behalf of their future support. HFfA recognises them as a valuable local solution to tackling food poverty Issues)			
Exploring community engagement in Dunmanway			
Sustainability of the CFIs in Windsor, Belfast			
Sustainability – Strengthening collaborative approaches			
HFfA National Conference in Dublin			
CFI Programme – Celebrating how far we have come! in Cloughmills			

Q.18 From your experience, what are the main challenges that CFIs need to be aware of if starting into a new programme? Please give examples.

Q.19 What do you believe are the key elements of the programme that should be brought forward if there is to be another funding stream or to the next programme?

Q.20 What changes (if any) have you noticed in relation to food habits and learning from your participants, e.g. have they reported any changes in the foods they eat or attitudes to food (please give specific examples, if possible)?

Section b: the participants

Q1. Why did you get involved with this project? What did you hope to gain?

Q2a. Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience in the project?

(Prompt: Did you achieve what you expected in the way you expected?)

	Being part of CFI programme
Very Satisfied	1
Satisfied	2
Mixed Feelings	3
Not Satisfied	4
Very Unsatisfied	5

Q2b Why do you say that? What would have made it better experience? Reference to other programmes he/she involved in.

Q2b Why do you/children say that?

Q.3 What did you/children like most?

Q.4 What did you/children like least?

Q.5 Did you change any of your food habits – what you ate, how often you ate convenience/healthy food etc? Examples.

Appendix 4

Table 3 Breakdown of participation in Community Food Initiative activities by project, years one to three

CFI Project	Gardening/ Growing	Cooking skills	Healthy eating	Planning/ Budgeting/ Shopping	Other activity	Total engaging in CFI activities
Ballybeg						
Year 1	60	24	16	10	10	120
Year 2	110	55	19	–*	157	341
Year 3	118	12	32	–*	–*	162
Ballina						
Year 1	301	87	163	4	201	756
Year 2	378	100	105	40	157	780
Year 3	80	45	70	79	–*	274
Cloughmills						
Year 1						
Year 2	158	335	19	–*	63	575
Year 3	111	706	220	38	13	1,088
	110	603	603	225	–*	1,541
Dublin 15						
Year 1	1,580	435	111	18	86	2,230
Year 2	1,378	49	1,828	25	25	3,305
Year 3	367	477	207	–*	120	1,171
Doras Buí						
Year 1	108	–*	45	22	15	190
Year 2	161	25	30	–*	326	542
Year 3	70	14	29	36	9	158
Dunmanway						
Year	48	15	16	9	153	241
Year 2	82	57	88	22	230	479
Year 3	279	112	207	24	323	945
Fatima						

Year 1	22	153	135	53	782	1,145
Year 2	36	222	210	24	382	874
Year 3	12	47	78	112	70	319
Fettercairn						
Year 1	607	226	1,984	52	2,118	4,987
Year 2	325	188	138	22	455	1,128
Year 3	155	124	129	_*	186	594
Gortin						
Year 1	309	227	209	205	264	1,214
Year 2	142	199	414	43	25	823
Year 3	327	336	374	95	_*	1,132
Windsor						
Year 1	80	13	601	_*	25	719
Year 2	68	_*	769	_*	_*	837
Year 3	53	54	532	60	_*	699
TOTAL						
Year 1	3,273 (27%)	1,515 (12%)	3,299 (27%)	373 (3%)	3,717 (31%)	12,177 (100%)
Year 2	2,791 (27%)	1,601 (16%)	3,821 (37%)	214 (2%)	1,770 (17%)	10,197 (100%)
Year 3 (9 months)	1,571 (23%)	1,824 (26%)	2,261 (32%)	631 (9%)	708 (10%)	6,995 (100%)
TOTAL YEARS 1 to 3	7,635	4,940	9,381	1,218	6,195	29,369

* – No activity offered

Appendix 5

Table 4 Total participation in Community Food Initiative activities by project, 2013–2015

CFI Project	Gardening/ Growing	Cooking skills	Healthy eating	Planning/ Budgeting/ Shopping	Other activity	Total engaging in CFI activities
Ballybeg	288	91	67	10	167	623
Ballina	759	232	338	123	358	1,810
Cloughmills	379	1,644	842	263	76	3,204
Dublin 15	3,325	961	2,146	43	231	6,706
Doras Buí	339	39	104	58	350	890
Dunmanway	409	184	311	55	706	1,665
Fatima	70	422	423	189	1,234	2,338
Fettercairn	1,087	538	2,251	74	2,759	6,709
Gortin	778	762	997	343	289	3,169
Windsor	201	67	1,902	60	25	2,255
Total over 3 Years	7,635	4,940	9,381	1,218	6,195	29,369

Appendix 6

Table 5 Community Food Initiative key stakeholders by project

CFI	Key Stakeholders
Ballybeg	Homebase DIY Stores; Credit Unions; Waterford City Council; Ballybeg Horticultural Local Training Initiative; Ballybeg Community Education Project; Barnardos; Ballybeg Greens; other CFI projects and HFFA.
Ballina	Mayo Traveller Support Group; Ballina Traveller Men’s Group; St. Vincent de Paul; Ballina Network; Ballina Karen Group; Ballyhaunis Men’s Shed; Ballyhaunis Family Resource Centre; HSE (Health Service Executive); Western Care.
Dublin 15	Fingal County Council; RAPID Programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development); Institute of Technology Blanchardstown; St. Patrick’s National School; Food Rescue; local supermarkets and stores; FoodCloud.
Cloughmills	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council; Public Health Agency; Groundwork NI; The Conservation Volunteers NI; Surestart; British Heart Foundation.
Doras Búi	Doras Búi; HFFA; Community Development Committee; Northside PatnershipNSP; St. Michael’s House; local schools.
Dunmanway	<i>safefood</i> ; ETB/VEC (Education and Training Board/Vocational Education Committee); Department of Social Work; Irish Natural Forestry Foundation ; The Hollies; Men’s Shed; local schools; Tús; Cork County council; Dunmanway Community Council.
Fatima	Local residents; Fatima Homework Club; Rialto Youth Project; Fatima Children’s Day Care Centre; F2 café; community garden; The Grow Dome Project; Dublin City Council; HSE – Health Promotion, Social Inclusion and Primary Care services; HFFA; GIY (Grow It Yourself); <i>safefood</i> ; other CFI projects; FoodCloud; and a nutritionist.

Fettercairn	Foróige; Barnardos; local schools; South Dublin County partnership; Fettercairn Community and Youth Centre; Fettercairn Youth Horse Project; Fettercairn Enterprise Company; Fettercairn Management and Community Garden; Brookfield Community Garden; and Glanmore Foods.
Gortin	Gortin Parent and Toddlers; Rascals Playgroup; Little Stars Daycare; local schools; Gortin Ageing Well; Gortin Tuesday Afternoon Club; Outreach; The Conservation Volunteers Green Gym ®.
Windsor	The Conservation Volunteers; <i>safefood</i> ; HfFA; local people; CFI projects.

Appendix 7

Main successes of the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015, per year

Main successes of year one

- The projects have started. All or most of the objectives planned for year 1 have been achieved (mentioned by 10 projects).
- A lot of work has been done. The community gardens are in place (N=6 projects).
- Administrative structures are in place and budgets have been met (N=5 projects).
- Positive engagement with the local community and schools, and positive responses from the community (N=5 projects).
- Training courses were well attended and there was positive feedback from participants (N=5 projects).

Main successes of year two

- The CFIs are generally on target. The gardens continue to expand and grow as open spaces for everyone to enjoy (mentioned by eight CFIs).
- Increasing numbers of people visiting and using the garden and attending special events and open days organised by the CFI (N=6).
- Opportunities created for networking with local organisations and other CFIs (N=5).
- People continue to volunteer to work in the CFI and to take responsibility for the CFI (N=5).
- The good dynamic that has developed between the volunteers (N=4).
- People are more aware of the positive health benefits of eating healthy food (N=4).

Main successes of year three

- Most objectives have been achieved and a lot of work has been done (N=10).
- A garden is in place and is being maintained by local people (N=7).
- Changes have been made in eating behaviour and attitudes to healthier food consumption (N=7).
- The popularity of events hosted by CFI (N=7).
- Positive engagement with local community and the creation of local networking opportunities, for example through schools, statutory bodies and community organisations (N=6).

- People continue to volunteer and take ownership of CFIs (N=5).
- Funding enabled the work to begin and continue without the pressure of having to look for additional funds (N=5).
- Practical advice being given by specialists, for example gardeners, nutritionists and chefs (N=4).
- Sharing learning and networking with other CFIs (N=4).
- Building capacity in the community, leading to sustainability (N=3).
- The evaluation process – quarterly questionnaires helped to “keep eye on the ball” (N=2).
- The programme provided a great opportunity for projects to show what is possible, especially in a marginalised community (N=2).
- Opportunities to explore healthy food (N=2).

Main challenges of the Community Food Initiative Programme, 2013–2015, per year

Main challenges of year one

- Maintaining and increasing the number of participants (mentioned by seven projects).
- Motivating volunteers (especially in winter), and managing interpersonal relations and volunteers’ expectations (N=7 projects).
- Sustainability of the project (N=6 projects).
- Insufficient community engagement and networking with local organisations and agencies (N=6 projects).
- Inflexibility of the funding process (N=4 projects).

Main challenges of year two

- Motivating volunteers to continue working regularly (mentioned by 10 CFIs).
- Sustainability of the project (N=8).
- Managing tight budgets (N=8).
- Insufficient number of staff to dedicate time to the CFI (N=6).
- Limited time and resources to plan, work and develop projects (N=6).
- Recruiting new volunteers (N=5).
- Managing group dynamics (N=5).
- Coping with the challenges of different seasons (N=5).

Main challenges of year three

- Maintaining and increasing the number of participants, and engaging the target group for their project (mentioned by 10 of the projects).
- Sustainability of the project when funding stops (N=9).
- A lot of work involved in recruiting and motivating volunteers (N= 7).
- Limited resources – CFIs need more staff time dedicated to project or have competing demands from other tasks (N=6).
- Not enough time to plan and develop projects (N=4).
- Not enough staff (N=4).
- No gardener or other specialists to advise and coordinate volunteers' work (N=3).
- Working within tight budgets, and the annoyance of having to apply for budget adjustment (N=3).
- Coping with the challenges of different seasons (N=3).
- Early shutdown of the programme added pressure and uncertainty to the CFIs' work (N=2).

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