



University of Brighton

**Community
University
Partnership
Programme**

**On our
doorsteps**

Growing Local Food Communities Self-evaluation Report

1. Brief Description of Project

This project seeks to increase awareness of the benefits of and involvement with local food production, preparation and consumption among staff and students and respective neighbouring communities, improving access to fresh, seasonal and healthy food. In doing so, the partnership hopes to grow an active forum of interested partners to share and discuss issues, ideas and research in relation to this agenda.

The partnership, facilitated through the Environmental Action Network (EAN, a grassroots forum within the University whose members have identified and voiced their desire for more local, seasonal and ethical food related activities) aims to develop an operational example of collaborative work around local food. The project will also determine ways in which to expand and adapt the model to different campus-community contexts and develop a framework that would make such projects easily achievable on different University sites.

2. Project Progress

The project partners planned to develop a community of interest around food in the university and neighbouring areas, focusing on the Moulsecoomb campus. The partnership working aimed to facilitate and develop projects, workshops and events where there was a demand, using existing programmes and networks in order to develop a more sustainable model for future developments.

An important part of the project involved developing links between the University and existing food networks (especially in East Brighton), as well as links with community groups and organisations.

The initial project proposal included a number of events and public talks to be organised. While this provided an initial framework for events to take place, the project steering group felt it was more important to respond to integrate events into existing networks in order to make the most of resources and also respond to demand or interest. This was also clarified early on in the project with a meeting with the Harvest project director.

For instance, the 'Food Inc.' Screening was organised as a joint events, working with local organisations and being able to offer the Sallis Benney theatre at the internal hire rate. We felt this was beneficial as the occasion of the food festival would bring external people into the university. We also decided to link up with the Love Food Hate Waste campaign, which the council and food partnership started running in October 2010. With one of their main aims to

reach students, and the obvious issue of cost of interest to the university and student community, these were the perfect opportunity to facilitate such workshops taking place.

With regards to organising public talks on specific topics, the university proved to be more of a barrier than the project partners initially thought. We felt that focusing more on developing links and networks as well as understanding these barriers was more important for this 'seed' project.

The University of Brighton Food Co-op was developed by volunteers and has provided a route to further explore real connections with organisations in the area in terms of improving access to seasonal, local and healthy foods. For instance, once the food co-op is running, the group is hoping to explore ways to help supply other affordable vegetable box schemes in the area. However, a student-led fresh food co-operative proved difficult to start up at the end of the growing season so we are working with the University's fruit and vegetable supplier based in East Sussex. The co-op is hoping to become more visible to students and staff and perhaps include stalls as part of their activities in the future. This would hopefully provide a financially sustainable model for food markets around the campuses.

Finally, in terms of the original research proposal, one of the ideas was to develop a competency group around food issues including community members, producers, university staff and students, but the steering group felt that it might be redundant to set up a group and more productive to explore links with existing networks and community groups in the area. With the insight gained during the project, some areas might emerge as needing additional research or investigation.

3. Partnership working

The main partners in the project were the Sustainable Development Co-ordination Unit at the University of Brighton and the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership. However, the partnership did extend to include people from other departments in the University and connections with community groups, workers and residents.

The partnership was developed through developing a dialogue between the University and the Food Partnership, and involving relevant members in the project steering group.

This work enabled the partners to increasingly realise how much each other could gain from working together. The University partners gained knowledge about projects in neighbouring communities, food growers and food projects, a link into existing and developing food networks as well as insight into communicating and disseminating information. The Food Partnership also gained knowledge about how to more effectively link into the university and reach out to students, and soon some information on who the Harvest Project is reaching, geographically. Both partners collectively learned more about the difficulties of engaging people in sustainable food systems, especially in East Brighton. One challenge perhaps was to develop an understanding of what the University and connection through the Sustainable Development Co-ordination Unit could contribute to the Food Partnership, but this was steadily developed as the project evolved, and became especially apparent with the involvement in the East Brighton food meeting and Love Food Hate Waste campaign.

On Our Doorsteps provided a framework in which to present and carry out this collaborative work. It also developed a group of interested university and community members who can

share experience and knowledge about our University neighbours. It might have been useful to explore more the mutual support we could have given ourselves between the different On Our Doorstep projects, even a list of contacts and phone numbers to call others up when questions arose. It might also have been useful for CUPP to link up with the Trust for Developing Communities or other such organisations to provide some 'tips and tricks' for community engagement (although the partnership with the community partly already fulfils this).

4. Neighbourliness

In the original project proposal, the concept of neighbourliness was defined most in terms of geography and university 'membership'. Through the experience of the project, those involved have found that the feeling of neighbourliness is less obvious than initially portrayed in the project proposal.

In the January steering group meeting, partners discussed the different dimensions and complexities linked to the university and its neighbours in the context of the project. The group found that the university is seen as a different entity and there is a 'perceived disinterest' within the university's neighbouring communities in Moulsecoomb, as residents and active community members still feel that most of their neighbours would not be interested in engaging with the university.

The project also helped to identify issues to address in order to perhaps create more of a feeling of neighbourliness. The steering group identified three dimensions to the 'university-community' relationship in this project:

- 1) the 'people' dimension; thinking about university members as students, and the community as residents, experiencing difficulties with studentification for instance.
- 2) the 'physical' dimension; the university campuses and buildings as an image of the university, and a physical barrier as well and
- 3) the 'interest group' dimension; many initiatives and food projects in the Moulsecoomb campus area are keen to work with the university, involve students *and* other community members, who all face the difficulty of involving those residents, students or groups who do not want to engage.

Comments gathered by Elona Hoover in Action for Bevendean Community meeting: 'I still hear complaints from residents as soon as the students come back'; 'If we organized something at the University, would residents come?' 'No, I am pretty sure nobody would'.

Comment gathered by Ann Baldrige, meeting with women in St George's Hall (Moulsecoomb): 'the community doesn't feel as strong anymore' 'why?' 'well there are more students, and the population is more changing and they don't get involved.'

As a result of the project, the group felt that it would be important to hold events within the community's physical space in order to break the first barrier; which might then open a new dialogue.

The group also felt that a key challenge to developing this link between the university and our neighbours is the lack of a sense of community within the university itself.

5. Outputs

- Training sessions (Love Food Hate Waste), awareness of the University's activities; information from food co-op survey for staff and students;
- Free recipe cards for students at Freshers' Fair on Food Co-op and Environmental Action Network fliers
- Events: Food Inc. screening; Local Food event in Grand Parade;
- Conference presentation: Transition Universities Conference, Winchester (5th and 6th February 2011)
- Influence on existing course module: Citizenship for the Environment module to include projects and areas in our campuses' neighbouring communities in the Edible Campus project run as part of the module. This was a direct result of thinking how to engage students more in food projects around where they live, especially in Coldean and Moulsecoomb.

(see appendix for photos)

6. Outcomes

Details of the project's impact on community organisations and stakeholders:

- The project has made several organisations and projects aware of resources and links to make with the University, especially in terms of recruiting student volunteers. There are two new projects starting in the area – the Magpie Environmental Trust educational allotment and the Bevendean Community Garden – both of which will be developing a link with the university at early stages of the project.
- The Sustainable Development Coordination Unit has now become a coordinator on University side of projects for the food partnership and facilitated links to be made with the University of Sussex Students' Union as well.
- Thanks to the collaboration with the University, the Food Partnership, World Family and Transition Brighton & Hove were able to host a film screening at the University Sallis Benney theatre, benefitting from internal rates.
- The project partly helped to catalyse an East Brighton food projects meeting.
- Action for Bevendean Community group were very interested, and made links that need to be followed up. Comments included: 'Perhaps we could do a Harvest dinner, but with different types of food' 'The best thing would be to have different types of food at our events, more healthy, different foods' ; Elderly residents commented that you used to be able to just walk down to the green grocer's and get fruit and veg, and that transport access is very limiting for them and people they know. There was a general consensus that they would like to see a green grocer there again.
- Link between producers in East Sussex and the University through the food co-op (Tablehurst Farm, Plawhatch Farm, Stanmer Organics)
- Food Partnership involved with a major institution in helping to develop composting and food waste management in offices.

The project's impact on the University:

- Involvement of the Brighton and Hove food partnership in the Environmental Action Network – members of the food partnership have come to EAN meetings twice during the length of the project at different sites.
- Direct contact and collaborative work started between University Sustainable Development Co-ordination Unit (SDeCU) and Community Development Workers in Moulsecoomb, Bevendean and Coldean.

- Piloting of workshops and food events at three different sites meant that site managers and estates and facilities management staff have become much more acceptant of these events happening as the project has established a precedent.
- As a result of the event in Grand Parade, the Site manager is not involved in the Environmental Action Network which had not happened previously.
- Increased cross-fertilisation and collaboration with the Food Partnership and the Harvest Project in terms of engagement, awareness raising and events organization.
- Link with University of Sussex through the food co-operative, which created networks and facilitated the launch of the Brighton and Sussex Medical School Environmental Action Network
- The link with the University of Sussex as well as successful events organized as part of the project inspired SDeCU and the Students' Union to organize a green week for the University of Brighton as well.
- The results and experience of the project encouraged the University's Fairtrade Steering Group to think about ways in integrate broader ethical and sustainable food issues into the group's remit, and perhaps rethinking the steering group's role and strategy.
- Strengthen collaboration within the University of Brighton and networking between different departments, more specifically between
 - SDeCU and CUPP (which is also happening in parallel with other projects)
 - Environmental Action Network and Active Student
 - SDeCU and academics within the Faculty of Science and Engineering
 - The Environmental Action Network and the Wellbeing Zone (linking up with pier2peer, the new wellbeing zone programme, and thinking about ways to support each-other)
 - SDeCU, marketing and communications and learning technologies. Engaging students in the project's aims was handicapped by the inadequacy of the university's internal 'sustainability' communications, and this feeling contributed to moving forward on improving the internal communications platform and strategy.
- As a result of the project, the notion of 'campus' will be widened to think about our neighbours and those living on our doorsteps – Citizenship for the environment (course leaders: Graham Sharp and Andrew Church)
- Invitation to speak as part of the food panel at the Transition Universities Conference in Winchester, 5th and 6th February 2011 (see photo in appendix). Elona Hoover presented the project in addition to other work at the University and with CUPP (Eastbourne and Grand Parade specifically). The presentation drew out productive discussions and it seems that the University of Brighton is quite forward looking in its projects.

7. Longer term knowledge exchange work

- How will the project and/or relationships develop at the end of this seed funding?

The link between the food partnership and the university will be ongoing – the project enabled a space to be created in order to develop the initial partnership.

The project should also make a case for what it found in terms of the barriers between university and community in Moulsecoomb, and perhaps seize the opportunity to think of food as an ideal vehicle for developing this neighbourly relationship. This might also lead to food being included into broader and more strategic agendas.

- How will the role of volunteers be developed to support future work?

The Environmental Action Network aims to maintain a strong link with Active student and follow-up on relevant opportunities for students as well as keep directing organisations to Active student for recruiting student volunteers. The Sustainable Development Coordination Unit is also working with the student volunteering programme to further promote relevant volunteering opportunities to students and organise work days.

It will also be useful for the future of the project to further develop links between the food co-op and community groups, as well as encourage interested students not only to get involved with projects of gardens, but also to take part in local forums and use community cafés for example.

8. Statement of Income and Expenditure

please note the budget expenditure has not been fully exhausted. Continued use of the budget beyond the project end date has been agreed by CUPP and the project steering group.

The project partners agreed to spend part of the budget dedicated to the Food Partnership to match staff time on the project if this would be available in the budget. This is included in the £570 mentioned below for the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership.

	Project total	Sallis Benney	Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	travel and hospitality	publicity and events	seed fund	time
initial budget	£5,000	£1,000		£500.00		£500	£1,500
expense		£240	£570	£35.38	£30.00	£500	£1,500
				£11.15	£282.98		
				£3.00	£11.00		
				£2.25	£6.90		
					£9.42		
					£21.50		
Total expense	£5,000	£240	£570	£52	£362	£500	£1,500
remaining	£1,776						

9. Quantitative evaluation

- Number of people involved in the project: 20 people (estimate)
The project was as much about organising events as developing new networks and building links with different organisations. The estimate number of people involved in the partnership thus includes those with whom we have been in discussion and contact as well as people more heavily involved in the project management and planning.
- Number of people involved organising or running events/workshops: 10 to 15 people
- Number of people who have benefitted from the activities you have undertaken: 232 people. This count includes: 75 (film screening) + 20 (Hollingbury Environmental Action Network) + 100 (food event in Grand Parade) + 15 (food co-op society event) + 22 (Love Food Hate Waste workshops)
- Numbers of hours the partners have worked on the project. Total paid and unpaid: 375 hrs (please see detailed timesheets attached for breakdown)

APPENDIX – PHOTOS FROM EVENTS AND PROJECT DISSEMINATION

Project information flyer

The flyer features a yellow top section with the Harvest Brighton & Hove logo on the left and the University of Brighton logo and tagline 'sustainability in action' on the right. Below the logos is a row of green plant silhouettes. The main body is green with white text. The title 'Growing local food communities' is in yellow. The text describes the project's goals and lists activities like a food co-op, food events, and workshops. It includes contact information for Elona Hoover and logos for the University of Brighton and the Community University Partnership Programme.

HARVEST
BRIGHTON & HOVE

University of Brighton
sustainability in action

Growing local food communities

This is a project about local people, local businesses and local food. We want to see more food grown on our doorsteps and people coming together to buy, share and eat.

Communities play a vital role in developing new food systems. In order to bring sustainable, local, healthy food to the staff and students at the University of Brighton and our neighbours we need to build relationships, link up different initiatives, share ideas... and do something!

Here is what we're working on:

- A food co-op where local residents and university students and staff can combine their buying power to purchase local and sustainably produced foods at a lower price
- Fun food events, such as food markets and film screenings
- Workshops to share knowledge and skills about food growing
- Informal get-togethers where students and residents share views about local food and the local area
- Creating volunteering opportunities, such as helping to run events, being part of a food coop or joining a community garden.

Got ideas? Want to get involved?

To find out more about the project or to get involved, please contact:
Elona Hoover • 07722177737 • 01273 644707 • e.hoover@brighton.ac.uk

The growing local food communities project is being led by the University of Brighton Sustainable Development Coordination Unit in partnership with Harvest Brighton & Hove. It is being funded through On our doorsteps, a community university partnership programme from the University of Brighton. For more information visit www.brighton.ac.uk/on_our_doorsteps.

University of Brighton
Community University Partnership Programme

1. FOOD INC. Screening



FOOD, INC.

Free film screening and food debate @ Sallis Benney
6:45pm 22 September





2. Food Co-op stall at Freshers' Fair



3. Compost bin set up in Hollingbury with help of the Food Partnership



**4. Local Food Event in Grand Parade, 30th October 2010
Organised in conjunction with the International Food Planning Conference**



5. Love Food Hate Waste workshops in Moulsecoomb and Falmer, February 2011



6. Presentation at Transition Universities Conference, Winchester, 6th February 2011

