

# ***Just add...***

***Observations of a practical and strategic nature based on evidence generated and gathered during the first five years of the Scottish Community Diet Project. 'Just add...' focuses on how to maximise the impact and effectiveness of the contribution from community food initiatives to local, regional and national efforts to tackle food and health inequalities in Scotland.***

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## Introduction

Celebrity Chefs are always telling everyone to **just add** a drop of this or a touch of that as they pass on their experience, knowledge and talent to viewers. This document is a compilation of the experience, knowledge and talent of those working in Scotland's low-income communities to tackle the barriers to a healthy, varied and balanced diet.

'**Just add**' is designed to highlight, promote and enhance effective practice by the volunteers, lay workers, professional staff, planners, policy makers and decision-takers. These combined, if not always collective, efforts determine the quantity and quality of contributions from Scotland's communities to the national strategy to improve diet and health.

The purpose of this document is to highlight exemplary practice, expose gaps, confront concerns and address aspirations arising from the experiences of those tackling the barriers currently faced by many in our society in accessing a healthy, varied and balanced diet.<sup>1</sup>

The report's title is also appropriate because the activity and efforts reflected in this report pursue a **just** cause. Scotland's community food initiatives highlight and tackle inequality and social exclusion as and where it is being most experienced.

'Community action' is only one part of the national strategies on diet<sup>2</sup>, health<sup>3</sup> and social inclusion<sup>4</sup> adopted by government. It **adds** however a crucial ingredient to the development and delivery of these and other interlinked policy agendas and could **add** even more, given the right support and encouragement.

It is important to remember that whatever new initiatives, strategies, policies or agencies appear in the future they will need to be informed by past experience and current practice, **adding** to years of effort in many Scottish communities.

*"A key theme which ties the initiatives together is the effort to work within and with the community to tackle the problems of food and low income in Scotland and to overcome the identified barriers to a healthy diet."*

From the introduction of the first edition of 'Food in the community – A directory of Scotland's community food initiatives', SCDP/HEBS, 1997

## Historical Legacy

Securing an adequate and acceptable diet is a recurring theme in Scottish history, with no shortage of contrast, contradiction and conflict.

The Highland Clearances and Irish Famine played major roles in shaping Scotland's current demography. Collective responses evolved in the late eighteenth century from 'meal mobs' to the establishment of some of the world's earliest consumer co-operatives.<sup>5</sup> Hardly an industrial town or city in Scotland doesn't commemorate the leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League of the 1840's.<sup>6</sup>

From malnourished Boer War recruits in the 1890's to a series of food crises in the 1990's<sup>7</sup>, food has rarely been far from the top of the political agenda in the past hundred years. The contribution of Lord Boyd Orr to tackling food and health inequalities has been recognised not only at home but internationally<sup>8</sup>.

The modern manifestation of collective responses to food poverty owes much to the community development initiatives of the early 1970's and the anti-poverty public health and environmental agendas with which they became ideologically and methodologically intertwined throughout the proceeding decades<sup>9</sup>.

*"So much of what I had read or heard seemed conflicting or contradictory. The Scots used to live entirely on oatmeal, said someone; their cooking was a product of the Auld Alliance with France, said someone else. Their favourite dishes were all developed out of the extreme hardship caused by the infertility of the soil, I was told; others spoke of the lavish use of eggs, butter and cream..."*

Taken from the introduction to 'A Caledonian Feast' by Annette Hope, 1987

*"Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots".*

Opening line of Burns' poem 'On the late Capt Grose's peregrinations thro' Scotland' 1789

*"'And div ye think,' rejoined the virago, setting her arms akimbo, 'that my man and my sons are to gae to the sea in weather like yestreen and the day...It's no fish ye're buying, it's men's lives'"*

From Walter Scott's 'The Antiquary.' 1816

Community food initiatives are ideally placed to present a positive image of both low income communities and 'healthy eating', and provide some balance to the contrasting, if not entirely incorrect, popular notions of public disinterest and individual apathy. Food in many areas has acted as an excellent vehicle to develop relationships with the local media to the benefit of the self esteem of not only individuals and communities but entire towns.

**The Scottish Community Diet Project and other relevant national and local agencies need to assist local communities to ensure that the current positive interest and activity around food at a community level, invariably envied by other parts of the UK, is adequately reflected in the public perception.**

*"...it is no use trying to build the new world from the top down, with political ideas of spheres of influence and so on. We have to build it from the bottom upwards, and provide first the primary necessities of life for the people who have never had them, and build from the slums of this country upwards"* Quoted from Boyd Orr's 'Welfare and Peace' – nobel prize presentation 1949

*“The new parliament must listen to communities and learn from those who have been trying to tackle many of the problems...At the end of the day it is about government working with local communities. We’ve already shown our willingness but we can’t do it all ourselves.*

Hopes of community food activists in Paisley, Greenock and Dumfries & Galloway quoted in ‘Holyrood on a plate – food, local communities and the Scottish Parliament’, SCDP, 1999

## Current Context

One reason for briefly outlining the historical legacy is to illuminate the change in the policy environment which community food initiatives currently find themselves operating within. Since the Diet Action Plan in 1996 recognised community food initiatives as having a role to play, a policy environment has evolved around them that often mirrors both their activities and methods of working.

Community food initiatives could even be argued to have pre-empted much current policy development<sup>10</sup>. Local food initiatives were applying joined-up thinking and promoting socially inclusive practice at a time when medical models of health were the norm and official policy colluded with public victim-blaming.

While initiatives have proven they can survive a hostile policy environment they equally do not operate in a vacuum and must take account of social, political and economic developments. 'Advances' in science and technology are also impossible, as well as unwise, to ignore. Genetically modified produce and e-commerce have particular potential implications for disadvantaged consumers. Many changes have taken place, are underway, in the pipeline, or can be reasonably extrapolated from current circumstances. All, to varying degrees, will impact on the work of local initiatives, generating opportunities and challenges.

The most obvious development is that Scotland has its own parliament to address needs, concerns and aspirations. Apart from benefiting from the physical proximity of national decision-makers, the new Parliament's responsibilities for health, education, transport and agriculture reflect many of the key areas of concern raised by local groups.

The Scottish Executive's commitment to improving the nation's health, combating inequalities and developing a new public health agenda is manifesting itself in a number of ways, including the Demonstration Projects<sup>11</sup>, Healthy Living Centres<sup>12</sup>, Local Health Care Co-operatives<sup>13</sup>, Public Health Practitioners and the establishment of the Public Health Institute for Scotland<sup>14</sup>. All will, or should, interact, enhance and be enhanced by, activities around food at a local level. The recurring windfall from tobacco taxes, the Health Improvement Fund, has been committed to public health and targeted at *strong, practical local initiatives*.<sup>15</sup>

The establishment of a Food Standards Agency<sup>16</sup> will impact on local activity not only due to its remit but also its commitment to be open and transparent, with a maximum level of public involvement. Community food initiatives are not only interested in the agency's nutrition remit but also in issues around food safety and food science.<sup>17</sup>

National initiatives on active citizenship/volunteering<sup>18</sup> and new technology<sup>19</sup> should also have a positive impact on the effectiveness and capacity of community-based activity.

*“You need do’ers on strategy groups not talkers...partnerships must be action oriented and people oriented.”*

Quote from ‘Table Manners’, report of SCDP conference, Stirling, October 1999

*“The experience of community groups currently attempting a dialogue with a variety of civil service bureaucracies further emphasised the need to develop new appropriate channels for constructive dialogue which took account of language, presentation and timing.”*

‘Open Mouthed’, report from the SCDP seminar on the Food Standards Agency, Glasgow, February 1998

Many new initiatives will be led at a community level. Greater recognition of the ‘social agenda’ within urban regeneration<sup>20</sup> and rural development<sup>21</sup> is already creating opportunities and it will be important to ensure food and health are key components as community-planning<sup>22</sup> processes develop.

Schools have for some time been important venues for local action and health promotion<sup>23</sup>. The creation of community schools<sup>24</sup>, the proposed health promoting schools unit<sup>25</sup>, the commitment to establishing nutritional standards for school meals<sup>26</sup> and the attempt to introduce universal free school meals, has provided further impetus in this area<sup>27</sup>.

The potential for mutual benefits from greater contact between community food initiatives and activity around Local Agenda 21<sup>28</sup> is also likely to increase.

COSLA’s appointment of Public Health posts<sup>29</sup> within their organisation is a positive move, which should pay dividends for local authorities both as service deliverers and as partners in joint activity<sup>30</sup>.

A number of local authorities and NHS Boards have, or are in the process of launching multi sectoral local nutrition strategies or mini-diet action plans<sup>31</sup>, linking often to both local communities and the Scottish Diet Action Plan, not unlike the model promoted by the World Health Organisation<sup>32</sup>.

Meanwhile, welfare reform led from Westminster including the New Deal<sup>33</sup>, working families tax credit<sup>34</sup> Sure Start<sup>35</sup>, minimum wage<sup>36</sup>, and review of the current welfare foods system<sup>37</sup> will undoubtedly have impact, both directly and indirectly, on projects reliant on volunteers, promoting income maximisation and often targeting children and parents.

At European level, the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy<sup>38</sup> will continue to be a key issue alongside the establishment of the European Food Authority<sup>39</sup>.

In the private sector, change within retailing appears never ending and the pivotal position of major retailers, alongside the importance to many communities of smaller retailers, will continue to be a key factor despite the particularly competitive and volatile nature of the commercial sector<sup>40</sup>. The long established Scottish Grocers Federation<sup>41</sup> and the more recently established Scottish Retail Consortium<sup>42</sup> both have important roles to play.

Representing Scotland's food producers and processors, the Scottish Food and Drink Federation<sup>43</sup> is a new agency with much to offer and Quality Meat Scotland / Meat & Livestock Commission, the reorganised representatives of the country's meat industry, and the Seafish Authority are both actively working with a range of stakeholders in the field of diet and health<sup>44</sup>.

With agriculture also under review<sup>45</sup> the outcome for both small and large producers could also be of major significance to disadvantaged consumers.

It is clear that Scotland's community food initiatives exist in an agency and strategy rich environment. While there are many common aims and objectives tensions will be unavoidable and contradictions possible. The challenge is to ensure the experience and efforts of those working at community level adds value to the work of the agencies and the application of the strategies. It is also just as important that these agencies and strategies add to the effectiveness of community responses and address the deficiencies identified.

The close affinity that has developed between Scotland's community food initiatives and the Scottish Diet Action Plan can only be strengthened further through the remit of Scotland's Food and Health Co-ordinator appointed last year. As well as stimulating progress within other sectors, the appointment should increase opportunities for building better relations with other sectors, eg retailers.

The Scottish Executive have never hidden their recognition of the contribution of practical community level activity in their strategy to tackle inequalities in health and it is likely this will be given a further boost from their creation of a Public Health Institute of Scotland.

The Health Education Board for Scotland have a long history of supporting community level activity<sup>46</sup> and have worked closely with the Scottish Community Diet Project throughout its existence.

The Scottish Food Standards Agency have recognised from their inception an awareness of the needs of disadvantaged consumers<sup>47</sup>.



**The Scottish Executive should be supported by both national and local agencies in ensuring that food and health's major presence within much of the current policy environment is sustained and the needs of disadvantaged consumers prioritised and carried into practice.**

**It is crucial for community level activity if it is to maximise the effectiveness of its contribution that it engages with all major public agencies, builds on existing support within local authorities and NHS Boards and explores better relationships with private sector agencies. A prerequisite of course is an understanding from others of the nature and scale of the contribution that Scotland's community food initiatives can make.**

*“Change is coming and it looks like it’s starting with young people. It takes time but, step by step, we will shed the sausage supper syndrome and build ourselves a healthier future.”*

Martin Raymond, head of Public Affairs at the Health Education Board for Scotland

*“..dynamic initiatives spanning every age group and every community, focussed on improving health where it is currently worst, dedicated to tackling inequalities, meeting the very real needs of our poorest communities, and delivered wherever possible with the active participation of local communities.”*

Susan Deacon, Minister  
for Health & Community  
Care

## Current Status

An understanding of the current status of and trends within both Scotland's **community food initiatives** and Scotland's **diet** is important in examining future interventions

The common barriers faced by Scotland's low-income communities outlined in the Scottish Diet Action Plan<sup>48</sup> are met by an incredible diversity of community-led responses. This diversity has two sources, one being the appreciation by communities of local circumstances, concerns and needs and the other driven by available resources. The former needs to be valued and encouraged while the latter should be the target for change by funders.

The most recent trawl of Scotland's community food initiatives<sup>49</sup> discovered almost two hundred groups undertaking over four hundred activities around food.

Scotland's community food initiatives cover all aspects of the food chain from food growing and distribution to catering and retailing. Some concentrate on food provision while others prioritise their educational role. They may be based in their own purpose-built premises but more likely make use of a village hall, school or community centre. Funding is similarly diverse with local authorities, the health service and voluntary sector often involved. A few exist on relatively secure funding guaranteed for a set period but most rely on short-term funding and one-off grants from a range of sources. Some initiatives are purely food focussed while others are part of wider health, environmental or anti-poverty initiatives. A number of projects will have staff (both lay and professional) working for them. These, and projects with no staff of their own, also rely on access to specialist staff particularly from local authorities, the health service and the voluntary sector. Some initiatives have their origins in an anti-poverty agenda while others come from a diet, health or environmental perspective. Invariably these agendas merge as the initiatives highlight in practice the much sought after 'joined-up thinking'. Over time there are also many projects whose aims and activities evolve while others are happy to sustain their efforts at a constant level, delivering a particular service.

A common theme however is that no initiative is claiming whether individually or collectively that it is the sole or even primary solution to the problems of food and diet facing their community or the country as a whole. What they do make, is the fundamental contribution of their skills and knowledge to an ongoing national strategy to tackling Scotland's unacceptable inequalities in diet and health.

**An examination should take place of the extent and nature of outcomes from the recommendations contained in the 'community action' section of the Scottish Diet Action Plan.**

*Food projects are clearly not the only answer to addressing health inequalities, but they can be part of a wider strategy to improve health. They require a facilitating policy environment that recognises their potential but is realistic about the problems facing those who live where food projects are found.*

**FOOD PROJECTS AND  
HOW THEY WORK  
JOSEPH ROWNTREE  
FOUNDATION**

The status of Scotland's **diet** is increasingly the focus of much attention including a recognition that issues, concerns and trends vary between differing groups in society.<sup>50</sup> Regularly collected data<sup>51</sup> from the Health Education Board for Scotland would indicate that improvements in diet is considered an important issue by most people, with an overwhelming majority attempting to make positive changes in their diet particularly in terms of fruit and vegetable consumption.<sup>52</sup>

The barriers to eating more healthily find 'expense' coming second to 'will-power' but ahead of 'taste' and 'knowledge'.<sup>53</sup> 'Expense' however was found, not surprisingly, to be twice as important a factor at one end of the social class gradient compared to the other.<sup>54</sup>

A recent survey from the Scottish Food Standards Agency reinforced the importance of 'bridging the gap between awareness and behaviour'<sup>55</sup>.

Other research<sup>56</sup> has shown positive trends among the young although with a recognition of there still being a long way to go and will take time and effort.

The monitoring of Scotland's dietary status should continue to emphasise not only dietary intake but also disposition to change and perceived barriers.

**Qualitative and quantitative evidence from the country's community food initiatives should be regularly compiled and disseminated by the Scottish Community Diet Project and/or through other agencies to complement population data.**

*There is no quick panacea. What is required is a combination of measures, brought within a strategic framework, which build on existing initiatives and tap into, and stimulate, community initiative and energy.*

**SCOTTISH DIET ACTION PLAN**

*"Initiatives to change factors within the complex business of obtaining, preparing and consuming food are bound to be varied in nature and outcome. Local food projects are clearly seen in different ways by different people investing in that process. For these reasons, local food projects are difficult to define and understanding how they work is not a straightforward matter. Yet it is important to do so to appreciate what they contribute and what facilitates their sustainability."*

**Food Projects and how they work  
Mclone et al  
JRF 1999**

## Definition

It is important before any suggestions or recommendations regarding structures, systems and practice are made that there is an informed and realistic understanding of what exactly a community food initiative is. The preceding section highlighted the diversity that exists in terms of age, aims agenda and activities. Definitions must be based on experience and evidence from initiatives themselves not the values, aims and aspirations of third parties.

It is important not to work from a definition based on a long established urban food co-operative to arrive at good practice guidelines for a rural community cafe only just set up. Lumping all activity regardless of origin, nature and scale into an all-encompassing category can be unhelpful and counterproductive, particularly if uninformed and unrealistic aims, expectations and aspirations from funders compound this.

However Scotland's community food initiatives do have common features which are worth outlining both to achieve a working definition and to reflect in any conclusions and recommendations.

In practice terms a common feature is what is commonly referred to as a community development approach, although this is a term which also suffers from much misinterpretation<sup>41</sup>. The local communities have generally been involved in identifying local problems<sup>42</sup> examining possible responses<sup>43</sup>; designing<sup>44</sup> and running<sup>45</sup> their initiative; and monitoring and evaluating progress<sup>46</sup>.

Another key connecting feature is that all these many and varied initiatives are tackling one, and almost always more than one, of the barriers (access, availability, culture, skills) outlined in the Scottish Diet Action Plan.

Again as outlined in the plan, these barriers are most keenly felt in low-income communities<sup>48</sup>, communities defined both by geography<sup>49</sup> and common interest<sup>50</sup>.

It is important not to be one-dimensional in defining community food initiatives. The diversity both within and between initiatives should not be sacrificed because of inflexibility, or desire for uniformity, from funders, professions or academic disciplines.

Community food initiatives have been criticised as resembling 'the little Dutch boy with his finger in the dyke'. However what local communities are doing is not only sticking their finger in a dyke but also operating a flood alarm system, highlighting the inadequacy of current dyke construction, contributing to the design and development of new flood prevention schemes and providing an opportunity to discuss the local implications of global warming on sea levels.

*“Food is both a necessity and a commodity but it is a commodity unlike almost any other that is ingested into our systems in ways which do not apply to cars and fridges. Food matters to individuals and communities in ways which do not apply to most consumer goods because, in the words of the seventies slogan – you are what you eat.”*

‘Food Security – a challenge for Scotland’,  
The Poverty Alliance 1999

Similarly community food initiatives have been compared with sticking plasters, a palliative of only short term use. More accurate would be to compare community food initiatives with the bright blue sticking plasters worn in the catering trade, which not only deliver immediate assistance but also act as a visible warning and reminder of future action required.

Another criticism aimed at community food initiatives, based on a misunderstanding, is the notion that they are not the solution. As mentioned earlier no community food initiative in Scotland is claiming to be the solution and instead see themselves as contributing to a wider solution and often highlighting, informing and encouraging the contribution of others.

Community food initiatives operate both within and with<sup>51</sup> Scotland’s low-income communities, contributing to wider efforts to tackle the barriers<sup>52</sup> to an acceptable healthy and balanced diet.<sup>53</sup>

**A common language around community food initiatives built on a realistic and informed understanding of how and why they operate is essential and must be developed and promoted. This would be a prerequisite to any efforts to increase the capacity, scope and coverage of existing or planned initiatives.**

*“Much of the discussion concentrated on how best to give local communities access to research skills and resources and the confidence and capacity to apply them. Building partnerships between communities and research agencies was seen as an important objective. A need was identified for mechanisms that allow communities to take advantage of existing research skills and influence research agendas rather than simply act as subject matter to be studied as and when others decide”*

‘Food Research and Local Communities – the facts, the figures, the feelings’ Notes/Slides from SCDP training event, Glasgow, March 2000

## Discovery

The research agenda around community food initiatives should both inform and be informed by a better understanding of what activities, aims and agendas the term encompasses.

Better co-ordinated research, and more of it, is required not only within themes common to all community food initiatives but with specific types of activity<sup>54</sup>, settings and targets. Some will be for local purposes some with national objectives in mind and on occasion, both.

There are a number of related research agendas and even more disciplines that impact on the efforts of these initiatives. The effectiveness of activities is obviously important both in terms of immediate outputs<sup>55</sup> and long term outcomes<sup>56</sup>. Equally relevant however are enquiries into local circumstances<sup>57</sup>, examining local retailing and shopping patterns, consumer concerns, transport systems, and all the factors that create the physical and psychological environment that initiatives develop within.

Needs assessments, food mapping<sup>58</sup>, baseline data collection, ongoing monitoring of local circumstances and initiative development, and evaluations of both community and wider initiatives, by necessity call upon a wide alliance of disciplines often as unfamiliar to each other as they are to local communities, e.g. nutrition, planning, marketing, public health, social policy, agriculture, economics, housing, sociology.

No subject could benefit more from 'joined-up thinking' and 'joined-up action' in the field of research than food and there is every indication that this belief is shared by both academics and paid and unpaid practitioners in the field<sup>59</sup>.

There is far greater willingness by local initiatives to be involved in the research than there are resources to carry it out. Much pertinent work has been carried out by projects themselves<sup>60</sup> often with very limited resources and poor access to research skills and in the face of competing pressures.

There is a growing recognition from academic establishments that community initiatives have much more to offer than mere subject matter as and when research grants becomes available<sup>61</sup>. There are major benefits to be gained from including those working in the field in identifying, constructing, carrying out and disseminating research projects and this recognition is increasing<sup>62</sup>.

While responsible for generating useful material themselves, communities need better access to the skills of professional research agencies. They also need access to these skills when they require them. This access must not be based on the timetables and agendas of others.

**Opportunities to share and promote research skills, research resources and research outcomes should be established.**

**Funding for community food initiatives must always contain a budget that would allow for adequate self-evaluation and/or for the commissioning of external evaluation.**

**Existing research resources within agencies funding or supporting community food initiatives, such as local authorities and health boards, must be made more available and accessible to the initiatives.**

**Academic/public sector mentoring of projects undertaking evaluation should be piloted and partnerships between communities and academic institutions should be encouraged and supported by agencies funding research.**

**Colleges and universities training fieldworkers must be engaged improving opportunities for students involved in relevant academic and vocational training to undertake projects and placements with community-based initiatives.**

**Suitable mechanisms must be established to improve access to, and influence of, the research agendas of major public and non-public commissioners.**

*“..there was a clear empathy between initiatives whatever stage they had reached and a willingness to help each other...”*

*“Good communications and making contacts, normally through visits to other initiatives or meeting up at events was highlighted as a vital tool in improving practice. Learning from others and not repeating other peoples mistakes seemed to be common sense.”*

From 'Food for thought' inaugural SCDP conferences,  
Edinburgh & Paisley 1997



## Dialogue

Developing a common language and promoting improved understanding about community food initiatives and the barriers that they are tackling is impossible without effective communication and dialogue.

Key Scottish agencies can lead by example; the Scottish Executive, Health Education Board for Scotland, Food Standards Agency and the Public Health Institute. Scotland's small but specialised networking agencies<sup>63</sup>, which possess tangible links with the field, will also be vital components in enabling and encouraging dialogue. These should not be mistaken, however, for alternatives to adequate communication systems and structures, but complementary to them.

The systems and structures to generate effective communication can take many forms<sup>64</sup> but a fundamental principle sought by local communities is that communication is a two-way process. The dialogue must also be action-oriented. The views of communities need not be agreed with but must be respected, and the avenues of communication remain open and not be dependent on one party choosing how and when to communicate<sup>65</sup>.

Dialogue is required between levels, in other words between work at local, regional and national level, but also within each level. Those active at community level have clearly shown their enthusiasm for sharing advice, information and encouragement<sup>66</sup>. Regional strategies and networks, often based on 'mini-diet action plans'<sup>67</sup>, are constantly developing. The more recently established national agencies such as the Public Health Institute, Food Standards Agency, and Scottish Executive itself, are still developing or honing their communication systems and consultation structures. The practices of agencies such as Cosla and Hebs are constantly under review<sup>68</sup>.

To promote serious dietary change however, there will not only need to be dialogue with those willing to talk but also with those less keen or less familiar with the notion of dialogue. A key player with whom dialogue is in the past been patchy is the private sector, another, despite excellent exceptions<sup>69</sup>, is the media. The appointment of a Food and Health Co-ordinator has been a positive development in both respects.

**Communication would be encouraged by an annual event held for those working at community level on food issues but with invited guests from all relevant players. This could allow issues to be examined from the perspective of Scotland's communities but in the presence of those who can make a difference. The aim of this event would be to spark off ongoing dialogue and activity as well as allow annual reflection on progress towards overcoming dietary barriers and tackling inequality.**

*'The creation of a Food and Nutrition Council, the Food Standards Agency or even a Food Czar could boost work at ground level but is just as likely to marginalize or exclude it. A common concern is less what structures are established and more what systems are put in place...and the culture adopted. For most people, the preoccupation is ensuring they have access to whatever structures exist and that these structures are listening.'*

Quoted in 'Healthy Food Policy: on Scotland's menu', Scottish Council Foundation / Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000

**An audit needs to take place of the nature and scale of local strategies around food and health since the launch of the Scottish Diet action plan, with a particular focus on the role of local communities in the process.**

**The development of government of any national body or structure around food should be preceded by wide consultation with, Scotland's many and diverse community food initiatives.**

*"It will, however, take more than that brisk walk to cure the ills of the socially excluded, and more than a few small lifestyle changes to give them parity with the muesli-and-oatcake brigade."*

**MARIAN  
PALLISTER,  
HERALD, 31/5/00**

*"..for many people in the less well off areas, there are a number of real practical obstacles to healthy eating."*

SCOTTISH DIET ACTION PLAN 1996

## Delivery

As the nature and scale of the potential of community food initiatives is better understood and shared, the next step is how to ensure that potential contribution is effectively delivered.

Delivery involves:

- ✍ The **people** involved
- ✍ The **activities** undertaken

Figures collected by SCDP in 2000, provided by groups themselves<sup>70</sup>, would appear to indicate Scotland's community food initiatives delivering an essential service, often for the most vulnerable in our society. The average Scottish food co-operative has almost 100 customers each week, with almost a third of them open at least four days per week. Some serve small groups of between 10 and 20 people each week while others are dealing with several hundred customers per week. The average Community Café has 140 customers each week, although some over 400. Figures returned by Breakfast Clubs showed them to be working with between 10 and 50 pupils on a daily basis.

It is important to recognise not only the range of tangible immediate outputs from community food initiatives but also what they deliver in medium and long-term outcomes.

As well as providing a vehicle for an often much needed physical delivery of foodstuffs, community food initiatives also frequently deliver opportunities for people to widen their dietary awareness, experience and skills.<sup>71</sup>

The increase in confidence and self esteem that is so regularly commented on by many initiatives<sup>57</sup> and highlighted in evaluations must also be seen not only as an important outcome but one that is intrinsically linked with dietary outcomes.<sup>72</sup>

**A programme combining research and multi-targeted dissemination promoting of the range of benefits delivered by specific community food initiatives should be prioritised by SCDP and appropriate agencies.**

*“Recognition, appreciation and trust of community involvement... professional partners who listen, understand and genuinely consult... joint working with common goals in genuine partnership”  
needs identified at ‘Well Down the road to.. Local Communities tackling inequalities and health’*

**SCDP / Scottish Community Development Centre / West of Scotland Network of Community Health Projects, 1999**

*“Much can be done to place CFIs on a firmer footing, including practical support for volunteers, a more flexible approach to job-seeking conditions while volunteering, and a stronger contribution on the part of the major retailers to support CFIs (in cash and in kind)”*

**from ‘Healthy food policy: on Scotland’s menu?’ Scottish Council Foundation / Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000**

Key factors in the delivery of effective community food initiatives are the **people** involved.

- **Volunteers**
- **Lay Workers**
- **Professional Fieldworkers**

Volunteer burn-out and issues around volunteer recruitment are re-occurring issues which must be addressed. Many initiatives have been run by the same volunteers for many years. Some may find volunteering a useful step back onto the employment ladder. Others may find volunteering only possible during particular periods in their lives. The amount of time, effort and skills that is contributed varies enormously. Volunteers can be drivers, sales persons, tutors, cooks, researchers, managers of professional staff and most commonly a combination of these. For many tasks some volunteers are already extremely skilled and knowledgeable while for others training is required.

Currently volunteers tend to be local people contributing to tackling barriers faced by themselves, their families and their community. A useful pool of skills and experience however also lies outwith low income communities.

**Investment in training for volunteers and building their capacity would not only boost initiatives but also the individual. Appropriate agencies should be enlisted to establish and promote guidelines encouraging good practice in the terms and conditions under which community food volunteers operate.**

**The Scottish Community Diet project and appropriate agencies should explore the potential role for non-local volunteers, including their acceptability within, and implications for community ownership of, food initiatives.**

Lay workers have been around the community health and community food settings for some time and their local knowledge and experience is frequently attributed as a key factor in the success of initiatives.<sup>74</sup>

Issues, including recruitment, training, support and career development ensure lay workers are no easy option and the manner of their application has varied enormously.<sup>58</sup>

Despite the numbers of people employed in projects there have been only a few attempts to systematically operate and evaluate lay workers schemes.<sup>75</sup>

*“Food is a medium for intimate social communication in families and communities but its production, manufacture and distribution is dominated by market relationships...”*

*Food issues are often separated from wider issues, whether in terms of policy-making or professional practice and this is problematic constituting a barrier to creative solutions and effective partnership working...*

*Well-organised food initiatives make a difference to the quality of life of those who work within them and use them.”*

Taken from ‘People eat food not targets’ a deliberative seminar looking at food issues in low income communities. HEBS/Scottish Consumer Council/Scottish Executive, 2000

**Incentives should be given by central government to local authorities and health boards to promote the establishment of lay community food worker schemes across the country, supporting voluntary initiatives and supported by professional fieldworkers.**

Qualified fieldworkers come from a number of professions including Community Development staff, Community Dieticians and Health Promotion Officers. A common concern however has been the multiple responsibilities often held by such staff, leaving them with inadequate time to devote to food poverty

Ensuring professional staff are given adequate time and resources is essential if they are to tackle Scotland’s diet and health and ensure the contribution from local communities is maximised.

**The recommendation in the Scottish Diet Action Plan that professional staff within local Health Boards be allocated ‘specific responsibilities for action to improve the diet of low income communities’, should be implemented as a matter of priority. The allocated staff should also have this task as their sole responsibility.**

**A greater prioritising of food issues within the workloads allocated to staff in other agencies would help match the current opportunities constantly arising.**

**The mutually beneficial relationship between volunteers lay workers and professional fieldworkers must be recognised, promoted and encouraged.**

**Recruitment of staff by Health Boards with community development skills and experience is as crucial to the development of community food**

**initiatives as the recruitment by Local Authorities of staff with skills and experience in food and health.**

Also relevant are the planners, managers and politicians who will provide the leadership, oversee the structures, and take forward the agenda on food poverty in Scotland.

**It is important to ensure that policy makers are given the opportunity to develop as accurate an understanding of issues and practice as possible. Improved communications, secondments and personnel exchanges should be initiated as a means of achieving this.**

As indicated earlier Scotland's community food initiatives undertake a range of **activities** in their efforts to tackle the barriers to an acceptable diet<sup>76</sup> and it is important to appreciate both the individual requirements of specific initiatives as well as features common to all initiatives.

“...community food co-ops do a lot more than just provide affordable food. Community food co-ops also play an important social role – for both the users and the volunteers.”

From ‘Starting your own food co-op’, CWS 1999

**Food Co-operative**<sup>77</sup>, is a term, which normally includes initiatives, which describe their collective bulk buying in a number of ways, including fruit and veg barras<sup>79</sup> and food clubs<sup>80</sup>. They are one of the longest established forms of community food initiative<sup>81</sup>.

Current practice would indicate that this form of activity lends itself particularly well to collaborative activity<sup>82</sup>, partly to take advantage of economies of scale but also to lessen the arduous workload on volunteers.

Some food co-operatives, alone or together, take advantage of the benefits of local authority purchasing while at least one has a direct relationship with a retailer<sup>83</sup> and many negotiate their own terms with suppliers<sup>59</sup>.

There has been recent recognition of the benefits of food co-operatives operating on a scale that best suits their current aims and abilities<sup>84</sup>. Some may be run within specific premises such as a nursery while others offer a wider geographical coverage. The key is ensuring that food co-operatives have the support necessary for the level they operate at and the capacity to evolve over time<sup>85</sup>.

Central resource bases<sup>86</sup> to support a number of food co-operatives in an area have also been found to be useful, particularly in providing a sale-or-return system for fruit and vegetables to local co-operatives who would otherwise under order to avoid wastage they couldn't afford.

Many food co-operatives have been the starting point for other dietary initiatives<sup>87</sup> or combined with non-food activities<sup>88</sup> and the benefits of such activity is regularly highlighted as extending beyond improved access to retailing<sup>89</sup>.

**Food Co-operatives should be given the encouragement and resources to collaborate; operate central resource bases where appropriate; have access to the benefits of Local Authority/Health Board purchasing power; have access to start up and development assistance as required.**

**The Scottish Community Diet Project should enlist the skill and experience of the Scottish Co-op to carry out an audit of available resources and good practice.**

**The Scottish Community Diet Project should work with the former Food Futures Initiatives<sup>60</sup> in Scotland to explore potential links between local producers, food co-ops and other community food initiatives.**

*“Breakfast Clubs feed children physically, emotionally and educationally.”*

from 'Breakfast Daze' SCDP seminar report, August 1999

*“..the health promoting agenda should be paramount if more breakfast initiatives are to be set up. There is evidence from this research which suggests that breakfasting, oral health and general behaviour improved amongst attenders (albeit a small number), with a resultant positive impact on health-promoting behaviours in the home and within the classroom.”*

from an evaluation of Breakfast Clubs carried out for Greater Glasgow Health Board and the Health Education Board for Scotland.

*“The role of a breakfast club, whether it is in school or based in a community venue, is to offer a service with a child-centred ethos in a safe environment. A breakfast club involves pupils, parents and the wider community. It aims to improve the health and health behaviours of children as well as the staff and volunteers who become involved, and so underpins the goals of the health promoting school.”*

from 'Headstart' a guide to setting up Breakfast Clubs, SCDP 2001

**Breakfast Clubs** must be one of the most fast-growing forms of community food initiative in Scotland.

Most, but not all, are in Primary Schools and driven not only by the diet agenda but also often by oral health concerns as well<sup>90</sup>.

Evidence from the field<sup>91</sup> and research<sup>92</sup> in Scotland plus work south of the border<sup>93</sup> all emphasise that the key to a successful Breakfast Club is involvement and engagement. It has to be a whole-school activity supported by pupils, parents, teachers and support staff. The clubs create opportunities for children to not only start the day well in a nutritional sense but also to engage with other children and adults present. Without such engagement and participation the result would be only breakfast provision and the benefits reduced accordingly.

Breakfast Clubs provide an excellent example of where a locally identified need and response has been recognised at a national policy level with the recent announcement of a Breakfast Service review by the Scottish Executive.

**Support, including start-up funds should be made available via central government initially to any school in a Social Inclusion Partnership, and eventually to any school, which can prove its pupils, parents and staff wish to operate a breakfast club.**

**Each breakfast club must contribute to the development of a whole school approach to health promotion. It should also use the Scottish Community Diet project and the Health promoting School Unit to network and share good practice on a local authority and national level.**

*“The best of community cafes provide a wide public with the opportunity to eat at modest cost with assured nutritional controls in a sociable setting. Some provide lively opportunities to try new ingredients, including dishes from other cultures, as well as scope for the development of new skills, qualifications and self esteem for paid and voluntary workers.*

*Community cafes can provide congenial places for those who want to get out of the house or off the street into an atmosphere that reduces stress and reduces isolation. In some cases, they may also provide a base for a range of community alliances, where local people can gain access to services and facilities which may not otherwise be available to them.”*

*“The café had a real buzz about it...the staff and volunteers have created a real safe haven for its members to come along to relax, learn and eat well...”*

*You can come any time and feel really listened to. It's not just about good food...*

*Food was the vehicle to get everyone together and from this many other activities can take place...”*

Comments from customers, visitors and staff during a SCDP study tour visit to the Rendezvous Café in Dumfries. 1999

from ‘Just for starters’ a community café resource pack produced by HEBS and the Edinburgh Community Food Initiative 1999



**Community Cafés** play a key role in many communities as a source of not only good food but also good value, good advice and good company.

The cafés serve both geographical communities<sup>94</sup> and communities of common interest<sup>95</sup>. In both settings they bring a heart to the community and act as a springboard to further change<sup>96</sup>.

Many cafés provide low cost healthy meals but others are also involved in training,<sup>97</sup> cooking skills classes<sup>98</sup> and act as a base for health promotion.

Recently produced resources<sup>99</sup> have both boosted existing cafes and encouraged new initiatives<sup>100</sup>.

With a worldwide trend towards more eating out, carryout meals and eating alone, the community café obviously has a lot to offer.

**The current interest generated in community catering initiatives needs to be maintained and built upon. The necessary mix of cooking, nutrition, community development, marketing and business skills required by successful and sustainable community cafes must be accessed from local agencies such as colleges and businesses as well as by tapping the resources of a range of national agencies including the Natural Cooking of Scotland, the Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme, the Health Education Board for Scotland and the Scottish Community Diet Project.**

**Growing initiatives** come in all shapes and sizes<sup>101</sup> from a community café growing its own herbs<sup>102</sup> or primary school pupils with their own small plot<sup>103</sup> to a city farm<sup>104</sup>.

As with other community food initiatives they are driven by varied and often intertwined agendas, particularly health<sup>105</sup>, food standards<sup>106</sup> and environmental concerns<sup>107</sup>.

The benefits similarly take many forms from the physiological to the psychological and from the educational to the economic.

**Work must be undertaken to provide a better understanding of the range and scale of growing initiatives in Scotland alongside a promotion of the benefits that can come from communities growing their own food, even in small quantities.**

**The Scottish Community Diet Project should ensure that sources of, and access to, the varied and sometimes specialised support skills required by growing initiatives should also be examined with appropriate agencies.**

**Cooking Skills Classes** have run for many years and been in demand by many groups in our society. This has received a recent boost from the boom in TV cookery programmes.

While cooking skills deficiencies are not limited to low income communities<sup>112</sup> it is undoubtedly within such circumstances that a lack of cooking skills has the greatest detrimental effect<sup>113</sup>.

Over the years cooking skills classes have evolved into much more than only basic cookery. Many involve a survey of local shopping opportunities, food safety training, childrens eating habits, multicultural dietary awareness and issues such as labelling, additives and new developments in food science<sup>114</sup>.

The most successful classes ensure tutors are aware of local circumstances<sup>115</sup>, prioritise a hands-on approach<sup>116</sup> and emphasise the relevance and applicability of the learning experience.

Cooking skills classes have often sprung from other initiatives<sup>117</sup> as well as providing a springboard to related activities<sup>118</sup>.

**The Scottish Community Diet Project and appropriate agencies should document and highlight the range of providers of cooking skills classes and encourage the sharing of good practice in terms of settings, methods and contents for wider adoption and adapion.**

*“..no course could ignore the context in which the educational experience was occurring. The circumstances participants in courses were experiencing on a daily basis in terms of income, access to shops, availability of fresh produce, access to equipment and competing priorities, had to be reflected in both the course content and the manner of its delivery...course participants were also recognised as being varied not only in their circumstances but also in the skills and experience they already possessed. Their motivations for getting involved would also vary as would what they felt they got out of participating.”*

Taken from Information Exchange on Cooking Skills Courses organised by SCDP, Dec 1999

The diet and health aspects of some activities have evolved over the years. **Youth Cafes** are increasingly promoting a health agenda<sup>122</sup> alongside their other interests. Scotland's large number of **lunch clubs**<sup>123</sup> for the elderly are not only providing an essential community catering service but also often form the base for a bulk buying initiative or the provision of nutrition education.

**Community Shops** are providing a key service in isolated rural communities<sup>124</sup> and previously mentioned central resource bases act as **wholesalers**<sup>125</sup> to food co-operatives and to a range of initiatives. In some places **delivery schemes**<sup>61</sup> ensure the most vulnerable are able to take advantage of a local food initiative.

Children are often the target of the most imaginative initiatives<sup>126</sup> and the **milk token initiatives**<sup>127</sup> proved a particularly attractive option in some communities. **Healthy tuck shops**<sup>128</sup> are school-based initiatives that have often been driven by local communities and some excellent work around **weaning** and home-produced baby food<sup>129</sup> has generated a lot of attention.

Some initiatives are targeted by agencies at groups who would have difficulty acting or advocating on their own behalf<sup>130</sup> but involve many of the activities already mentioned<sup>131</sup> to meet their needs.

The activities of Scotland's community food initiatives take place in all sorts of premises set by local opportunities or more often lack of opportunities. However, whether by luck or foresight community food initiatives can be found operating from an incredible range of settings, each bringing something different to the tasks being undertaken. Initiatives are not only run from community centres<sup>132</sup>, schools,<sup>133</sup> churches<sup>134</sup>, nurseries<sup>135</sup>, family centres<sup>136</sup> but are often also integral parts of these agencies. A small number even exist in purpose-built premises<sup>137</sup>.

**Support must be available locally and nationally to improve existing practice and promote sustainability within community food initiatives. However, it is equally important, particularly for the Scottish Community Diet Project and appropriate agencies to support the piloting and development of effective new approaches aimed at identified gaps in current methods of delivery.**

**Community Shops**<sup>62</sup> have a limited and largely rural history in Scotland but have displayed a sustainability that merits further investigation of their potential and wider applicability.

**It is essential that the needs and contributions of Scotland's black and ethnic minority communities be taken account by community food initiatives, support staff, funders and policy makers. What would be required to support community food initiatives wishing to address the specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees must also be explored and responded to as soon as possible.**

*“Through the strong motivation and enthusiasm of people in local communities, an impressive range of projects has been initiated, involving local people in design, implementation and development... It is clear that realistic expansion of community food initiatives will only take place if political willingness and financial support are present.”*

‘Community Food Initiatives in Scotland’ A Anderson, R Callander, A, Ellaway, S MacIntyre, K McColl, J Oswald, Dept of Human Nutrition, University of Glasgow; MRC Medical Sociology Unit.

Much of what we have already covered in terms of ‘people’ and ‘activities’ is dependent on **funding**. While far from the only factor in the delivery of effective initiatives, funding is a pivotal factor in determining the nature, scale and sustainability and effectiveness of much community food activity.

There is no shortage of evidence of excellent work being carried out for extremely small investments<sup>119</sup> but little evidence of satisfaction with access to investment<sup>120</sup>.

Criticism is normally quite consistent and aimed at a more effective use of resources rather than a simplistic cry for more. Experienced initiatives are aware that their funding needs will change throughout the evolution of the initiative as will the speed with which they will need to access it and the time within which outputs and outcomes can be realistically expected.

Appropriate and timely access to resources also applies to **help in kind**. Both the public and private sector has skills; knowledge, equipment and premises, which are often difficult or impossible to access or have to be, paid for<sup>121</sup>.

**The available resources of core funding for community food work must be increased. Funding agencies should also consider establishing separate seed-corn funding and development budgets to invest in start-ups and to support later changes of direction or emphasis as appropriate agencies to promote good practice in ensuring such funding is accompanied by realistic timetables and targets as well as evaluation and monitoring systems that encourage interest rather than act as a disincentive and barrier.**

**A study of the resources available, or potentially available, from both the private and public sectors in the form of training, secondments, mentoring, equipment, premises and the like needs to be undertaken by the Scottish Community Diet Project and relevant private sector agencies and a protocol for access to such assistance explored.**

*Bringing about a wholesale change in the nation's diet will require joined up approaches between government departments and I will be working to help pull together government strategies and policies across health, education, social justice, development and sustainability. Building effective partnerships: with the Food industry, with all the different agencies involved. Looking constantly for gaps and for opportunities to join things up, where that would make them stronger. Learning from the best, - moving projects into national programmes where there is that potential. Building a high profile for the task in hand so the media participate and contribute positively to our work.*

Scotland's Food & Health Co-ordinator, Gillyan Kynoch, speaking at SCDP's 'Rich Pickings' conference, Dunfermline, Dec 2001

*...that is an issue that needs collaboration and understanding of different professional and community views in order to move forward. **Carol***

*Single agencies whether they be statutory or voluntary can not achieve this in isolation, but by working jointly to tackle the health problems that exist in Scotland with Genuine health partnerships been formed between the above and local communities is the way forward. **Christine***

Quotes from 'The Finnish Experience', An insight into the Scottish Community Diet Project's Study Tour to the National Public Health Institute of Finland and North Karelia, September 2001

## Direction

While currently enjoying a high profile and 'flavour of the month' status in some quarters, community food initiatives still constantly face criticism from two seemingly diametrically opposed positions. One cannot accept local communities choosing to tackle food poverty because they believe the barriers to a healthy varied diet *don't* exist and the other who cannot accept local communities choosing to tackle food poverty because they believe the barriers *shouldn't* exist.

The former attitude is the remnant of a, previously officially sanctioned, philosophy that still exists within many agencies and professions, many of whom have, publicly at least, committed themselves to tackling health inequalities, promoting social inclusion and practicing community development.

The latter attitude is the product of understandable frustration at the pace, nature and scale of social change. Many individuals and agencies have correctly described the current circumstances as intolerable. What many local communities are experiencing *are* intolerable circumstances. The key point is that local communities are not tolerating the situation they are doing something about it. They are not taking the blame nor sitting back and settling for putting the blame on others. Community food initiatives have acted as a vehicle for not only identifying barriers of local, national and even international origin but also act as a vehicle for tackling these barriers and highlighting the role of others in tackling them.

Community food initiatives have proven in the past they will continue to operate regardless of the current policy climate and act on what they are experiencing rather than what they are told they are experiencing or would like to be experiencing. There is no reason to believe that this is likely to change in the short to medium term.

The options therefore for the future direction of community food initiatives in the short-term concern whether they receive support encouragement and recognition or return to an isolated and marginal existence. It is a question of whether their experience and understanding will be sought out and valued or ignored and devalued. Will their enthusiasm and energy be rewarded or patronised? Will they become a fundamental component of developing food policies for Scotland or consigned to the fringes?

In the medium to long term a number of predictable, and some less predictable, developments will take place in the fields of government, retailing, farming, food science, trade and demography<sup>122</sup> which will influence and shape dietary choice and opportunity in this country. These developments may well add new contrasts, contradictions and conflicts to Scotland's food and health legacy.

Scotland's most vulnerable communities will respond to these new pressures but whether they do so in an effective and integrated fashion will be dependent on the attitudes and actions of other agencies.

A constantly recurring theme throughout the five years of the Scottish Community Diet Project has been the need for partnership working which includes local communities. However, partnership working is dependent on two key elements. One, rather obviously, is partners, while the other is a willingness and capacity to work together.

Scotland's local communities have clearly evidenced their willingness and the challenge is to ensure they also possess the capacity. Potential 'partners', including the obvious and less obvious, familiar and less familiar, have to examine their own willingness and capacity to work together to tackle inequalities in food and health that exist in Scotland today.

Recommendations from this report, some more specific than others, have been collated in the following section. Some are directed at particular agencies but most have been left for **you** to '*just add*' how your organisation could contribute to the tasks outlined.



## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS WHAT?**

The Scottish Community Diet Project and other relevant national and local agencies need to assist local communities to ensure that the current positive interest and activity around food at a community level, invariably envied by other parts of the UK, is adequately reflected in the public perception.

The Scottish Executive should be supported by both national and local agencies in ensuring that food and health's major presence within much of the current policy environment is sustained and the needs of disadvantaged consumers prioritised and carried into practice.

It is crucial for community level activity if it is to maximise the effectiveness of its contribution that it engages with all major public agencies, builds on existing support within local authorities and NHS Boards and explores better relationships with private sector agencies. A prerequisite of course is an understanding from others of the nature and scale of the contribution that Scotland's community food initiatives can make.

Qualitative and quantitative evidence from the country's community food initiatives should be regularly compiled and disseminated by the Scottish Community Diet Project and/or through other agencies to complement population data.

## **Just Add... What you can contribute!**



A common language around community food initiatives built on a realistic and informed understanding of how and why they operate is essential and must be developed and promoted. This would be a prerequisite to any efforts to increase the capacity, scope and coverage of existing or planned initiatives.

Opportunities to share and promote research skills, research resources and research outcomes should be established.

Funding for community food initiatives must always contain a budget that would allow for adequate self-evaluation and/or for the commissioning of external evaluation.

Existing research resources **within** agencies funding or supporting community food initiatives, such as **local** authorities and health **boards, must be made more available and accessible to** the initiatives.

Academic/public sector mentoring of projects undertaking evaluation should be piloted and partnerships between communities and academic institutions should be encouraged and supported by agencies funding research.

Colleges and universities training fieldworkers must be engaged improving opportunities for students involved in relevant academic and vocational training to undertake projects and placements with community-based initiatives.

Suitable mechanisms must be established to improve access to, and influence of, the research agendas of major public and non-public commissioners.

Good communications and making contacts, normally through visits to other initiatives or meeting up at events was peoples mistakes seemed to be common highlighted as a vital tool in improving practice. Learning from others and not repeating other sense

Communication would be encouraged by an annual event held for those working at community level on food issues but with invited guests from all relevant players. This could allow issues to be examined from the perspective of Scotland's communities but in the presence of those who can make a difference. The aim of this event would be to spark off ongoing dialogue and activity as well as allow annual reflection on progress towards overcoming dietary barriers and tackling inequality.

An audit needs to take place of the nature and scale of local strategies around food and health since the launch of the Scottish Diet action plan, with a particular focus on the role of local communities in the process.

The development of government of any national body or structure around food should be preceded by wide consultation with, Scotland's many and diverse community food initiatives.

A programme combining research and multi-targeted dissemination promoting of the range of benefits delivered by specific community food initiatives should be prioritised by SCDP and appropriate agencies.

Investment in training for volunteers and building their capacity would not only boost initiatives but also the individual. Appropriate agencies should be enlisted to establish and promote guidelines encouraging good practice in the terms and conditions under which community food volunteers operate.

The Scottish Community Diet project and appropriate agencies should explore of the potential role for non-local volunteers, including their acceptability within, and implications for community ownership of, food initiatives.

Incentives should be given by central government to local authorities and health boards to promote the establishment of lay community food worker schemes across the country, supporting voluntary initiatives and supported by professional fieldworkers.

The recommendation in the Scottish Diet Action Plan that professional staff within local Health Boards be allocated 'specific responsibilities for action to improve the diet of low income communities', should be implemented as a matter of priority. The allocated staff should also have this task as their sole responsibility.

A greater prioritising of food issues within the workloads allocated to staff in other agencies would help match the current opportunities constantly arising.

The mutually beneficial relationship between volunteers lay workers and professional fieldworkers must be recognised, promoted and encouraged.

Recruitment of staff by Health Boards with community development skills and experience is as crucial to the development of community food initiatives as the recruitment by Local Authorities of staff with skills and experience in food and health.

It is important to ensure that policy makers are given the opportunity to develop as accurate an understanding of issues and practice as possible. Improved communications, secondments and personnel exchanges should be initiated as a means of achieving this.

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The Scottish Community Diet Project should work with the former Food Futures Initiatives<sup>63</sup> in Scotland to explore potential links between local producers, food co-ops and other community food initiatives.

Support, including start-up funds should be made available via central government initially to any school in a Social Inclusion Partnership, and eventually to any school, which can prove its pupils, parents and staff wish to operate a breakfast club.

Each breakfast club must contribute to the development of a whole school approach to health promotion. It should also use the Scottish Community Diet project and the Health promoting School Unit to network and share good practice on a local authority and national level.

The current interest generated in community catering initiatives needs to be maintained and built upon. The necessary mix of cooking, nutrition, community development, marketing and business skills required by successful and sustainable community cafes must be accessed from local agencies such as colleges and businesses as well as by tapping the resources of a range of national agencies including the Natural Cooking of Scotland, the Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme, the Health Education Board for Scotland and the Scottish Community Diet Project.

Work must be undertaken to provide a better understanding of the range and scale of growing initiatives in Scotland alongside a promotion of the benefits that can come from communities growing their own food, even in small quantities.

The Scottish Community Diet Project should ensure that sources of, and access to, the varied and sometimes specialised support skills required by growing initiatives should also be examined with appropriate agencies.

The Scottish Community Diet Project and appropriate agencies should document and highlight the range of providers of cooking skills classes and encourage the sharing of good practice in terms of settings, methods and contents for wider adoption and adaption.

Support must be available locally and nationally to improve existing practice and promote sustainability within community food initiatives. However, it is equally important, particularly for the Scottish Community Diet Project and appropriate agencies to support the piloting and development of effective new approaches aimed at identified gaps in current methods of delivery.

Community Shops<sup>64</sup> have a limited and largely rural history in Scotland but have displayed a sustainability that merits further investigation of their potential and wider applicability.

It is essential that the needs and contributions of Scotland's black and ethnic minority communities be taken account by community food initiatives, support staff, funders and policy makers. What would be required to support community food initiatives wishing to address the specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees must also be explored and responded to as soon as possible.

The available resources of core funding for community food work must be increased. Funding agencies should also consider establishing separate seed-corn funding and development budgets to invest in start-ups and to support later changes of direction or emphasis as appropriate agencies to promote good practice in ensuring such funding is accompanied by realistic timetables and targets as well as evaluation and monitoring systems that encourage interest rather than act as a disincentive and barrier.

A study of the resources available, or potentially available, from both the private and public sectors in the form of training, secondments, mentoring, equipment, premises and the like needs to be undertaken by the Scottish Community Diet Project and relevant private sector agencies and a protocol for access to such assistance explored.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> See appendix listing SCDP events and reports
- <sup>2</sup> Scotland's Health A Challenge To Us All, A Diet Plan for Scotland, The Scottish Office Department of Health, July 1996
- <sup>3</sup> Towards a Healthier Scotland, A White Paper on Health, The Scottish Office Department of Health, February 1999
- <sup>4</sup> Opening the door to a better Scotland, Social Inclusion Strategy, The Scottish Office, March 1999
- <sup>5</sup> Fenwick Weavers Society 1796, Lennoxtown Victualing Society 1812.
- <sup>6</sup> The statue of Robert Peel, who repealed the Corn laws, stands in George Square, Glasgow
- <sup>7</sup> eg Salmonella, BSE, CJD, GM, E-coli
- <sup>8</sup> Director of the Rowett Institute, Aberdeen and later Director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and winner of the Nobel Peace prize in 1949
- <sup>9</sup> See 'Practicing Community Development – Experience in Strathclyde' by Alan Barr 1991, 'Communities Against Poverty Resource Pack' by Strathclyde Regional Council/Strathclyde Poverty Alliance 1994, 'Poverty and Health – Tools for Change' by Public Health Trust 1995, Private Troubles and Public Issues – A Community Development Approach to Health' by Jane Jones 1999
- <sup>10</sup> Social Justice...A Scotland Where Everyone Matters, Scottish Office, November 1999
- <sup>11</sup> Health Demonstration Projects were announced within 'Towards a Healthier Scotland, A white Paper on Health', The Scottish office Department of Health, February 1999. Both diet and health interventions are given high priority within the 'Have a Heart Paisley' Health Demonstration project to tackle cardiovascular disease, and also within Glasgow's Early Start Health Demonstration Project focusing on child health.
- <sup>12</sup> Healthy Living Centres, to be funded by the National Lottery's New Opportunities Fund, were first announced within the Government White Paper 'The People's Lottery – health, education and the environment', April 1998
- <sup>13</sup> The setting up of local Health Care Co-Operatives was announced following the 1997 White Paper Designed to care – Renewing the NHS in Scotland and the Government's vision for improving health for all in Scotland in the White Paper Towards a Healthier Scotland, which was presented to Parliament in February 1999.
- <sup>14</sup> The establishment of a new Institute for Public Health was adopted by the Government in July 2000 following the Review of the Public Health Function in Scotland, commissioned by the Scottish Executive in December 1999.
- <sup>15</sup> The Budget 2000 resulted in the largest ever package of spending on the NHS with an immediate £2 billion boost, including extra revenue from tobacco taxes and spending set to rise by 6.1 per cent over the next four years, the longest period of sustained high growth in the history of the NHS. Twenty six million pounds from taxes on tobacco was allocated to Scotland to fund public health activity as announced by Ms Susan Deacon, Scottish Minister for Health and Community Care, in August 2000.
- <sup>16</sup> The establishment of a Food Standards Agency was announced within the Government White Paper, The Food Standards Agency: A Force for Change, (January 1998). The Agency is responsible for providing policy advice to Ministers, including the Scottish Parliament, on food safety and standards, aspects of nutrition, for drafting legislation, and for providing the public with information and advice.
- <sup>17</sup> See 'Open Mouthed' a report on the proceedings of an SCDP seminar looking at the implications for local communities of the establishment of a Food standards agency. Glasgow 1999
- <sup>18</sup> Active Citizenship and Volunteering as promoted within the publication 'Communities: Change Through Learning Report of a Working Group on the Future of Community Education', the Scottish Office, 1998. The Scottish Executive provided £1m to ensure that each local authority area has a Local Volunteering Development Agency.
- <sup>19</sup> New Technologies for local people as outlined within "Implementing The National Grid For Learning in Scotland", The Scottish Office, 1998
- <sup>20</sup> The social agenda of urban regeneration is outlined within a "New Life for Urban Scotland" an evaluation report on urban regeneration policy and its contribution to disadvantaged communities in Scotland over the past ten years, published by the Scottish Office, October 1999.
- <sup>21</sup> Towards a Development Strategy for Rural Scotland, Scottish Office 1998
- <sup>22</sup> Community Planning in Scotland – an evaluation of the Pathfinders Project; COSLA 2000  
COSLA Review of Community Planning Progress Reports, April 2000
- <sup>23</sup> E.g. SNAGS, Breakfast Clubs, etc
- <sup>24</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/education/newcommunityschools>
- <sup>25</sup> A Health Promoting Schools unit is expected to be established in the near future.
- <sup>26</sup> See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/schoolmeals>

- <sup>27</sup> Also see Filling the Gap Child Poverty Action Group Dec 1999 and [www.cpag.org](http://www.cpag.org) and 'Even the tatties have batter' CPAG 2002.
- <sup>28</sup> Changed Days: local agenda 21 in Scotland, Scottish Office 1999 A network now exists of LA21 officers from each local authority
- <sup>29</sup> The posts were created as a direct result of recommendation in 'Towards a healthier Scotland'.
- <sup>30</sup> See Local Authorities as Public Health organisations, COSLA, August 2000
- <sup>31</sup> See Food and Health Action Framework for Glasgow 2001-2006, <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/healthycities/ghcp/pdf/food.pdf>
- <sup>32</sup> See <http://www.who.dk/Document/Nut/PresentationLeaflet2001.pdf>
- <sup>33</sup> [www.dss.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/index.htm](http://www.dss.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/index.htm)
- <sup>34</sup> [www.dss.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/index.htm](http://www.dss.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/index.htm)
- <sup>35</sup> [www.dss.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/index.htm](http://www.dss.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/index.htm)
- <sup>36</sup> <http://www.lowpay.gov.uk/>
- <sup>37</sup> The Policy Review of Welfare Food Scheme Provisions is due to report imminently
- <sup>38</sup> See 'The Cap Doesn't Fit', CEG, Sept 2000
- <sup>39</sup> See [www](http://www.futurepatterns.org).
- <sup>40</sup> Future Patterns of Retailing in Scotland, Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, Research Findings No 21
- <sup>41</sup> SGF, Federation House, 222-224 Queensferry Road, Edinburgh, EH14 2BN, tel: 01313433300  
SRC, same address as above, tel: 0131 332 6619
- <sup>42</sup> Scottish Retail Consortium, 222/224 Queensferry Road, Edinburgh, EH4 2BN tel: 0131 332 6619
- <sup>43</sup> Scottish Food & Drink Federation, 4a Torphichen Street, Edinburgh EH3 8JQ tel: 0131 229 9415
- <sup>44</sup> QMS is a partnership of the key organisations in the Scottish meat and livestock industry. The new organisation will integrate and build on the work of the Meat and Livestock Commission in Scotland although nutrition and dietetics currently remains within the MLC's UK remit.  
QMS, Rural Centre, West Mains, Ingliston, Newbridge, Midlothian. EH28 8NZ tel: 0131 472 4040/4111
- <sup>45</sup> See Scottish Consumer Council response at <http://212.74.28.31/evparl/evparl08.PDF>
- <sup>46</sup> Both individually (eg Just for Starters, Community Café Resource Pack) and in partnership (eg Food in the Community, Directory, jointly published with SCDP '97,99,01)
- <sup>47</sup> See <http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk/scotland/>
- <sup>48</sup> Access, availability, culture and skills. SDAP pg. 56
- <sup>49</sup> Carried out by Scottish Community Diet Project in May/June 2000.
- <sup>50</sup> such as diet and hospitals..check Annie's column FSA research
- <sup>51</sup> HEPS 1998, HEBS 2000
- <sup>52</sup> 83% of respondents had tried to make at least one change in the past year, 47% had tried eating more fruit and vegetables. HEPS 1998, HEBS 2000
- <sup>53</sup> willpower:35%, expense:25%, taste:15%, knowledge:15% HEPS 1998, HEBS 2000
- <sup>54</sup> AB:15%, C1:23%, C2:26%, DE31% HEPS 1998, HEBS 2000
- <sup>55</sup> Better Eating in Scotland, FSA Scotland, Dec 2001
- <sup>56</sup> Study of 5,000 schoolchildren by RUHBC at Edinburgh University. Results published November 2000
- <sup>41</sup> Definition from CDF/CHEX
- <sup>42</sup> Midlothian
- <sup>43</sup> Kirkcaldy fifteen visits
- <sup>44</sup> Ferguslie's community shop/business plan?
- <sup>45</sup> ? are an example where the project volunteers are both the staff and the management
- <sup>46</sup> Glasgow North Community Health Project have viability (?) surveys, good practice guidelines and evaluations on their work with Breakfast Clubs.
- <sup>48</sup> Possible figure relating postcodes to Carstairs's Deprivation Index?
- <sup>49</sup> e.g.? Kirkton
- <sup>50</sup> Lets Community Cafe
- <sup>51</sup> Definition applied by SCDP in grant system
- <sup>52</sup> SDAP
- <sup>53</sup> HEBS' definition
- <sup>54</sup> Breakfast Clubs?
- <sup>55</sup> e.g. Increasing fruit & vegetable availability through establishing a food co-op or introducing healthy choices through a community cafe menu. See 'Not taken for granted - an evaluation of the Scottish Community Diet project's grant scheme' August 1998
- <sup>56</sup> Establishing permanent changes in individual or family dietary choices and nutritional intake
- <sup>57</sup> say something about food mapping - East London?



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- <sup>58</sup> Sustain?
- <sup>59</sup> SCOFF was established in? and meets ? involving sociologists, nutritionists, geographers and other disciplines. Dundee working with town planning? Is Donna worth quoting from our training event?
- <sup>60</sup> Eg's
- <sup>61</sup> Dundee e.g.
- <sup>62</sup> Research newsletters?
- <sup>63</sup> SCDP est'd 1996, CHEX (formerly SCHNP) est'd Voluntary Health Scotland est'd?
- <sup>64</sup> See COSLA's 'Thirty Ways to Consult'?
- <sup>65</sup> See 'Table Manners'
- <sup>66</sup> All SCDP events have been oversubscribed and both SCDP and HEBS have had to run events twice on occasion to cope with the interest of those working at community level to 'get together'. ( Food for Thought 1997 and Just for Starters 1999
- <sup>67</sup> Mention Glasgow, Borders, Ayrshire and Food Futures.
- <sup>68</sup> Cosla?, Hebs?
- <sup>69</sup> Ref C.Brown, L.Farrell, M. Pallister articles
- <sup>70</sup> Figures collected by SCDP as part of production of latest edition of Directory of Scottish Community Food Initiatives.
- <sup>71</sup> See Not Taken For Granted, SCDP 1998
- <sup>57</sup> Find e.g. in grant evaluations
- <sup>72</sup> See pg. 41 in 'Food Projects and how they work' McGlone et al, JRF 1999
- <sup>74</sup> JRF?
- <sup>58</sup> Rountable discussion & Rich Pickings
- <sup>75</sup> Ayrshire
- <sup>76</sup> See range of activities in directory or HEBS database on www.etc
- <sup>77</sup> See Annie's research? And Spaghetti Junction
- <sup>79</sup> Cambuslang, Ferguslie Park, Craigend etc
- <sup>80</sup> Polbeth, etc
- <sup>81</sup> Johnston West Food Co-operative was founded 17 years ago
- <sup>82</sup> N.Lanarkshire, Aberdeen
- <sup>83</sup> Edinburgh, N.Lanarkshire
- <sup>59</sup> ECFI
- <sup>84</sup> See the 'co-opportunity programme' developed by Govan Healthy Eating Project. Etc Focus Group?
- <sup>85</sup> See Co-op start-up guide
- <sup>86</sup> The longest established are ECFI and Aberdeen, the most recent N.Lanarkshire and the smallest Dundee
- <sup>87</sup> Pam Pam Fruit Game, Kids and Co in Govan and North Lanarkshire
- <sup>88</sup> Credit Unions etc
- <sup>89</sup> Deliberative Seminar & Stirling research
- <sup>60</sup> Forth Valley, Skye and Dumfries & Galloway
- <sup>90</sup> SCDP Seminar
- <sup>91</sup> Possilpark evaluation, Cambuslang Evaluation, SCDP Training event
- <sup>92</sup> GGHB/HEBS
- <sup>93</sup> New Policy Institute inc latest report
- <sup>94</sup> Pavilion
- <sup>95</sup> Lets, Rendezvous
- <sup>96</sup> Craigend article in Fare Choice
- <sup>97</sup> Rendezvous
- <sup>98</sup> Pavilion
- <sup>99</sup> Just for starters ECFI/HEBS
- <sup>100</sup> Just for starters evaluation
- <sup>101</sup> Current National Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens has? entries from Scotland in its database and in the SCDP's most recent directory of community food initiatives growing initiatives were being carried out by just over 12% of the initiatives listed.
- <sup>102</sup> e.g. Rendezvous, Dumfries?
- <sup>103</sup> e.g. Grounds for Food, Stirling tel: 017868 70247
- <sup>104</sup> e.g. Gorgie?
- <sup>105</sup> e.g. Cambuslang Health and Food Project tel: 0141 641 5169?
- <sup>106</sup> e.g. Edinburgh Community Organic Gardeners tel: 0131 557 2923?
- <sup>107</sup> e.g. Earthshare, Forres tel: 01309 676128?
- <sup>112</sup> Tim Lang, Martin Caraher?

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- <sup>113</sup> Dundee study  
<sup>114</sup> See Get Shopping Get Cooking, Grampian Evaluation, Info exchange notes  
<sup>115</sup> Stirling e.g.  
<sup>116</sup> Burnfoot community school kitchen  
<sup>117</sup> See Craigend experience in Fare Choice Issue 9  
<sup>118</sup> Stirling?  
<sup>122</sup> Answers and Mastrick  
<sup>123</sup> Bharitya-Dundee and?  
<sup>124</sup> Ollaberry?  
<sup>125</sup> North Lanarkshire or Aberdeen acts as wholesalers to ? food co-ops, ? schools an elderly home and ?  
<sup>61</sup> Dumfries  
<sup>126</sup> See Govan Healthy Eating for details of their 'Pam Pam fruit game and Kids & Co'  
<sup>127</sup> Ref David Black evaluation  
<sup>128</sup> West Lothian and Pilton  
<sup>129</sup> Ferguslie Park, Craigmillar, Pilton, Milton  
<sup>130</sup> HITS, and homeless – ark and Cyrenians  
<sup>131</sup> Surplus food distribution  
<sup>132</sup> e.g. Leithland Neighborhood Center, Glasgow  
<sup>133</sup> e.g. St Ninian's Primary, Dumfries  
<sup>134</sup> e.g. Whitfield Parish Church Breakfast Club, Dundee  
<sup>135</sup> e.g. Greengables Nursery, Edinburgh  
<sup>136</sup> e.g. Blackburn Family Centre, West Lothian  
<sup>137</sup> e.g. Edinburgh Community Food Initiative  
<sup>62</sup> See Martin Meteyard.  
<sup>119</sup> See 'Not Taken For Granted', SCDP 1998  
<sup>120</sup> See points made in 'Well down the road to..', SCDP/SCDC/WSNCHP, 2000  
<sup>121</sup> B&Q, M&S  
<sup>122</sup> Foresight findings  
<sup>63</sup> Forth Valley, Skye and Dumfries & Galloway  
<sup>64</sup> See Martin Meteyard.