

GCFN Facilitated discussion

Chefs, Cooks, and Community Meals

1st Group.

- Donna (GCFN) asked how do we make Community Meals happen in each area?
 - Neil from Glasgow Eco Trust gave the example of where they are based in the west there are currently 5 sites that can and do offer community meals, we need to coordinate to ensure that rather than competing they are supplementing each other. The area could have each venue provide a free meal on a different day, ensuring that local people had access to free food 5 days a week. Similarly by linking up services and involving different groups in delivery we can expand this to include takeaway options. It's all about partnership working.
- We mentioned the example of Blackhill's Grown homegrown pizza, how we can create really holistic food experiences by utilising produce grown at the site as ingredients for our meals and workshops
- Participant from FARE talked about the community allotment she is setting up. At the moment they are growing the produce but don't have the facilities to cook on site – need fresh water supply for cleaning/hygiene to even use outdoor stoves, etc. – need to get funding for this but it's not often prioritised in funding streams
- Participant mentioned that Outdoor cooking spaces had been developed greatly during the pandemic and brought a lot of good to the workshops, although obviously are weather dependent.
- Participant mentioned their project setting up a community pantry and bakery hoping to run workshops engaging local young people giving them the cooking skills to bake and use certain items. Also how they would like to link this in with growing food.
- We agreed more should be done throughout the city to link Growing Spaces with Cooking facilities. Similarly the need for both indoor (polytunnel) and outdoor growing spaces to get the range of produce needed to run exciting cooking workshops – i.e. not just the classic Scottish veg, but tomatoes, peppers, etc.
- The group discussed online workshops during the pandemic and had mixed successes. Good relationships with the community can make online easier but there needs to be the infrastructure to support it. People need access to wifi, laptops, etc. Some organisations got funding to give these out which helped.
 - Similarly there is a cultural difference in online accessibility in different areas and generations. At St Paul's Youth Forum we had lots of success with online cooking activities for young people during lockdown, but far less when running it with older people and working families.
- Donna asked if there were enough community chef's in Glasgow to allow for the upskilling of community meals and cooking workshops.
 - This sparked a discussion around what makes a community chef, what are the skill sets needed and how do they differentiate between standard kitchen chef's. Is chef even the right word or is it's connotations too 'top down' is Community Cook a more accessible phrase.
 - We spoke about how a lot of the culture of professional kitchens is completely opposed to the type of environment we are trying to create in a community setting. It's often very top-down almost military style, with high stress environments. To run

cooking workshops in a community setting we need not just the cooking skills but also the facilitation skills, and people person patience and attitude.

Group 2

- We started the discussion by asking what makes a good community meal? What differentiates it from a normal eating setting.
 - Firstly we discussed the cost – community meals should be free for all it was argued. Others said pay what you can/feel is a more dignified and self-sustaining approach, but all agreed cost shouldn't be a barrier.
 - We also argued it should go beyond price, there should be a shared responsibility, participants should be encouraged (although not expected!) to get involved in the cooking and cleaning of the meal. This process should also facilitate shared learning, so participants are also gaining skills and confidence.
 - We all agreed that the community setting was incredibly important. There shouldn't be private tables like in a restaurants but larger shared seating where meeting people outside of your immediate circle is encouraged.
 - It should also breakdown the hierarchical structure of a normal restaurants setting. Participants should get a say in the menu and what is created, how the events are run, etc.
 - It should involve accessing new knowledge. Participants should be encouraged to taste new things, learn new skills and experiment with different recipes.
- We then discussed what we felt was need in a good community chef/cook?
 - They needed to be a people person, needed a diverse skill set, not just cooking skills but also facilitation, great communication, adaptability (so they can respond to different participants needs and strengths).
 - Finally we needed to ensure that we have an inclusive programme. Chef's should represent diversity in Glasgow and the incredible diverse range of foods and cooking cultures in the city. Soul Food Sisters were given as a successful example.
- We discussed how to facilitate more community cooking (com meals and cooking workshops)
 - Better partnership working was raised, the importance of improving links between chef's and community groups.
 - Similarly linking facilities with the people with skills. There are far too many community spaces with fantastic kitchens that are only used once every month or two. More skill sharing is needed and food is a fantastic way to share.
 - The importance of linking in with growing spaces to give as holistic an approach as possible to community cooking.
 - It was raised that more community mapping could facilitate this, as could technology, David Williams suggested the idea of a 'dating app' for third sector orgs to link up and work together on projects.
- We discussed the importance of sourcing our ingredients in a way that is dignified and also beneficial to the community and society as a whole
 - For example is purchasing food from big supermarkets for community meals not just destroying with the left hand what the right hand builds. We are trying to address issues of food insecurity and food deserts but are at the same time propping up low-wage structures which actively promote depopulating local areas of food.

3rd Group.

- One participant raised how fantastic a resource food was for building community. They mentioned the universality of food, how it's accessible and brings people together in a unique way.
 - They suggested (coming from a community health backgrounds) that we should be using Community Meals as a way to engage with those harder to reach individuals and signpost them and link them to services – Income Maximisation, health services, mental health and addiction, etc.
- We discussed what makes a something community led – meals and workshops – why do we put this word in front of it instead of just meals and cooking workshops?
 - It should be a user-led space with the focus on inclusion and connection not on productivity.
 - One participant mentioned how successful they had been running a series of user led skill sharing cooking workshops in their community. Online during COVID, this was a fantastic way of bringing a diverse group of busy women together during a difficult time.
 - One participant mentioned that whilst it was important we offered opportunities to get more involved in community meals outside of simply consuming them that shouldn't be expected. Lots of individuals on low-incomes are time poor and stressed so an expectation to engage could be a barrier.
- We talked about the importance of long-term funding to build up community, it takes months if not years to make a service truly embedded in the community and to build up a social environment that is cherished by the community, rather than just somewhere people attend to address a lack of income.