



**FOOD & CLIMATE ACTION
TRANSFORMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT
NORTHERN STAR**



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Thank you

This research was made possible by the Food and Climate Action participants who gave of their time and shared their stories; and Food and Climate Action staff who gathered and analysed the stories. This research aims to help Food and Climate Action to better understand its work and keep on improving.

Introduction

The Food & Climate Action (FCA) project aims to work alongside local communities to co-create a more resilient food system that is fair and kinder to both people and the planet.

Led by Glasgow Community Food Network and funded by the National Lottery, the five-year project is based on years of collaborative action in Glasgow and is a partnership between Urban Roots, Glasgow Eco Trust, The Space, St Paul's Youth Forum and Central & West Integration Network.

Glasgow Community Food Network (GCFN) was established in 2017 to bring together practitioners and organisations in the private, public and third sectors along with other interested individuals, to develop a flourishing food system in Glasgow.

GCFN aims to work with everyone with an interest in food: chefs and restaurants, farmers and market gardeners, foodbank and soup kitchen volunteers and anyone else who cares about better food for Glasgow. We want to see a city where high quality, fresh, local, organic produce is available and affordable for all and where good food is a celebrated part of our culture.

FCA Work

Phase 1 (2021-23):

Initially funded for two years, the project's five workstreams consisted of increasing urban agriculture within the city, engaging and empowering people of all ages through **food education**, establishing **community-led climate cafes**, collating all learning in an **online food hub** and supporting action around **COP26**. The work connected to wider action on climate and food through policy and campaigns activity including the aims of the Glasgow City Food Plan.

Phase 2 (2023-26):

In phase 2 FCA is focussed on three key workstreams:

1. Delivering **Food Education**, both in local communities in Glasgow, and centrally as part of the climate crumbs training package.
2. The **Urban Agriculture** workstream focuses on supporting existing growers, supporting new and entrant growers, and providing opportunities for upskilling.
3. The **Movement Building** workstream focuses on increasing knowledge & opportunities for community composting in Glasgow and includes funding small community projects through peer budgeting.

The Evaluation

In 2023 FCA commissioned Northern Star to develop and implement the 'Transformative Evaluation' methodology across the project.

Specifically, this evaluation sought to answer two questions:

1. What changes do people and organisations experience as a result of engaging with FCA?
2. What elements of FCA's practice contribute to these changes?

Methodology

The Transformative Evaluation methodology used in this study was developed by Dr Sue Cooper (Cooper 2012) from St Mark and St John University, Plymouth. Transformative evaluation is based on the 'most significant change' approach and involves the generation and analysis of stories gathered through reflective conversations between participants and FCA staff. The stories are co-authored. Participants identify what they perceive to be an important change and which elements of the work contributed to this, whilst staff commentaries provide the reader with a description of the practice.

The methodology aims to provide both evidence of impact and development of practice through a participatory approach where FCA staff form part of the research team. Involving FCA staff as researchers helps staff to receive direct feedback about how their practice has impacted on people and organisations. One of the benefits of this approach is the space and opportunity it gives staff to reflect on what is working and improve and develop their practice accordingly.

FCA works both with individuals and organisations. It has a number of Community Activator posts who work through five host organisations across Glasgow to engage with individuals and communities. FCA also works with

those host organisations and other partners through the 'movement building' strand of work connecting together organisations, projects and ideas.

This study included stories from individuals and organisations; 13 stories from individuals and 7 stories from organisations.

The methodology had four stages:

Stage 1 – Generating Significant Change Stories

The research team was made up of seven FCA staff all of whom delivered work in communities or with partners. They were trained in how to collect the stories ethically by Northern Star. After the training, staff identified individuals and organisations to participate in the research. They were selected based on staff perception that the participant had experienced a change as result of their involvement in FCA. Staff used the following two questions as the basis for the reflective conversation:

1. Looking back, what do you think has been the most significant change that occurred for you/your organisation as a result of accessing the Food and Climate Action project?
2. What is it about the project that has led to the change?

Staff were able to tailor the question to focus on the specific elements of the project that an individual had engaged in for example a supper club.

Once the stories had been gathered, staff contextualised each story with their own commentary focusing on how a participant had engaged in the FCA work and what difference the staff member had observed. Significant change stories are at the heart of this research and they consist of a participant's input and the staff commentary. Once complete, each participant was asked to check and approve their story for use in the research and final report. The stories were

anonymised before analysis and participants were asked to choose a pseudonym to use in their story.

Stage 2 – Analysis

Analysis of the significant change stories was carried out by the FCA staff and supported by Northern Star. Analysis took place over two workshops and involved reading each story and identifying key themes and trends known as codes. This process is called coding and generated two types of codes:

- ❖ Impact codes that described the changes participants identified in their lives or organisations.
- ❖ Practice codes that described what it was about FCA that contributed to those changes.

FCA staff then organised codes into overall domains by grouping similar codes together and agreeing an overall name for that group. Domains help to summarise and describe the findings of the study.

All of the data and codes were independently checked and verified by Northern Star and some codes were merged together, edited or deleted. This process ensured that there was clarity about the meaning of each code, that the codes were applied consistently across stories, that there was enough evidence to apply the code and that the initial codes contributed to the relevant final domain.

Stage 3 – Stakeholder Workshop

A wider group of partner organisations who had not been involved in the research group came together in April 2024. This group spent the afternoon exploring the stories in small groups. The stakeholder workshop enabled the research group to sense check the coding framework it had developed, helped broaden awareness of the research and methodology and gave a wider group of

people the opportunity to reflect on what FCA does and the difference that it makes.

Stage 4 - Review

This stage aimed to identify any learning or concerns about the methodology itself and how the project will embed the findings into its planning.

Strengths and Limitations of the study

This study gathered stories from 20 participants across FCA's work. The stories provided rich data about the changes participants identified and the work of FCA. The study provided the space and time for FCA staff to explore and reflect on the project's work.

Transformative Evaluation is a selective process. Rather than measuring the 'average condition' of all participants or whether change occurred, the research focused on exploring what changes happened and the contribution of FCA. Selecting participants based on knowledge that they have experienced a change is purposefully 'biased' in order to learn from those cases of good practice. (Patton 2002). We cannot apply the findings to all participants in FCA's work.

Findings

The findings are split into two separate sections in this report. The first section looks at the changes participants identified in themselves or their organisation. The second section explores which elements of FCA's practice contributed to these changes or helped create the conditions for change.

The FCA project and the participants and organisations it works with exist in a complex system with multiple actors and forces. It is important to remember this when reading these findings. The codes and domains do not occur in isolation but are connected to each other.

We make use of quotes from the stories in this report. Quotes from FCA staff are labelled as such, all other quotes come from participants/organisations and are anonymised.

What changes did people experience as a result of engaging with Food & Climate Action?

There were 28 impact codes and 6 impact domains identified across the 20 stories. Table 1 below shows the number of stories that the impact codes and domains are applied to. Please note that codes and domains can only be applied to stories once. For example, if a story has both the 'Food Consumption' and 'Improved Health' codes applied, this will only count as one application of the 'Behaviour Change' domain.

Whilst there was some overlap between the impacts on organisations and individuals we report on them separately in this section. There were a total of thirteen stories from individuals and seven from partner organisations.

The Impact Codes were categorised into the following 6 domains:

- ❖ Learning
- ❖ Personal Development (changes in attitudes)
- ❖ Behaviour Change
- ❖ Connection
- ❖ New Experiences
- ❖ Increased Capacity (organisations)

Table 1: Impact Codes

Impact Domains	Number of stories the domain is applied to	Code	Number of stories the code is applied to
Learning	13	Increased knowledge	13
		Skills development	13
Personal Development	13	Enjoyment	10
		Confidence	8
		Inspired/motivated	6
		Peer support	6
		Sense of achievement/Pride	6
		Attitude to immigration	3
		Change in how they view life	3
Behaviour Change	13	Food consumption	12
		Sharing with family and friends	8
		Improved health	5
		Employment/Social Enterprise/Other Projects	2
		Giving something back	2
Increased Connection	12	Building relationships	11
		Feeling part of a community	11
		Reducing social isolation	4

New Experiences	12	Different Foods	11
		New cultures	7
		Spending time outdoors	7
		Visiting new places	6
Increased Capacity (orgs)	7	Improved connections between organisations	7
		Improved reach	6
		Access to land	2
		More focus/excitement to work on climate change	2
		Profile	2
		Amplify voice	1
		Shaping policy	1

Domain: Learning

In all the stories from individuals, participants reported changes in knowledge or skills or both.

Participants had a deeper understanding of food. Through their participation they learned about new ingredients, new recipes and fermentation. They explored the link between food and health and how to use food to promote wellbeing.

“...the other thing that this group has really got me into is my herbals. My herbals of nettle tea when I’m cramping. There’s another couple of things. Do you remember the little jars we made and the vinegar, and then we would put the apple cider vinegar?... I did the same with the children. I’m like, if you’ve got a headache, or you’ve got a sore tummy. There was another thing [she] said about a sore tummy that’s fennel seeds, and that, honestly... I wrote it all down. And I try and do that. I try not to give the kids medication. Or even like in summer they got cuts and things, I used the... was it aloe vera gel, or a burn they had, and I remember using... and I went and bought an aloe vera plant!” (Story 1)

In eight of the stories participants identified that they understood how to source and cook food on a budget whilst seven stories talked about having a better understanding of food waste and how to reduce it. Three of the stories talked about having an increased understanding of agriculture, including access to land and funding. In two of the three stories the participants had been involved in the Women in Farming programme.

Participants also developed skills through their participation in FCA work. They were more skilled in preparing, cooking and preserving food. They were more creative in their use of leftovers to create meals and they were able to integrate new ingredients into their home cooking.

"I've learned to cook from scratch, no processed food, everything's all from scratch. I've learned to have less food waste. I've made a lot of new friends, which is superb, because they encourage you to be better in your work and your cooking. We'll use a lot of fresh vegetables, which is hard in an area like this, with so much poverty, but it's good to use fresh ingredients when you can but obviously everybody's not going to be able to afford that. But I've learned to cook and I've learned a lot of new ideas, made new friends and learned to bake. I've learned to make a white sauce, I've learned to bake and I feel as I'm bursting with pride that I can bake a cake now." (Story 12)

One participant had developed skills in growing food, another talked about improving their English through attending one of the groups whilst a third participant talked about the business skills they had learnt through the Women in Farming program.

Domain: Personal Development

In the context of this evaluation, personal development refers to values, attitudes or outlook.

Participants really enjoyed their time and engagement with FCA and this is evidenced in ten of the stories. They looked forward to the FCA sessions and talked about having fun in the groups.

“And the impact on my life is that once a month there’s something to look forward to or to experiment doing during the weeks preceding that and after that, and to continue with looking at, okay, what was it that we learnt? I try to remember if I’m doing it correctly. I have passed on what I’ve learnt to some of my friends that have come to the house and gone, what is this? And I say, well, taste that and tell me what you think of it. So, experimenting with them. And they’ve gone, that’s nice, or, I’m not sure about that. But they’re intrigued about it too, which is nice”.
(Story 4)

In eight of the stories participants talked about having confidence to cook or try new things at home. They felt motivated to keep embedding what they had learned and use it in other areas of their lives. They had an understanding of their own agency and the steps they could take to improve their diet and reduce food waste. Six participants talked about the sense of achievement they felt as a result of their participation.

Groups that the FCA ran provided an opportunity for peer support. People came together, shared how they were feeling and felt better when they left the session.

In three of the stories, participants had positive, open and tolerant attitudes to people from other countries and cultures, in part, through regular interaction and learning in FCA group sessions.

“And I do think we have to be more accepting of people. And do you know what, they’re not any different from us. Not that I ever thought there were in particular, but I just think it has certainly made me interested in their culture more as well. I had a wee look and I was like, what does that mean? Is it Sunni Muslim they are instead of just plain Muslim. That sounds terrible to say it like that! But again, it’s a different culture. It has made me more interested in looking at that. And obviously, the girls made the bread the other week. And I missed out on quite a few weeks, which was a shame, because I’d been away, and with the kids. I just think... it sounds terrible to say ‘tolerant’ because you’re not tolerating them. See if you really looked into what it is these people are coming away from, it’s just horrendous. I would like to think if I was in that situation, and had to go to another country, that they people would be as understanding of me.” (Story 6)

In three of the stories participants talked about a change in how they viewed life, specifically becoming less materialistic as well as being more optimistic about the future.

“I just think it has made me think not even just about the community but people as a whole. Even it’s coming up for Christmas time. Something I speak to my kids about quite a lot anyhow, I’m not a materialistic sort of person, that’s just not me. And I say, I see how much the wee ones get. I’ve got three grandkids now. My granddaughter, the oldest one, she’s got... her gran and grand-da on the other side are one of seven each. So, she gets absolutely hundreds of these plastic toys and things and I’m just like, no, I’m not doing it. See after the first year when I seen how much she got, I said, no, we’re not doing this anymore. Now I would rather do experiences with her. I’ll maybe look and say, there’s tickets... But that’s what we do now, so we try to make it about experiences. I like to try and do things with them”. (Story 6)

Domain: Behaviour Change

In 12 out of 13 stories, participants talked about changes in their food consumption. These included

- using the recipes they had learned in their own home cooking,
- cooking from scratch,
- actively reducing their food waste
- making different food choices like more meat-free meals
- shopping locally and ethically,
- fermenting.

In six of the stories, participants reduced their intake of processed food through cooking with more vegetables.

Participants also reported improved health and well-being from their engagement with others and improvements in their diet.

“I would say being shown how much food waste what I used to be doing, and when you’ve got tins lying about, how easy that can be put into nice healthy meals. Things like that. I would say that’s the main thing, making food go further... Like bits and bobs in your fridge, you can all put it together and make a nice, healthy meal, instead of just phoning a takeaway, things like that”
(Story 19)

Eight of the stories talk about how participants shared the knowledge, skills and food they cooked with family and friends. They introduced friends and family to new recipes and helped to cultivate an enthusiasm for cooking in others.

“After we do a cooking session on a Thursday, we get the recipe home with us, and my sister will take the recipe off me because she wants to try it to cook it. I’ll say, bring me that back. So, she’ll take it home and copy it. And my other sister does the same. Because they want to try and learn the recipes that I’ve cooked, and ... we take turns, it’s your turn to cook, Margaret. Why don’t we make something that you made at the church. So, I’ve got to dig my recipe out to try this because, as I say, I’d never cooked before so I’m going by a recipe that [the FCA Worker] gave us.” (Story 11)

In two of the stories participants mentioned ‘giving something back’ through volunteering or social enterprise.

Domain: Connection

“Well, the interaction with the group. I’ve made new friends. I started to really enjoy cooking again, actually, and it’s just fun. And it’s just really nice to eat in a group. Being on your own now... because I’m on my own, and cooking for yourself is okay, but it’s a bit boring and you tend to do the same things. It’s lovely that people come up with ideas and I don’t have to think of a dinner sometimes. The other thing is it’s just company. So, the social aspect of it’s really good fun.” (Story 2)

Many of the activities FCA delivered involved bringing individuals together to cook, eat, share and learn. Through the sessions delivered by the FCA Community Activators, people were able to meet new people, make friends and build relationships and networks. This in turn helped people feel part of a community whether this was their existing geographical community or a new micro community created through FCA. Seeing the same faces regularly, working together to create a meal they share or learn a new skill helped participants feel a sense of belonging through shared experience.

In four of the stories participants were able to talk about how their participation in FCA activities has reduced their sense of loneliness or social isolation.

"I would say meeting new people, so my social side... the social side of things. The cultural thing has been a very big wakeup call for me. Different countries, different customs really broadening my mind. I love the strength. I love interacting with the Kurdish women, and I think it's great because I hear the stories from... some are from Iraq, some are from Iran, Turkey... I think it's a great organisation, and it's a way of actually beating loneliness as well. Social isolation for different people... And people are made very welcome by yourself when you come through the door. Great organisational, great ideas for the cooking. Everything's laid out and I really think it's marvellous." (Story 22)

Domain: New experiences

Through their engagement in FCA, participants were able to try a range of new experiences. In 11 of the stories people talked about trying new foods (including things they had never eaten before or not eaten for a long time) and learning new recipes that they then went on to use in their home cooking.

The diverse nature of the groups meant that participants were able to learn about and experience a range of new cultures and this was really valued by participants. They were able to visit new places with farm visits and spending time outdoors mentioned in a number of stories

Domain: Increased Capacity - Organisations

Seven of the stories gathered came from host or partner organisations.

There were improved connections between organisations. All of the organisations who participated in the research identified that the project helped them to meet and engage with other organisations across the city.

FCA acted as a hub and network coordinator. It brought organisations from across the city in contact with each other to share updates on their own work, generate new ideas and learn from one another.

“I think what our organisation workspace has really got out of it has been really great networking opportunities. For me, working with GCFN where basically you’re getting to meet people across the city doing really interesting food projects that hopefully we can help with. And yeah, we have our own spaces that we hope that we can contribute to different groups in the city. So, it’s really quite useful for us as well, it’s very co-beneficial. And the same is true for any events that we’ve ran with GCFN.” (Story 13)

Organisations also reported improved reach into communities and groups, some of which were often excluded from climate change and sustainability work. This reach through FCA, helped organisations to develop a better understanding of communities and the needs within them.

“Not only does the Food and Climate Action team provide us with a range of experts in different aspects of the food system but have community-facing roles and community-facing expertise, which is very, very helpful. They are involved in a range of different community organisations and can provide information to us and represent the views that they are hearing on the ground from their organisations. It gives us a much better understanding of what is going on in communities, and all the activators and the people involved in the climate action project are involved in different ways and aspects of the food plan, which is really, really helpful and gives us much more grounding and links into community work.” (Story 16)

Participation in the FCA project led to a new focus on climate change for two organisations.

“I guess there’s probably been a few rather than just one big change. But I think having someone who is working with us on a regular basis, who has a mandate to focus on issues around climate change has been really, really good for the organisation. Obviously, we do a lot of work to do with food, but it’s not necessarily specifically focused on climate change. That’s been really important, and it’s been good for when we’ve had engagement with a lot of the young people and people in the community. I also feel that being part of the wider network and being a more key part of the network through the Food and Climate Action project, that’s Glasgow Community Food Network and just the wider network of community organisations engaging with climate is growing. But this has been important for us. It has helped grow our profile and helped us fulfil more of a leadership position within the wider community” (Story 8)

A further two organisations reported they did not see a significant difference in this area but rather working with FCA enhanced existing work. These organisations were already working on climate change and sustainability but engagement in the project had given them increased and dedicated resource.

Two organisations reported improved profile though their engagement in FCA whilst a third organisation thought that the project acted as a voice for community organisations, amplifying the voices of local communities and enabling them to shape policy though the Glasgow Food Plan. Through engagement in the project, two organisations had increased access to land for growing.

What elements of Food and Climate Action’s practice contributed to impact?

In this section, we examine the specific elements of FCA's practice that contributed to the changes outlined above. During the analysis of the stories, any themes that emerged related to what FCA does and how it works were recorded as practice codes. Practice codes describe that it is about FCA that created the conditions for change. There were 28 practice codes which were then grouped together into 5 domains:

- ❖ Creating safe and welcoming spaces
- ❖ Celebrating inclusivity and diversity
- ❖ Enabling skills and knowledge development
- ❖ Building communities
- ❖ Providing support to partner organisations

Table 2: Practice Codes

Domains	Number of stories the domain is applied to	Codes	Number of stories the code is applied to
Creating Safe and Welcoming Spaces	13	Facilitation of group	13
		Consistency/length of engagement	12
		Making the process enjoyable	11
		Relaxed environment	6
		Based on existing passion/interest	3
		Non-judgemental	3
		Care and compassion	2
Celebrating Inclusivity and Diversity	13	Accessible/reducing barriers to participation	11
		Celebrating what people bring to the group (range of backgrounds)	11
		Diversity of group	8
		Engaging people usually excluded from climate action	5
Enabling Skills and Knowledge Development	13	Informal learning	13
		Providing information	13
		Experiential Learning	11
		Peer learning	11
		Providing resources	9

Building Connections	11	Building relationships	10
		Collective action: doing things together	8
		Relationship with worker	5
		Focus on conversations/talking	5
Providing Support to Organisations	7	Enabling orgs to connect/local network	7
		FCA Staff	5
		Providing resource	5
		Initiating new work	4
		Host Structure	3
		Visibility/creates audiences	2
		Long term sustainability	1
		Peer learning	1

Domain: Creating Safe and Welcoming Spaces

Most stories from individuals highlighted the work that FCA staff did to create welcoming and safe spaces for their participants. They provided physical spaces for people to meet and offered emotionally and socially safe environments in the following ways:

- Participants engaged in FCA groups over a longer period. Sustained engagement helped to build relationships within the group and fostered a sense of community.
- Participants were welcome to engage flexibly, accommodating family life or other commitments, ensuring they could participate even if they could not attend every session.
- Long-term engagement and consistent FCA staff provided stability, enabling participants to build relationships with the staff.

Participants enjoyed the group sessions and looked forward to attending. They highlighted the way the groups were run as an important part of their engagement and impact. The choice of recipes and tasks were simple and easy, focusing on small, achievable changes that people could make in their everyday lives. The relaxed atmosphere within the project activities provided space for participants to pursue existing passions or interests within a flexible programme.

“I think because we have you and other friends... had a great impact on me. You tried very hard to manage everything in here and your management was excellent in my opinion. In the superfood club we read food recipes together and implement them step by step. This helps me to learn the food and enjoy the time in community. I am learning English, and talking with you and other people in here have helped me to speak more easily.” (Story 5)

Domain: Celebrating Inclusivity and Diversity

FCA staff worked hard to ensure that their activities were inclusive by design. The groups were intentionally diverse both generationally and culturally. Participants spoke about how positively their and others' input was received. Contributions were encouraged and celebrated, whether it was sharing a recipe or food from their own culture or trying new activities.

The FCA staff planned to make the sessions accessible. The sessions took place in local community centres or hubs, which made it easy for people to attend and ensured they felt comfortable in their local area. FCA reduced barriers to participation through low-cost activities and by choosing food that was affordable and replicable at home. There was also evidence of the project engaging people who might otherwise be excluded from climate change activity, such as those living in poverty or who had recently moved to the UK. The stories shared the warmth and positivity that surrounded the groups and activities.

Domain: Enabling Skills and Knowledge Development

One of the key impacts of the FCA project was the development of new or existing knowledge and skills among participants. FCA enabled this in several ways:

- **Community Development Approach:** The project used informal learning methods. This type of learning was often self-directed, driven by the learners' interests and experiences, and didn't follow a formal curriculum. Informal learning made knowledge and skill development accessible to diverse groups within communities. It encouraged individuals to continue acquiring knowledge and skills throughout their lives with a number of stories coming from those with grandchildren. The programme focused on practical and applicable skills such as cooking, baking and preserving, that were beneficial and relevant in everyday life.
- **Experiential learning -** Much of the impact, particularly around skills and knowledge development, was facilitated through experiential learning. FCA staff combined practical activities, such as cooking and baking, with discussions around relevant themes. Participants were able to meet actors in the food chain, such as visiting a farm, which helped deepen their understanding of where food comes from and the impact of their food choices. The stories revealed participants having 'lightbulb' moments through these experiences.
- **Providing resources -** In order for participants to learn and develop, the FCA project provided resources - information, ingredients, or expertise. The FCA project provided a range of resources and information around agriculture and animal welfare; climate change and sustainability; new recipes; new foods; new cultures; saving money and reducing food waste.

“She has helped to influence the sessions planned by requesting certain topics, especially sessions on vinegar. As a result of her engagement with the FCA project she has engaged with new ways of cooking, preserving and eating food. She has increased her vegetable intake and reduced food waste. She has met new people and travelled to areas of the city she had not visited before. The most significant change for her has been to be able to regularly learn new things to do with food and fermentation.” (Story 15, FCA Worker Commentary)

The relationship between group members and between the group and the workers was often reciprocal, with peer learning an important part of the project. Participants learnt from each other as well as from FCA workers, which was strongly encouraged by the project. FCA workers also learned and developed through facilitating the groups.

Domain: Building Connections

When working with individuals and partner organisations, FCA focused on helping people build connections. Participants in the project were able to meet new people and make new friends. These new relationships provided emotional and social support.

“And it’s great to see others within the community, bringing the community together. We would never probably have met these lovely ladies that we’ve met them. We probably wouldn’t have met them, and the same probably goes for them as well. Just the way that we all work together, it’s just great. I think it’s great. The way that they all work together and combine these lovely meals.” (Story 21)

Collective action was an important way to build community. Many activities were centred around doing things together, whether it was food preparation, cooking, or eating. They all involved people working together towards a

common goal through a mix of conversations and action. Participants built relationships with FCA workers, speaking positively about their impact on the group and on them as individuals.

Domain: Providing Organisational Support

Organisations involved in the study said that FCA helped increase capacity by enabling organisations to connect and build local networks. The project linked organisations together and created space for peer learning, mutually beneficial discussions and idea generation. It helped organisations become more visible and linked organisations to new audiences.

"I think GCFN has really great engagement, and that great engagement definitely has to do with what they're doing and how much people care about it. But that has also had an offshoot result where it's basically been able to be shown off to loads more groups and communities that have really helped the space. For example, the PEEK Project learned about us again through working with GCFN and they started using our space again for different events." (Story 13)

FCA staff were seen as knowledgeable and experienced, bringing passion and energy to the project and working with care and compassion. Their presence within host organisations provided additional resources and helped some organisations continue their work with dedicated support. This enabled them to make new strides forward within communities. The host structure within five organisations was a useful way of increasing resources within those communities.

“It’s always difficult to work out cause and effect. That’s hard. I think part of it is that it is linked to the Community Food Network. The Community Food Network has links with a whole range of organisations, trusted relationships. It also links to the passion and energy that the individuals and the teams involved in the Community Food Network and Food and Climate Action bring to it, which is really important and different, I think, to what other people bring. It’s the fact that they are based within anchor organisations, and we can go out and they can help us meet and see what’s going on from different perspectives. We also initiate new bits of work that are relevant and appropriate for their local communities, which is really, really helpful because us sitting here in a strategy group can’t possibly do that. Also, because they are keeping their eyes out for little pots of money where we can develop new bits of work that we can learn from them and perhaps scale up in the future.” (Story 16)

For some organisations, working with FCA enabled them to initiate new work and add climate change and sustainability into their programmes. FCA staff helped to source new funding for organisations and through creating local networks contributed to longer term stability.

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