

Transition Initiatives and Sustainable Food Seminar 24 January 2008

Brief Notes

General Issues Raised

- Need to provide mechanisms for replicating projects that work e.g. Growing Communities in Hackney keen to share their model.
- Current lack of networking opportunities within Transition Initiatives nationally. Need to have better communication and opportunities to visit projects / have mentoring / work shadowing/ etc.
- Discussion of web resource held nationally to point people in direction of existing practice and sources of advice and expertise. Noted that Transition Network will be launching a new website shortly that may fulfil some of this need.
- Noted that the Transition Network is still a very young organisation and has been overwhelmed with possible work.
 - Important that the Transition Network support and seek resources for bottom up networking between transition initiatives.
 - Transition should be seen as a framework for pulling together existing initiatives not necessarily creating new ones.
 - Important to address issues of inclusion in projects and the transition movement. Noted the absence of participation from different ethnic groups in the seminar.

Project Issues

- Difficulty engaging producers in projects.
- The need to keep sustainability at the forefront – local food does not necessarily contribute to sustainability if taken in isolation. Need to keep social issues and resilience at the core of our thinking.

The Role of National Organisations

- May not be possible or desirable to coordinate whole of transition and local food sector nationally. However there may be opportunities for supporting strong local networks e.g. on Food Links model.
- Don't necessarily need national coordination – but there are some functions that would best be performed nationally.
 - E.g. Setting the framework for Transition Groups to influence Local Area Agreements / Local Authorities. Where are the levers for change?

National Funding Bid

- Nervousness amongst transition groups about the move from voluntary based activity into funded posts and what this means for their groups / organisations. Big difference between salaried and volunteer posts.
- Concern about replication of funding bids e.g. national bid might overlap with regional ones e.g. Gloucestershire
- Need to know who is planning what nationally – national organisations need to be open about what they are bidding for.

- Needs to be closely tied in with Making Local Food Work and Local Food Programmes, both being funded by the Big Lottery and starting about now.
- Would like the bid to cover ‘how to....’ Workshops and a ‘matchmaking’ service/mentoring.
- Transition Network will be organising a national conference – could we have a further meeting about this bid at that conference?

Next Steps

- Sarah to write up notes and circulate with email addresses
- Joy Carey to lead on taking forward a future meeting
- Possible meeting attached to Transition Conference

Group	What does Success Look Like in 3 years time?	What are the barriers to achieving it?	What support would you need to overcome them?
1 (James Pavitt)	Cafés and B&B’s sourcing local food	The need to have effective links between producers and these outlets. Education and Awareness Any initiative must be market driven to be sustainable. Land Access.	
	Engagement of ethnic groups Buy in from Local Authorities. Transition is an opportunity to re-brand sustainability.	Need to influence policy, but Permaculture and organics are viewed as marginal and fringe activities. External Factors such as climate change and economic downturn can be viewed as opportunities for mobilisation of people. Clone countries – along the lines of Clone Towns. Can be used as a motivator for local resilience.	Need for briefings for transition workers to use when talking to local authorities. This could take the form of a national template which can be locally adapted.
	Physical Presence for Transition Group (Building)	Volunteer Fatigue -	Finance for a project manager or entrepreneur to set things on a sustainable footing. NB also should try and grow slowly and make the initiative as voluntary as possible.

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2 (Claire Milne)	<p>Infrastructure that works in favour of local food production</p> <p>Models of Sustainable food projects are readily available</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation underpin local work</p> <p>Farmers and retailers are at the heart of the system</p> <p>Health and sustainability agenda are brought together.</p> <p>Community demand for local food</p> <p>Skills, Land and Market created.</p>	<p>Claire please fill in here!</p>	<p>And here!</p>
3 (Paul Jackson)	<p>Vision is for a farmers market in every community, plus other diverse routes to market.</p> <p>Cuba!</p> <p>CSA in every town. Use the CSA model in different ways. E.g. community supported energy.</p> <p>Transformed attitudes to money and power./ Positive attitudes.</p> <p>Community bread ovens</p>	<p>Any barriers here?</p>	<p>Use start up funding – but not to become dependent on it.</p>

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4 (Lucy Wallis)	<p>Community supported school</p> <p>Physical drop in transition centre</p> <p>Openness and sharing of ideas</p> <p>Community owned food enterprise</p> <p>1 supermarket closed</p> <p>community power station</p> <p>Raised awareness / food celebrations.</p> <p>Didn't really cover this.</p>	<p>Access to Land</p> <p>Difficulty with Lobbying local authorities.</p> <p>Tension and disagreement between local authority departments.</p>	<p>National organisations to lead on a vision for sustainable food</p> <p>National organisations to facilitate links between transition and local authority strategies.</p> <p>Support with lobbying.</p> <p>National organisations to lead on what works and what doesn't.</p>