



Enough is Enough

Belfast Food Network, final report, August 2019

Belfast Food Poverty Working Group

Food Power as enabled BFN to reinstate the Food Poverty Working group (FPWG). The 'Sow, Grow, Munch' schools learning resource was actively promoted to the community growing sector, the manual has been adopted by 3 community gardens. A policy review of food-related policies in NI was carried out to identify where food poverty is mentioned, identify gaps and levers, and a holiday hunger survey was sent to all schools in Belfast to gauge the level of holiday hunger in the city, map 'hotspots' and target resources. A desktop review of best practice community gardening initiatives that tackle food poverty and generate income, was also completed.



Separately, funding was also secured to deliver the 'Nourish Programme' with 3 groups in autumn 2019 and deliver a 'Right to Food' joint project between three civil society organisations – Nourish Scotland, Belfast Food Network and Food Sense Wales to strengthen existing networks, build knowledge and share learning on the right to food.

83%



of school representatives have reported that they have witnessed cases of holiday hunger



2 ZERO HUNGER



END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

“This is a problem which is becoming more widespread and would be a much needed programme within the local community.”

“Children regress over any longer holiday period and with hunger added to their worries, it takes significant amounts of time for them to be ready to learn and perform to their abilities on their return to school.”

“It is clear to see in the physical wellbeing of some children returning to school after a holiday period that they have been missing good quality hot food. Some have lost weight, or gained it because of poor diet. Others are pale and lacking in energy.”

“Substantial, well-resourced city level research is required in order to target holiday hunger programmes and seek eradication measures. Food distribution is an effective temporary measure, but does not provide a means to stop child hunger.”

Kerry Melville, Belfast Food Network

Our challenges and learning

We found it difficult to maintain numbers, with approximately 7-10 attendees at each meeting (over 30 people invited). This was discussed at length at the end of the reporting period and it seems that regular meetings are hard for front line initiatives to attend due to the fact that they are operating on minimal resources and rarely have time to engage with 'external' meetings. We have found that the local initiatives are supportive and happy to share info and learning when engaged directly through calls and visits

Our next steps

The Food Poverty Working Group is organising an event to be held October to promote frontline initiatives, share learning and raise awareness of food poverty.

Our key achievements and impact

- A holiday hunger survey was sent to all schools in Belfast to gauge the level of holiday hunger in the city, map 'hotspots' and target resources.
- The FPWG has been able to deliver seven projects from the collaborative response to food poverty, with reasonable attendance at meetings.
- Three Community Gardens have adopted our 'Sow, Grow, Munch' manual.
- Delivered a 'Right to Food' joint project between three civil society organisations – Nourish Scotland, Belfast Food Network and Food Sense Wales to strengthen existing networks, build knowledge and share learning on the right to food.