



Interfaith Food Justice Network (Glasgow)

Food Poverty Alliance, final report, April 2019

Making connections, supporting each other's work, using our collective voice to campaign for food justice

We bring together people from different faith and belief backgrounds who volunteer for and work with projects that support people facing food insecurity. We support collaboration and the sharing of ideas, information, good practice and resources. We enable participants to engage with the 'big picture' and to use of their collective voice to campaign for change. We run monthly meetings and networking events and use our growing mailing list, Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp groups to communicate with our network. We run an annual large-scale free community meal in Glasgow's George Square called One Big Picnic.

This year we put in a detailed group response to the Scottish Government's Good Food Nation consultation - asking, among other things, for the right to food to be enshrined in Scots law. The right to food is a fundamental principle of our [Interfaith Food Justice Declaration](#) signed by over 100 diverse food initiative and faith communities.

"We hope we've made a difference by bringing together local volunteers, activists and faith communities to consider the changes we need in our food system and to make those demands collectively to the Scottish Government. We couldn't have done this without the support of Food Power and our partners at Nourish Scotland. We're delighted that our members now feel connected to a wider movement for food justice."

Magdalen Lambkin, Interfaith Glasgow



This activity was assisted by financial support and other advice from Food Power.
www.foodpower.org.uk

Our challenges and learning

Involving experts by experience: We are primarily a network for workers and volunteers with food initiatives delivering services for those facing food insecurity, but many of these volunteers are themselves service users. We also know that it is only by including experts by experience that we can hope to make the changes necessary in our society. We have found we need to budget for travel expenses and reach out through local groups if we want to ensure the attendance of experts by experience at our events.

Increasing demand on limited resources: The people in our network are often overcommitted, operating on very limited resources and facing increasing demand. We need to be mindful of this as we work to give them the motivation, support, tools and connections they need to not only continue their important work in helping people facing food poverty, but also to engage with the deeper questions of why such inequality exists and to campaign together for food justice.

Connecting people through multiple platforms and face-to-face: Far more than Facebook, the use of WhatsApp groups has increased the quality and quantity of connections between people in our network. However, nothing will replace the power of the face-to-face meeting for generating ideas, motivation, fermenting plans and relationships.

Our next steps

We will continue to deliver One Big Picnic, an annual volunteer led, free community meal in Glasgow's main square (planned for June 2019) – designed to raise awareness of food insecurity and the diverse groups working together to tackle it, and promote the unity and dignity of all. We will also continue to run monthly meetings and larger networking events designed to facilitate personal connections; mutual support; knowledge of the services available and good practice; and collective campaigning opportunities.

"The contacts are extremely valuable."

"I've gained motivation, interest, fun, contacts and I've learned more about the food reality."

"I've learned from others how to go about setting up community meals."

"Learned of some amazing work going on."

Various network members

Our key achievements and impact

- **Good Food Nation campaigning:** As members of the Scottish Food Coalition we have been active in the campaign for a Good Food Nation Bill to overhaul Scotland's food system, based on the right to food. We put in a group response to the Scottish Government's Good Food Nation consultation. We organised a consultation event with support from Nourish Scotland which brought together the views of 90 people involved in local food initiatives, organisations and faith communities. They included those with lived experience of food insecurity and poverty and most would not have participated without our input.
- **One Big Picnic:** Over 3 hours in Glasgow's George Square in May 2018, around 2,000 people from diverse backgrounds gathered to share free food being served up by diverse food initiatives at a fun event for all ages. This annual community meal serves to raise awareness of food insecurity and the diverse groups working to tackle it, promote the unity and dignity of all and strengthen our network through cooperative working.
- **Improved connections and signposting:** Local groups are better connected and informed so they can improve their services and appropriately signpost people to much needed support. We held a networking event dedicated to increasing awareness of and familiarity with the Glasgow-wide online "[Free Food Map](#)" (produced by Urban Roots and partners) and our WhatsApp group for sharing resources and excess food between food initiatives has proved a very useful tool.