



Generations Growing Together

Impact report on the an Intergenerational Food For Thought programme in 3 East Ayrshire Schools

Learning Outdoors Support Team

2018-2019

East Ayrshire Council



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Introduction

The project developed an Intergenerational Growing Together programme that took place in school grounds and local greenspaces. Its main objectives were to support the transference of key skills and knowledge between young and old, on gardening and food growing, to increase teacher confidence in growing food and build active and healthy communities.

Summary

The project engaged early years, primary and secondary schools in an intergenerational food growing projects in three East Ayrshire Schools in school grounds and local community/greenspaces.

The project delivered food growing sessions that brought together old and young members of the community. The older people had much to share and supported the younger people with nutrition, cooking, growing and gardening. The Conservation Volunteer staff hosted training to support the teachers in planting and growing in addition to pupil sessions which included the vegetable hunt.

Intergenerational activities can actively demonstrate that older and younger generations have a great deal to offer each other in terms of knowledge and experience.



The role of partners



The Conservation Volunteers delivered intergenerational sessions to all the schools, these sessions included tool safety, risk assessment, propagating, planting, growing, pruning, harvesting, composting, designing & planning food growing areas, construction of raised beds and planters. TCV helped create food growing spaces within the school grounds and local community spaces through events, workshops and community outreach. TCV supported teachers and

practitioners to use their local outdoor spaces as a resource across the curriculum for pupils of all ages, in addition to growing your own food, sustainability, healthy eating, health & wellbeing and community engagement and gardening.

Rationale

Inequity/Attainment Gap



Growing food brings out the best in pupils, inspiring a positive attitude towards school, learning and the way pupils interact with each other. Contact with living things is very beneficial for schools, particularly for pupils who find it hard to make friends or those with emotional difficulties. The growing environment brings everyone together,

compared to formal classroom settings. Working outdoors improves teacher-pupil relationships as well as relationships between pupils. Growing as part of a broader education programme helps pupils prepare for life after school, educating pupils not just academically but also in terms of helping pupils to feel values and prepared when they leave school. Growing activities increases self-esteem and confidence in all and especially in pupils who don't flourish in other aspects of school life.

Learning for sustainability and food education

Programmes such as this will inspire pupils, teachers and the wider school community to live more sustainably. Schools will consider food waste and food miles and implications for their local environment and make positive changes in their food sourcing, cooking and food waste practice outside of school.



The project will have a hugely positive impact to respect and care for the environment not just in terms of the physical environment, but also for the wildlife that lives in and around

all the growing areas. By linking growing to other aspects of the curriculum, both formal and non formal, pupils will develop an awareness of the idea of 'seed to plate' and the nature of healthy eating and sustainable living.



Outdoor learning and food education

A food growing project working with the local community can support learning across a wide range of curriculum areas and subjects from creating recipes, outdoor cooking, photography, developing enterprise and web based learning and sharing with a real emphasis on health & wellbeing, numeracy & literacy. Pupils learn a range of enterprise and vocational skills participating in outdoor activities.



Parents/Community food education



Generations Growing Together project is an excellent way of enabling all pupils, staff and the wider community to participate and make a contribution to school life. Crucial social and interpersonal skills can be developed through working with other pupils, staff, parents, carers, grandparents and community members to plan and make decisions, for example, about the growing calendar. There is a chance to learn more about community gardening from more experienced horticulturalists and an opportunity for everyone to enjoy including those who have no gardens and create a real sense of community. Involvement of the local community helps in broadening the impact and supporting the long-term sustainability of food growing in schools.

Better Eating, Better Learning

Children and adults are better able to recognise fruit and vegetables and more willing to try new ones if they have been involved in growing and harvesting them. Individual members of the community can develop skills and knowledge by working with these schools. This project will bring communities together, sharing ideas, skills fostering an understanding between people from different generations and cultures.

Good Food Nation



This project aimed to reconnect young and old with food – its provenance, its cultural significance and its variety which will help everyone to develop healthier habits. Involving the local community helps to broaden the impact and support the long-term sustainability of food growing in schools. Food growing has a positive impact on diet and nutrition.

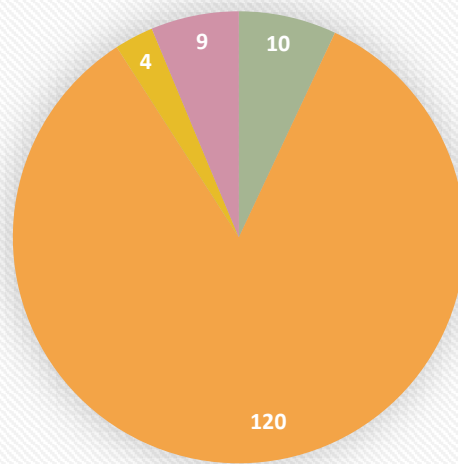
Engagement

Support sessions were delivered to teachers and pupils in the three establishments; Auchinleck Academy, Whatriggs Primary and Sorn Primary School. Sessions were delivered to the pupils and classes involved: site assessment, risk assessment, why we should grow food, sustainability, composting, designing growing spaces, healthy eating, transport of food, setting up social enterprise with the produce grown, growing, harvesting, health & wellbeing, food waste and pizza gardening.

Support groups made up of teachers, pupils and members of the community have put their initial growing plans in place. New plants and seeds are currently being planted reading for the new growing season.

Pupils at Sorn and Whatriggs primary schools, took part in a vegetable treasure hunt in the school grounds, children could touch, smell and identify a wide variety of vegetables and herbs that could all be easily planted in their community beds. Some of the classes have sown a wide variety of herbs and vegetables in their classrooms and once plants become established will plant out in the community beds.

Who took part in Generations Growing Together?



Teachers Pupils Partners Community Members



Pupils at Auchinleck Academy have linked their garden with a World War 1 project and are growing a wide variety of herbs and vegetables which were grown in the war years.

Conclusion

Embedding food growing and gardening into the life of the school community is a sustainable approach which we have witnessed continuing beyond the life of the grant fund.

They are now working on the schedule of planting, growing and harvesting is being established at each plot. Over the coming months this will result in more engagement and involvement from the community members as they share their expertise.

All three plots are on a sustainable, long term journey which will need little external support. Capacity building through the training sessions from TVC has supported a healthy start to the programme.

Pupils and staff have been very enthusiastic about the project and excited to be growing their own with food with classmates, pupils, family members and the local community.

The Learning Outdoor Support Team will continue to support the schools but there is community 'buy in' which we hope will ensure a more self-sufficient and sustainable programme.

