



# Community Food **INITIATIVE**

2016-2018

Healthy Food, Healthy Families





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# FOREWORD

At **safefood**, we have been funding community food projects on the island of Ireland for over six years and these have helped upwards of 40,000 people by offering real and practical help in local communities and beyond. The work of Community Food Initiatives demonstrate how investing in our communities can help with influencing healthier food choices and learning lifelong skills; this community-led approach has the potential to positively impact on health, from childhood right through to adult life.

Ray Dolan,  
Chief Executive,  
**safefood**



SECAD was delighted to have been appointed project coordinators by **safefood** for the 2016-2018 CFI and are very proud of the programme we co-designed and delivered. This would not have been possible without the commitment and dedication of the staff and volunteers within each of the CFI Leaders, the hundreds of support agency members that helped steer local initiatives and the thousands of people that participated in the projects, training and networking events. Well done and a sincere thank you to all concerned.

Ryan Howard,  
CEO,  
**SECAD**  
**Partnership CLG**



## INTRODUCTION

The early years in a child's life are recognised as a critical period for the development of eating patterns and food preferences. Although a range of environmental factors may influence the development of these eating patterns and preferences, it is parents and caregivers who shape choices that form life-long, healthy habits. The toddler/preschool stage is a critical time during which the foundations of good health are established for later life as, by the time a child reaches adolescence, there may not be any understanding about the connection between food consumption and health.

The purpose of the Community Food Initiative (CFI) is to provide families and young people with the knowledge and skills to provide healthy food options for themselves and their families. A community development approach was used in the delivery of the CFI and this approach supports individuals, groups and organisations to promote healthy lifestyles with a particular focus on healthy eating.

The CFI Programme 2016-18 is the third funding programme under the CFI banner and this booklet will provide some insights into the community led food initiative that was rolled out across the country under the leadership and guidance of SECAD Partnership working with **safefood**.

The CFI is delivered by 13 CFI Leader organisations throughout the island of Ireland. Each Leader was invited to nominate examples of good practice of healthy eating projects and events that they wished to highlight across 2016 – 18. These are contained in the main body of this booklet. The activity highlighted is either a project that provided support to a small group of people or a large community event which promoted the benefits of healthy eating.

If you would like to discuss any of the activities highlighted, the contact details of each CFI are provided at the back of this booklet.

## SAFEFOOD

The Community Food Initiative Programme 2016-18 is funded by **safefood** and administered by SECAD Partnership CLG. **safefood** is an all-island implementation body set up under the British-Irish Agreement with a general remit to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety and nutrition issues on the island of Ireland (IOI).

As **safefood** is an all-island body, the organisations delivering the programme are from both Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Four projects in NI and nine in the ROI have received funding over the three years to implement their local CFI.

Funding is provided to support three specific target groups:

- Low income families with pre-school children (year 1)
- Low income families with older children (year 2)
- Young people and their families (year 3)

## CFI THEMES

The main aim of the CFI is to positively influence the eating habits of low income families and to identify and promote best practice under the following CFI themes:

- Supporting an increased awareness/knowledge around healthy eating
- Healthy shopping
- Budgeting and food/meal planning skills
- Cooking skills
- Improving the availability and access to safe and healthy food in the community and complementing existing structures that offer healthy options, e.g. community café's, events etc.
- Preventing food wastage, and promoting food safety and hygiene.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The 13 organisations delivering the CFI are referred to as CFI Leaders and they act as champions for the CFI in each area. This is achieved as follows:

- Each CFI Leader brings together organisations to form a local CFI Steering Group with the aim of identifying and promoting best practice under the CFI themes (outlined above).
- With the support of their CFI Steering Group, the CFI Leader organises two Networking Events per year. The aim of the events is to provide a range of interesting demonstrations and discussions based on the CFI themes and specifically shaped for that years' target group.
- The third element involves the CFI Leader, with the support of its CFI Steering Group, designing and delivering a minimum of 3 "Small Projects" which promote best practice under one or more of the 6 CFI themes (see above) and tailored to meet local needs.

The activity must provide a 'learning opportunity' for the participants in the project. For example some of the projects have involved cookery lessons delivered over 5 sessions. Other projects have been a combination of cookery lessons, budgeting, a visit to the supermarket to learn about labels, learning how to reduce food waste.

## The CFI Leaders are:

### Northern Ireland

- Belfast Food Network
- South Lough Neagh Regeneration Association
- SPACE (Supporting People and Communities Everyday)
- The Resurgam Trust

### Republic of Ireland

- Avondhu Blackwater Partnership
- Ballyhoura Development
- Carlow County Development Partnership
- Co Wicklow Community Partnership / Southside Partnership DLR
- Inishowen Development Partnership
- Laois Community & Enterprise Development Co
- Monaghan Integrated Development
- South Tipperary Development
- South West Mayo Development Co

# ROLE OF SECAD PARTNERSHIP CLG

The technical support and expertise provided by SECAD Partnership CLG in the implementation of the Community Food Initiative 2016-18 has:

- ensured a robust community based approach to working with target families;
- underpinned the value of partnership across key agencies and community & voluntary groups;
- bolstered the strength of the steering group model;
- provided an invaluable access point to consumer insights via the focus groups;
- built capacity to attract leverage to the Community Food Initiative; while
- leading to increased sustainability, broader spin-off, and longer term impact

## STEERING GROUPS

The work of each of the thirteen CFI's is planned, supported and overseen by a Steering Group. The membership of the Steering Group is made up of representatives from the community and public services including education, health, community development and community services. As the target group changes each year, the membership can also vary from year to year. The role of the Steering Group is to:

- Identify the most appropriate methodologies to support target groups' involvement at all levels of the CFI
- Agree the format and content for the networking showcase event
- Consider and identify the most appropriate options for the 3 small projects
- Support the CFI Leader in considering how the CFI could be evolved and sustained
- Identify and promote best practice under the CFI themes



# NETWORKING SHOWCASE EVENTS

Each year, the CFI Leaders co-ordinate two Networking Showcase events with the support of the Steering Group.

- The theme for the first Networking Event each year is 'Learning from the Experts' which includes a range of demonstrations and discussions based on the CFI themes and specifically shaped for that year's target audience (target group).
- The theme for the second Networking Event each year is 'Learning from each other' and provides an opportunity to share the learnings from each of the three Small Projects and is supported by related food demonstrations and practical advice from experts.
- Both events provide opportunities for **safefood** and the CFI partners in each area to promote their own work and the services available to target group members.

## SMALL PROJECTS

Each year, the CFI Leaders organise and deliver at least 3 Small Projects. The criteria for the Small Projects are as follows:

- They must be practical projects, based on one or more of the CFI Themes and provide a 'learning environment' for participants
- They are delivered between Networking Event 1 and Networking Event 2 and provide the opportunity for the participants to learn new skills
- They are a central element of Networking Event 2 as the participants are invited to share what they had learned through their participation in the Small Projects.



# EXPERIENCE OF DELIVERING THE CFI

The CFI Leaders report biannually on their delivery of the CFI in their local area. In their reports they provide commentary on the support provided by their Steering Group, and the impact of their networking events and small projects. The Leaders are also invited to provide recommendations which can assist other organisations who would like to include healthy eating programmes in their work. Some of the feedback provided by the CFI Leaders includes:

- The programme has brought together a range of agencies to form partnerships that are sharing resources, skills and expertise under a common agenda. The partnerships formed have been really engaging and proactive in helping to shape and deliver the programmes.
  - and some are considering other joint courses, separate to the CFI work.
- Recruitment is the area that requires most work in order to engage with the families who will benefit most. However, the CFI Leaders have found that once people take part in a CFI activity they start to use other services provided by the CFI Leader and means that engagement with the participants continues after the conclusion of the projects. The CFI has provided the opportunity to reach a target group that has been difficult to engage with.
- Interagency delivery of a course can create interesting, interactive and beneficial courses for groups, and materials provided by different programmes / agencies can complement each other.
- For some of the projects, the CFI Leaders have found it useful to link in with the local schools and to use their facilities in order to encourage greater participation and ease of attendance.
- It can be useful to involve local groups and people on the ground when planning and running events, as their local knowledge and experience can be invaluable.



- Appropriate venue selection is important for ensuring that courses / events are offered in places that are familiar and comfortable, and where individuals / groups are not required to travel long distances.
- Involving children as information providers on stands during networking events was extremely beneficial. They encouraged their parents to attend and to actively participate at the events.
- Cook and chat sessions provide valuable opportunities to learn. The tutor gives direction, clarification, handouts and advice as required and participants are encouraged to share tips with each other. Learning is peer-led and interactive, rather than lecture style.
- As childcare is not an option for some parents, children were able to attend courses. However, this can make it difficult for the adult participants to fully concentrate during the sessions.
- People are receiving mixed messages about nutrition from a variety of sources so it is important to pitch the message of healthy eating correctly and in a positive manner.
- During sessions where the topics include hidden sugar, salt and fat in foods and how to read labels, it is helpful to physically show the amount of sugar, salt and fat in each item of food. Participants have a better understanding if they can see the amount.
- It is important to provide printed material, as participants might not have access to the internet or the ability to find online, the leaflets mentioned during the sessions.
- Some parents need support with literacy so resources such as the "Just Look & Cook" would be very useful.
- The CFI Leaders have found that friendships have developed and participants' confidence has increased through participating in the CFI.
- Parents have reported that they are including their children in the preparation and cooking of meals and consequently, children are eating fruit and vegetables that they had not wanted to try before.
- Through word of mouth, people have heard about the CFI and the Leaders have received enquiries from members of the public about how they can take part in a cookery course or learn about healthy eating.
- Schools and community organisations who were not involved in the CFI are looking for opportunities to participate in workshops on sugar and healthy eating.



# AVONDHU BLACKWATER PARTNERSHIP CLG

## Cookery Skills & Healthy Eating Programme

A local Family Resource Centre (FRC) delivered the programme in partnership with the Community Health Worker to eight parents of preschool children. It involved five weekly, two hour sessions which were based on experiential learning where parents cooked on a weekly basis. During the sessions, the participants discussed and identified nutritional information, grocery shopping and budgeting, hygiene in the kitchen, cooking healthy meals and snacks and menu planning. Recruitment for the programme was carried out through speaking to the parents who were participating in other FRC programmes and who had children attending the Pre and Play schools.

By challenging the current practice of parents in the purchase and cooking of their daily meals, they were encouraged, and by the end of the course had, changed their attitudes towards prepared foods. Parents appreciated the benefits in cooking a wholesome meal where they know exactly what is going into meals. They learned how to use leftovers to their best advantage so as to prevent waste and save money.

During the course, they were also shown how meal planning can include all members of the family and the importance of involving their children in meal preparation from a young age. They also discussed why it is not necessary to give prepared meals to preschool children as they can eat what the rest of the family is eating when given in age appropriate portions.

The benefits of participating in the programme reflected the CFI recommended themes which included an improved knowledge of healthy eating, nutrition and menu planning, kitchen hygiene, making meals from scratch for all the family, what to do with leftovers, making maximum use of your oven, seasonal food – where to get it and what to look for, budgeting, the importance of making a list before grocery shopping and sticking to it.



The participants came from varying starting points in terms of their knowledge and ability. Some parents had no experience at all of cooking. One participant said at the beginning of the course; “why would I make a sauce from scratch when I can buy it for 80 cent in the shop”. She was converted to home cooking by the end of the programme. The participants learned how to cook basic recipes that could be adapted to make different dishes e.g. turning a beef stew into a curry. They also learned the value of adding vegetables to meals and how to discreetly add them to children’s meals. At the end of the five weeks, there was a great energy in the group and enthusiasm for cooking as they saw that it can be a fun activity and not hard work.

## Healthy Eating Showcase Event

This was the final event for year 2 and attracted over 60 visitors to visit the twelve stands. The theme of the second Networking Showcase Event each year is 'Learning from each other' and the FRC showcased their Cookery Skills & Healthy Eating Programme.

Staff from the FRC and some of the participants were available to talk about the Programme which involved six cookery sessions and included an additional session which was held in the community garden with the children during half term. During the programme, parents learned the importance of cooking a wholesome meal and also how to use left overs to their best advantage to prevent waste and save money. During the visit to the community garden, the parents and children learned where vegetables come from and had the opportunity to taste some. They were also shown how to plant vegetables.

The Irish Heart Foundation provided Mini Health checks and gave advice to the attendees regarding an appropriate diet to promote a healthy heart. During the wild berry workshop, visitors tried samples and received recipes on how to make berry syrups. These can be

used to make natural cordials thus eliminating the need to purchase sugary drinks and sugary cordials and can also be used as a cough soother / remedy.

During the cooking demonstration the tutor presented three recipes - Butternut Squash and Chickpea Stew, Butternut Squash Soup and Hummus. The demonstration highlighted how to reduce food waste as the three recipes used similar ingredients.

MABS (Money Advice & Budgeting Service) was present to provide information on budgeting and debt issues. Stopfood Waste provided a demonstration on composting and also gave general tips on how to reduce food waste through using leftovers.

Feedback from the stallholders was very positive, with many attendees asking questions and signing up to e-newsletters. The Mini Health Checks were very popular and it was noted that two nurses would be needed to enable all the attendees to avail of the service at the next event.

The organisers promoted the event through distributing flyers to all houses in the estates around the venue. Posters were put up in doctor offices, dental offices and pharmacies, and the event was also promoted on all Steering Group members' social media pages. A press release was issued to the local papers which cover the area, the local church newsletter and C103fm Community Diary.



# BALLYHOURA DEVELOPMENT CLG

## Healthy Eating & Active Living Programme

The purpose of this three week programme was to promote healthy eating and active living among parents of preschool children. Twenty one adults and nineteen children participated in this Dietitian led programme. The CFI Leader chose a local Parent & Toddler Support Group to host this project as it was already established and the numbers attending are constantly high.

Each week, a new topic was introduced to the parents, grandparents and children who attended the three workshops. The workshops were held in a large hall with a play area set up as one end and tables at the other end. During the workshops, the adults and children sat around tables and the children were free to come and go to the play area.



Workshop 1 focused on why three regular meals and two nutritional snacks each day are important for children to ensure that they get their daily intake to meet nutritional needs. It emphasised the importance of

parents as role models and provided tips on how to make meal times happy. The 101 Square Meals Recipe Book was introduced and recipes, cooking methods and skills were discussed. A variety of food was introduced and tasted by participants.

Workshop 2 focused on appropriate portion sizes, shopping lists, food wastage and active living. The dietitian, asked parents and children to compare the size of their fists and used this as a tool to show the appropriate size serving for a child's "me size meal". In addition, she used a food atlas that contained photos to indicate the appropriate portion sizes for children. Examples of indoor and outdoor activities and challenges for children and parents were suggested.

Again, food samples were made available and the parents were encouraged to try out different foods with their children. It was explained that children need to be exposed to various types of food numerous times so that children can acquire a taste for the food. The dietitian discussed shopping skills such as planning lists, food wastage, special offers and pitfalls, etc.

During workshop 3, the concentration was on high fat, high sugar foods and food labelling. The dietitian highlighted the fat content and hidden sugars within many of our common foods. She provided sugar, butter and teaspoons

and ask parents to “guess” and “measure” out into bowls how much sugar and fat is in a range of commonly eaten foods.

Parents were amazed at the sugar content in common foods. The Dietitian suggested healthier options and provided samples of healthier foods which parents and children thoroughly enjoyed. She asked the participants

to look at various food packages and then explained how to interpret the information given on the nutrition labels.

All three workshops were interactive and informative with plenty of nutritional food available to sample which sparked off many discussions during and after the sessions.

## Healthy Eating Showcase Event

This was the first activity of the second year and attracted 26 visitors. The main feature of the event was interactive cooking demonstrations from one of the Steering Group members who is a Culinary Lecturer at Limerick Institute of Technology. Visitors at the event were given the opportunity to man their own stations and follow along with each recipe, producing an element of each dish. Recipes were provided from the 101 Square Meals recipe book and copies of the publication were also provided on the day.

Tips and demonstrations on growing your own food, reducing food waste, budgeting skills and a healthy lifestyle were also available with various free takeaways such as potted vegetables and baking packs amongst



others. The method used during the various demonstrations was vitally important and great care was taken not to overcomplicate the delivery. Participant parents from year 1 also came and spoke about the positive experience they had in taking part in the programme and urged others to do the same.

A conscious effort was made to ensure that each of the CFI themes was actively addressed and promoted during the Networking Showcase Event. Promotion and communication focused both on traditional printed media (i.e. flyers, posters) as well as promotion through the various social media channels.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with attendees citing the hands on demonstration element in particular being of value and interest. The ability to produce quality, nutritious food at such a low cost was surprising to many and it was felt this should be promoted more. Many attendees stated they would like to see more of these types of events held in the future.

## Healthy Eating & Cookery Programme

This four week programme provided an environment where ten young people could acquire the skills to plan, purchase the ingredients, and prepare and serve a healthy, easy to cook meal for their families. They developed an increased awareness around healthy eating and how it can lead to delicious meals that are easy to plan, budget for and cook. In addition, they learned the importance of food hygiene during the preparation of raw meat and vegetables. A full three course meal was cooked by the group upon completion of all sessions, which they enjoyed together. An unexpected outcome of their involvement was that their organisational skills have greatly improved.

Each participant received the recipes, a breakdown of the cost to produce each meal and a certificate of attendance upon completion. Participants were recruited through the local schools using leaflets and sign up forms and the group was facilitated in the local secondary school's Home Economics room.

The participants have since reported that they are now preparing meals at home for their families. Extra, different recipes were requested by all participants upon completion of the course and they have experienced great satisfaction at being able to prepare a meal for their families.

## BELFAST FOOD NETWORK

### Nourishing Communities Programmes

Belfast Food Network developed the Nourish programme with people from across the city, who are affected by food poverty issues, to tackle concerns relating to health inequalities, accessibility to fresh food and a lack of food skills and knowledge.

The programme was co-designed to suit numerous audiences with each course tailored to the group's needs and the availability of local produce. Nourishing Communities incorporates a rights based approach to food poverty where the dignity and empowerment of the beneficiaries and the wider community are the key guiding principles of the programme. Support is provided to people affected by food poverty in community settings through implementing innovative people led

solutions that increase understanding of, and accessibility to healthy, fresh, affordable food in areas of high multiple deprivation.

Through delivering the Nourishing Communities pilot to people affected by food poverty, it was discovered that many people in Belfast know very little about their food, where it comes from, how it is grown, how to store it and how to cook it, not to mention issues of nutrition and health. Nourishing Communities works with people experiencing food poverty to increase their food knowledge and skills. This enables them to make informed choices about their diet, share learning and build confidence in cooking from scratch.



It aims to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable and disadvantaged people by ensuring that everyone has equal access to a healthy diet from birth, based on fresh, local and seasonal produce. This approach increases beneficiaries' food knowledge and skills and helps to build relationships between community gardens and local producers who provide fresh ingredients.

During the three years of the CFI, the BFN has worked with people affected by food poverty issues to develop their skills and confidence to prepare simple healthy meals. People want to learn how to cook from scratch and become less reliant on processed foods. The participants used fresh herbs and unprocessed ingredients to make easy to prepare, tasty and inexpensive meals. To date, over 50 participants have taken part in a Nourish programme across five centres in Belfast through the CFI funding stream. All participants live in economically and socially deprived areas of Belfast, either living on very low incomes or unemployed and in receipt of benefits.

The Nourish Programme has exceeded expectations and participants agreed unanimously that the Nourish programme was a meaningful way to engage with hard to reach groups as people are learning and building their skills whilst exploring the issues that affect them on a daily basis.

Participant feedback has been very positive with attendees stating how much they loved learning about how to prepare simple, low cost, healthy and very tasty food. They found it to be much more practical than other cookery programmes they have attended in their local centre. The tutor's approach was also very important as participants found the sessions fun and the tutor's tips were useful. People felt they were in the kitchen with friends.

An important feature was learning how to prepare food that could be used in more than one way, e.g. a "made from scratch" pasta sauce could be used for different dishes. Some participants were tasting fresh herbs, garlic and radishes for the first time. Meals cooked have included White Velvet winter soup, Pumpkin risotto, Winter vegetable and lentil stew and sticky chicken wings.

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## Healthy Eating Showcase Event

3 local organisations, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast City Council and Belfast Food Network worked together to hold a health and wellbeing day in a local community centre.

Many organisations were invited to have a stall at the event and included; Spine Health, alternative therapy

practitioners, cholesterol testing, aging profile, sun damage, Making Healthier Choices, Belfast City Council Reducing Food Waste advice, Making Healthier Shopping Choices, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust - Eatwell Guide, Cruise Bereavement Advice, Citizen's Advice, Patient Council, Allergy testing, Cancer Awareness and Occupational Therapy.

The nutritionist, who facilitates the Nourish programme delivered 5 cooking demonstrations throughout the event, with 8-20 participants in each session. She shared the Nourish ethos of cooking healthy food from scratch, the benefits of avoiding processed foods and the simplicity of cooking delicious healthy food.

The Health and Wellbeing Event increased awareness of the benefits of healthy eating, making healthier lifestyle and food shopping choices, meal planning, increasing cooking skills, reducing food waste and they also shared information about the new community food shop.

## Nourish including a Sushi Workshop

The focus of year 3 of the CFI is young people and their families. This particular group was made up of 9 young girls aged between 8 and 11 and during the sessions they learned how to make chicken fajitas, pasta salad, scone pizzas and soup.

While they were waiting for the meals to cook, they asked the girls to talk about their favourite meals. One girl absolutely loved sushi and ate it whenever possible, three of

At least half of the participants asked for the recipe (a one pot tomato and spinach pasta dish) and asked numerous questions during the cooking demonstrations. Most questions were specifically about the pasta sauce and a porridge bread the tutor spoke about. Most people wanted the opportunity to attend more Nourish sessions.

The event was advertised on Facebook and a poster was distributed to all local shops and organisations. There was a really good turnout of 100 people which was nearly twice the number that was expected.

the group loved proper home cooked Sunday roasts. Another girl loved her grandmother's homemade vegetable broth and associated it with feeling looked after. This was unexpected but it was gratifying to hear that most of the stories were about food that was fresh, not processed, and that many stories related to family meal times.

The group was supported by a new, enthusiastic youth worker who was extremely helpful and very interested in the healthy eating Nourish programme. She helped the girls to think differently about food and encouraged them to attend a Sushi making workshop.

Yo Sushi is a chain of sushi restaurants and some of their restaurants offer hands-on "Mini Ninja" classes where children and young people get to learn how to make sushi. The workshop that this group attended helped increase



their knowledge of the benefits of healthy eating, especially the benefits of eating fresh fish regularly. Yo Sushi provided A5 menu cards for each participant and they increased their cooking skills by learning how to make sushi from scratch. By the end of the session, the participants were also able to make 'sushi salads' with the excess ingredients to take home, helping to show how simple it can be to reduce

food waste.

The girls live in a part of the city that would not normally be associated with sushi. One girl was scared of raw fish, but tried some by the end of the session. The rest of the group were happy to try everything during the session. It showed how important it is to take groups out of their comfort zone and to push boundaries.

## CARLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

### Cooking on a Budget

A local Family Resource Centre coordinated a cookery skills programme for eleven people in the FRC kitchen which focused on increasing the knowledge of individuals regarding healthy eating, looking at healthier ways to prepare food and introducing vegetables into meals for young children. The participants were aware that the ability to cook is a valuable life skill and were delighted to receive the opportunity to gain these skills.

The aim of the classes was to introduce the individuals to home cooking so during the course, the group worked with a tutor in preparing and cooking a healthy and nutritious meal each week that they would be able to replicate at home. By the end of the five weeks, the participants had five low cost recipes that they had learned how to prepare and that would be nutritious for their young children. There was also a focus in the classes on how to make meals go further and how to cook on a budget.



The recipes provided, outlined the ingredients and quantities they would need for each meal which in turn would influence what they would be buying on a weekly basis. In many cases, the recipes referred to other meals that the participants would be able to make with any leftover food or creating a new meal using leftover food from the day before.

The participants were given a practical demonstration of the various cooking skills throughout the classes and were given the opportunity to practice those skills with the tutor. Participants were given information about the storage of food and safety information regarding cross contamination and using appropriate utensils and chopping boards. Food waste was a

topic regularly covered during the programme and included using left over foods and appropriate portion sizes for adults and children.

The feedback from the group was very positive and they were delighted to get practical tips on how to cook everyday food and to learn new cooking skills. There were some unexpected positive outcomes from the CFI; new people came in to use other services at the family resource centre and this was as a result of their engagement in the various CFI projects. Another positive was the development of friendships and confidence building that happened through the group participation and engagement which will continue outside of the CFI.

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## Fake-aways

When conducting some local research, it was discovered that there are seven take away outlets, in addition to three hot food counters in the town where this project was based. The aim of the project was to help the participants to explore and become aware of the benefits of healthy eating both nutritionally and financially.

The programme was promoted through social media, posters and advertising directly through the local primary schools. However, the most effective means of recruiting participants was through speaking on a one-to-one basis with the parents who use the various services provided through the FRC.

The focus of the programme was on looking at healthier ways to prepare

food and introducing vegetables to young children. The tutor used a novel approach to getting the message across through teaching the participants to make their own “fakeaways” at home.

The tutor also highlighted that when someone is buying takeaways they do not necessarily know what the meal is made from. When the “fake-away” is made at home, it is less processed and therefore more nutritious than food from a take-away, etc.

The recipes outlined the ingredients and quantities that the participants would need and the method for making each meal. They also looked at the cost of buying a take-away and the savings that could be made by the participants through cooking their own “fakeaways”.



Again, they looked at how the recipes could be adapted to create a new meal for the following day.

The sessions began with a practical demonstration by the tutor and then the participants were given the opportunity to practice those skills with the tutor. An important element of the programme was to buy the meal from the takeaway that they were cooking during each session and to do a blind tasting of both the takeaway and the fakeaway to see which meal

they preferred. Obviously the fakeaway tasted better!

Again the tutor discussed the correct storage of food and how to avoid cross contamination through the appropriate use of utensils and chopping boards. Food waste, using left over foods and difference between portion sizes for adults and children was also covered.

The overall objective for the CFI was that over the three years, the learning and experience would become embedded and the individuals and families would adopt what they had learned as part of their everyday lives.

It is hoped that through developing the capacity of the individuals and encouraging healthy eating habits, a positive relationship between food and cooking healthy delicious meals will be created. Upon completion of the course, the participants said that they were delighted to have received the opportunity to develop new skills and ideas around healthy eating and providing their families with low-cost, nutritious meals.

## INISHOWEN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (IDP)

### Get Active Parent & Toddler Programme

Parents can support and encourage healthy lifestyle choices for all the family at home so delivering programmes to young children and parents together helps make the activity and learning fun.

The project was delivered in conjunction with a local community

family centre that was set up in 2010 to support young families and their children. Their support services include advice and information, after school activities, Baby 0 – 5, holiday-time activities, and parenting support.

Support was also provided through the Public Health Nurse (PHN), the

local Family Resource Centre and Girls National School. The Family Resource Centre sourced additional funding for the Parent and Toddler group through the Catherine Howard Foundation for additional activities. The community centre subsidised the venue hire and associated costs for the Saturday workshops.

The 5 week Get Active programme was delivered during October and November 2016 and included:

- Tips for healthy cooking, including advice on nutrition and well-being
- Strategies to avoid using sugar in meals and snacks
- Healthy breakfast options
- A guide to labelling.



Children were supervised in one space doing physical activities while parents had the opportunity to engage in discussion and demonstrations around healthy eating.

The Public Health Nurses reported that “these programmes were a great way to engage new mums and help focus on their health and well-being not just focus on children. Parents got an opportunity to explore new recipes with healthy options and creative ways to disguise vegetables in their children’s diets”.

## Be Healthy Be Happy

This small project was based in a rural community centre which is the base for one of the Foroige Youth Groups. It has a café space and a fully functioning kitchen, which was ideal for the programme delivery.

The Youth Workers discussed the opportunity to have a healthy eating programme with the young people and they expressed an interest in the Cookery Workshops. In November and December 2017, a group of twenty-five young people, aged between ten and fifteen years old and ten parents participated in the three week Cookery Workshops programme. Most of the young people and their parents live in the area.

The programme focussed on healthy eating and a local cook, who also has diet and nutrition expertise, delivered the weekly sessions. The aims of the programme included demonstrating that cooking healthy meals could be quick, easy and inexpensive; whilst at the same time being tasty and fun. The programme incorporated opportunities for the participants to learn some cooking skills. The Cook also spoke to the participants about healthy shopping and budgeting, food and meal planning skills, food wastage and food safety and hygiene.

The kitchen facilities were good but limited so the Cook prepared the basic ingredients in advance of each session and then cooked the meal

with the participants. During the cooking, the participants were given the opportunity to be hands-on while the Cook explained more about the ingredients and the preparation she had done before coming to the Centre. The participants asked questions, both about the ingredients and the cooking processes.

The Cook chose the initial recipe and thereafter used ideas (when possible and practical) given by the participants. Meals prepared included chicken and broccoli pasta bake, pigs in blankets and a pavlova, made with Greek yoghurt. At the end of each session the participants helped clear up and were given the meal recipe to take home.

The Youth Worker reported that the participants enjoyed all the sessions. Prior to the Programme, as far as she was aware, none of the boys who participated had experience of cooking and the girls “hadn’t done a lot of practical cooking either”.

The Youth Worker reported that the young people enjoyed spending time making the food. They tasted new things that they had not eaten before, for example butternut squash, Greek yoghurt and pine-nuts. They tasted different meals and thought about food differently. They realised that they can enjoy healthy food as well as burgers. It was great having the parents there as well, because if the parents enjoy it (which they did) then they will start to shop differently and plan different meals, which some of them said they did. The young people really enjoyed it and it is hoped that the organisation will

be in a position to do something like this again.

The Cook wanted to involve the participants in the whole process, as far as was feasibly practical within the Centre so the recipes used took into account practicalities such as cooking times and the space available in the ovens.

She explained that the brief included showing that healthy eating could be enjoyable and that it is fun and relatively easy to prepare meals from scratch. The participants were so appreciative of the meals and came back and (very politely) asked if they could have some more. At the end of one the sessions, some of them said they would make the recipe at home. When they came back the following week, they said that they had and enjoyed talking and asking questions about cooking.



## Skills for Life Food & Nutrition Programme

The North Inishowen School Completion Programme (NISCP) Co-ordinator, the Home School Community Liaison Officers and the School Year Heads worked with IDP and Inishowen Family Association Network (IFAN) to develop a programme for the young people that would increase their knowledge and awareness of a good diet, healthy lifestyles and associated skills. The NISCP provided additional funding for the Programme.

The four week programme was delivered in a local restaurant to a group of fifteen boys and girls aged 12 to 14 years old. The students, from two community schools, are in their first or second year at School.

The programme was very hands-on and each week the young people worked with the Chef to prepare the meals, which included omelettes, chicken stir-fry, wheaten bread, banana pancakes, wraps, salad and egg muffins. One week the young people had the opportunity to prepare a meal for their teacher. The students also visited the restaurant's vegetable garden, where they picked and tasted different herbs and helped with digging the vegetable beds (until the rain became too heavy!).

During the last session, additional time was added for feedback and the students discussed what they had learnt during the Programme. They talked about tasting foods that they had not previously eaten, including aubergines and courgettes, banana pancakes, egg muffins and brown bread. One boy said that although he had eaten omelettes before, that these

were "completely different and much nicer".

Another area of learning that the students discussed was food hygiene and safety. Learning included being aware of the dangers in the kitchen and how to be safe, washing your hands before cooking, washing up as you go along, using different chopping boards for different types of food and avoiding cross-contamination, and putting raw foods in the bottom of the fridge.

The aspect of the programme that the students said they enjoyed most was having the opportunity to cook. Other responses included interacting with new and different people from the other school, "we ate nice food and tried new things", how to layup a table properly and fold napkins, food hygiene and safety, learning about a balanced diet and to eat less sweets and sugary food. The young people also emphasised how much they enjoyed the 'hands-on' approach and they "learn much more by doing, rather than just sitting and writing stuff down".

The students discussed some of the changes they have made to their diet, which included eating less sugar and sweets, eating more fruit and vegetables and trying new things. Their parents and families were trying new things as well now. This was helped by the fact that some of the young people had cooked the recipes at home

The Home School Liaison Coordinator found that programme worked well because the facilitators had the ability to tailor the programme to meet the



needs of the group. It ran at the same time each week and was hands-on. As the programme was delivered outside the school, the responsibility was with the students to get themselves there and none of them missed a session. The students had an input and the recipes could be repeated at home easily. It was also the first opportunity for many to cook and some of the young people said that they would like to train to be a chef and work in the hospitality business.



## LAOIS PARTNERSHIP COMPANY

### Cook & Chat Cooking Skills & Healthy Eating Programme

Laois Partnership Company delivered three Cook & Chat programmes during 2016 in three separate locations and again in 2017. During their first networking event in 2016, they canvassed the parents about their main concerns regarding the provision of healthy food for their families and what kind of programme they would find useful.

The parents expressed an interest in learning about how to budget their food bills and what was contained in the food they were feeding to their children, e.g. e-numbers, etc. From this consultation,

it was decided to run a Cook & Chat programme where the participants would learn how to cook nutritious meals and also learn about nutrition in an informal setting.

33 people took part in the three programmes in 2016 and each week the participants prepared and cooked a simple dish. Each dish was used to prompt discussions and sharing under the six CFI themes. The same programme was delivered in the three locations and the dishes/topics included:

#### WEEK ONE

##### Recipe:

Bacon & Vegetable Pasta Bake.

##### Topics:

How and why should you compost and how to get kids to eat more vegetables.

#### WEEK TWO

##### Recipe:

Vegetable Soup and Scones.

##### Topics:

Reading labels, judging the nutritional content of food and comparing the labels of shop bought soup & scones.

**WEEK THREE****Recipe:**

Simple Fruit Cake.

**Topics:**

Comparing nutritional content and labels of shop bought treats, how to get kids to eat more fruit and budgeting: compare cost of all dishes on the course with shop bought alternatives.

**WEEK FOUR****Recipes:**

Potato Cakes and Tomato Sauce.

**Topics:**

Budgeting with a focus on using leftovers & cooking in batches, meal planning & using leftovers and comparing the nutritional content of shop bought waffles & tomato ketchup.



Time was set aside for feedback at the end of the final session in each location. Everyone who took part was delighted that they had and felt that they had really benefited from the experience. One unexpected outcome was that while the preschool parents had requested training in budgeting, and this was the element of the training that attracted the parents to attend, the reality was that they generally had excellent budgeting skills. Their main concern when shopping is value for money. Healthy shopping and the

nutritional value of food were not seen as a priority before the training, but the simple low-cost recipes with higher nutrition values provided during the training were welcome options for the families for the future.

The number one challenge for the organisers was recruitment. Preschool parents are very busy and also quite time poor so the Steering Group had to develop strategies to encourage them to attend which included:

- Holding some events while pre-schoolers were in crèche, to facilitate stay at home parents, and other events in the evening time to facilitate working parents
- Providing training in both urban and rural venues
- Holding events in crèches, so that preschool parents would feel welcome
- Holding events in crèches, where crèche managers and staff would have ownership of the event and therefore assist with recruitment
- Providing ample refreshments as an enticement, and advertising same
- Promoting events widely, through email, Facebook, posters, flyers and word of mouth

In 2017, the target group was parents of children between the ages of 4 and 12 and the Home School Liaison Officers provided great assistance in encouraging people to attend. The new target group provided new challenges for the Steering Group which were subsequently addressed as follows:

**Childcare:** apart from the first networking event, all events were held during school hours, and parents were welcome to bring pre-school children with them, so that childcare was not an issue.

**Convenience:** the Small Projects all started immediately after the local school's start-time so that parents could (a) meet at school gate and walk / travel as a group to the Small Project, and (b) not get diverted by other tasks.

**Access to Venues:** all Small Project events were held in close proximity to primary schools.

**Maintaining Attendance:** each participant was sent a text message reminder on the morning of each of the Small Projects to maintain attendance levels.

An unexpected challenge was competition for participants from the well-established Slimming World and the new "Nutrition Clubs" (Herbalife) which impacted on recruitment for the small projects. It was a major task to explain the difference between a slimming class and a healthy eating programme.

28 people participated in the three programmes during 2018 and the programme also changed slightly as a result of the feedback they received after year 1. One of the issues that the parents were very concerned about was the popularity of energy drinks amongst children and teens. The programme content during 2018 was as follows:



**WEEK ONE****Recipes:**

Soup and Scones.

**Topics:**

Meal planning, food budgeting, healthy food on a budget.

**WEEK TWO****Recipes:**

Pea Soup, Banana Pancakes and Potato Wedges. **Topics:**

Fruit and vegetables, the food pyramid, lunch box food and drink ideas.

**WEEK THREE****Recipes:**

Vegetable Risotto, Pizza Base and Tomato Sauce.

**Topics:**

Treats and sugars, judging nutritional value of food/drink and reading labels.

**WEEK FOUR****Recipes:**

Apple Fingers, Drop Scones and Chicken Goujons.

**Topics:**

Fruit and vegetables, preventing food waste and composting.

**WEEK FIVE****Recipes:**

Butternut Squash & Lentil Curry and Brown Bread.

**Topics:**

Protein / carbohydrates and comparing nutritional value of processed food with homemade food.



It was felt that the Cook and Chat approach was successful because it was peer led, rather than lecture style. The tutor's role was to provide the cookery skills training and to set the topics and themes for discussion.

During the discussions, the Tutors provided handouts, clarification and advice as required. The participants were encouraged to lead the discussion, talk about their cooking experiences and to share tips with each other.

## MONAGHAN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

### Practical Cooking with Parents & Toddlers Together

The project was designed to complement the Smart Start Programme and to provide an opportunity for the parents & children to gain wider exposure to healthy foods, to be informed about health and nutrition and to get some training in "back to basics" cooking. During the five week programme, the families involved

learned how to budget, shop for and cook meals from scratch.

The first session started with the families getting to know each other, finding out about their lifestyles, and their knowledge around healthy eating. They played some games which involved identifying different foods,

mystery tasting, portion sizes, sugar content and the pricing of food.

Each session involved a shopping trip, a practical cooking session and a chance to sit down together and eat. This project focussed on selecting recipes which would make the most meals for a family from a small number of main ingredients. During session 4, they started with ingredients leftover from a Sunday dinner and showed the families how to use them in the soups, pasta, curry etc.

After each practical session, participants received a copy of the recipe and were supplied with ingredients to recreate the meal at home. They also looked at the costs involved in cooking at home and then made a comparison to the cost of the ready meal alternatives. The recipes for each session were as follows: (1) breakfasts, French toast; (2) vegetable soups and soup taste challenge; (3) curry; (4) leftovers, pasta, (5) healthy lunch and treats.

Through bringing the children into the programme, it showed the participants that if children are involved in food preparation, they are more likely to try the food and cooking can become less of a chore for the parents. At the start of the project, the parents said that they did not have time to cook as they had to mind the children but by the end of

the project some parents agreed that if they cooked together then that solved the problem.

The children were provided with Kiddikutter knives which allowed parents to get the children more involved in food prep at home. One parent reported back that her son helped to cut broccoli, a vegetable which he would not eat at all. But because he had prepared “the little trees” he demanded to get more of them on his plate and ate them all. Another parent was delighted with the advice to blend vegetables into the pasta sauce.

The participants discovered that unnecessary spending can be avoided by writing a list and only purchasing the exact quantities. It also highlighted the value and service that you can get from a small local business, i.e. the local butcher who can give advice on cooking and make suggestions for using different cuts.

Some parents needed support with literacy so the “Just Look & Cook” recipe book was used. This book includes a series of very basic recipes and the steps are displayed in photo format. There are also ingredients and tools cards. This resource also enabled the preschool children to follow what was going on during the cookery demonstrations.

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## Outdoors Health and Wellness Fair

The theme for the first Networking Showcase each year is ‘Learning from the Experts’ so Monaghan CFI decided to hold the first ever ‘Health and Wellness Fair’ for County Monaghan

outdoors in The Diamond, the main square in Monaghan town. The event brought together a range of groups and agencies that provided health and wellness information on a host of topics

at information stands located around the Square. In addition, there was a main stage where they held healthy cookery demonstrations and public fitness sessions.

The primary schools in the town participated in the Community Food Initiative "Healthy Lunchbox" poster competition. The teachers brought the relevant classes to the fair and all the parents were invited along to see the work on display. The local press and radio station were present for the prize giving ceremony. Throughout the day the CFI was promoted through

running a competition where people were asked to guess how many portion of soup could be made from a basket of ingredients, highlighting the upcoming small projects and registering families to attend.

They took a risk on holding an outdoor event but it was a great success as the weather was fantastic on the day. Using a public space meant that they could engage with people who would not have gone out of their way to go to such an event. Working with schools prior to the event meant that families were aware of it and the parents did come along.



## Shopping Centre Health and Wellness Fair

As the target group for year 3 is young people between the ages of 11 – 18 and their families, it was decided to hold the Health and Wellness Fair in a local shopping centre as this is where the young people congregate in their spare time.

Exhibitors were arranged along the main walkways and demonstrations and activities took place in a vacant shop unit. The Irish Heart Foundation parked outside on the main street entrance to the shopping centre so that people could avail of free checks but also to draw attention to the activities inside.

The morning demonstrations were targeted at the parents and from noon onwards the demonstrations were geared more towards the young people and were as follows:

- 10.00 am: baby massage and food for toddlers
- 11.00 am: cooking for one, chairobics
- 12 noon: school visits – healthy lunchboxes and snacks
- Afternoon boxercise
- junk food from scratch
- label reading workshops & handout cards

In addition to the cookery demonstrations, the stands highlighted various aspects of nutrition and healthy living including cereal portion displays,

sugar and salt content, energy drinks, food storage, recipes for leftovers, and food samples. It was felt that displaying the portion plates was a great idea as people are unaware of appropriate portion sizes for children.

The feedback was very positive and the visitors to the shopping centre said that they found the demonstrations very interesting and informative. They were delighted to be able to interact with the displays and talk to the experts. Getting free health checks and then advice on healthy eating and lifestyles all in one place was very beneficial.

The Steering Group found again that holding the event in a public space meant that they were able to reach people who would not have come along to a community venue especially for a health fair.

## THE RESURGAM TRUST

### Christmas Healthy Eating Showcase Event

The second networking event was held in the lead up to Christmas and had a festive theme. 109 people attended the event which was held in a local community centre and was supported by 14 organisations. The event involved a mix of demonstrations and information stands on healthy eating.

To get into the festive mood, the Dig Deep volunteers provided a demonstration on Christmas wreath making and then invited the attendees to try it for themselves. The participants from the Small Projects showcased the learning from the CFI Programme and hosted two cookery demonstrations where they cooked turkey with chick



peas and spices served in lettuce boats. In between the cooking sessions, a slide show presentation showcasing the CFI activities from 2016 was projected onto a large screen.

Before and after the demonstrations, visitors to the event were encouraged to speak to exhibitors and to try the many healthy food samples on offer including the Polish Christmas food experience. Interactive sessions included a weaning demonstration provided by the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust Dietitians with some of the Small Project trainees in attendance. Information was provided by Sure Start on the purchase of weaning foods and healthy options.

Lisburn Food Bank was also present to discuss how people can donate, volunteer and access food. Barnardos and Sure Start had information on their early years programmes. Laganview Community Gym distributed pedometers and advised on physical activity and BMI checks.

**safefood** resource materials were available including the very popular 101 Square Meals recipe book. The food demonstrations provided by Atlas Women's Centre and Café highlighted practical information on shopping and cooking healthily, planning meals and how to cook and eat healthily on a budget.

The EHO from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council promoted healthy, safe cooking at Christmas and provided fridge thermometers for visitors to take home. Fare Share NI attended to promote their work around reducing food waste and also provided food samples.

The feedback was very positive from both attendees and agency personnel. One Steering Group member reported that their staff found it a really useful morning for connecting with families and networking with other professionals.

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## Summer Cookery Skills & Healthy Eating Programme

This week long project was based in a local community centre and involved parents and their primary school age children. The purpose of the project was to raise awareness and understanding among the participants of where food comes from. All the participants had hands-on learning experiences as they not only gathered ingredients but also were shown how to cook what they had picked.

During the week, the participants went on a trip to a local farm to meet and feed animals and to see where

eggs come from. They also visited the local supermarket where the butcher and fishmonger spoke about all the different types of meat and fish and gave suggestions on how to cook them. During the visit, they learned about different fruits and vegetables and were invited to choose their favourites to eat at snack time. Another outing involved a visit to an 'allotment' to dig for vegetables and see what they look like before going to the shops.

The local Tesco Community Champion brought lots of fruit to the centre for



the participants to taste and to discover which countries they came from.

Parents made soup and bubble & squeak from left over vegetables without following a recipe. This gave them the confidence that they can make meals from scratch without having to follow step by step instructions. When they were finished cooking, participants washed and tidied up together, which reinforced the information provided by the facilitator about the importance of health, safety and hygiene. Participants brought food home in containers which prompted a discussion with the facilitator around use by dates and freezing food to prevent food wastage.



During the sessions in the centre, the parents and children took part in various activities to reinforce the healthy eating message. All the Arts & Crafts activities had a healthy food theme, e.g. they designed their own Healthy Eating mascots. They made a display board showing where various fruits and vegetables come from and the display also included information about the planting and growing process. A display entitled “Know your Sugar” was created to demonstrate how many teaspoons of sugar are in favourite snacks and drinks and the effect too much sugar has on health. During story time, books such as “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” were used to teach younger children about healthy eating. They also planted and grew watercress.

A “Know your Onions” booklet for families was created by the participants which gave lots of tips for encouraging children to eat healthily, how to save money and reduce food waste and included tasty, healthy and affordable recipes. The book was distributed at the Food Fayre (second networking event), to the families taking part in other Small Grant projects and generally in the Healthy Living and Youth Centres.

All the resources and materials created during the project are now used across a range of projects. In addition the model is one which has been adopted by other agencies and included to varying degrees in other youth related programmes.

## 'Come Dine with Me'

Resurgam community members and groups were invited to put forward teams to compete in a 'Come Dine with Me' competition and five teams, each with four participants took part. Groups were self-formed and included (1) a women's group, (2) & (3) community associations, (4) Resurgam staff and (5) a football supporters group. Those taking part were of mixed ages with the youngest participant being 12 and the oldest being 70+. The intergenerational approach supported the learning and teaching of new skills and introducing new tastes.

The project was based in the Highway Inn which is a social enterprise that was set up by the Resurgam Trust as part of their strategy to support the social, economic and physical regeneration of the community they serve. The Chef at the Highway Inn provided support and guidance to teams on cooking, safe use of the kitchen and food hygiene. The Chef is also trained in the facilitation of the "Cook It" programme and has delivered many cooking programmes in the community.

Prior to the programme starting, a focus group was held with representatives from the community to see who might be interested in taking part. This focus group was facilitated by the Trust Director, Healthy Living Manager and Chef from the Highways Inn. The people attending the meeting decided on the rules of the competition, with the primary focus on providing healthy, affordable meals.

The teams were selected and the practical elements of the programme

were agreed such as timings, days and support to be provided. Once the start date was agreed and the order that each team would take part (selected through drawing names from a hat) each team then organised their own planning programmes.

Many groups used group chat via text, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc., to communicate with their teams to discuss menu ideas and plan meetings. Meals were cooked at home and together to support tasting and practice cooking to agree the final menu. The contact time varied for each team but on average each team met weekly up until the time that they competed in order to try, taste and practice their menu.

When the competition started, one team prepared a two course meal each week and then served it to the other 16 participants. The budget to buy the ingredients for each two course meal was £5.00. Each team was judged on presentation, menu including healthy options, taste and affordability. The menus were held in secret each week by an independent person until the cooking night with the scoring also held in secret until the final celebration event when the winners were announced.

The chef at the Highway Inn provided induction training in the kitchen which included food safety. Some of the participants had taken part in Cook It programmes as part of the CFI programme (Small Project) and through the Public Health Agency 'Health Promoting Homes' programmes.

The project was promoted through Facebook and through word of mouth with community members and community groups. Each week, once the new menu had been tried and scored, the information along with photographs was shared across social media. This generated great interest in the community with people attending the bar to watch the competition taking place and generating discussion among patrons and members of the community.

The feedback was very positive and some of the benefits the participants

experienced were that it provided an opportunity to meet new people and to enjoy and try different foods. They also enjoyed working as a team and serving up the food they had created. Their participation encouraged them to try new ideas at home and showed them how easy it is to cook 'real meals' at home, use fresh ingredients, and try new flavours and alternatives. It also helped them to put healthy eating and different cooking skills into practice with people reporting that they were using more healthy ingredients and using the information and tips provided to make healthier meals at home.

## SLNRA – SOUTH LOUGH NEAGH REGENERATION ASSOCIATION Healthy Living Programme

During 2016, SLNRA decided to roll out each of their Small Projects in a number of locations across their area of operation rather than locate each of their projects in one venue. The projects were delivered by SLNRA staff

in conjunction with a local chef. The Playgroups were also partners in this initiative. Tesco Craigavon supplied fresh food and ingredients for the small projects and provided a number of pumpkins for the second networking event. Both parents and children were present during the workshops and the supermarket visits.



The first project involved an interactive workshop delivered in six preschools/ playschools where the children were shown how to prepare and make healthy snacks e.g. smoothies, fruit kebabs and fruit yoghurt pots for themselves and their parents.

During the second Small Project which was delivered in three locations, the participants (all of whom had participated in the first project) watched the chef prepare and cook a

healthy low cost meal from scratch and the parents were given the opportunity to sample the food. During the session, there was a discussion about how to use leftovers to make healthy delicious meals. Love Food Hate Waste also made a presentation that gave the parents lots of practical information and numerous menu ideas.

During each of the sessions, the chef and the SLNRA staff introduced different aspects to the parents on how to feed a family on a budget and the importance of meal planning. They also used the cookery demonstrations as an educational tool to highlight the importance of food hygiene and how to prevent food wastage.

The third project involved a visit to Tesco in Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown and the Tesco Community

Team was very helpful with the planning of these visits. The visit took place on three separate dates to give everyone the opportunity to attend. During the visits, the parents were educated on how to read the food labels correctly and there was a discussion around the own brand versus branded foods. The Tesco staff spoke about how they work with local producers (farm to fork) and everyone received samples of food.

The feedback from the participants was extremely positive and many were amazed when they realised how easy it is to cook food from scratch, how much cheaper it works out to cook for a family of four using fresh ingredients and how healthy and tasty the food is. There was also the added bonus that the meals were low in fat, sugar and salt.

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## Family Fun Day

This event was held in Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Lurgan as it is accessible to people living in both urban and rural areas. Over 600 people attended with 12 organisations supporting the event and helping with promotion including Tesco who provided free fruit for all attendees. The event was designed to be both informative for parents and to provide the families with fun, interactive activities which everyone could participate in.

The information presented emphasised the importance of healthy eating, e.g. eating a breakfast every day, how to make healthier choices when buying a takeaway meal. Portion sizes for children were outlined, which enabled

parents to have a better understanding of how much food their children should receive during mealtimes.

Children and parents responded positively to interactive educational activities for example estimating the sugar content in drinks, and having visuals of healthy food products worked well as a talking point with parents and adults.

From their involvement in the CFI, SLNRA has produced some of its own resources to inform people about the amount of sugar, fat and salt contained in everyday processed foods. During the event, SLNRA provided visual displays at its stand and exhibited a



and therefore prevent food wastage, while taking into consideration food safety and hygiene.

The families in attendance were shown healthy options for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. Advice was given on how these meals could be created, what ingredients were used, cooking methods and cooking times. Recipes were available at the **safefood** area which had a range of meals that the attendees could create at home. A lunch box planner was also available in the **safefood** area which provided parents with ideas for making their child's lunch.

range of common everyday processed food which families purchase as part of their weekly shop. In order to show how much sugar, salt or fat is contained in each item of food, they provided accurate examples of the additive beside each regular portion, for example, a bowl of sugar puffs breakfast cereal.

Information was provided on how to be a savvy shopper and the cost savings which a family could make, if e.g. they make their own lunch. The cost of purchasing a lunch each day and a takeaway each weekend was outlined. This enabled families to gain an awareness of how they can save money when purchasing food. In addition, the families were provided with suggestions on how to use leftovers

Food diaries were given to all willing children and parents, and an explanation was provided on how to complete the re-usable food diaries. Some parents indicated that they hoped this could positively change their child's eating habits. There was a general consensus that the food diaries were a beneficial resource in order for both parents and children to track a child's eating habits.

A considerable number of parents were shocked at the hidden sugar content in branded children's food and drinks, for example porridge and yoghurts. These parents commented that although they were horrified at the sugar content, they found the information beneficial and would begin to read labels to evaluate the sugar content of foods and drinks.

## Youth Networking Event

South Lough Neagh is a large rural area covering a region of 50 sq miles. SLNRA worked with two of the larger youth groups in the area to gather 86 young people together for a Youth Networking Event at Todds Leap, an outdoors activity centre. Prior to this event SLNRA delivered two of its small projects in the two youth clubs where the young people learned how to make “fakeaways” and about the importance of living an active, healthy lifestyle.

The day in Todds Leap started with a healthy eating fair where the CFI Leader had invited organisations to host stalls. The Tesco Community Champion provided free, fresh fruit and water to all the participants when they arrived and the fruit and water was available to the young people throughout the day.

Staff from the Loughshore Family Action Project provided information at their stand on healthy alternatives for dinners and lunches and provided recipes for healthy family meals. There was a display on the sugar and salt content of popular snacks and the importance of eating a breakfast each day was emphasised. In addition, they spoke to the young people about looking after themselves at exam time and distributed the **safefood** Exam Survival Guide.

Advice was provided on how young people can make healthier choices when they are eating a takeaway meal and they used the Eat Well/Portion size plates to illustrate appropriate portion sizes. All the young people received a copy of the Eat Well guide

Breakthru is an organisation that works to reduce the impact of substance misuse and to promote health and well-being. They brought along a drug box and beer goggles to illustrate the information they were providing to the young people. The drug box contains replicas of drugs with comprehensive details on appearance, methods of use, effects, street names, risks and what to look out for. The ‘Beer Goggles’ simulate the impact alcohol has on balance. The young people had the opportunity to try on the beer goggles and information was provided on the health risks associated with alcohol.

Cancer Focus was also present and provided information on skin protection in hot weather. They brought a skin scanner which showed the young people whether their skin had been affected by the high level of UV rays during the Summer.

Staff from Todd's Leap Outdoor Activity Centre provided information on the foods which slows down metabolism and foods that can provide you with energy. They also spoke about the importance of keeping active and the effects of dehydration.

Lunch was provided using healthy, fresh, unprocessed foods and during lunch, the young people were given information on why they should buy healthy snack alternatives. They were encouraged to tell their parents about the range of healthy snacks they should buy when out doing the family shop.

The young people were separated into groups of six and with a leader had the

opportunity to take part in some of the activities provided in Todds Leap.

## SOUTH TIPPERARY DEVELOPMENT

### Healthy Cookery Programme



This project was designed to encourage the parents of preschool children to increase their awareness of healthy food, to learn easy ways to incorporate it in the diet of small children and to understand the real value of home cooked food.

During the sessions, the 12 participants examined the quality of convenience food and how they contain higher levels of fat, sugar, salt, poor quality meat and a variety of additives. They also looked at how an over reliance on this food leads to poor health outcomes. The health benefits and the nurturing element of cooking with children was emphasised and the tutor and participants discussed how the smell and comfort of home cooking can create a healthy relationship with food.

The participants analysed the overall cost of providing homemade meals versus the cost of shop bought food e.g. shop-bought pizza versus homemade pizza, frozen chips versus roast baby

potatoes. The tutor advised on the basic items that should be in every food cupboard at home and to look out for supermarket suggestion leaflets as it can be difficult to come up with new ideas.

The tutor provided practical demonstrations on a variety of foods, utilising a number of techniques. The recipes were distributed to the participants and they each received a “Start Up Pack” that contained the basic elements required to cook the recipes. The participants were invited to try everything that was cooked during the session. The recipes included: shepherd’s pie, brown bread, vegetable soup, homemade chicken goujons, healthy pizza and courgette muffins.

At the end of the final session, the participants provided feedback on their involvement. They all found the cookery demonstrations very helpful and got lots of useful ideas. They thought that the tutor gave very helpful tips including using shredded vegetables and how to use left overs. The ingredients used were ordinary items that people would have at home and the tutor provided lots of different ideas for healthy food without adding from packets. An important element was that the tutor created a very pleasant atmosphere and they found her to be really helpful with practical suggestions and recipes for family cooking including great ideas for children’s lunch boxes.

## “Eat Well for Less”

31 individuals attended the event which was held in a local Family Resource Centre. The theme of the event was “Eat Well for Less” and the aim was to encourage parents of primary school children to introduce healthy, low cost food into their children’s diet.

Two ETB cookery tutors cooked dishes which demonstrated basic and simple cooking skills around healthy eating. Glengoole Men’s Shed showcased their food growing and composting of food waste. Tipperary County Council provided advice on food wastage and the benefits of recycling.



The HSE Community Dental Hygienist explained to parents the importance of teaching their children how to brush their teeth properly and the damage that sugary drinks and sweets can cause to children’s teeth. The Nutritionist gave a talk on using fermented vegetables in the diet and fruit consumption.

Participants from the three Small Projects discussed their participation in the CFI and the changes they have made in how they prepare food for their families.

The people who attended the event said that they were very satisfied with the level of expert advice and the guidance they received on how best to introduce, cook and present fruit and vegetables. Participants were very interested in learning new cookery ideas and developing skills. Also, many were surprised at how cost effective it can be to shop around for the best value.

## Youth Cookery Skills Event

The final event was an opportunity for participants from the small projects to “Learn from Each Other”. The cookery demonstration was delivered by the participants who prepared for this Event by undertaking specific cookery classes in the weeks running up to it, which increased both skill and confidence levels. The tutors worked closely with the participants in agreeing the menu, ensuring they were nutritionally balanced and incorporated all the learning from the Small Projects. Everyone had the opportunity to sample

the food prepared by the young people which included: sausage rolls, Venetian pizza, cheese and bacon scones, garlic bread, low-fat, low-sugar chocolate cake, low-fat chocolate brownies, Moroccan stew and chicken curry.

The participants from the three Small Projects were drawn from youth organisations in three locations in Co Tipperary and the age groups varied from 11 to 18 years with a mixture of both male and female. Each Small Project comprised four cookery



workshops of 2.5 hours duration. The workshops were participant led and the content was designed around the knowledge and skills of the participants and their level of cooking skills.

The Event was opened by one of the Steering Group members who welcomed everyone to the Event and presented aprons with the **safefood** logo to all the participants

of the cookery demo. Certificates of Completion were also presented to all the participants of the Three Small Projects.

The participants who attended the networking event were full of enthusiasm and delighted to have had the opportunity to learn new skills about cooking dishes that are basic, simple and easy to prepare.

## SOUTH WEST MAYO DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

### Cookery Skills & Healthy Eating Programme

The CFI Leader developed a four week training programme for a group of five young mothers in conjunction with Mayo Abbey Training Centre, an accredited training centre in Claremorris. They also engaged with Mayo Rural Transport to secure funding towards transport costs for the group.

This programme was delivered in conjunction with Foroige's Neighbourhood Youth Project and was rolled out over four weeks. The participants had previously attended workshops with a dietitian and a talk

on "how food affects your mood" so the cookery skills programme provided the opportunity for the parents to learn and practice cooking skills during each three hour session.

The programme was based around children, their eating habits and how best to ensure their nutritional needs are met through practical cookery. Recipes were designed to enable children to be involved in the preparation of meals and lunch box ideas were included.

During the programme, the parents learned how to incorporate the food pyramid into their daily menus and how to prepare meals that fulfil the nutritional requirements of small children and pre-schoolers. In addition, they discussed how to cook healthy meals on a budget, batch cooking and planning meals in advance in order to cut down on unnecessary costs.

The practical cooking skills concentrated on food that is high in



nutrition and methods to include hidden fruit and vegetables for fussy children. Kitchen hygiene practices were discussed throughout the programme and included using the correct chopping boards for the correct food item and also the importance of cleaning implements correctly and safely. The participants were shown around the organic garden on site and advised about growing their own produce.

The participants completed a course evaluation and were awarded

certificates of participation. All found the training enjoyable, very effective and felt that the content was relevant. They enjoyed working with the Trainer and felt that they gained valuable knowledge. One member of the group who discovered she had a flair for cooking is investigating the option of going further in her training to get accreditation. The other participants have expressed an interest in further training to improve their cookery skills and knowledge of nutrition.

## Healthy Living Event

Over fifty families attended a free seminar which was hosted by the CFI Steering Committee. The overall theme of the event was how to make better food choices for your kids and involved talks from experts and an interactive workshop. The event was broadcasted through Facebook Live which meant that they could reach a larger audience and was viewed by over 150 people.

The first speaker was Dr Mary Flynn, Chief Specialist in Public Health Nutrition at the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. Dr. Flynn covered topics including nutritional issues for school children, healthy eating, critical stages of rapid growth and development etc.

HSE Community Dietitians, Michelle Mullally and Carmel Murphy then facilitated an interactive workshop on healthy eating which looked at sugar in foods, the new food pyramid, perceptions of portion sizes and the calorie content of various foods. Dr Eileen Kelly-Blakeney, Lecturer in Home Economics at St Angela's College presented the findings of a recent study

on Healthy Eating in Primary Schools and the important contribution the Primary School Curriculum has to make in educating children about healthy eating as well as impacting positively on the types of foods included in children's' lunchboxes.

The event was promoted through the Steering Group members' social media channels and information on the event was circulated to parents through the local National Schools. The people attending found the event very informative overall and enjoyed the workshop on healthy eating and the new food pyramid.



## The Video Competition

As the target group for year 3 was young people and their families, the CFI Steering Group decided to run a Social Media Competition entitled 'Boost your mood with healthy food'. The project was run in conjunction with Foróige and the participants were invited to create a short 2-3 minute long collaborative video which would address one or more of the CFI themes. Essentially they were looking for a video that would be made by teenagers for teenagers and could be used to promote healthy eating among teenagers.

The project provided an enjoyable approach for the young people to explore the CFI themes and to express their own unique understanding and perception of them. It gave the teenagers the opportunity to identify the important messages, to find a way to express that creatively within a group, to work collaboratively and to develop skills to create a video which teenagers would find educational and entertaining.

The first Networking Event was an information session for Group Leaders representing eighteen Foróige clubs. Registered Nutritionist, Catherine Duignan gave a presentation to the attendees with the theme "Energy for Everyday" which looked at the foods that will provide energy and boost mood in teenagers. She spoke about the macronutrients (carbohydrates, fat and protein) and the micronutrients (vitamins, minerals and more) contained in food and also referenced the sugar content in food, and the foods that can provide sustained energy.

The Foróige Leaders were made aware of the competition guidelines, how to upload their video and the specific dates to be aware of. There was a range of relevant **safefood** publications available at the event, the **safefood** teenager specific website links as well as the correct portion size plate.

Foróige Group Leaders were advised that throughout the competition, the nutritionist would be available to give advice and guidance to the clubs and to ensure that they were following the correct guidelines.

It was decided to roll the three small projects into one and the small project funding would be used as the prize fund. The winners were chosen as follows:

Judging panel votes 50%  
Public votes/Thumbs up 50%

The judging panel consisted of experts on healthy eating and representatives from the CFI Steering Committee and South West Mayo Development Company. All entries were assessed on:

- How well the themes of the CFI were interpreted
- Key message(s) delivered
- Creative approach
- How well the video was directed and use of teamwork

The entries were made available to the public through the SWMDC Facebook Page and each club's own Youtube channel.

Five Foróige clubs entered videos in the competition and they were advised that the prize funds should be spent on items or programmes based around the CFI themes of healthy eating, health and nutrition and boosting mood with healthy food. Prior approval for proposed expenditure would be required from South West Mayo Development Company.

The second Networking event was the Awards night for the competition where the five videos were shown. The young people who were involved in making the videos and their parents were invited to attend. There were three special guests from the fields of sport, fashion and beauty who took part in a facilitated panel discussion around:

- What healthy eating is to you – sports nutrition, etc.
- How you deal with things as a teenager (healthy mood)
- What foods are your go to item for snacking, eating on the go, etc.
- How important healthy eating is for good skin, hair, nails

There were a number of information stands from organisations such as Mind Space Mayo (Mental Health Service for young people), Mayo Sports Partnership, SICAP and Healthy Ireland.

Everyone who took part in the competition and who attended the Awards night enjoyed the experience. They felt that it allowed them to express their own opinions and ideas around healthy eating and to show what they had learned through their own research and creativity.



# SPACE

## Healthy Cooking Programme



used low cost, nutritional food and the participants were invited to discuss the difference in the cost and nutritional value of similar pre-packed meals. They also compared the meal they had cooked to a processed alternative for taste. The focus was on meals that everyone in the family could enjoy from baby to adults

SPACE hosted a two hour session once a week for four weeks at a local parent & toddler group. Through their experience of working with the families, SPACE knew that a lot of the households' income was spent doing daily shops on expensive processed food and takeaways. Older children in the families avail of free school meals but during school holidays the families struggle to meet the additional cost of providing lunches. SPACE hoped that through targeting pre-school age children, they could show parents that they can create one meal which the whole family can enjoy.

Ten parents and their children and one grandparent and grandchild participated in the programme. SPACE was already working with some of the families under their family support programme, delivering parenting advice and support around behaviour management, routines, budgeting and practical support.

The four week programme delivered a weekly cooking/tasting session using affordable healthy ingredients. They

and included a session on weaning and starting your baby on family meals. One session dealt with using leftovers to create another meal. Recipe cards were provided each week which contained ideas for other meals which could be made using similar ingredients and/or left overs. Hygiene and food storage advice was also given. At the end of the four weeks, participants were given food and equipment hampers to take home.

The feedback was very positive and it was agreed that the most beneficial part of the programme was the budgeting. They found the new recipes really healthy and useful and felt that they had widened their cooking range. They also said that the chart on how much sugar/fat was in various foods was shocking.

The CFI Leader promoted the programme through Facebook, flyers shared around other agencies, parents & tots groups, etc. Posters were placed in appropriate local shops, chemists, doctor's surgeries, etc.

## Oktoberfeast

Oktoberfeast, a healthy eating and wellness event organised by SPACE, was held in the run up to Halloween. 86 adults plus children attended the event which was held in the hall of a local primary school and was supported by 25 agencies. The event provided an opportunity for parents, children, the school and the agencies to interact in a setting that was familiar and accessible to all. The CFI Leader themed the event as Oktoberfeast and asked all the agencies attending to make their stands as interactive and fun as possible.

The stands included a showcase of all the Small Project activities and highlighted the difference in the cost and nutritional value of take away meals. Information and advice was provided on how the nutritional value of food changes during cooking, on using leftovers effectively and also the importance of storing and reheating leftovers properly.

SPACE ran an interactive cooking session where children and parents had the opportunity to cook and taste a range of snacks and meals. This was a very busy station and proved very popular. Tesco ran a snack station where children could make their own healthy snacks and try new food. The Early Years team had a sugar content display and the Relax Kids group ran a relaxation workshop for children and parents.

In the activity room, there was face painting, bag decorating, a sensory play area (this proved very popular), an arts and craft station, dunking for apples,

blind box games, etc. There was also music and dance which the children thoroughly enjoyed.

The event was publicised widely through traditional and social media (Facebook and Twitter). School children were given leaflets to take home to their parents and the school and steering group members also shared it around their own contacts. It was shared with all members of the Newry and Mourne Family Support Hub.

The visitors and agency representatives found the event extremely beneficial. One parent commented that it was a fantastic event and provided an opportunity for all to see what services are available in the community. The agency representatives found that



it provided a good opportunity for networking with other agencies and to make connections. They commented that it offered the opportunity for agencies and parents to meet in a relaxed setting and that it was great to see parents networking, socialising and chatting with the agency representatives.

## Healthy Living Skills for Young People

The project was delivered in a local community centre in conjunction with their youth club and thirteen of the members participated. One of the youth leaders had been involved in a Year 2 Small Project and approached the Steering Group about taking the concept into the youth club and tailoring it for the older children who attend the club.

Before the course started, a preparatory session was held with the young people to discuss the kind of food they would like to learn how to cook, so that the recipes would be to their taste and also something they would be likely to enjoy and want to make again.

Adding a physical activity element to the programme reinforced the message that eating well rather than “dieting” goes hand in hand with keeping fit. It

Each week the group prepared, cooked and ate a healthy meal which included; crispy chicken wraps, burgers, curry with rice, pizza and, for a treat on the last week, beetroot brownies. An integral part of each session was the importance of food hygiene, hand washing, handling raw meat, washing vegetables, washing the dishes and cleaning surfaces.

On a few occasions, the group took home what they had made so this provided a good opportunity to discuss safe storage and reheating techniques. There was also discussions on the difference between their home made meal and the convenience or take away version. They were asked to consider the preparation time, the cost and the nutritional value of the meal by comparing it to the packaging of a ready meal and take away menus. They also

examined the amount of sugar in foods and in particular soft/energy drinks.

The main resources used for discussions were those provided by **safefood** and included the ‘Exam Survival Guide’, ‘Fuel your body for the teenage sports



also meant that there was a great buy in from the young people who were all keen to participate in the activity day.

person’ ‘Sugar Shockers’ and the 101 Square Meals Recipe Book. The Promoting Wellbeing Team from the Southern Health & Social Care Trust

provided useful leaflets on healthy eating, such as 'Enjoy Healthy Eating' and 'this label could change your life'.

All of those who participated seemed to really enjoy the cooking and the eating! Attendance was steady throughout with very low drop out. It was felt that running the programme for an existing group was very beneficial as recruitment had already been done in a sense.

## CO. WICKLOW COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

### "Free, Fun Breakfast with Giggles the Clown"

38 families attended this event which was held in a local community centre. The starting time was scheduled for just after the time that the parents dropped their children to school and playschool and ended just before pick-up time. It was promoted as a fun interactive morning with practical information on healthy eating, managing waste and budgeting advice.

Members of the HSE Dietetics and Health Promotion teams were present and were supported by "Peer Leaders"

For some of the group, the number one priority whilst at their centre was playing football and/or pool, so they would come in to prepare their food and then play football or pool while it was cooking and return when it was ready to eat and take part in the discussion. It was a good way to keep up the interest of the group and ensure their continued attendance.

from the local Healthy Food Made Easy Programme (HFME). They provided a display which showed the amount of sugar contained in every day processed food. In addition they demonstrated the appropriate portion sizes for children aged 0 to 5 years, which always catch people by surprise because they perceive them as too small.

They displayed a "healthy" shopping trolley and a less healthy shopping trolley which encouraged people to talk about what they usually buy and potential healthier options.

One of the displays that provided a discussion forum for parents was the food pyramid mat. The parents were invited to sit on the floor and to put where they thought various pictures of food items should be placed on the pyramid. Again this provoked discussion around treats and how often children should receive them.





The Peer Leaders provided a cooking demonstration to show how to cook healthy, easy recipes with common household foods and simple basic equipment. The recipes were taken from the 101 Square Meals Recipe Book and the HFME participant handbook and everyone was invited to try samples.

The Wicklow Child and Family Project and Co. Wicklow Childcare Committee were present to provide parenting tips and to create awareness of the supports available for families. MABS provided advice and resources to help people with budgeting.

A fun quiz sheet encouraged parents to visit all the stands as the answers to the quiz were provided on the stands. Answer sheets when completed were entered into draw for a fruit basket. Giggles the Clown provided a fun atmosphere which occupied the children while the parents took time to explore the information stands, speak to the dietitian about their children's diet and avail of the weight and height measuring service present. Many parents attended the event for over two hours and found the experience extremely beneficial.

## Fun Family Healthy Eating and Exercise Event

The networking event was held in a local national school and was the culmination of a healthy eating programme that was delivered to the 4th class pupils in the school. The local HFME Peer Leaders liaised with the teachers to develop a programme that would assist the pupils to design healthy eating information stands for the networking event.

The teachers and children planned and researched the content for each stand based on the materials and information given to them by the HFME peer leaders. At the event, pupils manned the stands and provided information to the visiting parents and pupils from other classes in the school. The pupils were supported in the delivery of the information at the event by the Dietitian, teachers and HFME Peer Leaders.

Each class was given a specific time to man the stands and the pupils were encouraged to invite their parents to

attend the event during that time slot. When the parents arrived they were given a questionnaire and they had to go around all the stands to get the answers. The pupils on the stands gave smiley face stickers to the parents who got the correct answers. (The pupils were encouraged to help the parents to find the correct answer!) All completed questionnaires showing the smiley face stickers were then entered into a free draw for a basket of fruit. The stands included the following:



- Fill the fridge game: game participants had to guess where various items of food should be stored in a fridge
- Hygiene in the kitchen game: participants were shown a picture and they had to spot 10 incidents of poor hygiene practice
- Food Pyramid game: participants were given real food and they had to place them in the correct position on the Food Pyramid. The very innovative pupils had made the food pyramid from shoe boxes.
- Fats in foods: participants had to guess the correct amount of fat in particular foods by allocating cards with numbers of teaspoons of fat in each example of food.
- Sugar in foods: participants had to guess the correct amount of sugar in particular foods
- Cookery demonstration provided by HFME Peer Leaders: children were invited to make wholemeal scones and to bring them home with instructions on how to cook them
- Dietitian's Corner: HSE Dietitian provided an information point and was available to respond to questions and concerns raised by parents
- HSE Health Promotion: displayed posters, booklets and leaflets and provided information
- MABS provided information on budgeting and copies of the 101+ Square Meals cookery books
- HSE Dental Services: provided information and tips on oral hygiene and reducing sugar in the diet
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Local Sports Partnership promoted physical activity through fun calisthenics exercises outside with the children from all the classes

Parents commented on the information provided and were delighted with the enthusiasm of the children. Parents were by extension learning from the children. Parents were also delighted to have the opportunity to speak

to the Dietitian. One of the parents commented that "my child now knows that they shouldn't have more than one small treat a day, they decide when to have their treat, even saying "no Mum I have had a treat today"

## Healthy Eating & Cookery Skills Programme for Teenagers and Families

The CFI Leader together with HFME Peer Leaders delivered this project to three groups in three different locations and it involved teenagers taking the opportunity to learn how to develop a healthy diet and lifestyle

for themselves. They were guided and supported to consider the cost, nutritional value and the practicality of preparing and cooking food with the materials, budget and equipment available to them.

The first four sessions were interactive and involved the teenagers learning how to plan, shop for and prepare healthy meals. Budgeting and shopping were addressed through showing the teenagers the receipts for the ingredients bought and allowing them to work out the cost of the meals cooked during the sessions. Food waste was addressed during cooking exercises where they discussed what they could do with any leftover food and how it should be stored appropriately for use on another day.

Course materials included the Healthy Food Made Easy participant handbook and the 101 Square Meals recipe book. Awareness and knowledge around healthy eating were addressed through exercises on the food pyramid and looking specifically at areas important to this age group e.g. good sources of calcium and iron and appropriate portions sizes.



Four of the sessions were two hours in duration as this was the maximum amount of time that the teenagers would engage. The final session was three hours in length as the teenagers agreed to be there for an additional time for the preparation of their “pop up café”. The teenagers planned, prepared and served a meal for their invited guests who included parents / guardians, family and friends and key workers. The menu for each café was as follows: oven baked chicken goujons served with side salad; melon wedges; chicken curry & rice, fresh fruit salad served with low fat natural yoghurt, banana muffins, tea or coffee.

Parents and families were involved in informal learning through their attendance at the Pop Up Café. There was a discussion about what the teenagers had learned in terms of healthy eating, cooking and reducing food waste and these conversations were prompted through circulating a “café fun quiz” to adults. Answers were on information sheets and posters on the walls and the teenagers were encouraged to assist the adults to find the correct answers. When completed, the answer sheets were placed in a box for a free draw.

The ‘Customers’ were very impressed with the standard of enjoyable, healthy food created and served by the young teens.

One key worker observed that working with a small established group of teenagers had benefits in terms of learning and engagement rather than inviting in participants who may not have a rapport with the existing group.

The dynamics allowed conversations that facilitated informal and meaningful engagement with the teenagers around the themes. This was reflected in the key workers conversations with parents who related that the teenagers were cooking healthy recipes at home for their families.

The Coordinator at one of the venues noted the enthusiasm of the participants and their attention to detail

in setting tables, checking bathroom facilities were clean, creating colourful menus. Equally in the food preparation, cooking and serving, the teenagers were keen to present good food and were anxious that it was cooked properly, and paid attention to serving and portion size, seeking advice and assistance from peer leaders. The teenagers also helped to complete the clean-up with peer leaders and key workers.



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