



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# Food growing

Case studies

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# Dearne Valley Allotments Project, Yorkshire



## *Background*

- Groundwork Dearne Valley was asked by schools in Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster to offer horticultural experience and training to young people at risk of exclusion from mainstream education.
- The project has reclaimed and developed an area equivalent to six allotments at Spring Garden in Bolton on Dearne, South Yorkshire.
- The aim of the project was for young people to gain recognised qualifications – and enjoy the benefits of growing and eating their own organic food.

## *Approach*

- Small groups of young people who are struggling to engage with formal education are taken out of school for 1-2 days a week and offered training in a range of horticultural skills as well as functional English and Maths.
- A buddy system with a local college has been established, where “graduates” of the Spring Garden project share their experience with new students.
- The young people cleared the site, created raised beds and erected a greenhouse, potting shed and classroom. They are now building stock beds to produce ornamental plants for sale in addition to edible crops
- The first food produced was given to the young people to introduce them to the value of fresh produce and community health workers visit the site to deliver sessions on healthy eating.

## *Result*

- In six years, around 250 young people have gained City & Guilds qualifications in practical and work-based horticulture along with functional English and Maths.
- The health food message is spreading. A partner college held a meal for students, carers and supporters, using food grown at the project.

### *Impact*

- A previously derelict site of about half an acre has been transformed into a working allotment, producing organic food and providing a base for education and training.
- Young people at risk of alienation from mainstream education are engaging in an innovative form of learning, gaining skills and recognised qualifications. More than 85% of students come away with a horticultural qualification.

### *Partners and funding*

- Schools use their own budgets to fund placements on the Allotments Project.
- Rotherham schools have used European Social Fund money to pay for placements and there has been support from the Big Lottery-funded Motiv8 programme.
- The Learning and Skills Improvement Service has supported the college buddy system.

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# The Growing Kitchen – Wenlock Barn



## Background

- Wenlock Barn is an estate in Hackney managed by a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO). The estate has a diverse population and a higher than average percentage of residents over retirement age.
- In 2006, the residents of the Wenlock Barn Estate claimed the legal right to manage their homes. They formed a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) and receive an allowance from Hackney Council to carry out the cleaning, grounds maintenance (gardening) and day to day repairs. They also carry out general housing management.

## Approach

- A group of resident volunteers came together to identify disused green spaces across the estate and have subsequently transformed their local green spaces into productive urban landscapes that bring people of all ages and backgrounds together. Sarah Adams, an active member of the Growing Kitchen remembers that before the project there were *'just large amounts of empty grass, mainly used as a dog toilet.'*
- In 2008, Grass Shoots, a community food-growing initiative, was commissioned by Shoreditch Trust to develop a Growing Kitchen Garden on the Wenlock Barn Estate. Grass Shoots put together a package of community workshops based on cooking, gardening and sustainable living, to be implemented on the estate.

## Results

- The project was a great success and one of its major outcomes was the creation of 35 mini allotments which would give people ownership over individual plots and encourage them to look after it for themselves.

### *Sustaining the project*

- When the Grass Shoots project ended, residents organised themselves into a constituted group which maintains the garden area and has an elected chair and secretary.
- Using some funding secured from the NHS, the allotments space has been used for celebratory events (where people share lunch in the garden) and for cook and eat sessions which have sought to promote healthy eating. Sarah says “these events are important because they help us to reach people from the wider community. Many older people are very isolated and there is rising childhood obesity. These events are a fun way of bringing everyone together and trying to tackle some of these issues”
- Two of the allotment holders then became interested in developing a food-growing project with a commercial focus. They envisioned the business would grow herbs and salad crops on under-used green space in the estate and the produce would be sold to restaurants and commercial outlets. Their application to the East London Green Grid Programme and Capital Growth was to finance a business plan and set up costs, to give the project a clear structure.

### *Commercial enterprise*

- In spring 2010, Wenlock Barn Herb Garden was established on a small patch of disused land. Although small, the area is highly productive, with crops growing in raised beds. The project specialises in high yielding salad crops which are rotated to ensure they have a consistent supply to sell. The site is managed by a paid part-time grower who works on the site and manages help from occasional volunteers. The project was created as a commercial venture to ensure long-term viability. It generates income through the sale of produce, which is used to pay for staff to run the project. Any profits are fed back in to the local community.

### *Impact*

- Sarah explains how the food growing project is a new form of resident involvement “I’m on the board of the TMO and we have really struggled in the past to engage some groups in the way the estate is run. In particular we have found it hard to encourage mums with kids, older people and our Turkish neighbours to get involved. But these are the groups that enjoy getting involved in the garden and so we have found a new way of involving them. It is really positive; we have people from Iraq, Turkey and Africa taking part in the project; often they have come from a culture of food growing and they talk of how important growing is to them, it reminds them of home.”

### *The future*

- The group also holds a session every Sunday during the growing season where residents are encouraged to volunteer to help build and maintain the garden. The Growing Kitchen is also currently exploring working with an group of older and vulnerable people through a partnership with Hackney Council, linking with a local homeless charity to provide food and working with the school opposite to create a nature garden for education purposes. Since the garden has been established, it has become a magnet, drawing in local residents and other locally based organisations. Sarah says “the hardest part is finding the funding to keep it all going; it would be great if we could do more! The people here are brilliant and it really helps your mental well being when you’d otherwise be stuck in a flat.”

### *Funding/Partners*

- Funding was received from the NHS, East London Green Grid Programme and Capital Growth whilst Grass Shoots were responsible for setting up the original project from which Wenlock Barn Growing Kitchen has grown.
- Grass Shoots were a major partner initially but Wenlock Kitchen is also now trying to explore further opportunities working with the local school, the London Borough of Hackney Council and a local homelessness charity.

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# Ebury Bridge Gardening Group, Pimlico



## *Background*

- The Ebury Bridge Gardening Club in Pimlico, London, was established by local residents wanting to transform a disused run-down area of Ebury Bridge Estate. Their vision was to create a unique community garden for the estate.

## *Approach*

- Groundwork London supported the group in its plans, developing growing sites across the estate, digging a pond and installing bird and bat boxes. Raised beds and planters were built using reclaimed timber.
- This year Groundwork is supporting the group to run the gardening club themselves. This includes gardening training sessions, supporting the group in developing an action plan for future work and recruiting more local support allowing the group to continue in the long term.
- Items such as old fridges and washing machines were turned into planters and a greenhouse provides further space for growing as well as a secure place to store tools and equipment.
- Planting sessions have been used to encourage more residents to take up gardening and food growing.

## *Result*

- The community came together for a launch event to mark the opening of the new Magic FM Garden for a Wicked themed Halloween Party on October 30<sup>th</sup> 2011. Since then funding has been secured to support the group for a further year, building their capacity to manage the garden and run the group themselves.
- Since April 2011 23 sessions have been run (including gardening and capacity building sessions) and 122 young people and 123 adults have participated in the project.

- The project won a London in Bloom award and a Westminster City Council Achievement Award in 2009; a Developing Level 3 London in Bloom award in 2010 and a Level 4 Thriving Award from the RHS “It’s your Neighbourhood” programme in 2011.
- The mother of a boy with autism has expressed her delight that the project enabled him to engage with other children saying it was “absolutely brilliant because he finds it difficult in groups”. She said that following the sessions he had talked about them and so she had brought him back for more visits because he had been missing them. Similarly, the mother of a boy with MS who has difficulty speaking is ‘amazed and thankful that he is able to take part’.

#### *Impact*

- A dynamic, community-led gardening club has seen an increase in membership.
- The group has now become formally constituted, which means it can apply for further funding to continually improve the space
- The group has won London in Bloom awards and a Westminster City Council Achievement Award. New growing areas have been developed across the estate.

#### *Partners and funding*

- Funding came from Westminster City Council.
- CityWest Homes and the council's Ebury Bridge Youth Club helped Groundwork to deliver the project. Additional funding came from Magic 105.4 FM's Cash for Kids charity.
- The cast and crew of the West End show Wicked held a family fun day on the estate, selling items they had made. Profits were donated from the sale of tickets for Wicked gala performances.

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# Fruity Corners, Lancaster



## *Background*

- Transition City Lancaster's Food and Growing Group had already established three small-scale local community food growing sites before establishing Fruity Corners.
- Following the success of those projects, members felt confident to apply for funding for a larger scheme at Scotch Quarry Park, again growing food in a public open space.

## *Approach*

- The group, co-ordinated by Simon Gershon, is building eight large planters, a raised bed planter and seating on a site of around 170m<sup>2</sup> at the edge of a public park.
- They will plant trees and shrubs in the first season followed by ground cover plants the following year, ensuring trees and shrubs have time to become established and providing later plantings with a shady environment.
- The forest garden approach mimics natural woodland edge and creates a very low-maintenance ecosystem, with minimal need for weeding and composting. Concentrating on perennial rather than annual plants means that, long-term, the garden will be easier to maintain.
- Volunteers from the community are helping to build the beds and will carry out planting whilst local youth groups are being encouraged to get involved and will be allocated a growing bed for their own food production.

## *Result*

- Construction work on site is nearing completion and a launch event is planned for March 2012.

### *Impact*

- An under-used corner of a park is being transformed into a vibrant growing site, with the food grown available to the whole community.
- Young people and volunteers will learn about food production and sustainable gardening techniques.
- The site will be used as an education and training resource for all age groups.
- The community will be encouraged to take part in further food-growing projects.

### *Partners and funding*

- The project has been funded through a £24,477 grant from Community Spaces, a £57.5 million open grants programme managed by Groundwork UK on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund.

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# Grow it, Cook it, Eat it, Salford



## *Background*

- Groundwork undertook a variety of activities to increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables in the local area and reduce the social isolation of residents in Charlestown and Lower Kersal, Salford.

## *Approach*

- Groundwork trained and supported residents to grow their own food in containers in alleyways which developed into urban allotments.
- Residents living next to each alleyway were given access to training, a small grant, capacity building support and a growing guide to help them to get growing. Residents made decisions and were empowered in the project process. In addition, horticultural workshops, cookery courses and planter building workshops were available to the wider community.
- Groundwork also ran courses for children and young people to encourage them to get involved with intergenerational activities to encourage family participation. Many residents who had never done any gardening before and/or had never been involved in local community events before participated.

## *Result*

- 16 alleyways and 2 community venues grew food.
- 17 community groups received support and horticulture training.
- 323 adults and children received horticulture, cookery or healthy eating training.
- 22 residents were involved in three 10 week cookery courses and a cookbook was produced and given to all attendees.
- An adult and children's growing guide was produced.

### *Impact*

- A stronger sense of community was created as a consequence of people getting to know their neighbours and local residents.
- Social isolation was reduced as people got to know other participants.
- Greater links were made between community groups across Salford.
- Residents living around the alleyway allotments had the opportunity to grow their own food and learn new skills, as well as using their alleyway in a positive way.
- The health and wellbeing of residents has improved.
- The alleyways are now pleasant spaces being used positively.

### *Partners and funding*

- New Deal for Communities in Salford: £90,000.
- Department for International Development: £2,000
- Environment Agency: £6,950
- Additional and in-kind support came from East Salford Community Committee, People's Voice Media, Willow Tree Healthy Living Centre, Salford College and St Sebastian's Centre
- Refugee Action helped to engage migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers.

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# St Quintin Avenue Kitchen Gardens, Kensington and Chelsea



## *Background*

- The Royal Borough Environmental Project works in partnership with the local community and the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve neglected sites in Kensington and Chelsea.
- The development of ten community kitchen gardens transformed under-used, neglected or disused areas of land into kitchen gardens where residents grow their own fruit, vegetables and herbs.
- Before the project, 64% of residents had never grown fruit and vegetables before.

## *Approach*

- At St Quintin Avenue, Groundwork London has provided gardening support, advice, workshops and training to plot-holders and interested residents.
- Groundwork community gardeners ran workshops, including fortnightly garden training sessions. Plot holders were able to plan what they wanted to grow and receive free expert advice and practical gardening tips.
- Groundwork's on-going gardening support ensured the project was sustainable in terms of continued community involvement and reduced the dropout rate of plot holders to virtually nil.

## *Result*

- 47 plots of 3m<sup>2</sup> each are used by more than 100 families at St Quintin Avenue.
- The garden was voted second best community garden in London in Bloom in 2010.

### *Impact*

- The project has brought the community together, improved sustainability and seen the establishment of a new garden club.
- 97% of plot holders say it has improved their local environment and 71% their quality of life.
- 82% feel the project has greatly improved their feeling of belonging and sense of community.

### *Partners and funding*

- £50,000 of construction costs were provided by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- £30,000 for community gardeners came from Groundwork London and Well London

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# Stewarts Road Adventure Playground, Lambeth



## *Background*

- Stewarts Road Adventure Playground in Larkhall, Lambeth, was an unsafe outdoor space, with exposed drains, dumped rubbish and poor access to a cabin that had been built as a youth facility.
- The land was identified as a suitable Well London Healthy Spaces site and work began on a range of improvements.

## *Approach*

- Groundwork helped to develop a master plan for the site, using the ideas, designs and issues provided by local children, young people and adults via a series of workshops.
- A new path and decking were installed improving access to the cabin, followed by a vegetable garden, chicken houses, beehives, pond and relaxation area.
- What started as a few simple raised beds quickly became a thriving food growing project. Young people were able to learn about food growing and produce fruit and vegetables, including courgettes, tomatoes, carrots, blueberries and strawberries.
- The chickens produced up to 120 eggs a week and the first year of beekeeping saw 60lb of honey sold.
- A Groundwork community gardener ran regular gardening sessions to equip the young people with the skills necessary to continue the garden after Well London involvement had ended.

## *Result*

- A formerly run-down space was transformed into a vibrant multi-use garden, with fruit, vegetables, eggs and honey produced on an impressive scale.

### *Impact*

- Local children now care much more about the space and the local environment. They are interested in trying the vegetables they have grown and are more aware of issues such as food miles and healthy eating choices.
- Chickens have been a great success and eggs are sold to local residents. The money raised from the eggs and honey will be used to cover the cost of future residential weekends and to provide new games equipment for their play area and extra gardening equipment.
- Five young people now have beekeeping certificates and will be able to look after the bees on an ongoing basis as well as selling honey. Adventure playground staff and local volunteers have been trained to manage the garden, including the hens and bees.
- There are plans to link in with the Well London volunteering project and the food co-op to increase sales of eggs and honey.

### *Partners and funding*

- Funding came from Well London, a partnership between seven organisations including Groundwork London, established to improve the health and wellbeing of Londoners.
- The site is owned by Springfield Community Flat charity, a development project set up by the parish of Christ Church and St John's.

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# Growing Paradise - Coventry



## *Background*

- The project occupies a central space in the Foleshill Ward, Coventry - one of the top 5% most deprived areas in the UK.
- The area has a diverse population with 45.9% of residents from non white British populations, the largest percentage of these being of Indian or Pakistani origin.
- Over half the population of Paradise are not in employment (of which 10% are retired and 6% are in education). The average household income in Coventry is £31,687 while in Paradise the average is £19,650.
- 2007 Household surveys undertaken by Coventry City Council revealed only 10% of residents in Paradise eat the recommended five-a-day portions of fruit and vegetables; 12% never take any form of physical exercise; and only 25% exercise at least once a week.

## *Approach*

- Existing green spaces were perceived by residents as neglected and unloved. Groundwork West Midlands teamed up with Whitefriars; Orbit Heart of England; Midland Heart; and Coventry City Council, to launch Growing Paradise, a project which encourages residents to grow their own food and care for their own gardens.

## *Results*

- With external funding, Paradise House and surrounding area have been given land, manual help, equipment, advice, guidance and support to create communal growing spaces within the gardens of St Barnabas and Paradise House.
- Weekly training at St Barnabas Family Centre has allowed residents to develop food growing skills whilst Paradise Parks' diverse community gives residents the opportunity to share food from different cultures - e.g. herbs and spices from around the world.

- Project Partners are aware of the need for ongoing engagement and outreach to attract socially isolated residents to participate in the project.

#### *Impact*

- The project has enhanced social cohesion in the area with physical improvements to the estates generating a sense of pride among the residents.
- The project has improved partnership working between participating organisations and provided the catalyst for them to work in partnership to tackle other issues.
- Residents now take a pride in their local environment with the project showing them how to make the best use of their outdoor spaces whilst leading a healthy lifestyle.

#### *Funding*

- Funding for the project initially came from Marks & Spencer's Greener Living Spaces programme. This was then matched with cash from all the partners (Whitefriars' Housing Group; Groundwork West Midlands; St Barnabas Family Centre; and the Sustainable Communities officer at Coventry City Council).

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# Lansbury Gardeners - Poplar Harca



## *Background*

- During a consultation exercise in October 2007, residents said they wanted a community garden in the LSOA under the Healthy Spaces Scheme. Groundwork London worked in partnership with Poplar HARCA.

## *Approach*

- Based on this feedback, Groundwork London working in partnership with Poplar HARCA (Housing and Regeneration Community Association) chose an unused open area at the Hind Grove Community Centre to start the project.
- Funding from the Big Lottery Fund paid for a community gardener providing weekly gardening sessions at the Hind Grove Community Centre.
- The project aimed to engage the widest possible range of people in the area including those with disabilities, older people, and other hard to reach groups and was designed to increase their mental well being and physical activity whilst encouraging healthy eating.

## *Result*

- An under-used space became a community garden and 15 building bags each containing half a tonne of soil and manure were installed to grow plants and vegetables. Residents were asked to adopt these grow bags and individuals, families, schools and community groups adopted a bag.
- The gardener spent 3 hours at the community garden every Thursday morning from June to September 2008, providing gardening expertise.
- The Lansbury Gardeners officially became a voluntary group in May 2009. The group's aim is to promote and develop gardening for everyone. They want to make estates greener, more attractive places to live and by doing so residents without a grow bag can come along and chat to residents interested in gardening and the professional gardener and pick up tips about growing flowers and vegetables in their gardens or balconies.

### *Impact*

- The Lansbury Gardeners have learnt to grow and maintain their own fruit and vegetables. The project has engaged with at least 15 local residents every week brought neighbours and cultures together and created community cohesion.
- The group also promotes fitness and well being through light exercise, increased social contact and raised awareness of healthy eating.

### *Funding*

- The Lansbury Gardeners are a constituted voluntary group and have accessed up to £30k of funding from Poplar Harca allowing them to create gardens and growing spaces on the Lansbury Estate

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# Seeds for Change, North Devon Homes



## *Background*

- Much of North Devon homes 60's social housing developments had large amounts of green and garden space lacking any clear function. The area was characterised by high rates of vandalism and a fear of crime.
- In October 2009, North Devon homes Ltd, in response to a consultation exercise, made a commitment to its customers to develop a number of these gardens for use by the wider community in Forches and Gorwell.

## *Approach*

- Stakeholders from health and education were invited to join the project to create a community agriculture enterprise and develop an effective means of working in partnership.
- Underused land in both communities was set aside to support the initiative. In Yeo Valley/Gorwell, this amounted to a decommissioned and condemned play area of 220 square metres whilst in Forches, three hugely overgrown gardens have been converted into one area of 550 square metres.
- The project is intended to support and mentor community volunteers for three years using a strategy ensuring the project's success.

- This is a multi faceted community agriculture social enterprise project which aims to tackle inter generational integration; perceptions of young people; poor eating habits; whilst promoting the concept that growing your own food is cheaper; increasing community engagement and upskilling the local population.

- Outcomes are aimed to build in success and sustainability of the project and are based around four key areas;

People have better life chances:

- Many adults in areas of deprivation have had a bad experience of the education system and often feel let down by it. This project seeks to change this by enabling the whole community to participate in educational training using practical experience throughout the project to introduce training opportunities in a way that will capture the imagination of many adults who would not normally engage in training opportunities enabling them to gain better skills, lead less chaotic lives, enhance their own personal development and gain higher levels of confidence and self esteem.

Stronger Communities:

- This project uses a holistic approach to reach children, parents and older people within the community; and aims to bring about lasting cultural changes in these communities for years to come.
- The project seeks to build community cohesion, community engagement.

Improved rural and urban environments:

- The benefit to the environment from the project will be the ripple effect of more and more vegetable growing taking place in the gardens of the local community. The gardens are open to all 24 hours a day and have become a peaceful place to sit, as the project develops it will act as a catalyst for the creation of more spaces to cultivate.

Healthier more active people and communities:

- Empowering the community will ensure the project's longevity. The community has taken ownership of the gardens, organising working parties to grow vegetables in an organic way; dealing with weeding, watering and natural pest control which has increased the activity levels of many of the older residents who work shoulder to shoulder with young people and families.
- The project acts as a vehicle for other agencies to promote a number of issues including healthy eating, cooking on a budget, making budget shopping fun and increasing community capital, self esteem, self confidence and community cohesion.

### *Result*

- The level of community involvement in the project has built a sense of ownership of the gardens that will be cherished for years to come.
- To maintain the continued participation of young people in the project over a sustained period, North Devon Homes encouraged the participation of local primary schools as important partners in the project.



### *Impact*

- The project has created a real sense of community in the area with locals now regularly using the gardens.
- This enhanced sense of community ownership has meant the area is now better utilised which in turn has increased the levels of self policing and resulted in no vandalism at either of the two sites.

### *Funding*

- Start up capital and revenue funding for the project was provided through a multi agency steering group.
- The primary care trust provided £15k.
- Devon County Council provided £1k.
- North Devon Homes provided £5k which enabled the capital build side of the project and gave the community a tangible asset from day one.
- Petroc, the local further education college in partnership with North Devon Homes, secured a further £29k (from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service) to provide volunteer training.
- Lottery funding was also applied for under the Changing Spaces Local food funding stream which was successful in gaining £29K to engage with the entire community, and be able to extend to extend the veggie box pilot scheme, which was initiated by Yeo Valley Primary School, in Year Three of the project.

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## *Diggin' It, Plymouth*



### *Background*

- Diggin'It in Plymouth is an organic gardening project managed by the Routeways Centre Ltd. Routeways was established in August 1997 as an amalgamation of a number of community benefit economic regeneration projects previously managed by Plymouth City Council.
- Since 2006, the project has worked to change 2.5 acres of overgrown allotment land into a verdant market garden producing organic vegetables, fruit and flowers, fauna and compost.
- The aim of the project is to provide an environment that will benefit a range of vulnerable or socially disadvantaged people, helping them become better integrated into the community. Those involved with Diggin' It gain skills and confidence, self-esteem and self-sufficiency; some become ready for training or work, enabling them to participate more fully in society.
- Facilities include a meeting room, storage units, poly-tunnel, raised beds, education zone, compost toilet, beehives, wildlife area and pond.

### *Approach*

- The project has invested in a comprehensive website to inform potential volunteers about opportunities and to target service providers who may want to refer clients to the site.
- There is also a small shop on-site which sells produce from the site and acts as a focus for promoting the project.

- The project has produced a brochure called: *Diggin' It – Education in the Garden*, which outlines the activities provided.

#### *Results*

- In 2011, Diggin' It achieved a Level 5, Outstanding Award from the RHS "It's Your Neighbourhood" programme.

#### *Impact*

- Diggin It delivers an outreach project to schools and voluntary organisations, offering a range of training, events and open days. It is a welcoming place for vulnerable groups including refugees, people with mental health issues, learning disabilities or addiction issues, as well as young offenders and the long-term unemployed.
- The project provides participants with an awareness of growing and producing their own healthy food as well as reducing waste through composting and recycling. For example, there's a strong emphasis on renewable resources, including rainwater harvesting and using green power sources.
- Work placements for young people who are at risk of exclusion from school are also available, teaching them about commitment and respect at the same time as allowing them to express themselves outside the classroom environment.
- The site has regular visits from local schools. From sowing seeds, propagating, nourishing and nurturing plants to digging and building beds and making compost to feed the soil, a wide range of activities enable children and young people to reconnect with the earth and where their food comes from. National Curriculum links are made with each of the activities.

#### *Funding*

- Currently funded by the Big Lottery Reaching Communities programme.

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# Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, London



## *Background*

- The greenhouses were originally a propagation site growing plants and produce for the main house, now Brockwell Hall.
- In 1892, when the London County Council (LCC) purchased the site and designated Brockwell Hall's grounds a public park, the greenhouses took on the role of serving the Walled Gardens and, in latter years, the park.
- In 1998 the greenhouses were 'released from service' and took on a new charitable life designed as a local resource to improve the lives of the local community.
- The site consists of two large greenhouses, about a third of a walled garden, a small forest garden, lots of vegetable plots and two sets of beehives.

## *Approach*

- The aim of the project is to keep the greenhouses open as a resource to the public promoting organic food and plant production.
- The project is promoted via leaflets and to people walking in the park and visiting the greenhouses. There are also open days around six times a year. A supervisor is also on site each day and there are volunteers who welcome the public.

## *Results*

- Funding was recently secured to employ the project's first staff member – a part-time Project Development Worker.
- The greenhouses mainly sell seedlings of organic kitchen herbs in spring and summer, with a limited amount of other vegetables on sale as and when it's ready (on a first-come first-served basis).

### *Impact*

The Greenhouses offer:

- Training and education courses and drop-in sessions
- Activities for schools helping children learn about nature and growing plants
- Opportunities for volunteering and gaining new skills
- Tailored activities for children and adults with learning disabilities
- Open days including cooking demonstrations of the vegetables and fruit grown on site. This includes produce from around the world.
- Organised community culture events and projects which bring together different cultures, faiths and cooking styles
- A beautiful open space for volunteers and visitors to enjoy

### *Funding*

- The project is funded via sales of organic kitchen herbs and seasonal vegetables with occasional funding from 'Awards for All' and Heritage Lottery Funds, via a Brockwell Park bid in 2008. Charging a fee for educational visits and courses also brings in income.

### *Contact*

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# Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens



## *Background*

- In 2001, people from the Meadows area of Nottingham, one of the most deprived in the city, transformed part of a disused, rubbish-strewn playing field into an attractive green space.
- With the help of volunteers and partnerships with local training schemes, the Gardens started to take shape - native hedging and orchard trees were planted, a triple-skinned polytunnel was erected and the curved walls and raised beds built.
- Over the following years the Gardens have been further developed, with residents regularly coming to buy vegetables, hundreds of attendees at events and numerous daily visitors.
- The next step is to design and construct an eco-building, a space which will play host to more events, house training in horticulture and food practices, act as a meeting place for the local community and allow extended winter opening hours.

## *Approach*

- The aim is to be at the heart of the Meadows through:
- Horticulture: To grow reasonably priced organic fruit, vegetables and plants for sale to the Meadows community.
- Education: To be an educational resource for local school children and the Meadows community, focusing on horticulture, the environment and healthy eating.
- Activities & Volunteering: To provide a range of horticultural based activities for the Meadows community and foster volunteering as a valued and worthwhile activity.

- Recreation: To be a place where Meadows residents of all ages can work, rest and play and where events that reflect the community's cultural diversity can be celebrated.
- Training: To provide vocational training for Meadows residents that can lead to recognised qualifications and employment.

#### *Results*

- Arkwright Meadows received a Level 5 Award from RHS "It's Your Neighbourhood" programme in 2010 and in 2011 was the recipient of an RHS "It's Your Neighbourhood" National Certificate of Distinction.

#### *Impact*

Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens has become an oasis for local residents and other visitors to enjoy, a place of learning, relaxing and recreation. Facilities and activities include:

- A ponding-dipping area and raised beds for an after-school gardening club
- Mini-plots to allow local residents to grow their own food
- A chicken shed
- A tyre garden – recycled truck and tractor tyres are used to hold raised beds, used by local schools to learn about food growing
- Education days for local schools. These days are individually designed to meet the learning needs of the school group. This may include wider themes such as a World Environment Day, or more specific themes such as History – Dig For Victory At AMC Gardens.
- Training towards recognised qualifications for young people (Foundation Learning & City and Guilds In Work Based Horticulture level 1) and adults (City and Guilds In Work Based Horticulture level 1).

#### *Funding*

- In 2007 the Gardens successfully secured funding from the Big Lottery Fund to continue its work and aims for a further five years. It has allowed the group to employ additional staff and extend its reach to the many diverse groups found within the Meadows community. The gardens also raise money through selling produce grown on the site, by running training and education courses/days and through regular public events.

#### *Contact*

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# YUMI International Community Garden, York



## *Background*

- The garden was set up on a disused allotment site in March 2010. Since April 2011, the project has also cultivated part of a walled garden opposite the allotments.
- The garden is part of York Unifying Multicultural Initiative (YUMI), an organisation aiming to create a more vibrant city by integrating and empowering Black and Minority Ethnic communities, as well as creating positive attitudes towards difference and diversity.

YUMI established the garden with several aims in mind

- To train and support local amateur cooks born outside the UK to serve their food at YUMI events and projects (the garden grows plants which would otherwise have to be bought commercially) and which may have many associated food miles.
- To create a permanent place where people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups can meet regularly with other local people.
- To create a venue where people from different backgrounds, ages, cultures and ethnic roots can learn about different foods.
- To support people to develop and share skills in the community.

## *Approach*

- Part of the funding the garden received has been used to employ a garden facilitator who helps maintain interest in the garden, for example by giving talks to local groups.
- YUMI has an established network of contacts, which is exploited to raise interest in the garden and other local community sector organisations also feed information through their networks. In addition, a general YUMI newsletter, web page and Facebook page all contain updates on the Garden.



As for visitors and volunteers on the site, interest and enthusiasm is maintained in several ways:

- An open journal is kept on-site of what has been done, allowing garden-users to contribute their own thoughts and opinions.
- There is always a shared lunch on work days and people are encouraged to share their views and participate in decision-making about what to grow and what events to plan.
- A book about the garden, its people and their stories, memories and recipes has been funded by Arts Council with a design team of garden users helping to design it.
- The garden holds open days, fundraising events and children's activity days and a small children's area has been designed on the site to encourage more children to grow produce.

### *Results*

- In 2010, YUMI ran its fourth Multicultural Food and Arts festival - attracting 15,000 people – with a produce stall and food cooking, showcasing the garden's work. In addition, the garden produced its first home brand bottled sauce in 2011.
- An international lunch was held on the allotment site for journalists from the local press resulting in good coverage. And the well-known gardener Carol Klein agreed to be an official 'friend' of the garden.

### *Impact*

- YUMI has created a safe and welcoming environment for people from many backgrounds and communities.
- Evaluations have highlighted many positive reactions including:
  - An increased sense of belonging in the community.
  - An increased sense of cultural pride as their heritage is positively acknowledged.
- A sense of personal achievement as their skills are recognised in the community.
- A sense of personal empowerment as their opinions have an impact.
- Increased skills and learning (including spoken and written English, where applicable) and potential for further skills development.

Members of the wider public say the garden has given them:

- An increased awareness and appreciation of York's cultural diversity
- A stronger sense of connection with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds

### *Funding*

- Initial funding came from the Big Lottery Local Food Programme. Further funding came from a variety of sources including Community Development Foundation (Faiths in Action); Awards for All; Prince's Trust; and Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- YUMI is hoping to secure future Big Lottery funding from the Reaching Communities Programme and via the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

### *Contact Details*

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# The People's Community Garden - ActivLives Project



## *Background*

- The Garden was established in 2008 on an abandoned corner of an allotment field in Ipswich.
- It was established by the Town & Bridge Project (now ActivLives charity), formed by the Local Strategic Partnership to tackle health inequalities in two deprived areas of the town.
- The T&B project won a Big Lottery Fund People's Millions Award to build the garden, after consultation with plot holders and the local community, who helped the garden win a grant of £80,000 by public vote.

## *Approach*

- The land is leased rent free from Ipswich Borough Council on Maidenhall Allotments, which has many uncultivated plots.
- Prisoners on licence from Hollesley Bay Open prison built the infrastructure of the garden, including laying paths and paving the Welcome Space.
- Local businesses also held team-building days, putting up a poly tunnel and installing a composting toilet.
- The Horticultural Site Co-ordinators drove the design of the garden and co-ordinated work to create and build different areas, including a Sensory Garden, Herb Spiral, traditional vegetable plots, wildlife area and heritage/ permaculture orchard.
- Numerous groups have volunteered to work in the garden, including the unemployed, disabled people, people with mental health problems, homelessness or addiction issues and older people and ethnic minority groups.

- The project runs a training schedule helping unemployed people gain skills and confidence.
- Local food is at the heart of the project; people are encouraged to come and pick their own vegetables, and fresh produce is given to the local community shop and lunch clubs.

### *Results*

- The garden won a Suffolk Greenest County award in 2011 in the Local Food category.
- The site hosts visits for schools to enhance Curriculum topics or offer children alternative ways of learning. Children can learn about green energy (the cabin runs on wind turbine and solar panels), reusing and recycling, and get involved in sowing seed, planting and harvesting.
- Yearly events include a spring plant fair, a Big Garden Party in summer, and an autumn family fun day around the theme of Halloween/ Apple Day.

### *Impact*

- The projects main drivers are helping people become fitter, eat more healthily and exercise on a regular basis. The project volunteers aim to help people get out of their homes make new friends, and give them responsibility and a sense of belonging to something worthwhile and motivating.
- Education is key and delivered through courses and workshops.
- Skills for work are delivered through courses, workshops, work experience and volunteering, as well as contacts for jobs/work. Raising confidence levels is also important for getting people back into work by helping them establish a habit of coming somewhere each day and doing something purposeful.
- Sustainability, local food and greener living is at the heart of the project. We are part of the LAND Network (Permaculture Association), and work with Transition Ipswich.
- The project has been described as “an outdoor community centre”. Everyone benefits from this friendly, open resource, which literally welcomes everyone.

### *Funding/ Partners*

- After the initial Big Lottery Fund People’s Millions’ award (one year funding), the project applied to organisations each year to keep going. Main funders include Suffolk County Council – ‘Transforming Suffolk Innovation Fund’; Ipswich Borough Council community fund; Suffolk Foundation ‘Healthy Ambitions Suffolk’; Placement and course fees; fund-raising events; and donations for produce (although what they do is free to those who find it difficult to pay).

*Contact*

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# West Jesmond Primary School Gardens



## *Background*

- The Secretary of Highbury South Allotment Association in Newcastle together with a local parent set up and now run a school garden for the local primary school.
- The project was started 12 years ago from very small beginnings - one very overgrown plot and no money – and has grown to 4.5 plots over 12 years (including an International Garden).
- Year 5 Primary School children, from West Jesmond Primary School, come down every Wednesday afternoon for about 90 minutes to dig, weed, plant out, pot, harvest, taste, pond dip and hunt mini beasts (as well as wheelbarrow manure!).

## *Approach*

- The project coordinators try to be financially self sufficient, by selling plants and produce to the school playground. This activity and sales at summer and Christmas fairs have raised about £1000 per year.
- The project coordinators have also sought to encourage wider community engagement through additional, related projects for which they got external funding from the Lottery, the Community Foundation, LEAF (Local Environmental Action Fund) and the local ward committee.

## *Results*

- The main garden is now a lawned outdoor classroom with 5 picnic tables, bounded by a willow fence accessed through a willow tunnel. In addition there is an orchard, a soft fruit area, raised beds, a large pond, a bog garden, willow bird hide, 3 greenhouses and an international garden with 4 large sculptures made from local oak.

- Other projects include:

The International garden (as part of the main garden)

- The project coordinators took over a derelict half plot, got a team of volunteers to dig it over, then commissioned a local artist to work with the children for a week ( the normal curriculum was suspended) to research different parts of the World and come up with ideas and models which could be represented in the garden.
- The children then planned the shape of the garden which the artist synthesised into the final plan. With £500 from Barclays, they bought the plants from different parts of the world and set out the garden which is now mature and colourful. Project was about £5000 in total.

"Growing Things" Tapestries.

- The old primary school building was knocked down and a new PFI building was constructed. This had lots of bare walls so the project coordinators raised approximately £10,000 to hire 2 local artists who ran separate, and subsequently joint, workshops for groups of older people from care homes and sheltered accommodation and for primary school children from Year 5. The purpose of the workshops was to create tapestry designs which were then realised by the artists. The completed tapestries now hang in the stair well of the new school.

Young Children's Garden

- The last big project has been to create a specific garden for the very young children as it is too far for the very young children (reception and years 1 & 2) to walk up to the main garden on a regular basis.
- The school had no space in the playground so the project coordinators contacted the local government officers responsible for the adjacent cemetery who agreed to give us 2 pieces of land. One was a hard standing area which has been made into an outdoor classroom with raised bed boundaries and picnic tables with compartments for compost. Gardeners have also have put up a number of feeders and a variety of habitats for birds, bats bees and hedgehogs.

*Impact*

- The school garden was created 2 months ago and the children are already using it on a regular basis and a gardening club has been established. This project cost about £2500.

*Funding/Partners*

- Funding received from the Lottery, Community Foundation, LEAF (Local Environmental Action Fund ), the local ward committee and £500 from Barclays.
- West Jesmond Primary School is a major partner.

*Contact*

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