

Carbon Literacy Project Ideas

Doing it differently: Food

Food growing



'Doing it differently' for food, means having healthy, delicious meals that use foods that take fewer resources to get to our plate.

Project aims

- Households have a balanced diet with a higher proportion of home/locally grown food.

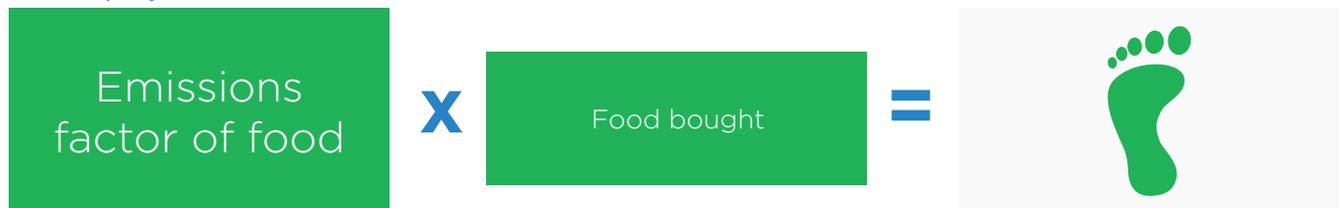
How does that save carbon? What's the measurable outcome?

All the food we buy has embodied carbon associated with getting it to the shop shelves. Growing food for ourselves – either individually or as a community – means we can minimise emissions that go into growing the food and eliminate emissions from processing, packaging and transporting food. This means the food on our plates has lower embodied emissions.

Measurable outcome: Increase consumption of locally grown food.

The CCF reporting tool and data collection guidance explains how you can monitor and evaluate how much your project has saved.

Before project



After project



Carbon footprint from food.

What are the co-benefits? What are the potential 'community outcomes'?

Gardening is proven to have therapeutic benefits, improving mental wellbeing and physical health. Community gardens also provide opportunities for volunteering, improving skills and increasing social interaction. Increasing the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables in the diet also has health benefits.

How do we demonstrate the co-benefits?

Health and wellbeing: There are a variety of methods you could use to monitor whether decreased travel time is having an impact on participants' mental or physical wellbeing. Evaluation Support Scotland have a range of resources, guides and tools to help you monitor your impact.

<http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/>

Improved skills, confidence and employability: There are a variety of methods you could use to monitor changes in skill, confidence and employability of participants in your project. Evaluation Support Scotland have a range of resources, guides and tools to help you monitor your impact.

What are the risks?

Growing food at home or in community gardens only reduces carbon emissions if the food grown displaces food that would normally be grown conventionally. It's common for people to want to take part in gardening activities, but not be interested in using the produce that's grown. Ways to address this:

1. Grow food you know people will eat and know to cook – ask participants.
2. Don't assume people know how to prepare vegetables from the garden for eating – you may need to include activities to address this (e.g. communal meals at the garden).
3. Think about how you could deal with gluts – you may get more of one vegetable in a short period than people want to eat! Workshops around storing and preserving foods can help.

Home grown food will only lower embodied emissions if you are careful about limiting the inputs that go into growing. This applies to the gardening techniques, e.g. using peat free compost and organic methods, but also to other activities associated with growing. For example, if you drive two miles to an allotment everyday and back, the embodied carbon of your potatoes will include all those car journeys and therefore will likely have higher embodied emissions than ones you could buy in the supermarket.

How do you increase the amount of food grown in your community?

Designing your project: If you wish to develop a project to increase food grown in your community, you should investigate what are the most important barriers and opportunities in your community. Your consultation could look into:

1. Do people already grow their own food?
2. How likely people are to take part in your proposed activities.
3. What are the biggest barriers to people growing their own food?
4. What assets are there in the community, or wider opportunities, that could support your project aims?

The four questions, four zones grid from Shifting Normal can help you identify factors that could influence the willingness or ability to grow their own.

Example project activities

Below are some examples of typical activities that CCF projects run in order to increase locally grown food:

Community gardens/allotments: Communities establish community gardens or new allotment sites to grow food for local consumption. In community gardens food is grown and shared communally between volunteers. In allotments individuals take responsibility for a given growing area and take all the produce they grow.

Gardening courses: Projects offer practical workshops and courses increase growing skills in the community – either to improve productivity of people who already grow, or to help people start growing their own.

Creating new growing spaces: Project work to establish new growing spaces in the community – in communal back greens, schools, public spaces, etc.

Advice and support for growing your own: Projects promote growing your own offering advice and support – this might be through formal courses, home visits from experienced gardeners to offer advice, or garden buddy schemes to encourage peer-peer learning on gardening in the community.

Visit our website to view a selection of case studies from past CCF projects:

www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ccf

