

Carbon Literacy Project Ideas

Doing it less: Food

Reducing food waste



'Doing it less' for food, means reducing the amount of food we buy and then don't eat – i.e. reducing food waste.

Project aims

- Households reduce the amount of food that is wasted.

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. By reducing food waste we buy less food to feed our families, and therefore avoid the 'wasted' emissions from food that is bought and then thrown away.

When it is thrown away, there are carbon emissions associated with it breaking down, so reducing food waste reduces these emissions too.

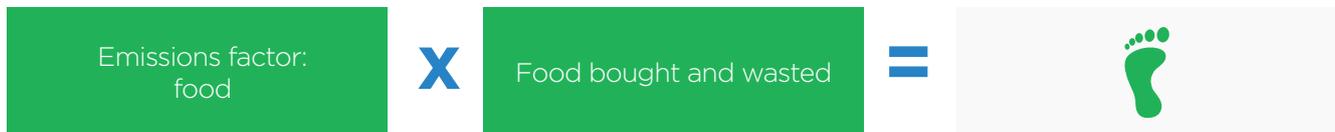
Measurable outcome: Reduce food waste production and food purchasing.

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 bought and wasted.

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

Throwing food away represents a huge waste financially as well as environmentally. Helping people avoid food waste will also help them out financially.

Projects tackling food waste often also increase cooking skills in the community.

How do we demonstrate co-benefits?

Financial savings: This is closely linked to the carbon savings you are already monitoring - changes in how much people spend on the weekly shop can help you demonstrate that your project is benefiting participants financially.

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.

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

What are the risks?

Although we know families waste a lot of food people are very reluctant to admit it. A report by WRAP in 2017 <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/CFWP%20Survey%20Spring%202017.pdf> showed that 60% of us underestimate how much food we throw away. This means it can be difficult to engage people with workshops etc. in the first place.

Avoidable vs. unavoidable food waste: It's important to make the distinction between these two, especially for monitoring purposes. In this section we are talking about 'avoidable food waste' which means food that could have been eaten but gets thrown away. Unavoidable food waste refers to things like egg shells and onion skins.

How do you reduce food waste in your community?

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

1. What kinds of food do people in your community most often waste?
2. How likely people are to take part in your proposed activities.
3. What are the reasons that food gets wasted in your community?
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 reduce food waste.

Example project activities

Below are some examples of typical activities that CCF projects run in order to reduce food waste.

Awareness raising: Campaigns that raise awareness of the issue in the community and share messages about tackling food waste.

Cooking classes: Practical classes to teach people skills to cook meals from scratch whilst also teaching messages around food waste reduction.

Community meals: Some communities find a workshop/class format too formal and find that communally cooked meals are good way to build confidence and share messages around food waste reduction. The SHRUB Co-Op ran regular 'Disco Soup' events, where soup was made out of leftovers, whilst DJs and live musicians provided entertainment.

Redistributing unused food: These projects look to intercept food that households or business can't eat and make it available for others. Edinburgh Foodsharers use social media to allow people to make unwanted food available to other members of the community. Community fridges are a new and popular type of project providing a drop-off/pick-up location for making unwanted food available.

Community recipe books: Collecting and sharing recipes for using up leftover food can be a good way to make use of the skills and knowledge in a community. NKS did this, focussing on the South Asian community in Edinburgh, with lots of recipes for using up leftover rice.

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

www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/ccf

