

EVALUATION

CFHS learning and development programme, January – March 2011

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

In September, Community Food and Health (Scotland) or CFHS launched its learning and development programme, which ran from November 2010 to March 2011. This evaluation covers four of the training courses included:

- **Recruiting and retaining volunteers**, delivered by Volunteer Development Scotland in Stirling on 19 January
- **Promoting your community food initiative**, delivered by Community Enterprise in Glasgow on 21 and 28 January
- **Managing finance, generating income**, delivered by the Social Enterprise Academy in Glasgow on 2 and 9 February
- **Developing your social enterprise**, delivered by the Social Enterprise Academy in Edinburgh on 23 February and 2 March

The content of the learning and development programme was designed to meet needs identified by community food initiatives. The content of the four courses was developed by the training providers in discussion with CFHS.

Recruitment for **recruiting and training volunteers** and **promoting your community food initiative** was carried out by CFHS, with the Social Enterprise Academy managing bookings for **managing finance, generating income** and **developing your social enterprise** courses.

Twelve places were originally available for the four training courses. The number of places offered for each course ranged from eleven to fourteen, with eight or nine people attending each one.

Two courses were planned for December, but were rearranged for early 2011, one because of bad weather, the other because of a low number of applications.

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Volunteer Development Scotland and Community Enterprise evaluated their training immediately following the end of their courses. Participants on all four courses were asked to complete a (further) evaluation in April or May, to identify if they were implementing any of their learning within their organisations.

The follow-up evaluation for **recruiting and retaining volunteers** was carried out by Volunteer Development Scotland using Survey Monkey. The evaluation for the other three courses was carried out by CFHS, by email. Course participants were given three opportunities to complete an evaluation form.

The percentage of evaluations returned from each course ranged from 25% (**managing finance, generating income**) to 56% (**developing your social enterprise**).

FEEDBACK

Comments received about the training sessions were all positive. Networking was reported as one of the highlights of all the training sessions by many of the participants.

Despite the relatively short time between the course delivery and the evaluation, a number of participants reported that they had already made or were making positive changes within their organisation as a result of attending the training.

“ starting to price our service properly”

“we have just had a successful February promotion using some of the strategies learned”

“ we now have a Facebook presence...”

“ we have established a marketing sub group”

“policies and procedures (about recruiting and retaining volunteers) are being put in place...”

“we are currently looking at ways to be self-sustaining and we will apply what we learned”

“gaining a real grounding on a very intricate topic....”

“...course was good for generating new ideas and refreshing existing knowledge”

LEARNING POINTS

The training attracted participants from a broad range of organisations

All of the participants were delivering some community food and health activities (or were planning to). For some, these activities were a small part of the work of their organisation.

Ability of participants to commit time for training

Attendance at the two-day courses was poorer than for the one-day course. Several participants only attended one day of the two-day courses. When contacted, participants cited staff shortages or illness as the reasons for their non-attendance.

Fewer people cancelled where the course bookings were managed by CFHS

CFHS reserved the right to impose a charge for people who had booked places but didn't attend. This may have influenced the number of cancellations.

All but two of the participants were from organisations that operate in central Scotland.

The courses were held in Edinburgh or Glasgow (because of their good transport links). Participants were not offered assistance with travel or accommodation costs, which may have deterred some people from applying. The learning and development programme advised that other Social Enterprise Academy training opportunities may be available in other locations. However, there were no enquiries about these.

The opportunities to network were as valuable for some of the participants as the training itself.

The evaluation did not ask participants about networking, but many commented on how useful the networking opportunities were.

“the interaction with everyone was brilliant”

“meeting like-minded people..learning from the experience of others...”

NEXT STEPS

CFHS is offering a further learning and development programme in 2011/12. The structure and content of the programme has been influenced by the learning points from the 2010/11 programme.