

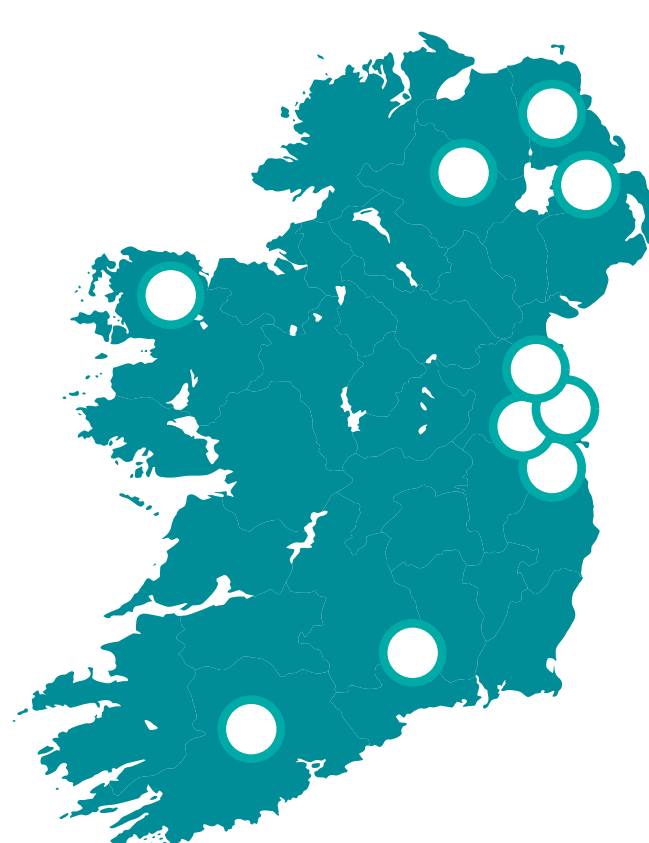
The Community Food Initiative Programme 2013–2015 – JA-CHRODIS

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BACKGROUND



Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) aim to positively influence the eating habits of families in low-income communities by addressing the barriers to having a healthy diet and supporting greater access to affordable and healthy food at a local level. Overall, CFIs promote good health by making it easier for people to make healthy food choices. Ten CFIs on the island of Ireland (IOI) are currently being funded by *safe food* as part of the CFI Programme 2013–2015, which is managed by Healthy Food for All.

Objectives of the Programme

1. Fund ten community-based food initiatives across the island of Ireland, over a three-year period (2013–2015).
2. Provide technical support, collective training and facilitate networking.
3. Encourage projects to consider long term sustainability from the start of the programme.
4. Promote shared learning among CFIs on the island.
5. Identify policy and best practice lessons and increase awareness of the programme among key stakeholders.

METHOD

An independent evaluation of the first year of the programme involved the review of data from a number of sources including monthly reports and questionnaires. Data was gathered on:

- Total number of participants engaged in CFI activities
- Ongoing activities organised by the CFI
- One-off events organised by the CFI
- Networking
- Training
- Sustainability of the project
- Shared learning
- Technical support
- The main challenges and problems
- The main successes
- The main 'learnings' of the process.

RESULTS

Number of individuals that took part in CFI Activities

	Overall reach of all CFI activities	12,117*
	Healthy eating	3,299
	Gardening/Growing	3,273

	Cooking skills	1,515
	Planning/Budgeting/Shopping	373
	Other activity such as physical activity, food and healthy living	3,717

* This number refers to the number of individuals who took part in an activity organised by a CFI. 60 individuals took part in more than one activity and are, therefore, counted twice, most participants (74%) took part in only one activity during any given month.

CONCLUSION

While the learnings from evaluation of year one of the programme were diverse, some key learnings were identified:

- Continue to network and communicate with other CFIs – to learn and share learnings with others
- Be flexible and facilitate community member's needs – no 'one size fits all' approach
- Be creative – e.g. make food fun and tasty
- Get specialist support when necessary – e.g. involving a gardener
- Actively promote the project in the local community
- Encourage community ownership – let locals shape the project
- Continue to develop skills – long term planning, time management and project prioritisation.

The CFI programme is a worthwhile and valuable approach to tackling food poverty at a community level.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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