

New Funding Awarded to Community Food Initiatives across the island of Ireland to help tackle Food Poverty

***safefood* to fund community food projects over 3 years**

Thursday, 11th April 2013. ***safefood*** today announced the recipients of funding for the Community Food Initiatives Programme 2013-15, which aims to positively influence the eating habits of families in low income communities on the island of Ireland. The Programme aims to support community projects in promoting greater access to affordable and healthy food. The projects that will receive funding were officially launched in Belfast today.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan, Director, Human Health & Nutrition, ***safefood*** said: "These Community Food Initiatives represent excellent examples of how local communities can work together to overcome some of the problems they face in accessing healthy, affordable food. The health effects of food poverty range from difficulties in concentration and poor energy levels in children, to wellbeing issues in everyday life for adults and higher rates of diet-related chronic diseases in later life."

"By funding community food projects that offer real and practical support for people, we can help develop lifelong skills and knowledge of healthy, nutritious food, promote positive attitudes to food and diet in the community and foster a new approach to tackling food poverty on the island."

Two examples of initiatives receiving funding include Belfast's "*Windsor Women's Centre Food for Thought*" Project which aims to provide a range of activities including a healthy breakfast club for crèche children, a multi-cultural cookery club and an inner-city community garden; and Waterford's "*Ballybeg Family Growing*" Project which aims to engage local families in skills-based food education programmes and change food consumption habits from convenience foods towards more nutritious meals which will include produce on the menu grown locally in the community garden.

The recipients of the Community Food Initiative (CFI) funding are:

- Fettercairn Community & Youth Centre - Growing Community Roots (Dublin)
- Dunmanway Family Resource Centre: Grow it; Cook it; Eat it – Growing Together (Cork)
- Windsor Women’s Centre - Food for Thought (Belfast)
- Blanchardstown Area Partnership - Blanchardstown Good Food Co-Operative (Dublin)
- Cloughmills Community Action Team - Incredible Edible Cloughmills (Antrim)
- Mayo North East LEADER - Ballina Eat Wise Project (Mayo)
- Doras Bui Parents Alone Resource Centre - Grow it; Cook it; Eat it (Dublin)
- Ballybeg Community Development Project - Family Growing Project (Waterford)
- Fatima Groups United - Fatima Food Project (Dublin)

The CFIs will be managed at a local level by Healthy Food for All, an all-island multi-agency initiative seeking to promote healthy food for low-income groups. Ms Marjo Moonen, Chair of Healthy Food for All, explains; “The core aim of our work is to end food poverty on the island of Ireland. As such, it is vitally important that we help make these Community Food Initiatives work locally. We understand the common issues that these projects face and can draw on our expertise from working at policy level and from managing the Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives 2010-12, from our wide network base, to assist them. We want to use work with these Community Food Initiatives to inform future developments; creating successful and sustainable models to ensure healthy and affordable food is ultimately available to everyone.”

The new CFI programme builds on the success of the initial three-year Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives (2010-2012) where seven CFI projects received funding. Key learnings and experiences from this previous programme will be shared among the new projects and they will be encouraged and supported to enhance the long-term sustainability of their project from the outset.

Each Community Food Initiative will receive funding annually over a period of three years to set up, manage and sustain their project, with **safefood** investing up to €45,000 per project.

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Editors Notes:

Republic of Ireland:

In ROI, 10% of people¹ are now living in food poverty, a rise of 3% between 2009 and 2010. Those most at risk of living in food poverty identified by the research include the unemployed; people on low income; those living with an illness or disability or who rate their health as being poor; those with low education attainment; families with more than three children aged under 18 and; lone parents.

Northern Ireland

In NI, 1/3 of households are deprived². Within those households, over 115,000 adults and children (6.4 per cent of the population) are not properly fed by today's standards.

- Six per cent of households cannot afford a meal with meat, fish or vegetarian equivalent every other day
- Seven per cent of households are unable to afford fresh fruit and vegetables every day
- Two per cent of households (over 14,000) cannot afford two meals a day

Food Poverty

Food Poverty has been defined as the inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet due to issues of affordability or accessibility (Dowler, 1998). This definition was expanded to include the social and cultural participatory aspect of food, i.e. lacking the means to participate in activities considered a cultural norm such as eating out with friends (Friel and Conlon, 2004)

References:

¹ 'Constructing a Food Poverty Indicator for Ireland Using the Survey on Income and Living Conditions'; (Carney, C; Maitre, B; 2012) published by the Department of Social Protection, using data from the annual Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC)

The Survey on Income and Living (SILC) is an annual household survey by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) which asks a broad range of questions related to income and living conditions. The most recent data available is from the 2010 survey during which 11,576 individuals in Ireland were surveyed.

The three food deprivation items from SILC relate to the affordability of food and are as follow:

1. The inability to afford a meal with meat or vegetarian equivalent every second day
2. The inability to afford a roast or vegetarian equivalent once a week
3. Missed a meal in the last two weeks due to a lack of money

² 'Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK' published by School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast.

Healthy Food for All

For more information on Healthy Food for All please visit www.healthyfoodforall.com.