



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# *What is a community food initiative?*

Community Food Initiatives foster communities where everyone has access to an equitable, inclusive, and thriving local food systems.

Here is an example...





# Case Study

Community Food Initiatives



# Project Background and Objectives:

Big Bocs Bwyd (BBB) was a project inspired in 2018 by 2 prior projects based at Cadoxton and Oakfield Primary Schools in Barry, Wales. These projects converted shipping containers located in the grounds of local schools to provide a focal point for education on everything to do with food.

The objective of the BBB project is to ensure that, through experiential learning, the children will become literate on the connection between food, wellbeing, health, nature, and the economy. The project aims to build the skills and confidence in children allowing them to process, cook and use food as a foundation for health.

The BBB project increases environmental awareness through building raised beds in neighbouring garden space (when available) where children grow vegetables to aid health and reduce food waste.

The containers are fitted out in the style of a farm shop, forming the focal point for the community and as distribution points for surplus food on a 'Pay as you Feel' basis. The 'Pay as you Feel' method provides needed nutritional support in areas of the highest deprivation in Wales, whilst removing the stigma of food bank usage. Importantly in terms of sustainability, indications are that even on a 'Pay as you Feel' basis, the schools more than cover their costs and, in fact, show potential for a small income for the schools.

The children are taught how to build enterprising skills through applied real-world learning which is linked to the national curriculum for Wales, Rights Respecting Schools aims, Future Generation and Wellbeing Goals, United Nations SDGs and Eco Schools.



*"the parents seem to love it because they don't feel it's like a food bank"*  
- Miss H  
(School Family Liaison Officer)



## Project Achievements and Benefits Provided:



The project also contributes to the reduction of food poverty, and poor nutritional intake, by providing education with the focus on improving the knowledge and understanding of foods and the nutrients within the food we eat. The educational aspect aims to form a knowledge base enabling the children and their families to make informed future food choices, and therefore improving the wellbeing of families.

Community involvement is a key element of the BBB with parental involvement a big factor to ensure the families are onboard, pivoting the skills learnt in the classroom into the home.

Following the 5 initial BBBs funded by the Waterloo Foundation (including in Barry, Cardiff and Swansea), further funding from the Welsh Government has been allocated to enable the project to grow to 35 BBBs locations, in various stages of development.

In 2020 the Welsh Government provided £100k to carry out a Valleys Regional Park supported pilot of a further 5 Valleys based schools. The present phase sees a further 25 schools in the Valleys joining the project with Welsh Government funding of c. £600k. The additional 25 locations have been identified and will be active in March/April 2022, subject to external evaluation.

BBBs host a supported website containing learning resources, videos and 'how to' knowledge compiled with the input of subject-matter experts including public health, health boards, farming representatives etc. This ensures they are a relevant and engaging vehicle for the delivery of the curriculum in Wales.

As sociable meeting spaces for parents and the wider community, the BBBs are proving very popular!



# Project Challenges and Key Learnings:

It has been important to share the understanding of the project's purpose, and to continue to evolve as the project grows. Locations of the BBB projects have diverse ranges of poverty, knowledge and space available. Ensuring that each BBB project is meaningful and relevant to each location is essential and thus a straight replication is not always the most appropriate route.

Ensuring health and safety is maintained can be a sticking point with the volume of children, families, volunteers and teachers accessing the containers. This was pushed to another level during the pandemic as restrictions and guidelines were imposed.

Securing, applying and accessing funding is a challenge due to the expertise and time required to pursue grant funding, as is getting buy in from stakeholders and volunteers.

Permission for both each site's location, and for the activities to be held there, must be obtained from each Local Authority. This can be time consuming and frustrating as the not all Local Authorities are aware of the project, and it can prove tricky to find the officer or designated person who can grant permission or open discussions regarding granting permission.

Each project is a registered charity in its own right, and they are 'Community Food Members' of Fareshare Cymru, securing a regular supply of affordable food via this organisation. The schools have fostered strong relationships with their local supermarkets enabling them to secure regular supplies of surplus food from those sources.

## Future Plans:

Indications are that there is funding available to the same level for 2022/2023 which would result in a total of 60 BBBs being installed in schools in South Wales, making it a very significant contributor to both the alleviation of food poverty, supporting the Wellbeing of Future Generations and providing family education in relation to food, nutrition, farming and enterprise.

The expanse of the idea has been extremely quick, and it is vital to note that there will need to be additional Programme Management in the next phase to ensure maximum impact, robust evaluation, consistent delivery across the projects and a plan for sustainability.



[www.bigbocsbwyd.co.uk](http://www.bigbocsbwyd.co.uk)

[Prosiect Big Box Bwyd](#)  
[Youtube Video](#)



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*With thanks to Big Bocs Bwyd for participating  
in this case study*