

Case Study Title

Project Title:	RDP056: Pathways to Farming	
Delivered by	Mach Maethlon	
Start date:	1/6/18	End Date: 28/2/21
LEADER Theme:	Theme 2 - Facilitating Pre-Commercial Development, Business Partnerships and Short Supply Chains	

Total Expenditure:	£106,638.51	100.00%
RDP Funding:	£83,093.89	77.9211%
Match funding:	£23,544.62	22.0789%

1. Introduction

Pathways to Farming was developed to support and increase the local food economy in North Powys, focusing on the communities of Machynlleth and Newtown. The project need was identified through research and evidence gathered by Mach Maethlon, which showed that there was a demand for more local produce, matched with the challenge of not enough routes to market for this additional local produce. So, the project aimed to tackle both supply and demand for local produce, to ensure that they could be increased at the same time.

The project involved 3 key elements to tackle the issue of improving the local food network and shortening the food supply chain:

1. Train more horticulture food producers
2. Provide access to land for new entrants
3. Support and develop the local supply chain and increase markets for local produce

2. Challenge

The key problem identified in the project, was access to appropriate horticulture training and land, which the project provided. One of the key issues for 'none farmers' (people without any land or family connections to food production) to becoming farmers is access to training and land to start producing food. Horticulture is not taught at HE colleges in the area, and there is very little affordable training available which includes both practical and theoretical elements. Access to suitable, practical land is also an issue to new entrants to horticulture, as available land is often either unsuitable for growing vegetable crops (too big, too wet, too steep, wrong orientation), or inaccessible financially or geographically (small pockets of land are often sold at a premium, or remote from the growers home and markets).

Another key challenge identified at the beginning of the pilot was lack of suitable markets for locally produced food. While many local businesses expressed a desire to stock and purchase more locally produced food, they did not have clear communication channels with growers or manageable ordering systems. A need for more short supply chains was identified, which would allow stronger relationships between local producers and buyers.

3. Solution

The project set up a horticulture training programme, for participants to access theoretical and practical horticulture knowledge. Participants received a one year training package, with a second year of mentoring and support available.

Pathways to Farming provided new growers with 'micro farm plots' in both Newtown and Machyllleth if they did not already have access to suitable growing land.

The project sought to develop and expand the demand for local produce through securing markets for the trainees produce and strengthening the supply chain.

4. Benefit

The project supported 20 new growers with land and training in horticulture food production, showing the demand for such support. We secured access to 'microfarm' plots in Newtown and Machynlleth, of which 11 participants required access to, showing the need for land as part of a horticulture training programme. Due to demand, we also managed to secure additional land with existing producers, on top of the 2 initially identified training plots, which also helped link the trainees in with existing, experienced growers .

All of our training participants increased their food production and sold produce commercially, showing the need for this level of support in growing and selling produce. Of the 12 participants who joined the project in the first year, 8 continued with the second year mentoring. 3 of our participants went on to run food businesses beyond the project.

We established 1 new local food network in the Machynlleth area, setting up a producer lead online food hub which enabled producers to sell direct to businesses in a short supply chain. We also worked with over 13 businesses to build new partnerships with local growers and increase the local food they were able to buy.

5. Result

80% of our training participants completed the training programme, and all have gone onto continue growing horticulture food. This has increased local food resilience in the Machynlleth and Newtown areas. Three of our training participants have gone on to run food businesses outside of the project. This has had a positive impact on the local economy and provided meaningful local employment. All of our trainees said that they found the project support was very valuable, it increased their confidence and long term employability.

The project established a new local food network (Bwyd Dyfi Hub) which has enabled more local businesses to have access to locally produced food. This has contributed to the financial sustainability of local food producers, by giving them added markets for their produce. It has increased positive relationships between local businesses local producers, which has in turn increased local awareness of the importance of locally produced food.

Through our interactions with our stakeholders and our the wider public, we have hugely increased awareness of the need to support local food producers. This will have an impact on the local food economy beyond the pilot project. We have raised awareness of eating locally and seasonally, which has made a contribution to the long term sustainability and health of people in Machynlleth and Newtown.



6. Project Outputs/Outcomes

Output (Case Level Indicator)	Achieved
No. of feasibility studies	1
No. of networks established	1
No. of jobs safeguarded	3
No. Of pilot activities undertaken / supported	1
No. of community hubs created	0
No. of stakeholders engaged	22
No. of participants supported (awareness raising events only)	69
No. of jobs created	3
No. of communities benefitting	3
No. of businesses benefitting	13

7. Project Contact Details

Name:	Katie Hastings
Email:	katie@machmaethlon.org
Website:	www.machmaethlon.org

8. Partners/Match Funders Logos



Date Case Study Completed:	26/2/2021
----------------------------	-----------



