

# CASE STUDY

## St Luke's Community Centre (Islington)

As part of TRiFOCAL's community engagement using the 'Small Change, Big Difference' campaign, one-off training sessions on food waste prevention, food waste recycling and healthy sustainable eating were delivered by Groundwork London.

Three of these training sessions were run at St Luke's Community Centre in Islington during February and March 2019.

### Highlights:

- Knowledge of some participants within the women's group increased, with the most significant increases observed in knowledge around healthy sustainable eating.
- The women's group planned on undertaking a wide range of positive actions as a result of the training. Most notably around further engagement with the campaign and planning to recycle food waste using their caddies.

### Background

The Centre ran separate one-off training sessions for kitchen staff, general staff and volunteers, and centre attendees (a pre-existing multicultural women's group). None of the groups had been introduced to the topics of healthy sustainable eating and food waste prior to the training. In total there were 33 individuals participating across the 3 sessions: 7 kitchen staff, 13 general staff and 13 centre attendees.

As each group would require separate evaluation case studies, this case study focuses predominantly on observed results from the centre attendees (multicultural women's group). It is possible that training for staff will have facilitated further learning and enthusiasm for the campaign.

After the one-off training sessions, the centre also ran an event open to the wider community on healthy sustainable eating and food waste prevention/recycling.

### Objectives

The three key messages of the one-off training sessions were:

1. **Preventing avoidable food waste**
2. **Recycling food waste**
3. **Eating healthy and sustainable foods**

The specific objectives of the training sessions were for participants to: increase their knowledge of the key messages; adopt positive attitudes and behaviours around the key messages; cascade information to wider members of the community; and, be inspired to take action around the key messages in their group or community.

### Activities

The one-off training sessions were two hours in length and provided participants with: an overview of the 'Small Change, Big Difference' campaign and the key messages; an interactive quiz revealing memorable bite-sized facts; and, ideas of action events they could run in their group or community. Participants were also supported to develop an action plan for creating awareness and impact in their community. The training sessions were designed to be highly interactive and encouraged the sharing of ideas and tips. It was this enthusiasm to share tips which was used as an indicator of training success, as it could be reasonably assumed that the sessions were useful if participants subsequently shared tips with others.

## Results

The objectives of the training sessions were assessed using a combination of verbal feedback from group facilitators and a participant survey. The survey included comparative questions highlighting what participants were currently doing and what they plan to do as a result of the training. It should be noted that not all participants completed the survey, and, in some cases, participants left questions blank, therefore comparisons may be between a different number of total responses. Furthermore, in contrast to the community workshops there was no pre-intervention survey as a single training session is unlikely to provide enough time for participants to embed learned knowledge and display visible changes in attitude and behaviour. Results therefore provide an indication of anticipated changes in participants' behaviour and attitude following the training.

### Knowledge

Most participants in the women's group had not heard of the 'Small Change Big Difference' campaign prior to the session (7/11) and attended the training with the aim of learning to reduce the food that they wasted (7/11) and to reduce their impact on the environment (6/11).

Some participants within the group reported increased knowledge as a result of the training. Most participants stated that their knowledge of healthy and sustainable eating had increased (7/11). However, the number of participants who reported increases in their knowledge of food waste prevention was slightly lower (6/11) and those who stated their knowledge of food waste recycling had increased was the lowest (4/11).

After the training, participants had very good knowledge of all campaign messages with 8/11 participants correctly answering each true/false statement (Question 6) on the survey<sup>1</sup>. The participants scored highest on two healthy sustainable eating questions and one food waste prevention question. Ten out of eleven participants correctly identified that the statement 'eating plenty of fruit and vegetables is healthy' was true and that both statements 'fresh vegetables are always healthier than frozen vegetables' and 'you should not eat food after its 'best before' date' were false. However, as no pre-intervention survey was conducted, we are unable to determine whether high levels of knowledge associated with these statements was a result of the training. Although participants had not received prior training on these topics, it is possible that they knew the correct answers prior to participating in the training session.

### Attitude

Following the training, more participants felt inspired to make changes or try new actions related to food waste prevention and recycling. However, few participants stated they would share tips with others. For both food waste prevention and food waste recycling, 6/11 participants felt inspired to make a change, whereas for healthy sustainable eating only 4/11 felt inspired to make a change. This was unexpected considering healthy sustainable eating was stated as the topic for which most participants felt their knowledge had increased. However, despite participants stating that they would make personal changes as a result of the training, they appeared less likely to share tips with others. The number of participants intending to share tips on the core messages is: food waste prevention (3/11), healthy sustainable eating (2/11) and food waste recycling (1/11).

Prior to the training, participants' motivations around food habits focused on healthy eating, food waste prevention and the financial benefits of food waste reduction. After the training, participants' motivations focused on acting as an advocate for the campaign messages as well as reducing their environmental

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<sup>1</sup> A full list of survey questions can be viewed at: <http://resources.trifocal.eu.com/resources/evaluation-case-studies-communities/>

**impact.** All participants were motivated to attend the training session due to the opportunity to ‘eat a healthier diet’ (9/9) and many were also motivated by ‘feelings of guilt when I throw food away that could have been eaten’ (7/9). In addition, a high number of participants were motivated by ‘the possibility of saving money’ (6/9). Following the training, all participants (9/9) were motivated to ‘encourage my friends or wider community to make changes’ (as opposed to 1/9 before the training). However, this goes against feedback provided when asked whether participants would share tips. As such it is difficult to determine whether participants were on board with the messages of the campaign and determined to cascade them with wider members of the community. There was also a small increase in the number of participants motivated by environment impact, with 6/9 participants motivated by ‘a desire to reduce my impact on the environment’ (as opposed to 4/9 before the training) and 5/9 motivated by ‘a desire to eat less meat’ (as opposed to 3/9 before the training).

## Behaviour

The participants planned on undertaking a wide range of positive actions as a result of the training. However, observed changes between current and planned behaviours suggested that some participants may have misinterpreted the survey questions. When asked what positive actions they were already undertaking the most common action listed was ‘Check date labels when planning meals’ (7/11). In total, the group reported that they were currently undertaking 36 of the actions highlighted in the survey. However, going forward the participants planned to undertake 68 new actions, an average of approximately 6 new actions per person. The most common planned actions were ‘visit the campaign website’ (9/11), ‘Get involved in Small Change Big Difference activities taking place in my borough’ (7/11) and ‘use my food caddy to recycle the food I don’t eat’ (7/11). Furthermore, variations in responses suggested that there may have been confusion regarding whether planned actions should also include those already being undertaken. Some participants included the same action for what they were currently doing and what they plan to as a result of the training, whilst others only included new actions in what they plan to do as a result of the training.

## Challenges and considerations

The main challenge with the one-off training sessions was around determining their impact. A single post-intervention survey makes it difficult to determine how the training has influenced the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of the participants. It also leaves no time to capture long-term effects of learning to be embedded. Furthermore, there appeared evidence of misinterpretation for certain questions where participants were responding in an inconsistent manner.

## Conclusions and recommendations

It is too difficult to determine whether the one-off training session for the women’s group at St Luke’s Community Centre has met its objectives, especially regarding the adoption of positive attitudes and behaviours. This is due to the impracticality associated with undertaking a pre-intervention survey and lack of time for changes to be embedded within participants. However, many participants were inspired by the training to make changes to their food habits. Participants stated that they would undertake a wide range of new actions to address the campaign topics. In fact, participants planned to undertake nearly twice as many positive actions going forward when compared to those that they were currently doing.

In addition, some participants did state that the training had resulted in increased knowledge across the different topics, with most participants reporting an increase in knowledge for healthy sustainable eating.

There was also conflicting evidence around participants’ willingness to cascade information to wider members of the community. Participants appeared motivated to encourage the wider community to make changes but also appeared very unlikely to share tips that they had learnt. One future recommendation would be to consider the language and wording of the survey and how this may influence participant responses. Improving consistency in responses will further help determine training impact.