



Briefing: **Small-scale income generating activities**

For many groups the idea of trading to generate income for their project can be a daunting one, but small-scale trading not only brings essential diversity in your income stream, it also creates many opportunities for volunteers and beneficiaries to learn a diverse range of new skills. Here are just a few suggestions of ideas for generating small amounts of income for community growing projects.

Selling produce

Selling surplus fruit, vegetables, or even eggs is a common way for community growing projects to generate a bit of extra money to help fund their activities. There are many ways to sell produce, from a small table with a donation tin at your site, to a weekly market stall, to selling to other businesses such as restaurants and shops. You might want to 'add value' to some produce by processing it into jams and preserves or other products. If you want to do this you'll need to register as a food business with your local authority (a very simple process) and make sure the people involved have done the necessary food hygiene training.

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens have produced a beginners guide to selling produce available here: www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/guide-growing-and-selling-produce

Plant sales

Selling plants grown on site is another common way for projects to raise funds. Unusual and exotic plants, as well as popular fruit and veg plants, often sell well. Take advantage of any indoor growing space you might have, such as greenhouses or polytunnels, to get seedlings going early and cuttings off to a good start. Some good varieties to start out with would be tomatoes, nasturtiums, herbs and strawberries (pot on runners from your existing plants), or even ornamental flowers such as stocks, nigella and hollyhocks. If you don't have enough pots, don't buy them, put a call out on social media and you're sure to be inundated, garden centres also often have an area for pots to be returned for re-use.

Events

Events are a great way to generate income and engage more people in your project, especially during the summer months. Do not underestimate the amount of time they can take to arrange though! Some easy ways to generate income from your event are: hot food and drink sales, run a licensed bar, face painting, raffles, coconut shy, plant and produce sales.

Things to consider:

- Events need publicity so consider how you will promote your event – social media, leaflets, posters, press releases, newsletters and word of mouth can all help spread the word.
- If you want to sell alcohol or provide musical entertainment at an event and your site is not licensed then you or an appointed person on site will need either a Temporary Events Notice (TEN) from your local authority if you're in England or Wales, or an Occasional Licence if you're in Scotland or Northern Ireland. These are very simple to apply for
- If you are running children's activities, ensure you have considered child protection in your plan.
- How many people will you need on the day to run the event. Make sure you have enough staff and/or volunteers and that they are well briefed about what their jobs are.

Talks

All community growing projects are unique, and the chances are that there are lots of people who would like to hear about yours! Many groups are regularly looking for speakers for their meetings and are usually happy to pay or make a donation. If you have someone in your group who is good at public speaking then consider making some inquiries about what groups there are near you so that they can spread the word about you and generate some income at the same time. Some good places to start are:

- The Women's Institute
- Church Groups
- Pensioners Associations
- Townswomen's Guilds
- Trade Union Council's
- Gardening Groups/Horticultural Societies
- Rotary Clubs
- U3A

Venue Hire and catering

Could your project host meetings, parties, exhibitions or even wedding receptions? If it could then consider what you might charge for use of your facilities. Don't forget to factor in your time! How much you can charge will depend on where you are in the country and what facilities you have, so do a bit of market research first to see what other people are charging. Some other things to consider are:

- Does your project have disabled access? If not you'll need to make this clear.
- Can you offer catering or refreshments?
- Do you have adequate indoor space? If not you could consider using gazebos, marquees or tents to increase your indoor areas.
- If you are planning on having music or serving alcohol you'll need a premises license or member of your group will need either a Temporary Events Notice (TEN) from your local authority if you're in England or Wales, or an Occasional Licence if you're in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Kids Parties, Activity Days and Holiday Clubs

If you already work with children and families you could consider running kids parties with a difference, or putting on activity days during the school holidays, these are a great way to make some money whilst engaging children in fun, outdoor activities. Think carefully about how many children you would be able to cater for, and do some market research with local parents. Make sure that you consider:

- How safe is your site for children? Do a full risk assessment and remove any hazards from the area you're using.
- Do you have the correct insurance? If you have children's play equipment this may not automatically be included in your public liability insurance so it's worth speaking to your insurer just in case.
- Do you have current enhanced DBS checks for everyone who will be working directly with the children?
- If you employ a contractor to deliver games or entertainment they will need to have the correct insurance and disclosures too.
- How you will promote your activities?
- Having a trial run with a family that you know and their friends to test your plans!

Craft Fairs

If there are a number of craftspeople in the area you're based in you could consider holding a regular craft fair at your project, or even just one in the weeks leading up to Christmas? Ensure you have enough chairs and tables (or ask traders to bring their own) and charge a pitch fee or percentage for each stall. Don't forget to sell hot drinks and other items from your project on the day too!

Make sure you think about:

- Will stalls be indoors or outdoors? If your event is outside make sure you communicate this clearly to stallholders and that they bring their own gazebo in case of bad weather.
- Are you providing tables or do stall holders need to bring them?
- Do stall holders need power? Be clear about whether this is available or not.
- How will you promote your fair to prospective stall holders and visitors?
- Do you have parking available for stall holders and visitors? If not where could they park?
- Is there anything you wouldn't want sold? For example, mass produced, imported goods, DVD's or 'bric-a-brac'?

Short Courses

If you have people with particular skills in your group, have you considered running courses from your site? Courses can be a great way of spreading new skills and engaging new people in your project as well as generating some income. If there is a subject that you know people locally would pay for you could even consider bringing in a contractor to deliver the course for you. Some potential course topics could be:

- Gardening, fruit tree care, grafting etc
- Arts and crafts
- Green building
- Seed saving
- Specialist cookery, preserve making etc
- Beekeeping

Another way to make money from courses (or at least to save some) is to consider whether your group requires training in a certain field i.e. child protection, first aid or health and safety, as it might be more cost effective to bring a trainer to your venue – and if there is spare capacity you could 'sell' those spaces to outside organisations.

Donations

If you provide refreshments for your visitors and volunteers, a clearly signed donations box or tin can encourage people to contribute towards their drinks, helping to cover their cost. It also helps convey that the project is a not-for-profit enterprise that needs to cover its costs. This might only raise a few pounds a week, but it soon adds up and will mean you're not losing out on small things like drinks and snacks. You can also set up a donation box at the entry to your project with a sign to explain the costs of running the site and asking for donations to visit the site and help with running costs. This is particularly effective if you have animals that people can visit.

Similarly, a donations button on your website (if you have one!) might help bring in a few more contributions from people who want to support your work.

Further Support

Get more advice and guidance on generating income from your regional Growing Together Adviser. Contact details, and further online resources, can be found at: www.growingtogether.community

You can also get advice and guidance from these organisations:

- Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens – www.farmgarden.org.uk
- The Permaculture Association - www.permaculture.org.uk
- Groundwork - www.groundwork.org.uk
- The Plunkett Foundation - www.plunkett.co.uk
- Incredible Edible – www.incredibleediblenetwork.org.uk
- Wales Cooperative Centre (Wales) – www.wales.coop
- Community Shares Scotland (Scotland) – www.communitysharesscotland.org.uk
- Cooperative Alternatives (Northern Ireland) - www.coopalternatives.coop
- Sustain - www.sustainweb.org
- Capital Growth (London) - www.capitalgrowth.org