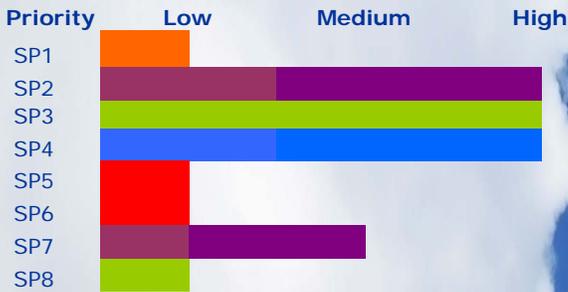


Relevance to CYPP Strategic Priorities



Children's Trust
Cornwall

Stories of Your Success

Chyan Community Field
by Stephanie Jackson

What did you do ?

Chyan Community Field is a 2.2 acre organic garden & a registered charity situated near Halvasso. Founded in 2002, from the beginning Chyan Community Field has been a grassroots organisation run & led by the local community. The community field has completely relied upon volunteers since it was set up, although in 2010 we plan to employ our first paid development worker through grant funding. A committee of 10–15 volunteers run the allotments, a larger group of 10–20 volunteers help organise & run the events & open days. The key aims of Chyan include:



To support & promote organic gardening & food production:

In April this year we will be working with & growing vegetables for Falmouth & Penryn Children's Centres. Through the Children's centres we also plan to establish a monthly Saturday Dads club day up at the field.

To teach about permaculture, sustainability & food production:

Over the last 7 years local volunteers have developed allotments, a pond, a strawbale tea-shed & tool store, a sensory garden, a composting area, a cob seat (to help mothers spending time at the garden with their newborns to breast feed), a community orchard and playground. A wind turbine provides sustainable energy on site which creates electricity for the water pump.

To encourage play & connection with nature

Children have been encouraged to use Chyan to interact with nature & to play in the countryside like children used to do 40 years ago. We have also organised local artists & performers to use Chyan to develop creative & expressive activities with groups of children, young people & adults.

To involve as many adults & children as possible in a community led development of the growing space:

Chyan runs a number of events, open days & visits to encourage community members to get involved including:

- School groups including Penryn College
- Families from Penryn & Falmouth
- Dreadnought
- Students with learning difficulties from Falmouth Marine School
- Travellers
- Young people through the Princes Trust
- Chyan is also involved with Ecominds (16 years +), a grant programme which helps people with experience of mental distress get involved in local environmental projects that improve mental and physical health
- This year, referrals will also be made to Chyan from the local health centre.



Who were the key partners ?

Green Centre Falmouth; Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens; Sustainable Trust (Cornwall); Cornwall Waste Action

Funding Partners have included: Cornwall Community Foundation; Cory Environmental Trust; Eatsome.

What challenges did you overcome ?

Chyan is completely dependent upon volunteer time which in itself presents challenges when trying to strike a balance between the time volunteers can commit and developing / growing the project. The sustainability of workload for some volunteers is a real challenge.

As with many projects it was difficult to engage widespread help in the first instance but over the last few years the increasing popularity & interest in sustainable lifestyles, and particularly in allotments, has really helped develop activity on the field. Once a few volunteers got involved & started developing the field, this encouraged more people to join & provide their time & support.

The transient nature of volunteers means that we have some people that have stayed with the project for many years but others come & go & this is something we have to manage.

Funding is a big challenge, nobody gets paid! We have sourced various grants but the time spent bid writing is after family, after work... at 10pm at night!!!

Funding is a key challenge when working with vulnerable groups & there is a lack of resource to do as much as we would like if the capacity was there. This limits us doing targeted work however diverse groups across the community, some of which are outlined above, are already benefiting from Chyan.



What made this project a success ?

An open day 2 years ago really highlighted to that we weren't just encouraging 'green wellies' to Chyan but a diverse range of people from across the community.

We have a family friendly approach & activities are low cost which help to encourage people to get involved

My top tips for making a project like Chyan a success include:

- Really value your volunteers
- Be realistic about your expectations for the project, be prepared to develop things gradually
- Be prepared to work hard
- For a similar project, the Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens were a key source of support

How long did the project take to implement ?

Chyan Community Field was set up in 2002 and has evolved over the last 7 years with the help of a large number of volunteers.

For more information:

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What difference has the project made?

As we don't tend to work with the same groups for a set period of time in a structured way, longitudinal evaluation is difficult. Feedback from the evaluations of courses & events we've run include:

"We had an amazing day at Chyan Community Field. The children were totally absorbed, had an all round practical, hands on educational and unique experience. In short they loved every minute of it" Emma Vyvyan, teacher, Constantine Primary School

"Washing our hands was absolutely great because I found out that a type of flower, called a ceonothus, would turn into soap".

"The willow sculpture fence and whale looked beautiful, especially the whale which you could climb inside. It felt like a forest!".

"I liked the winter salad garden because you were allowed to taste plants like chives, viola and fennel".

"A place to give people the chance to be creative, meet new people and work with the land in a sustainable way"

" I had a really lovely time, learnt a lot – very inspired"