

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Glasgow (UofG)		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 17 Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Supporting the management and development of community food growing initiatives		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
(1) Deirdre Shaw	(1) Professor of Marketing and Consumer Research;	(1) 2006–present
(2) Robert McMaster	(2) Professor of Political Economy;	(2) 2007–present
(3) Andrew Cumbers	(3) Professor in Regional Political Economy;	(3) 2001–present
(4) John Crossan	(4) Research Associate;	(4) 2013–2016
(5) Stephanie Anderson	(5) Lecturer;	(5) 2014–present
(6) Helen Traill	(6) Research Associate;	(6) 2019–present
(7) Natalie Marr	(7) Research Assistant	(7) 2019–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>The sustainability of local food systems has global economic and environmental implications. UofG research finds that community growing initiatives improve sustainable production and healthy consumption of food. Through engagement with local stakeholders from 2014 onwards, the research has: (i) supported the development of a new management and policy environment to enable community food production through the establishment of Glasgow Food Policy Partnership. In turn, this has: (ii) shaped the co-production of Glasgow City Food Plan under the auspices of the local authority. The same research has: (iii) underpinned the establishment of a Community Food Hub in Dalmarnock, an area of multiple deprivation, which now supports sustainable local food production and healthy consumption (e.g. 15,000 meals served in 2019). Associated benefits include: (iv) enhanced food knowledge and improved community cohesion.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
2.1. Context		
<p>The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015) requires local authorities to produce a Food Growing Strategy for their area—including identifying land that may be used for allotments and community growing initiatives. The legislation also requires local authorities to include members of the public in the decisions and activities of the authority, including in the allocation of its resources. Glasgow City Council (Scotland's largest local authority) was originally scheduled to deliver its strategy, Glasgow City Food Plan, in 2020. However, this activity was delayed until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>		
2.2. Investigating the sustainable production of food in urban areas		
<p>Against the backdrop of this community empowerment legislation, stimulated by increased public interest in community gardening and sustainable food production, a programme of UofG research investigated issues of sustainability management through the development of community gardens and local food spaces [3.1, 3.4]. From 2013 onwards, the research examined the effects of community gardening on participants and local communities and analysed the contribution of such initiatives to the promotion of more sustainable forms of 'prosumption' (production and consumption) of food in urban areas [3.1, 3.2, 3.3]. The research consisted of observations via site visits to 11 community gardens, participant observation through volunteering days at a further 7 community gardens and 20 semi-structured interviews (with garden employees, volunteers and representatives from stakeholder organisations).</p> <p>Since 2015, the underpinning research has sought to place localised studies on community gardens within the context of wider social, economic and environmental issues. For example, output [3.3] argues that community gardening cannot be divorced from the economic and social processes accompanying neoliberal austerity policies. Further research [3.5] (with Katherine Trebeck, Oxfam UK, and Iain Black, Heriot-Watt University) explored the progressive potential of prosumption and extended the debate beyond the commercially-focused marketing discourse.</p>		

The research offers additional understandings on how community gardens and ‘DIY citizenship’ and self-management can play important roles in creating and sustaining thriving communities [3.3] and examines how localised action might be scaled up to tackle climate change [3.1].

2.3. Key findings

Key findings from this body of research indicate that community gardens and local food growing initiatives demonstrate benefits including: (i) skills acquisition over a range of activities (e.g. from horticulture to managing meetings); (ii) enhanced community cohesion; (iii) improved wellbeing; (iv) increased knowledge of food; (v) healthy consumption and sustainable production [3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4]. The research finds that many community gardens are precarious in terms of key management issues, including: reliable funding streams, their knowledge of similar initiatives beyond the local area and their legal rights with respect to the changing (and more amenable) legal environment. The research [3.1, 3.4] also highlights the imperative for a food policy partnership at the city level, as a means of developing a holistic approach to the pressing social, economic and environmental issues of the day.

2.4. Establishing the need for community food provision in Dalmarnock

The underpinning research also highlighted the proximity between the most disadvantaged communities in Glasgow and derelict land. This led to two EU/Scottish Government Social Innovation Fund projects on community food hubs. In Stage 1 (2017) UofG researchers conducted interviews with local residents and identified the need for enhanced community food provision in Dalmarnock, an area of multiple deprivation in Glasgow’s East End. This led to the Stage 2 project (2018–2019) [3.6], which involved piloting a Community Food Hub in partnership with Baltic Street Adventure Playground, a community organisation based in Dalmarnock. This ongoing project promotes informal learning through community food production, communal cooking and the provision of nutritious meals (as outlined in further detail in section 4 below).

3. References to the research

- 3.1 Shaw, D., Cumbers, A., McMaster, R. and Crossan, J. (2018) [Scaling Up Community Action for Tackling Climate Change](#). *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 29(2), pp. 266-278. (doi: [10.1111/1467-8551.12274](#))
- 3.2 Cumbers, A., Shaw, D., Crossan, J., and McMaster, R. (2018) [The work of community gardens: reclaiming place for community in the city](#). *Work Employment and Society*, 32(1), pp. 133-149. (doi: [10.1177/0950017017695042](#))
- 3.3 Crossan, J., Cumbers, A., McMaster, R., and Shaw, D. (2016) [Contesting Neoliberal Urbanism in Glasgow’s Community Gardens: The Practice of DIY Citizenship](#). *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, 48(4), pp. 937-55. (doi:[10.1111/anti.12220](#))
- 3.4 Crossan, J. , Shaw, D. , Cumbers, A. and McMaster, R. (2015) [Glasgow’s Community Gardens: Sustainable Communities of Care](#). Project Report. University of Glasgow, Glasgow.
- 3.5 Shaw, D., Crossan, J. , Cumbers, A. , McMaster, R. , Trebeck, K. and Black, I. (2016) [Open Space: Places of prosumption: Community gardens putting the ‘we’ into neighbourhoods](#). *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 5(3), pp. 473-479. (doi: [10.1332/204674316X14758523887982](#))
- 3.6 Traill, H., Shaw, D. , Anderson, S. , Cumbers, A. , McMaster, R. and Marr, N. (2020) [Baltic Street Adventure Playground Establishing a Community Food Hub](#). Project Report. University of Glasgow.

This body of work meets the 2* threshold because outputs [3.1], [3.2], [3.3] and [3.5] are published in international double-blind peer-reviewed management, geography and social policy journals. Outputs [3.4] and [3.6] are project reports on community gardens and community food hubs. The research was also supported by the following awards, the value of which was split among the project partners:

1. ‘The Community Food Hub: Phase 1’ (April 2017–December 2017), European Social Fund/Social Innovation Fund, GBP49,878 (Cumbers PI, Shaw Co-I).

2. 'The Community Food Hub: Phase 2' (May 2018–May 2019) European Social Fund/Social Innovation Fund, GBP127,694 (Shaw PI, Cumbers Co-I).

4. Details of the impact

4.1. Pathways to impact

Inspired by the early findings of the research [3.4], a series of [workshops](#) led and attended by UofG researchers facilitated the formation of Glasgow Food Policy Partnership (GFPP), with key local stakeholders agreeing to join under a shared commitment to healthier, more sustainable and resilient food systems. The establishment of GFPP underpinned a new policy environment within the city (as outlined in section 4.2 below), which has since shaped the co-production by researchers and stakeholders of the Glasgow City Food Plan (as outlined in section 4.3 below). This city-wide approach is augmented by a community-level initiative in Dalmarnock, which supports increased food production and healthy consumption (as outlined in section 4.4 below); enhanced food knowledge and community cohesion (as outlined in section 4.5 below).

4.2. Informing the development of a new policy environment

The establishment of GFPP marked the beginnings of a new and more inclusive policy environment within the city, designed to drive sustainable change based upon multiple-stakeholder perspectives. The Sustainable Glasgow Manager and Chief Resilience Officer at Glasgow City Council confirms that, *'Professors Shaw, McMaster and Cumbers' research played a central role in the establishment of Glasgow Food Policy Partnership (GFPP) in 2014 [...] The formation of GFPP is a significant step for the city, as it ensures a place for community representatives on its committee, alongside public officials and representatives of NGOs - thus enabling members of the public to feed into local authority decisions and activities, as required by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015).'* (confirmed by statement [5A])

This partnership now includes Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government, NHS Scotland, Soil Association Scotland and FareShare—the UK's largest anti-food-waste charity. The resultant GFPP Charter 'Good Food for All' [5B] has been signed by 115 businesses, third sector organisations and local food growers to date. The Sustainable Glasgow Manager and Chief Resilience Officer at Glasgow City Council notes that, *'a key research recommendation was that an overarching partnership could act as a focus for informing food policy within the city.'* [5A]

On the recommendation of its Council representative, GFPP has become Glasgow's primary link to the Sustainable Food Cities Network. This network facilitates practical guidance based upon the experiences of towns and cities across the UK (an imperative originally outlined by the underpinning research [3.1, 3.4]). Reporting on Sustainable Food Cities in 2016, Glasgow City Council's Sustainability and Environment Policy and Development Committee stated that, *'The principal means by which the Council has engaged in the development of this work has been through the Glasgow Food Policy Partnership [...] GFPP is helping to deliver on the city's anti-poverty agenda through its own work on tackling food poverty.'* [5C]

4.3. The co-production of Glasgow City Food Plan

The creation of Glasgow City Food Plan is a legal requirement of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015). Statement [5A] confirms that, *'GFPP is now the main organisation tasked with leading the consultation and development of Glasgow City Food Plan'*. GFPP acts as a conduit to key local stakeholders and as a means of engaging with likeminded organisations throughout the UK through the Sustainable Food Cities Network. UofG researchers have been active members of two of the six workstreams that have drafted sections of the Plan (i.e. Food Procurement and Food Waste and Environment). The underpinning research [3.2, 3.4] is directly cited in the official Glasgow City Food Plan consultation document [5D], which was launched on 8 October 2020. Following a public consultation which ran until 31 December 2020, Glasgow City Food Plan will be finalised in 2021.

Reflecting upon this collaborative policy development, the Public Health Programme Manager at Glasgow Centre for Population Health confirmed, *'The research of Shaw, McMaster, Cumbers and Anderson [...] has provided additional understandings of the links between localised food growing initiatives and the wider social, economic and environmental issues of the day [...] The research has highlighted the inequitable distribution of community food projects across the city*

and demonstrated a need for more secure and sustainable funding to support the sector's intrinsic value, as well as its net benefits to Glasgow. She continued, *'The contribution of UofG research and engagement activity is highly-significant as the Glasgow City Food Plan is an ambitious project that supports the delivery of a number of other strategies and plans at citywide and national levels. The researchers' community-level knowledge and evidence from the underpinning research has played a vitally-important role in supporting this intensive period of policy development.'* (confirmed by statement [5E])

4.4. Increased food production and healthy consumption

Based upon two EU/Scottish Government-funded Social Innovation Fund projects, UofG researchers and Baltic Street Adventure Playground (BSAP) have pioneered an award-winning Community Food Hub in Dalmarnock—one of the city's most disadvantaged areas (confirmed by award [5F] and project report [3.6]). As a result, an area of once-derelict land has been transformed into a thriving community space, which now sustains an array of fresh produce to support communal cooking experiences and the provision of nutritious meals (confirmed by [short film](#) [5G]). BSAP is used throughout the year, particularly over school holidays, with 7,409 visits and approximately 15,000 meal portions served over the summer of 2019. The annual attendance for 2019 was approximately 21,000 visits (numbers confirmed by email [5H]).

This child-focused project brings parents and guardians together with experienced growers in an area where fresh, affordable food is not always readily available. BSAP's raised beds, renovated prior to the project's start, were combined with a project-funded polytunnel to produce a range of fruit and vegetables (e.g. onions, carrots, potatoes, alpine strawberries, peas, tomatoes, rhubarb, broccoli and kale) from a growing area of approximately 250 square metres. The team of local growers at BSAP estimate that between 80–100 kilograms of produce has been grown since the project began in 2017. They added that, *'carrots proved particularly popular with the children, who liked to pull them directly from the ground, wash them and eat them straight away'* (confirmed in statement from local growers [5I]).



The produce grown on site is integrated into the daily menu in salads, pasta sauces and curries. It also supports informal learning experiences to develop participants' knowledge of the food system and healthy eating (e.g. tomatoes are used in workshops to make relish, courgettes to make fritters in cooking classes). The produce grown locally is supplemented with food deliveries twice a week from the UK's largest anti-food-waste charity, FareShare. A statement from local growers confirms that the UofG project funding, *'allowed the Community Food Hub to move from one to two deliveries per week, doubling its capacity to support the local community through local meals and food surplus.'* [5I]

4.5. Enhanced knowledge of food and improved community cohesion

Local residents who visit the Community Food Hub have demonstrated a range of benefits, with two key themes identified in the research report [3.6]. Firstly, BSAP provides a space for experimentation with food that may be unfamiliar, or might otherwise be too expensive. For instance, Participant A said: *'there is all different things you can try [...] gluten free things [...] there's always so much variety that you can choose from and there's people coming in and saying, "Oh my goodness, that will do me for three days, at least I'm going to have dinners for my kids for three days"'*. Participant B added, *'Usually, I wouldn't eat anything like that [cabbage], but I just thought I will, just let me try, and I actually enjoyed it.'* Secondly, the Food Hub provides a much-needed focal point for the community in an area with very few local amenities. Participant A added: *'the community's starting to get back together, we're starting to*

see each other again [...] because we don't have shops, you don't really see anybody, but coming to the park [BSAP], you bump into people that you've not seen for a long time. I've seen people come in I've not seen maybe in ten years' (quotes confirmed by participant interviews [5J]).

4.6. Next steps

Through this innovative research-based intervention, co-produced by researchers and the communities of policy and practice, UofG research is contributing to the alleviation of food poverty through embedded engagement and deep local impact (as outlined above). This work supports social welfare within the city, through sustainable self-managing programmes, which make essential connections between local food growing and the global environmental, social and economic challenges of the day. Both at community and policy levels, this work looks set to underpin significant impact activity beyond the REF2021 period.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5A] Statement from the Sustainable Glasgow Manager and Chief Resilience Officer, Glasgow City Council (confirms role of UofG research in informing a new policy environment) **[PDF available]**.

[5B] GFPP charter [Good Food For All](#) (signed by 115 local stakeholders as of December 2020) **[PDF available]**.

[5C] Glasgow City Council, Sustainability and Environment Policy and Development Committee, [Report by Executive Director for Land and Environmental Services](#), 16 March 2016 (quotation from section 1.2 confirms role of GFPP in leading engagement with the Sustainable Food Cities Network) **[PDF available]**.

[5D] Glasgow City Food Plan – Official Consultation Document (the underpinning research [3.2], [3.4] is directly cited on pp.19-20) **[PDF available]**.

[5E] Statement from Public Health Programme Manager at the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (confirms the role of UofG research in collaborative policy development) (December 2020) **[PDF available]**.

[5F] 'Making a Difference' Award at the 5th Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards – February 2020 **[PDF available]**.

[5G] Short film: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=13Kvfor0SPkAJGjoBrrQwktTfkXPjv9L8> **[MP4 available on request from the HEI]**.

[5H] 2019 visitor numbers and meal portions confirmed by BSAP email (these figures represent cumulative attendances, rather than individuals) **[PDF available]**.

[5I] Statement from local growers with links to GFPP **[PDF available]**.

[5J] Participant observation and interviews with local community participants conducted by Helen Traill (2019–2020) (selected quotes reinforce the two themes identified) **[PDF available]**.