

# **Community Food Forum II - Key Discussion and Outcomes**

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018 5-9pm @Redmond Community Centre, London

An evening hosted by Made in Hackney (MIH) [www.madeinhackney.org](http://www.madeinhackney.org) brought together over 75 people for a night of networking, peer to peer advice and skill sharing and delicious food. Attendees were founders of community food enterprises - kitchens, cafes, start-up businesses and community food growing projects, or those just in the early planning stages.

This document captures the key discussion points and outcomes from each of the five break out discussion groups on:

1. Funding
2. Enterprise
3. Impact
4. Support
5. Outreach

With grateful thanks to the note takers in each group: – Emma, Danielle, Hannah, Tara and Rebecca.

## **1. Funding**

The purpose of this discussion group was to share experiences of how to identify funding for your project. See also the accompanying hand out on funding.

**Group facilitator:** Sarah Bentley, Founder Sarah Bentley

### ***Q: How is Made in Hackney funded?***

Through 50% traditional grants and 50% by its own enterprise activities. Its aim is to increase this further. A top tip is that if you get a grant you can always ask for more from the same funder!

MIH started on a Big Lottery grant whilst it was only a project of another existing charity. The bid writers (including Sarah Bentley) designed an innovative project and offered the idea to the charity AMURT UK <http://amurt.org.uk/> which is how it overcame the barrier of having had no previous funding or experience.

You need to 'sweat your assets' to get funding (but not just your fixed assets) eg. hiring out your venue when it's not in use, delivering more programmes, using skilled people, and monetising your services and support network. Offering services for free builds your support base, but you also need to have a 'paid for' programme and know how you can earn more revenue.

If you get asked to deliver a service or offer a volunteering experience by a corporate ask for payment to cover your time or offer them another service they will agree to pay for.

Each grant application needs to be tailored and written bespoke, like a job application.

**Q: What sources of funding are there?**

Many!

<https://www.beehivegiving.org> / provides a list of grants you are eligible to apply for and also the Directory of Social Change <https://www.dsc.org.uk/> .

You can also approach an existing charity and ask if you can deliver your services as part of their set up provided you can demonstrate you will bring benefit to their organisation as well. Partnership working is looked on very favourably by funders.

Always think about multiple income streams. See funding handout that accompanied this session for more ideas.

**Q: Can you get funding if you are a sole trader? (and what about funding for core costs like accounting?)**

Yes. The charity UnLtd ([www.unltd.org.uk](http://www.unltd.org.uk) ) supports individuals at the start up stage. You will need to show what social impact your project will have, that there is need for it, and that it will be sustainable. They offer awards of £500, £5,000 and £20,000.

There aren't many funders except Big Lottery who will fund core costs. Funders will have lists of the types of organisations they have already funded, mostly charities, but some will also fund social enterprises (eg. CICs). It takes 6 months to a year to complete the charity registration process. In some cases quicker. Setting up a business with a charitable purpose is another way of doing it.

Funding bids can be 20-50 pages long and very time consuming and competitive, but some funders are now getting more progressive and offering a less arduous process by conducting applications face to face. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation <https://www.phf.org.uk/> allows you to apply with a 3 minute video and only 3-4 pages of application. You are asked to first deliver a pilot project and then talk about your results in your funding bid. You will need to find the money to do the initial pilot and it then takes about 2 months to hear the answer.

If you want to design a project that is community based you will need to look at how you can create business opportunities to raise the required funds.

**Q: Have you found a funding application has restricted what you can do in the future?**

No, but in the early days when MIH was in awe of the funders it set unrealistic targets and claimed it could reach a far larger number of beneficiaries than was actually possible, so it had to go back and say they were typos! Always provide target numbers you know you'll easily reach so you'll have a greater chance of getting more money when you go back to funders.

Be very wary of twisting your core mission just to get funding, this is known as 'mission drift'.

There are so many trusts and foundations out there you just need the time to do the research. Also consider developing corporate partnerships.

***Q: Is there a certain time of year that's better to apply?***

No. Funders all have different deadlines.

Always provide a shopping list of things you need for your project and offer different levels of funding. Then let the funder decide which they go for (eg. scenario 1, 2, 3).

Create an ethical policy to help you decide who you will/won't accept money from (eg. defence, tobacco, oil, weapons suppliers.) Never accept funds where the funder's values are at odds with your mission.

***Q: The 'pay what you feel' model is becoming more popular, but how do you present it in a funding bid?***

You will need to support it with data. 84% of people will offer an appropriate payment amount or more.

Spend enough time on outreach and research to pitch the right price level and know who is going to walk through the door. Revenue from people who can afford to pay more will subsidise the cost of services for those on low income.

Employability skills and getting people back into work is a very hot topic at the moment. The Café from Crisis business model is focused on this <https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-involved/cafe-from-crisis/london/> . You need lots of human resources to manage and train the staff you're trying to help. Staff costs will be high but because they are based on training you can justify it to funders.

***Q: How can you earn money?***

You can offer products, services and subscriptions. A project with multiple income streams will be much more sustainable. You'll need to have a reality check on how many products you'll need to sell to raise enough funds. You'll need to assess how much time it will take to deliver and how much money it will generate and if it won't be enough then scrap it. Unless it will be beneficial to your project and lead to more sales don't do it!

## **2. Enterprise**

The purpose of this discussion group was to share experiences on how to create interest around your project and ultimately more revenue through delivering enterprise activities. See also the accompanying hand out about how to run successful events.

**Group facilitators:** Damien Clarkson, co-founder of Vevolution <https://www.vevolution.co/> and Steve Wilson, founder of Make Kit, <https://makekitfood.com/>

- Research what already exists – start ups, food growing communities, community kitchens etc.
- Be different - make yourself stand out, identify why are you different? Know your USP - what is it about your idea that's special and what can you offer to potential funders?

Importance of building confidence in your project, knowing your value and what your ideas are worth.

- 'Start with why' by Simon Sinek - why are you doing what you're doing? Everyone has a WHY. Your WHY is the purpose, cause or belief that inspires you. See link to Simon's Ted Talk [https://www.ted.com/talks/simon\\_sinek\\_how\\_great\\_leaders\\_inspire\\_action/up-next?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action/up-next?language=en)
- Be creative with venues if you're organising an event - find the right venue - bigger events will have a larger media profile and are more appealing to sponsors, smaller events may not generate as much income but can be more appealing to communities.
- Focus your promotional efforts – are they to achieve greater social impact? Who is your target audience? Which social media platform to focus on? e.g. Facebook, instagram, twitter etc
- Be professional and realistic - set achievable targets, be strategic and prepared, keeping track of finances is extremely important.
- Finding funding - successful crowdfunding tips: don't underestimate the time and effort it takes to run a crowdfunding campaign, make sure you have enough time for marketing, and always ALWAYS make time for your accounts.

### **3. Impact**

The purpose of this discussion group was to share advice on how organisations can more effectively monitor the impact of their work and 'make a difference'.

See accompanying handout based on "A Guide for Monitoring and Evaluating Community-Based Projects" from UNESCO.

**Group facilitator:** Katherine Stansfeld, Evaluation and Impact Manager, Manor House Development Trust.

There are plenty of guidelines and frameworks available to use so be flexible and adapt them for your project.

#### ***Q: Why is it necessary to measure impact?***

Funders all require convincing statistics on monitoring and evaluation practices before allocating funds so this needs to be an essential part of any organisations strategy.

It's also important to measure impact to inform the future direction of your organisation, to see if the original intention has been achieved or if a different direction is needed.

### **Q: How do you measure social impact?**

Use data available to you eg.

- Record number of participants / service users, age, gender, ethnicity, disability;
- Record behaviour change over time, eg. for children – can refer to school exam results, Ofsted reports;
- Collect data at different stages in the process: before, during and after;

Measuring community involvement is useful, for example, how many schools involved.

### **Q: How do you capture data?**

- Surveys - important to ask the right questions, (but not too many) to ensure positive and constructive feedback. Online survey responses can be low (10-30%);
- Evaluation forms handed out after activity/class guarantee higher responses;
- Face to face focus groups and case studies can draw out more detailed responses;

## **4. Support**

The purpose of this discussion group was to share experiences on how to identify and attract the right people and resources to support your project, and to acknowledge that all start-up community projects need this support.

See accompanying handout 'Useful sources of free support for your community project'.

**Group facilitator:** Nynke Brett, Project Director of Made in Hackney,

Everyone in the group who had already experienced starting a community project said you cannot do this alone. As Roy from UnLtd said '...don't try and do everything yourself.' Manage a checklist of daily tasks so you can handover to someone else if you need to. Start simple, start small, and focus. You need friends and volunteers who share the same vision and passion as you to work with together.

### **Volunteers**

- **How to find volunteers:** You can advertise on numerous free websites (see handout accompanying this session eg. Project Dirt, Charity Job, Do It and Good Gym). Use word of mouth, social media, flyering, put up posters in community centres and attend and speak at networking events.
- **How to attract volunteers:** Offer something fulfilling in return – think outside the box. Some people are altruistic by nature, some may be interested in a career change, or

may want to gain new skills and learn and grow as an individual, whilst others may just enjoy the social element of meeting new like-minded people. Promote your opportunity to appeal to these different needs.

- **What type of people volunteer?** Retired people looking for a new lease of life come with a wealth of life and work experience to share. Students have a passion and energy to learn. Corporate volunteers (eg. lawyers, HR, marketing, finance etc) look for ways to use their skills to support their local community, or to change their career, as well as anyone else with some spare time.
- **How to retain volunteers:** Take the time to identify the motivation of your volunteers so you can best meet their needs. Don't assume they're all attracted by the same thing. eg, Dan from Feedback (<https://feedbackglobal.org/>) explained that their recent volunteer survey revealed that volunteers weren't just motivated for environmental reasons but they also found the social element appealing. Always ask – don't assume! By understanding the motivations of the individual, you will have a longer-lasting and more positive relationship. Get to know your volunteer, you never know what other skills they may have – they may be a design expert or freelance social media whizz that could be very useful. Also find out the skills their partners, family or friends have.

### Marketing & Media – online and offline

- **Social Media:** Get your social media profiles set up. This is an essential way for people to find you and for you to target people who may be able to help you. Instagram, Facebook and Twitter are good starting points, and if your project creates particularly appealing photos, consider using Pinterest and Tumblr. To save time posting on all platforms each time, try 'If This Then That' (<https://ifttt.com/>) – which gets all your apps and devices talking to each other and can do simultaneous posts, e.g if you post on Instagram, it gets fed through to the other channels.
- **Images.** If you are just starting out you may not have the money, skills or time to create a library of photographs for using on social media. Check out Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com/>) and Pixabay (<https://pixabay.com/>) for free images you can use guilt-free! Be warned of using random copyright images from the internet as you may get caught out when a law firm suddenly contacts you with a threatening demand to pay a fine for a stolen image.
- **Consultancy.** The Media Trust (<https://mediatrust.org/>) has skilled media professional creatives offering their time to provide advice to charities and community groups.

- **Website:** The more content you have, the more Google will like you and bump you up on the search page so your visibility is increased. Have a blog on your website and update it as regularly as you can.
- **Flyers/posters:** If you have the budget using printed materials will reach a wider off-line audience.

## Networking Events

- You can meet a wealth of like-minded people at events that may have many varied skills to offer, e.g. Nynke from Made In Hackney met a graphic designer and photographer at an MIH vegan cheese tasting event who have since volunteered valuable time and skills to create promotional flyers.
- Talk to people and ask questions – everyone shares the same overall aim, it benefits everyone to stay connected and share information.

## Sponsorship

- **Just Ask!** Don't be afraid to ask for appropriate sponsorship in the form of donated products or other services. It benefits companies to be associated with a good cause and you could be helping them reach their marketing and/or corporate social responsibility goals.
- If you offer an online mention/write up and product placement, you are helping companies get in front of potential or existing customers, and introducing or emphasising their marketing message. Offer sampling opportunities and hand out their flyers or discount codes as well as offer them event photos they can use on their social media channels to make it as attractive for them to support you as possible.
- Made in Hackney frequently receives donated vegan food and drinks products from ethical companies like Clearspring, V Bites, Moju and Oatly.

## Professional Skills

- **Echo:** Offers free events to increase your skill set in areas you want to learn. Attendees trade time and skills. <https://economyofhours.com/>
- **UnLtd:** the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs [www.unltd.org](http://www.unltd.org) not only offers grants to individuals but also resources such as useful fact sheets on business and legal issues.

## Venues

- Ask to hire venues for free or at a heavily discounted rate. The same applies to sponsorship – the venues can gain credibility to be associated with a worthy project/event. What have you got to lose?

## Equipment

- You can find refurbished computers from the charity Computers for Charities (<http://www.computersforcharities.org/>) and numerous other items just by doing some research. See accompanying hand out for full list. MIH were recently offered 8 un-used food processors and blenders from Jamie Oliver's range that were end of the line – if you don't ask, you don't get.

## Trustees

- If your organisation has a Board of Trustees they can bring valuable skills and personal and professional networks. When recruiting new Trustees it's useful to ensure a varied mix of backgrounds; from corporate business leaders to teachers, from charity managers to lawyers and finance directors as well as young people.
- Ask your trustees for extra support with introductions to influential people in their network. If you have an attractive proposition people will come! Made in Hackney found the majority of their board members through promoting on social media, their existing networks and via the website Charity Job.

## 5. Outreach

The purpose of this discussion group was to share advice on how to reach your beneficiaries and supporters. See accompanying Outreach hand out.

**Group facilitator:** Veryan Wilkie Jones Project Director, Made in Hackney

There is no 'one' method to reach your entire network at once – you will have to use a wide variety of methods:

- Word of mouth – don't be shy, shout it out
- Flyering and leafleting is handy wherever you go as you'll never know when you'll encounter the right people. Keeps you connected to the 'off line' audience. Outsource the bulk of it though - it's worth paying someone to do this to save you time.
- Develop and nurture relationships with specific like-minded organisations who can help you spread the word on an ongoing basis.
- Engage local councils, community groups
- Encourage people to participate in the community
- Get in touch with local organisations eg. NHS practitioners (useful in the public health space)
- Make calls, develop contacts you have
- Keep up contacts – put them in a spreadsheet



- Try to get into local and national press
  - Use a standard format for a press release: story, fact sheet, photos, and a quote from someone compelling,
  - Send to organisations,
  - Always send to named contacts, never to a general info email address,
  - Look at ‘trends’ of the moment and see if you can build on the momentum, make it fun,
  - Phone someone interested in the topic and share a more personal angle
  - Interact with people on social media
- Links with schools (eg. head teacher) allows you to get closer into the community
  - Do research on schools with issues around healthy eating or whatever topic you are promoting
  - Get parents involved – push the ‘free meal’ incentive (if that’s what you’re offering)
  - Aim to sign up a local head teacher as an ally
  - Market as an educational workshop so people turn up and are not put off by the stigma of a ‘soup kitchen’
- Databases and spamming – must have a newsletter un-subscribe method

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With thanks to **Big Lottery** for financially supporting the event.

All handouts from the discussion groups are available on the Made in Hackney website here:  
<https://madeinhackney.org/news/latest-news/80>