

Final Report to the SRB / URBAN Futures Fund

Sheffield Organic Food Initiative: Organic Opportunities

VOLUNTEERING

During the life of the project, we were able to directly support **24** volunteers, more than half of whom maintained their involvement for an extended period (6 months or more). Practical growing activities were supplemented by an advice service, distribution of fertilisers and produce, and occasional talks by experts.

EDUCATION

Two classroom based courses at Crookesmoor Training Centre were attended by approximately **10** students each. Richard attained a teaching qualification, City and Guilds **7307-1**, Training for Trainers. He has also been accredited as a W.E.A. tutor. S.O.F.I. has registered a Learning Programme with the Open College Network, 'Organic Culture and Cultivation', (Prog. No. **3428**).

NEW PROJECTS

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

New group evolved out of regular volunteering and has independent constitution and successful funding record.

ORGANIC GARDENING FOR HEALTH AT UNSTONE GRANGE

S.O.F.I. successfully collaborated in gaining **£60,000** funding from the Department of Health's Consortium on Volunteering.

SUPPORTING OTHER PROJECTS

LIMBRICK OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ALLOTMENT

Support, advice, seeds and fertilisers provided. Group has now constituted itself, so it can be independent of Social Services to allow it to qualify for more funding opportunities.

RECLAIM (BURTON STREET) O.T. ALLOTMENT Support and advice provided.

R.E.C.Y.C. COMPOST COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SERVICE

Ongoing support and collaboration maintained throughout the project.

NETHERTHORPE SCHOOL Seeds and advice provided.

LAND IMPROVED

PONDEROSA OPEN SPACE

The final phase of planting was completed in the **Community Orchard**, which provides a unique facility for the area in the long term.

ALLOTMENTS

Eight allotments (= **2 acres** of land) were used for regular volunteering. These plots were maintained and improved as a teaching facility.

NEW PLOTS STARTED

Volunteers involved in the project have gone on to start a total of **eight new allotments**, with the confidence and experience they gained from their involvement in the project.

ORGANIC FOOD

During the life of the project, approximately **1000 Kg** of fresh, locally-grown fruit and vegetables were distributed to local people.

EMPLOYMENT

The project directly generated **2 years employment** for the course tutor. **Four** participants have now gone into regular employment as a result of their involvement.

PUBLICITY

LOCAL PRESS

The group was featured in an article by Martin Dawes in the **Star**. (see appendix)

LOCAL RADIO

Richard appeared twice on **Radio Sheffield** providing advice to listeners and publicising Organic volunteering opportunities.

EXHIBITION

In March 2001, we were able to use the new exhibition space at Crookesmoor Training Centre to organise ***The Organic Experience***, an exhibition of photographs, pictures and poetry to explain and publicise local organic growing. The exhibition was attended by several hundred people.

STALLS

S.O.F.I. organised stalls at the Ponderosa Carnival and at Heeley City Farm and Whirlow Hall Farmers' Market selling plants and fresh produce.

CONFERENCES

Members of the group attended several meetings organised by Sheffield Wildlife Trust and Healthy Sheffield. We also attended the International Conference on Community Gardening at Nottingham University.

HDRA OPEN DAYS

Volunteers were able to participate in two of these annual events at Unstone Grange, attended by more than **1000** members of the public. Publicity for these events included an article in the **Times** newspaper.

AWARDS

S.O.F.I. won the **Best Community Food Initiative** category in the Organic Food Awards 2001, organised by the Soil Association and the Mail on Sunday. Richard attended the prize-giving ceremony in London and shook hands with Jonathan Dimbleby.

BUDGET

During the two years of Futures Fund grants, the project was approximately £200 overspent. Precise figures with receipts were supplied to the Partnership Office as part of the quarterly returns.

