EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since December 2011, the Brixton People’s Kitchen has been turning food surplus from local businesses into free and healthy meals for local people. So far, we have saved 1.5 tonnes of food from being wasted. That’s a baby elephant.

A voluntary survey of UK retailers estimated that they produce 1.6 million tonnes of food waste, but the actual figures could be much higher. According to WRAP, the UK generates over 16 million tonnes of food waste from plough to plate every year. That’s more than 2000 elephants, and we would rather see all this food being cheerfully cooked, shared and eaten.

Being a finalist of Nesta’s Waste Reduction Challenge Prize has brought us a little closer to achieving this vision at scale. With the funding, we have upcycled a bicycle into a kitchen and, in addition to our regular monthly events in Myatt’s Fields Park, we have cooked up community feasts using surplus food, with our three new partner hosts: Max Roach One O’Clock Club, the Remakery, an organisation that is turning disused garages into workshops for makers using recycled materials, and Stockwell Partnership, a community development charity working with migrant families.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Our ambition was to inspire positive action against food waste, by acting as an open and joyful platform for food education, community building and skills-sharing. Our objectives were to:

• PREVENT MORE FOOD FROM BEING WASTED by doing more events, and by raising people’s levels of creative confidence in the kitchen;

• REACH A MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCE and test our model with people who might not otherwise take part in our regular events;

• SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY HOSTS to grow the will and the skills to set up their own food waste reduction projects, providing them with a £500 budget to cover start-up costs.

INNOVATION

Our experience before taking part in the challenge had highlighted the need for us to have a more holistic impact. This meant not just tackling business waste, but also enabling people to apply new skills and behaviours to reduce their household waste, and to eventually take ownership of the project within their own communities. We shaped our activities around the following principles:

• MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY WERE AT. We used the mobile kitchen to travel to the sites of our hosts, and co-designed the events with the group. We aimed to be flexible and responsive to the context, testing new ideas, and refining the format of each event, based on continuous feedback from our hosts.

• HARNESSING EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS. Our events focused on making the most of underused community spaces, including children’s centres and car parks, and on celebrating the skills brought by volunteers and participants.

• SEEKING TO HAVE A LONG-TERM IMPACT. While this summer’s events aimed at building demand for this sort of project, our activities are now focused on coaching our hosts to sustain our legacy, in a way that is relevant to them.

OUR IMPACT

Over the last 6 months we have been able to make a demonstrable impact due to our improved capacity. Since April 2013, we have:

• collected more than three times the amount of SURPLUS FOOD we were able to collect in the 6 months preceding that time.

• increased our VOLUNTEERS base by four times.

• inspired our 3 COMMUNITY HOSTS to run their own people’s kitchen, and are now working with them to grow their capacity to do so.


IMPACT

6 months
20 events
135 volunteers
758 hours volunteered
657 meals served
719 kgs of food collected from local businesses
3 new groups inspired to set up their own food waste project
**IMPACT SUMMARY**

The following diagram illustrates how the funding received has enabled us to input more into the project, and to deepen our impact as a result.

We are comparing 6 months preceding the testing period (September 2012 to April 2013) to 6 months of the challenge (April 2013 to September 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEFORE 30 VOLUNTEERS on our list, including 2 core organisers</td>
<td>BEFORE 6 EVENTS 1 per month in 1 location</td>
<td>BEFORE 200KG OF SURPLUS FOOD collected over 6 months</td>
<td>DIVERTING FOOD WASTE FROM LANDFILL (see p5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOW 134 VOLUNTEERS on our list, including 55 regular volunteers (have volunteered more than 4 times), 9 committee members</td>
<td>NOW 20 EVENTS 4 per month in 4 locations</td>
<td>NOW 719.8KG OF SURPLUS FOOD collected over 6 months</td>
<td>CHANGING ATTITUDES TO FOOD WASTE (see p6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 PART-TIME PAID STAFF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>INSPIRING PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION (see p6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEFORE 276 HOURS VOLUNTEERED in 6 months (1.5h a day)</td>
<td>BEFORE 1 BICYCLE KITCHEN made almost entirely out of recycled materials</td>
<td>6 LOCAL FOOD BUSINESSES are part of our network of donors.</td>
<td>PROMOTING COMMUNITY COHESION (see p7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOW 758 HOURS VOLUNTEERED in 6 months (4h a day)</td>
<td>BEFORE 12 BLOGPOSTS documenting our process</td>
<td>22 VOLUNTEERS have taken part in formal training opportunities.</td>
<td>GROWING SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE (see p7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 GROUPS have been inspired to set-up their own food waste project.</td>
<td>ENCOURAGING HEALTHY EATING (see p7)</td>
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<td>mobile-kitchen-cart.net</td>
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</table>
FOOD WASTE REDUCTION IMPACTS

DIVERTING FOOD WASTE FROM LANDFILL

METHOD Volunteers weighed the food collected and the food composted at each of the 20 events.

IMPACT We collected 719.8kg of food (an average of 36kg per event, over 20 events). Our target was £640 kg (40kg per event, over 16 events).

Our biggest food donors are Landridges Organics, and Lays of Chelsea, both organic wholesale greengrocers based in New Covent Garden Market (NCGM). We estimate they provided roughly 70% of all the food we collected, 90% of which would have been fed to livestock. The remaining 10% would have been composted.

We have also been collecting regularly from As Nature Intended, Oval Farmers Market, Italo Deli and Fishtales. While these businesses mentioned taking flexible initiatives to reduce waste, such as allowing staff to take unsold produce home, they estimated that a large majority would have gone to landfill.

WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED TO THE 719.8KG OF FOOD WE COLLECTED

- 7% 50.3KG would have been composted
- 30% 216KG would have gone to landfill
- 63% 453KG would have been fed to livestock

WHAT WE DID WITH THE 719.8KG OF FOOD WE COLLECTED INSTEAD

- 79% 566.4KG was prepared into 657 delicious meals
- 20% 135 KG was composted in community gardens
- 2.6% 18.5 KG was redistributed to food banks

1. (2009, "Covent Garden Market Food Waste Reduction Case Study" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWVq5aNV6Es)
CHANGING FOOD DONORS’ ATTITUDES TO FOOD WASTE

METHOD Informal interviews with our regular donors.

MAKING IT EASY FOR THEM

Over the course of the summer all of our donors have expressed their gratitude at having some of their surplus food collected.

“It always makes me smile when I see you cycling around the corner because I hate having to throw away so much good food every day”. NCGM floor manager

In our conversations with our largest suppliers (NCGM) about how to make the relationship mutually beneficial, we realised that convenience was key. To some extent, they see us as a ‘feel-good’ food surplus collection service. By demonstrating how effortless it can be for them, we are likely to have impacted on their willingness to support more community projects.

SHOWING DONORS THE IMPACT OF THEIR DONATION

We have aimed to make our food donors feel more involved, by showing them flyers and photos.

In September, the group of parents at Max Roach expressed an interest in meeting our food donors, so five mums and seven children joined us on a visit to New Covent Garden Market. The suppliers fed back to us how valuable it was to meet the people benefiting from their donations:

‘Now that I see where the food is going I’ll make sure we keep even more behind for you. I’ll make sure you get some good stuff!’ NCGM trader

BEING PART OF A SUPPORTIVE NETWORK OF BUSINESSES

We have also collected from some smaller local businesses. While food collections from small delis and corner shops are never as abundant and efficient as from NCGM, we have kept our relationships strong. We have learnt that they saw a benefit in contributing to a local community project, and that we saw a benefit in being part of a supportive network of local businesses.

For instance, our partnership with Italo has meant that we were able to run a supper club at the Bonnington Café, raising £426 in one night. Through this gig, one of our volunteers, met one of the Bonnington Café’s chefs, and is now working for her regulary.

CHANGING ATTITUDES TO FOOD WASTE

METHOD Event feedback cards: 127 responses, and informal interviews with 3 community hosts

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE FOOD WASTE PROBLEM

As our baselining evaluation revealed that only 6 out of 89 people had mentioned learning about food waste as a result of taking part in one of our events, we set ourselves to make the issue more visible. We involved volunteers in the weighing of the food collected and composted, and wrote the data up on the menu board.

We also started to involve more volunteers in food collections, allowing people to take home a small amount of the food collected as an incentive. While this was relatively successful, it also required more time and attention, and we are yet have to find the right balance between efficiency and engagement when it comes to food waste collections.

The most successful application of this was probably the Max Roach visit to New Covent Garden Market mentioned earlier. The group learned from one of the traders that he throws away an average of £3000 worth of food every week. This certainly made an impact on the group, as they are now considering using part of the £500 we are offering them to purchase a bike trailer, that would allow them to collect food surplus from New Covent Garden Market.
ENCOURAGING WASTE PREVENTING BEHAVIOURS

While information is key to shifting attitudes, our emphasis on learning by doing makes the biggest difference. Informal conversations with guests and community hosts suggested that people were surprised by the creativity that comes with having to improvise dishes with whatever ingredients are collected on the day.

"[The participants] wouldn’t normally think about food waste. They were apprehensive at the beginning about how some of the vegetables looked and what to cook. The events are about raising awareness of where food comes from and about the simplicity of cooking good food from very little." Host

We successfully encouraged people to work with food in a different way. Our first session in Max Roach was welcome with the question “Where’s the chicken?”. But by the end of the event, they were cooking millet stuffed capsicums and fresh tomato salsas! Encouraging people to think creatively about using the food that was available to them, turned them from ‘yuck’ to ‘yum’.

As we were keen to emphasise the link to household waste, we added the question ‘how will you reduce food waste at home?’ to our feedback cards.

This introduced a self-reflection element to our events. Most responses referred to buying less and planning meals. The improvised nature of our sessions supports both aspects. For some events, other self-reflection formats worked best:

“The most inspiring conversation that came out of our events at Max Roach was with three children, aged 4 to 6. They couldn’t understand why anyone would throw away food and, after writing some jumbled letters on a little white board, proceeded to lecture us, whilst pointing to what they had written on ‘Eat everything on your plate’, ‘Vegetables are good for you’ and ‘Don’t throw away food’. We wholeheartedly agree with them!” Kitchen coordinator

Finally, we have distributed 30 food waste diaries from Love Food Hate Waste to our volunteers. We have yet to collect the responses, but we hope to better understand to what extent people apply what they learn with us at home. Interestingly, the core team members who have tested those have mentioned being much more aware of the food they throw away, through the simple act of recording it.

SOCIAL IMPACTS

PROMOTING COMMUNITY COHESION

METHOD Event feedback cards: 127 responses, and informal interviews with 3 community hosts

Our findings reflected those of our baselining evaluation. Almost all responses to our events survey refer to refer to enjoying the sense of community.

HIGHLIGHTING NEW COMMUNITY SPACES

The mobile kitchen seems to have created opportunities for people to engage with local spaces in new ways. This was especially true of the Remakery, which, from the outside, looks nothing more than a disused car park.

“The mobile kitchen was definitely a bit of a spectacle, and attracted people who wouldn’t otherwise take notice of the space.” Host
Helping to connect isolated parents to networks of support was an area of impact we hadn’t expected. One of our partner hosts, Stockwell Partnership, supports 500 migrant families per year, through one-to-one advocacy services. The group included people from Ethiopia, Portugal, Poland, Somalia, and Japan. Some of them had recently arrived to the UK, some of them struggled with English, a few of them reported feeling isolated as a result of being a ‘stay-at-home’ parent. Engaging the same group over a number of events allowed them to bond in a very informal way, in the safe space provided by the children’s centre hosting the sessions.

“As an organisation, we do a lot of engagement projects, but they tend to be one-off. Because you have done 5 events with us, people had that continuity. Friendships have grown out of the project.” Host

Stockwell Partnership also highlighted the positive aspect of hosting a creative activity for parents, while providing the créche, allowing parents to take a short break from parenting and connect with each other as adults.

**Method**

 Volunteers surveys, event feedback cards (127 responses), and informal interviews with hosts.

**Volunteering Opportunities**

We estimate that a total of 758 hours have been volunteered over 6 months, which is almost equivalent to a full-time position. We currently have 134 volunteers on our list, including approximately 30 regular Brixton People’s Kitchen volunteers, and 25 that have been recruited by our partner hosts. As the size of our events vary, the number of volunteers fluctuates between 6 to 15 per event. Opportunities to get involved include food collection, cooking, serving, and cleaning up. A few people have also stepped up to contribute more, based on their skills and interests, by coordinating events, producing films, or writing guest posts on our blog.

Our 9 committee members are also involved on a voluntary basis, fulfilling roles such as evaluation, accounts and legal, coordination, marketing and social media.

Finally, the Challenge Prize funding has allowed us to hire two coordinators, who have worked one day a week for 6 months. We are currently looking at ways to sustain their positions.

**Formal Training**

We partnered with the Lambeth Food Safety team to provide food hygiene training to 14 volunteers from our 3 hosts sites. We also funded online food hygiene courses for 5 kitchen coordinators.

“The food hygiene certificate was definitely an extra motivation for some of the parents who have been looking for a job for a while.” Host

Other formal training opportunities we funded included Community Café workshops provided by Sustain, and coaching provided by Lambeth Volunteering Centre.

**Skills Gained Informally**

A quarter of the volunteers who have responded to our survey were motivated by the prospect of learning new skills, mostly cooking skills.

Almost 60% of all the people who have responded to our event surveys, including volunteers and guests, have mentioned learning new cooking skills, tasting new flavour combinations, and eating types of food that they hadn’t tried before (compared to 27% at baselining).

For the hosts, the way the events were facilitated - not about teaching recipes, but about being creative with the limited resources available to us - were key to encouraging pride, ownership and self-confidence:

“ It was great that the cooking wasn’t dictated. We created our own menus and everyone was fully involved and then we ate what we made!” Host
“WOW THAT IS INCREDIBLE! I’m so happy to be a little part of this, you guys have taken this big wreck and made it into something so beautiful and special. ... I’m glad it found a better purpose and will enjoy a happy life on this planet, even though it is a bike!”

We received this email from Mike, who sold us the bike parts for £20, after finding them in a skip.
**KEY EVENTS**

### April
- 6/04Committee Meeting prototyping the bike
- 12/04Committee Meeting selecting the 3 extra community hosts

### May
- 19/05Myatt’s Fields 63kg - 68 meals
- 23/05Remakery 30.7kg - 25 meals

### June
- 2/06Big Lunch We were paid by Loughborough Junction Action Group to cater for the Big Lunch
- 15/06Feminist Library Talk
- 16/06Remakery 30.8kg - 42 meals
- 23/06Committee Meeting skills mapping and shaping the team
- 25/06Stockwell Partnership “It’s very different to the way people may be used to cooking, with no recipes and definitely no ready meals.” Host
- 27/06Max Roach 38.0kg - 21 meals

### July
- 1/07Supper Club raised £426
- 13/07Speaking at Tedx Brixton
- 16/07Remakery 36.6kg - 45 meals
- 19/07Committee Meeting mapping future opportunities
- 20/07Stall at Lambeth Country Show
- 13/08Stockwell Partnership 27.8kg - 18 meals
- 21/07Remakery 36.6kg - 45 meals

### August
- 1/08Committee Meeting
- 9/07Food hygiene training delivered by Lambeth Council to 14 volunteers
- 13/08Stockwell Partnership 27.8kg - 18 meals
- 17/08Stockwell Festival We supported parents to run plan and run their own event.

### September
- 1/08Committee Meeting
- 2/08Committee Meeting
- 6/04Committee Meeting prototyping the bike
- 12/04Committee Meeting selecting the 3 extra community hosts

### October
- 3/08Remakery 35.5kg - 21 meals

### November
- 20/07Stall at Lambeth Country Show

### December
- 13/08Stockwell Partnership 27.8kg - 18 meals
- 17/08Stockwell Food Festival raised £420

**Max Roach**

### Test Event
- 25/04Remakery 35kg - 19 meals

### Launching the Mobile Kitchen
- 28/04Myatt’s Fields 112.2kg - 97 meals

### Map the Kitchen
- 30/05Max Roach 25.9kg - 26 meals

### Remakery
- 30/06Myatt’s Fields 26.6kg - 52 meals
- 30/07Stockwell Partnership 15.4kg - 19 meals

### Max Roach
- 28/07Myatt’s Fields 61.1kg - 48 meals
- 25/08, Myatt’s Fields 43.4kg - 46 meals

**Max Roach** visit to New Covent Garden Market to meet the food donors.
BUILDING THE BIKE

HIGHLIGHTS

Building the mobile kitchen was a great way to build interest in the project as a whole. 25 volunteers, including professional sign-painters, film-makers and bike mechanics, got involved at all stages of the building process, doing everything from prototyping, to pulling nails out of reclaimed wood, to designing specialised modular storage systems. The idea also gave the project an international dimension, with two artists traveling from Germany to donate their time and expertise.

The building process sparked interest from people who might otherwise have avoided food-related projects. Others became regular volunteers after having heard about us through the building aspect. We blogged about progress, building up anticipation. As a result, the launch of the mobile kitchen was our largest event of the summer, with over 100 people present.

It was also a good way to begin an effective partnership with the Remakery. We used their extensive set of tools and surplus materials from their stores - in fact, we estimate that 90% of the materials used to make the kitchen would otherwise have been thrown away. Finally, we demonstrated that is possible to do a lot with a little - the entire mobile kitchen cost only £520, allowing us to buy another three-wheeled bike for food transport.

The unique nature of the mobile kitchen captures people’s attention as we cycle through the back roads, and works as an effective conversation starter when we unfold it in public spaces. A wonderful engagement tool, the mobile kitchen also allows us to be very adaptable, and to cook with little to no other facilities.

CHALLENGES

Apart from the tiresome online quest for bike parts, we encountered surprisingly little challenges in the building phase. Using the bike, however, did present some small logistical challenges, particularly regarding storage and gas refill. Additionally, managing the expectations of our culinarily ambitious volunteers, was key for those events that relied solely on the mobile kitchen, as its cooking capacity is limited to 4 camping hubs.

LEARNINGS

• We stored the mobile kitchen at the Remakery while it was still a building site, and our food storage was at Myatt’s Fields Park. While shared spaces have their advantages, we have realised that having our own base would help a lot with logistics!

• We also hadn’t anticipated the skills and time required for bike maintenance and logistics. If we had to start again, we would recruit a bike and equipment coordinator.

• While we have produced a guide for how to use the mobile kitchen, we think it might also be necessary to produce guidelines for how to cook on the mobile kitchen. We are excited about writing a book of simple recipes suited to our modest 4 gas hobs.
**SHAPING THE TEAM**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Forming the committee.** Until April 2013, the Brixton People's Kitchen was run by 2 core volunteers. At the start of the challenge, we formally invited people who had been involved in the project to form a committee. We got 9 responses, and brought the group together to map roles and responsibilities. We defined the roles of overseer, volunteer coordinator (paid), food collection coordinator (paid), and kitchen coordinators (2 per site). This was a very useful exercise, which enabled us to grow quickly, and to deliver 4 times more events than we had been able to before.

- **Recruiting volunteers.** Acceptance into the Challenge Prize finale also prompted us to seek out a large number of new volunteers in a short space of time. We recruited people for specific roles through Twitter, Facebook, Couchsurfing and Escape the City. We also registered with the Lambeth Volunteering Centre, our local volunteer engagement and support organisation.

- **Volunteers engagement.** The Volunteering Centre helped us to access and engage local people but also supported us to develop structures and policies to enable effective working with volunteers. Our volunteers coordinator facilitated monthly inductions and socials, and we introduced a loyalty card system for our regular volunteers, rewarding them with free tickets to our supper clubs. All of this had a very positive impact on the amount of returning volunteers.

**CHALLENGES**

- In order to diversify our pool of volunteers, we had originally planned to engage young people from Lambeth Youth Offending Service. Although very positive at the start, this opportunity failed to develop into a real partnership, as the Y.O.S. team changed.

- The frequency of the events left the core team short of breath more than once! As life got in the way, a number of kitchen coordinators cancelled, leaving the core team to cover, which led to over-work and under capacity.

**LEARNINGS**

- We have learned a lot about relying almost exclusively on voluntary inputs. We have realised how important it is to set realistic expectations, and to have back up volunteers for each of the roles.

- We have also realised that, while a few volunteers have been extremely proactive, many people are happier turning up and being told what to do. Renumerating all coordination roles might help to ensure reliability at this level.

- We have recently reviewed the role mapping exercise, have identified a number of new roles, and are planning to do an open call for new committe members. A key role would be the one of a team leader (as opposed to project leader), who would focus on monitoring energy levels, and keeping the team motivated.

**COACHING OUR PARTNER HOSTS**

**HIGHLIGHTS** We have had follow-up meetings with each of our three new partner hosts, and they are all keen to take the project forward within their own community. (See Appendix II for support plan details).

- **Max Roach.** A small, enthusiastic planning committee has been established. The first event is due to take place on 31st October and events will occur bi-monthly.

- **Stockwell Partnership** have applied to the Design Council’s Knee-High project to fund the development of the cooking sessions into a parents’ support group. We are also supporting them to shape their own team, and find their own food donors.

- **Remakery.** We have developed a support plan for them to set up an in-house People's Kitchen.

**CHALLENGES**

We underestimated the amount of effort and confidence required to set up your own people's kitchen, expecting our partners to achieve in 4 months what we had achieved in 1 year! There was a fantastic impact from having events at the new sites, but a lot of it was due to us bringing the food, the equipment, the enthusiasm and the experience – and then we took it back with us!

As one of our hosts put it, we 'took the group to a place where they now think creatively about cooking with what they have' but haven't necessarily grown their confidence to take on other aspects of the project, such as food collection and volunteers coordination.
LEARNINGS

- **Transferring ownership progressively.** We definitely provided inspiration and built demand, but setting up new people’s kitchens requires a lot more commitment. For instance, we could have requested that each partner designates at least three key people to shadow our team, or we could have focused each session on learning a different aspect of the project (kitchen co-ordination, food supply, food hygiene, volunteer recruitment).

- **Building confidence from the start.** The most successful site in terms of taking ownership of the project is Max Roach, and we assume it is due to the strong leadership of Candice, the centre manager, and to the fact that the group already has strong bonds. Making sure these conditions are in place at the start of a project, or working with the new site to build a confident team early on would be key.

- **Sharing those learnings.** We are planning to produce a people’s kitchen toolkit (see Potential section).

TESTING OTHER FORMATS

- **Supper clubs.** In addition to our community outreach events, we ran two very successful supper clubs, the first one in partnership with one of our food donors, Italo, at the Bonnington Café, and the second one as part of the Streatham Food Festival. They were received with a lot of positivity and raised near £900. It also enabled the 13 volunteers who made them happen to get some near professional kitchen experience!

- **Hiring the mobile kitchen.** In early October we hired the bike to another community group, the Bandstand Beds in Clapham1 at a discounted price of £125. This worked really well to promote cooking and skills sharing as a form of community engagement. It was a great opportunity to give other community groups a taste of using cooking as a form of community engagement, and especially nice as the people’s kitchen had been the inspiration for it. It could potentially become a significant revenue stream for us. Hiring it twice a month, at a cost of £500 a day would generate £12,000 a year.

PARTNERSHIPS

This project was enabled by a strong network of local (and international) partners and collaborators, including:

- **Partner hosts.** Myatt’s Fields Park, Stockwell Partnership (with Saint Stephen’s Children’s Centre and Larkhall One O’Clock Club), Max Roach Centre, and the Remakery.

- **Makers.** GartenStudio, Entwruft Direkt, Cycooldelic, London Green Cycles, Bella Pace.

- **Food donors.** Langridges Organics, Lays of Chelsea, As Nature Intended, Italo, Malinka, Oval Farmer’s Market, Fishtails, the Best Before Project.

- **Others.** Streatham Food Festival, White Lion Pub, Bonnington Café, Grub Club, Incredible Edible Lambeth, Lambeth Council, Lambeth Volunteer Centre.

3 POTENTIAL
FUTURE POTENTIAL

1. SCALE & DIFFUSION

By testing our model with 3 very different communities, and by coaching them into running their own food waste reduction project, we have learned a lot about what it actually takes to run a successful people’s kitchen. We think the key ingredients are:

- A CONFIDENT TEAM that feels supported, and clear expectations about commitment.
- ENGAGED VOLUNTEERS who feel valued, and can contribute and learn on various levels.
- MOMENTUM generated by trying out new things and celebrating successes.
- SOLID RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOOD DONORS who understand the value of the project.
- A GOOD SPACE and an event format that reflects the limitations of that space.

We want to continue to share this learning with other community groups, and have defined the following scale of support.

1. COACHING Working with a group for 6 months to build their team, and grow their network of donors.
   - Tested with: Max Roach, Stockwell Partnership, Remakery
   - What do we need? Each new site would require the equivalent of 200 hours of support (£2,000).
   - What’s the value for us? new partnerships, new venues

2. IMMERSION Supporting a group to running one event, enabling them to learn by doing.
   - Tested with: Incredible Edible Southwark, Garten Studio
   - What do we need? Each group would require the equivalent of 16 hours of support (£160).
   - What’s the value for us? new partnerships, income generation

3. MOBILE KITCHEN HIRE Renting the mobile kitchen to groups interested in testing cooking and skills sharing as a form of community engagement.
   - Tested with: Bandstand Beds
   - What do we need? A mobile kitchen coordinator (£320/m), and a mobile kitchen guide + recipe book.
   - What’s the value for us? Income generation (£500 for a day), visibility of the BPK brand through the kitchen.

4. DIY GUIDE Publishing a guide to setting up your own people’s kitchen, downloadable by donation.
   - What do we need? Collaborate with Dalston People’s Kitchen. This could be followed by a launch accompanied with a ‘how to set up your own kitchen’ workshop.
   - What’s the value for us? Minor income generation through donations, establishing ourselves as a leader, and promoting our other support offers.

In addition to this, we would collaborate with the Dalston People’s Kitchen to facilitate a network of people’s kitchens, focused on learning from each other. We would aim at making it as low maintenance as possible. It could, for instance, take the shape of a yearly assembly.
2. DEEPENING OUR LOCAL IMPACT

**MAKING THE MOST OF OUR FOOD DONORS**

We estimate that collecting everyday from our 2 traders in New Covent Garden Market only would enable us to cook and average of 50 meals everyday. This could fuel a small community café open 5 days a week. This might imply:

- partnering with managers of whole market, rather than just individual traders, in order to expand and diversify our reach
- investing in developing a food collection system that is both efficient and engaging. We have thought, for instance, of partnering with the Good Gym\(^1\) to run a ‘food collection fitness bootcamp’!
- recruiting a part-time café manager (£1,000/m)
- finding a base (see below)

**SETTING UP A BASE!**

While the flexibility of our approach was key to inspire the new sites, having a base would allow us to have an even deeper impact. We have initiated discussions with the Remakery, Brixton Green\(^2\), and the Little Cat Café, in Myatt’s Fields Park. All are potential spaces for us to set foot, temporarily or longer-term.

Our base would include a place to store both the mobile kitchen, our equipment and food, a cooking area and seating area for dining. It would provide a place where people know that they can reach us and make coordinating logistics for outreach events a much easier task. It would also mean that we could run more regular events, thus maximising the use of our wonderful volunteers and cooking up more food that would have otherwise gone to waste.

We would also use it as an inspiration space, and run workshops on how to set up your own people’s kitchen, and invite individuals or organisations to share skills or provide formal training around cooking.


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**WHAT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY**

More time and money would enable to have an even deeper impact, by affording us to:

**DEVELOP STAFF**

To ensure that we have the capacity to run more events and inspire new groups, we would invest more time in identifying and recruiting the right team. This would involve setting out clear expectations of the time and tasks required for each role, and having contingency plans for when things don’t go as planned. Renumerating the co-ordination roles both for our own team and for the host teams would help to ensure greater reliability, and ensure that there is time to recruit volunteers, coordinate food collection and lead the process.

**DEVELOP VOLUNTEERS**

Hiring a Volunteers Co-ordinator for 2 days a week instead of one, would enable us to provide better supervision and regular follow ups with our volunteers to ensure that their time and skills are valued and they are engaged with the project. The co-ordinator could also develop more training opportunities through the Lambeth Volunteering Centre for example, develop a more comprehensive database to track the different levels of involvement and more clearly target and offer the opportunities available. There is a great opportunity to run more events and reduce more food waste, provided we have a committed group of volunteers with the passion and the skills to help deliver them.
**Develop our Food Donors**

Similarly, hiring a Food Collection Co-ordinator on for 2 days a week instead of one, would mean we could develop regular avenues for food suppliers to directly see the impact of the food they donate, and realised the ideas outlined above.

**Invest More into Coaching our Partners**

To better enable us to hand over responsibility to the new sites we would spend more time designing and tailoring the sessions to meet each site where they are at in terms of ownership and confidence. We would ensure that a volunteer from the new site could shadow us. This would focus on the three key roles of a people's kitchen: food collection (developing supplier relationships, collecting, composting, monitoring), coordinating the cooking and the event, and recruiting volunteers. This would require more time to develop a staged plan for the sites and a deeper level of commitment from the sites to take on ownership of developing their own kitchen.

**Documenting the Process**

With so much time devoted to setting up and running the events, it can be hard to take a step back, document and reflect on what has happened before diving into the next event. To help capture it all, we would have developed a volunteer position in charge of learning and communications. Including this documentation process as a key part of running a kitchen, and supervising a volunteer to do it, would enable us to blog, and better capture and share our journey.

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**What Next**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continue to Coach our Partners</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 Self-Sustaining People's Kitchens</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Find a Base</strong></td>
<td><strong>Invest in the Mobile Kitchen</strong></td>
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<td>Testing Little Cat Café</td>
<td><strong>A Sturdier Mobile Kitchen, A Guide for How to Use it, and How to Make One</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grow the Committee</strong></td>
<td><strong>A Stronger Committee</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>We want to expand the committee membership to include volunteers that have been most involved, and add a stronger mix of both strategic direction and practical experience.</td>
<td>We will keep running our monthly events at Myatts Field Park. This will enable us to maintain consistency with our volunteers, food suppliers and regular guests, and could be the time and place when anyone can come and see us and experience what we do.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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APPENDICES

I  challenge prize support feedback
II  support plans for our 3 partners
III  press and social media mentions
IV  how the team worked
V   waste reduction pyramid
APPENDIX 1
CHALLENGE PRIZE SUPPORT FEEDBACK

Being a finalist of the Waste Reduction Challenge Prize has had a huge impact on the project, and has meant that we grew our team, and multiplied our impact very fast.

The aspects of the support we received from Nesta that we found most valuable included:

THE INDUCTION DAY. It was a good opportunity to learn about the other finalists, and to spend some quality time as a team - which we can rarely afford!

THE SUPPORT SESSIONS FROM 100% OPEN. We appreciated the flexibility, and the fact that they were tailored to our needs. They were a good opportunity to both share and reflect on our progress.

THE REQUIREMENT TO CONDUCT BETTER EVALUATION! Although challenging, this was a real positive, as it forced us to really think about how we tell a better story about the impact we are having, and about why the project exists in the first place.

Upon reflection, it would have also been great to have the following things in place.

GOVERNANCE SUPPORT. The Brixton People’s Kitchen is a very young project, and we have had to grow quickly over the 6 months testing period. With started without having a formal legal structure, and it took time and effort to source pro-bono legal support ourselves.

ACCESS TO MENTORS. As mentioned before, we are a very young team, and having a mentor would have been invaluable. While we feel we really benefited from the sessions with 100% Open, having regular catch-ups with someone who has experience of running this type of projects, and who could have given us critical feedback would have been amazing.

JUDGES VISIT & DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS. We really appreciated being visited by one of the judges, but felt that one single visit was very light-touch. More social media love from Nesta, and maybe a blogpost on Nesta’s website documenting the progress of each finalist might have helped the judges to get a better sense of what was going on on the ground.

LEARNING DAYS. It would have been good to bring each of the finalists back together halfway through the testing, and at the end, to share progress, and learn from each other’s challenges.
APPENDIX II
SUPPORT PLANS FOR OUR 3 PARTNERS

The following pages outline the type of support we are going to provide our partner hosts over the next few months, in order to take them from where they are at, to a fully functioning people’s kitchen project.

Each plan has been co-designed with the group, and based on feedback collected at each event. Each site is at a different stage of progress, and the support plans are tailored to reflect their objectives.
OBJECTIVES OF THE REMAKERY

The Remakery will be a shared workspace for makers who work with reclaimed materials. It will be used by a diversity of designers and upcyclers, and has already received 200 expressions of interest.

One of the ambitions of the Remakery is also to act as a business incubator, and for makers to use the space in order to launch their business. The Remakery is currently still being refurbished, and will partly open in December.

The Remakery will have a kitchen and would like to provide homecooked food to the users of the space. Users of the space will include:

- the managing team (facilities manager, education manager, volunteers coordinator)
- some volunteers hosting and supervising different workshop spaces
- makers using the different workshops (on a full-time or part-time / one-off basis)
- people attending evening courses

This could for example take the shape of a weekly networking lunches for the makers, daily catering for the managing team, or monthly events open to the public.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

The Remakery is keen to apply the ethos of the Brixton People's Kitchen to the way food is going to be provided. We discussed a number of options, from least to most involved partnership.

OPTION 1 | BUILDING THE TEAM
Brixton People's Kitchen helps the Remakery to form the team that will run the cooking activities by:

- promoting volunteering opportunities
- coaching the team (food collection, food hygiene, etc.)

£500
- training materials
- volunteer expenses
- food hygiene training
- paying the coach

OPTION 2 | FOOD HEROES’
Brixton People's Kitchen supports the Remakery to set up a programme of cooking events engaging people from the local estate, to run cooking sessions themselves (inspired by Myatt’s Fields Food Heroes), by:

- recruiting potential cooks ad coaching them
- providing the food

£500
- training materials
- volunteer expenses
- food hygiene training
- paying the coach

OPTION 3 | BRIXTON PEOPLE’S KITCHEN MOVES IN!
Brixton People’s Kitchen use the Remakery kitchen as their main hub, and:

- provide regular meals to users and facilitate cooking sessions
- use the space to run educational workshops
- store equipment and food in the space

£500
- oven and additional equipment
PROGRESS OF MAX ROACH

We hosted four kitchens at the Max Roach Centre One O’Clock Club, focusing heavily on involving the children in the cooking process. As the events progressed we asked for feedback and dedicated increasing amounts of time within each event to forward planning.

Since our final event we have had two planning meetings with the centre manager, Candice, and the parents who are interested in continuing with the project. One suggestion that came out of the feedback was a wish to meet the food suppliers. We thought this was a great idea and arranged for the group to go on a trip to New Covent Garden Market. Early on a Thursday morning we gathered at the entrance to the market, five mums and seven children, and walked into the site. We visited Lays of Chelsea and Langridges, two of our biggest suppliers, who both talked to the group about how the market runs and explained the difficult waste situation. Pat, of Langridges, told the group that he has to throw away £3000 worth of food away in an average week.

The suppliers were delighted to meet the group and fed back to us how valuable it was to meet the people that were benefiting from their donations. Pat said ‘Now that I see where the food is going I’ll make sure we keep even more behind for you. I’ll make sure you get some good stuff!’

HOW WE ARE HELPING

The positive response from the food suppliers has encouraged the group to think more concretely about collecting surplus for their own events. Max Roach are currently completing a budget proposal for the money (£500) that we have allocated this and this will include a bike trailer to collect food surplus from New Covent Garden Market.

A small, enthusiastic planning committee has been established at the Max Roach Centre. Part of our support has included developing a task list and coordinating the task delegation.

The first event is due to take place on 31st October and events will occur bi-monthly, alternating between cooking sessions and ‘Bring and share’ events. The focus of both events will be using surplus food, from the market and from home respectively. Max Roach Centre has also chosen to combine their events with education on vegetables and healthy eating for the benefit of the children.

Brixton People’s Kitchen have provided Max Roach with one coordinator to oversee the progression of their food project. The coordinator will be present for the first two events and will then act within a long-arm supportive capacity. Brixton People’s Kitchen will review the project every two months for the following six months and provide additional support if needed.

The most inspiring conversation that came out of our events at Max Roach was a conversation with three young children, between the ages of 4 and 6. They couldn’t understand why anyone would throw away food and, after writing some jumbled letters on a little white board, proceeded to lecture us (whilst pointing to what they had written) on ‘Eat everything on your plate’, ‘Vegetables are good for you’ and ‘Don’t throw away food’. We wholeheartedly agree with them!
STOCKWELL PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS

Stockwell Partnership is a local charity that supports 500 migrant families per year, through one-to-one advocacy services. We worked with a group of 15 parents, including people from Ethiopia, Portugal, Poland, Somalia, and Japan. Some of them had recently arrived to the UK, some of them struggled with English, a few of them reported feeling isolated as a result of being a ‘stay-at-home’ parent.

According to Stockwell Partnership, the positive impacts of the projects are multiple: getting people to think creatively about food waste, encouraging people to eat more healthy and fresh food, getting people to share culinary skills and cooking traditions with one another, and providing an informal space for people to grow supportive friendships.

The sessions were the result of a 3 way partnership, between BPK, who provided the food, and facilitated the cooking, Stockwell Partnership, who brought the group together, and Saint Steven’s Children’s Centre, which provided the venue. An added benefit of using a children’s centre was that which connecting newly arrived parents to the services they provide.

After running 4 events, we also supported the group to run their own event, for the Stockwell Festival, in early September. This was meant as a step forward to the group taking ownership of the project.

STOCKWELL PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES

While the events were really successful, bringing the group the a place where they can run their own cooking sessions independently will be a challenge. Language barriers and low levels of confidence, which weren’t a problem at all during the cooking sessions themselves, might become an issue as we are encouraging the parents to take on organising roles. In order to alleviate this, Stockwell Partnership would like to:

- Work with two parents, who have been more confident and proactive than the rest of the group, to coach them into leading the group and becoming the key points of contacts.
- Make it of real value for them. While most have enjoyed the social aspect of the events, some have seen the experience as a step forward towards employability, and have requested volunteers certificates and letters of recommendations. We want to emphasise this aspect, with a mini awards ceremony at the next support meeting.
- Stockwell Partnership have seen value of the cooking sessions as a platform for growing supportive relationships. They have applied to the Design Council’s Knee High project to take the idea forward as a parents support group.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

OPTION 1 COACHING STOCKWELL PARTNERSHIP

Brixton People’s Kitchen ‘teaches’ the Stockwell Partnership team how to run an event, and how to grow their own suppliers network. Stockwell Partnership will provide one full-time volunteer to shadow us, and facilitate the group.

OPTION 2 COACHING THE GROUP

Brixton People’s Kitchen works with the group of parents themselves, and runs five coaching sessions between December and April, around:

1. reflecting on the experience
2. visiting New Covent Garden Market, for the group to connect to the issue of food waste
3. planning food collection, approaching local retailers
4. shaping the team, allocating responsibilities, defining budget.
APPENDIX III
PRESS AND SOCIAL MEDIA MENTIONS

The building of the bike and new, and more ambitious events in new areas generated a lot of press interest, ranging from international and national press ...


TELEGRAPH http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/10280904/Profiting-from-food-waste-is-no-longer-just-for-bin-divers.html

OPENDEMOCRACY http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/tess-riley/rise-of-sharing-economy

THE HANKOOK TIMES (KOREA) http://news.hankooki.com/ArticleView/ArticleView.php?url=world/201306/h2013061121010122450.htm&ver=vo02

... to local media:

SOUTH LONDON PRESS

Brixton Bugle https://twitter.com/Bobbie_Dazzler/status/32774923933052929/photo/1

... and a range of blogs including:


Below the River http://belowtheriver.co.uk/why-it-matters-the-joy-of-the-whole-table/
http://belowtheriver.co.uk/why-it-matters-the-joy-of-the-whole-table/
http://belowtheriver.co.uk/were-you-at-tedxrixton-we-were/

DotDotDot http://www.dotdotdotproperty.com/guardian-blogs/1448

Ilana Taub http://taublerone.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/a-not-so-long-time-ago-in-a-neighbourhood-not-far-away/
http://taublerone.wordpress.com/2013/06/05/food-fighters-unite/

We tripled our Twitter following to well over over 1,000, and were ranked seventh in a list of ‘Top 20 people to follow’ on food poverty/food waste issues by one site: http://thefoodbankers.wordpress.com/2013/04/28/the-top-20-food-bankers-to-follow-on-twitter/

Finally, we have blogged about our progress, and invited our hosts and volunteers to contribute as guests bloggers:


http://brixtonpk.wordpress.com/2013/05/22/a-lovely-guest-post-from-one-of-our-volunteer-cooks-ilana/
APPENDIX IV
HOW THE TEAM WORKED

supports

EVENTS

COORDINATION

REGULAR VOLUNTEERS

KITCHEN COORDINATORS

COMMUNITY HOST

GUESTS

EVENTS COORDINATOR

VOLUNTEERS COORDINATOR

Camilla

Lucy

Fan

FOOD DONORS

FOOD BANKS

SUPPORTERS

FOOD DONORS

FOOD BANKS

REGULAR VOLUNTEERS

NETWORK WEAVER

Supper Clubs

Legal Advisor

Money Magician

Tom Alice Farhan Jill

supports
People who have attended our events have reported feeling more resourceful in their cooking. The Mobile Kitchen events have been a combination of awareness raising, inspiration and practical skills sharing. This will contribute to changing behaviours to reduce household food waste, and enable people to set up their own projects.

90% of the food used during a People’s Kitchen event is surplus food from local businesses. For each event, we have used an average of 36kg of perishable ingredients per event, in addition to long shelf life items donated by Best Before. The Mobile Kitchen will enable us to...

Food scraps were composted in community gardens at Myatt’s Fields Park, Max Roach Centre, and Larkhall Centre (Stockwell).