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Gwell Cysylltiadau Busnes Organig
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Better Organic Business Links

# FOOD VALUES

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PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY

The Food Values project has been run by Jane Powell of Organic Centre Wales (OCW) and Dr Sophie Wynne-Jones (Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, Aberystwyth University), working with Rebecca Sanderson and Alice Hooker-Stroud at the Public Interest Research Centre and Sam Packer to evaluate and communicate findings.

**The Public Interest Research Centre** takes inspiration from a body of work called **Common Cause**, which seeks to apply an understanding of values to strategies for inspiring social change. Common Cause originated within WWF-UK, working in collaboration with several other UK charities. 'Common Cause: The Case for Working with our Cultural Values' was published in 2010 and is available at **www.valuesandframes.org**, along with many other related publications.

The delivery of the food education events and subsequent evaluations have also included a variety of partners including **Bangor University, Age Cymru, Neath Port Talbot College, Cwm Harry, Mid Wales Food and Land Trust, Cardiff Food Council, the Church in Wales, Work with Meaning, This is Rubbish and Rachel Lilley.**

**'Food Values' is funded through OCW's Better Organic Business Links (BOBL) project,** a six-year initiative designed to support the primary producer in Wales and grow the market for Welsh organic produce in a sustainable way. BOBL's aim is to develop markets for organic produce whilst driving innovation and promoting sustainable behaviours at all levels within the supply chain; to increase demand for organic produce, especially in the home market; and to ensure that the primary producers are aware of market demands. It has worked extensively with schools and communities, developing food culture in Wales.

BOBL is funded under the **Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013**, in turn funded by the **Welsh Government** and the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.**

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# Introduction

What does food mean to people? Is it fuel for the engine, a fashion item, an export commodity, a sensual temptation, a vehicle for culture and celebration, a badge of religious and political identity, or a vital connection with the natural world? It can be all of these things and more, and the stories people tell about food will affect not only what individuals choose to eat, but ultimately the structure of the food system in society. These stories reflect deeply-held values – the guiding principles that influence the attitudes people hold and how they behave.

Food security and sustainability are key challenges for this generation. Whilst research is advancing rapidly into the technical dimensions of agricultural productivity, less attention has been paid to the social questions around how food is produced and consumed. At the same time, concerns over food waste, well-being and poverty have gained increasing traction. Across all of these issues a focus on values, identity and emotion are critical to ensure effective communication and governance can be advanced.

**The 'Food Values' project has tackled this head-on, aiming to rethink the way food education is delivered by exploring the importance of values as a centre-point of progressive social change.**

The project took inspiration from the Common Cause report (see further reading p23) and wider developments in values-based learning across the education and communications sectors. It has run as a year-long programme of action research, involving food education events in a learning cycle with academic seminars designed to evaluate and inform the approach. Events were led by the partners to support long-standing local projects in different areas across Wales, and were consequently diverse in design.

This report is designed to provide some useful pointers for educators, community leaders and policy makers, and to contribute towards building the Wales that we as a community of food educationalists and practitioners would like to see.

*Anthony Pugh*

## Background

Although the project was led by Organic Centre Wales (OCW), it does not focus exclusively on organics. Instead the project started from the perspective that an isolated focus on the organic sector is counterproductive to the challenges faced, and hence aimed to tackle the bigger picture of communication and food sustainability. A further motivation was to acknowledge the broad base of organic principles: health, ecology, fairness and care. OCW believe that a broad approach is essential if the food system is to be seen as a whole and to ensure that it delivers a nutritious diet for all, now and in the future. OCW were therefore keen to explore educational approaches which would reflect and help them develop this thinking.

In addition, the project built on previous OCW events that emphasised an experiential approach to learning. These took the format of facilitated discussions over a meal, bringing together actors across food supply chains - for instance, farmers, processors and cooks - to foster engagement with food issues and promote new collaborations and ways of thinking. The 'Food Values' project was intended to augment the educational rationale behind this work, engaging with emerging thinking on values and behaviour change to inform the approaches used.

More broadly, 'Food Values' was intended to promote collaboration within the food chain, bringing partners together to reflect on the ethos they share and explore views which may divide them. The food sector currently includes distinct groupings with very different characteristics. One could contrast the export-orientated red meat industry with the community growing movement, for instance. An effective food policy will need to embrace all of these viewpoints, and find a fit between them, looking for synergies and new possibilities. The 'Food Values' project lays the groundwork for this by considering how values link issues. The project also addresses the need for further cross-sector work within government, given that food covers such a wide range of interest groups and departments.

## Aims of the project

The project tackles the following questions:

1. How can values inform the delivery of successful food education events?
   - How is a 'values approach' different to other models of education?
   - How do people respond to the values approach in food events?

2. What are the implications of a values approach for the wider food system?

3. How does the Welsh Government's existing food policy engage with and reflect values?

These are addressed in the following report, which includes:

- A synthesis of the values framework
- An overview of the case study education events
- Lessons learnt across the case studies (addressing questions 1 and 2), including advice for educationalists
- Policy evaluation (addressing question 3)
- Next Steps

A longer report is also available, which provides further details on the case-study education events and an extended framework and evaluation, with full supporting references. See **https://foodvaluesblog.wordpress.com/**

# The Values Framework

Values are a basic and irreducible feature of everyday life that shape how people act and feel. There is substantial research from social psychology and other disciplines which explains how values work, and how they are expressed in individual behaviour and social structures.

The idea that people are rational beings who only require information to enable them to make the right choices is flawed. Anyone who has tried to lose weight will know that it is not enough to be told how many calories their food contains: people make decisions based on a complex interaction of values, beliefs, personal identities, social norms, emotional states and environmental pressures.

This understanding of human nature increasingly informs the research areas of 'behaviour change' and 'social change'. While these fields often overlap and contribute to one another, their main difference may be described quite simply: in behaviour change models, the 'individual' tends to be the unit of change. Social change models look at transformation in the structure and practices of society, and tend to focus on the community (or society) as the locus of change.

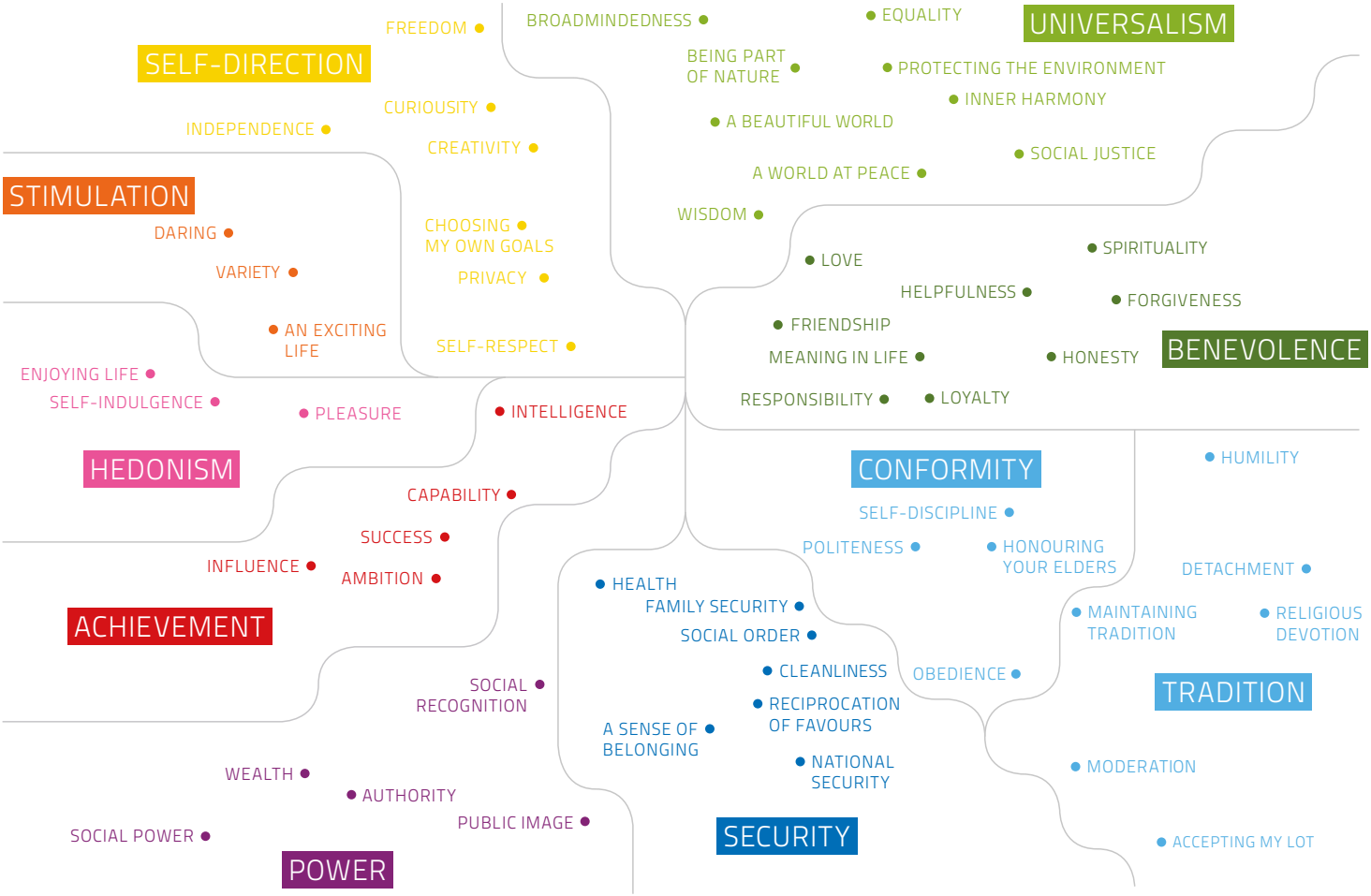
To ground this in some examples: behaviour-change thinking has informed government programmes such as Love Food Hate Waste and Change4Life, which use subtle techniques to steer people towards "better choices" of diet or exercise. Social-change thinking is evident, for example, in the charitable developmental agency Tearfund, which provides disaster relief, but has recently shifted to focus its advocacy work on the unsustainable economic system as a root cause of disasters.

Common Cause highlights the importance of values in social change. It is a social-change approach because it responds to the wider problems in society (be they climate change, hunger, poverty, human rights abuses), and it seeks to understand individual values and behaviour in the context of a bigger whole.

Five key principles, drawn from a large body of psychological research, inform the understanding of values and the way Common Cause applies them:

1. **Everyone shares values.** These values are common across the world, whatever age, gender or culture; but people differ in how important they consider each value.
2. **Values matter.** They shape peoples' identity; voting habits; spending patterns; career paths; prejudice towards others; and environmental concern.
3. **Values can be engaged** by language and experience. Engaging a value can make it seem temporarily more important, shaping how someone might respond to a particular situation.
4. **Society shapes values** by continually reinforcing particular messages – in schools, media, public institutions, policy and elsewhere. Values are not set in stone; they are more like muscles, growing stronger the more they are engaged.
5. **Values connect issues** – shaping attitudes and behaviours on everything from food to poverty, inequality and climate change.

The map below shows the broad range of values that most people share, wherever they live and whatever language they speak. Distances between values represent spatially how similar or different they are. Those shown closer together (like Equality and Broadmindedness) are likely to be held strongly at the same time, while those further apart (like Equality and Power) are not. This map can be organised into ten groupings of values, as shown below. Strongly holding or engaging one cluster of values undermines the values that cluster on the opposite side of the map, a phenomenon we call the See-saw Effect: as one end rises, the other falls. Engaging Power and Wealth values, for example, will undermine Universalism and Benevolence values.




**UNIVERSALISM**
UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION, TOLERANCE AND PROTECTION FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL PEOPLE AND FOR NATURE.

**BENEVOLENCE**
PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE WELFARE OF PEOPLE WITH WHOM ONE IS IN FREQUENT PERSONAL CONTACT.

**TRADITION**
RESPECT, COMMITMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE CUSTOMS AND IDEAS THAT TRADITIONAL CULTURE OR RELIGION PROVIDE THE SELF.

**CONFORMITY**
RESTRAINT OF ACTIONS, INCLINATIONS AND IMPULSES LIKELY TO UPSET OR HARM OTHERS AND VIOLATE SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OR NORMS.

**SECURITY**
SAFETY, HARMONY, AND STABILITY OF SOCIETY, OF RELATIONSHIPS, AND OF SELF.

**POWER**
SOCIAL STATUS AND PRESTIGE, CONTROL OR DOMINANCE OVER PEOPLE AND RESOURCES.

**ACHIEVEMENT**
PERSONAL SUCCESS THROUGH DEMONSTRATING COMPETENCE ACCORDING TO SOCIAL STANDARDS.

**HEDONISM**
PLEASURE AND SENSUOUS GRATIFICATION FOR ONESELF.

**STIMULATION**
EXCITEMENT, NOVELTY AND CHALLENGE IN LIFE.

**SELF-DIRECTION**
INDEPENDENT THOUGHT AND ACTION - CHOOSING, CREATING, EXPLORING.

Extensive research has revealed that Benevolence, Universalism and Self-direction tend to accompany greater concern and action on social and environmental causes. These values can be characterised as motivating **compassion** towards each other, nature and ourselves.

Benevolence, Universalism and Self-direction values make people more likely to support human rights; cooperate rather than compete with others, and show less racial and gender prejudice. They also make people more concerned about impacts on the environment; more concerned for others now, and for future generations; and more motivated to donate and volunteer for charities and campaigns.

## Values connect individuals, society, institutions and issues

Individual choices, community-level action, and societal and institutional frameworks can all be understood through the same values model.

To understand an individual's behaviour in full, the following should be considered:

- Internal psychological factors – it's easy for people to choose vegetarian food if this fits with their shopping habits and identity, for instance.
- Social norms and assumptions – recycling waste has now become a 'normal' thing to do, for instance.
- Social institutions and structures that shape norms – nowadays people cannot smoke inside pubs without breaking the law.

Policies and institutions can be shaped by individuals' values (through citizenry), but they also come to define and reinforce ideas of what citizens and societies consider 'possible, desirable and normal' – a process known as 'policy feedback'. A National Health Service, for example, based on equality and care for all, will also strengthen those values over time, through the experiences of those who use the service.

Values also connect issues. A health policy based on equality and care for all will not just affect individuals' values with respect to health issues, but will affect how they emphasise equality and care in their approach to other issues, like say the environment or education. One research project that compared values across 20 different countries found strong relationships between values at a national level and C02 emissions, maternal leave, child wellbeing and the volume of advertising to children. After controlling for GDP, countries that placed higher importance on Power and Wealth had higher emissions, lower maternal leave, lower child wellbeing and more advertising per minute of commercial kids' TV.

## Values and Food

**Individual behaviour**
Research in social psychology suggests a number of strong links between values and food. People who have stronger Universalism values (meaning they are particularly concerned with the welfare of all people and the environment) tend to:

1. Make more sustainable food choices – they may be vegetarian, eat less meat or choose free-range meat and organic products.
2. Show greater appreciation for health and quality over convenience or microwave meals, and avoid genetically modified products.
3. Consider country of origin; boycott untrusted retailers; avoid excess packaging, and consider whether packaging can be recycled.

Power values in particular tend to motivate opposing attitudes and actions. Although money and time can both constrain choice, the wider social environment will have an impact too. In particular, friends and family – at home, in schools and in local communities – help form people's food-related knowledge, habits and values.

Although people consistently rate Benevolence, Universalism and Self-direction most important, there is often a gap between what people care about and what people are able to express. If we - as a community of food educationalists and practitioners – want a society that really lives by these values, it is not enough for us to think they are important in the abstract. We need to consciously link them up to our work, making them relevant to the causes we care about and removing the barriers that prevent people from acting in line with them.

## Framing food

Values are sometimes more easily understood when they are considered in connection with frames, or stories. A frame is a collection of associations (ideas, memories, emotions and values) that accompany a given concept. Frames exist in our heads, but play an important role in helping us make sense of the world.

The way that food is framed can engage different values. Framing food as a commodity or a product often appeals to Achievement and Power values, for instance, whereas framing it as a human right makes the connection with Equality and Social Justice (Universalism values) and framing it as a focal point for shared mealtimes and human connection may appeal to Benevolence values.

Frames can be powerful, because if repeated over time they can strengthen the perceived importance of certain values, and weaken the importance of others (see 'See-Saw effect' above). For example, campaigns that associate organic food with celebrities can reinforce concerns about status and wealth (engaging Power values), at the same time eroding concern for Universalism values (which are oppositional to Power).

When communicating about food, it is important to reinforce values aligned with the ultimate aims of the project. If the objective is a sustainable and just food system, then a frame appealing to Universalism and Benevolence values will be most aligned and most effective in the long term.

## The bigger picture

Because values connect issues, there are some broad social causes that are in the interest of everyone working for a more sustainable and just food system. While single issues such as waste are important, they must be approached with the bigger picture in mind. A number of 'Common Causes' indirectly help food-related issues by promoting Universalism, Benevolence and Self-direction values in society:

1. **Opposing inequality** by reframing and supporting welfare, providing equal opportunities through the state school system, pursuing gender, sexual and racial representation in the workplace, or in many other ways.
2. **Reducing commercial advertising**, perhaps by supporting calls to ban advertising to young children.
3. **Increase connection to nature** in children and adults, by improving outdoor education, access to green space and other measures.
4. **Reducing working hours**, by supporting "opt-ins" to the Working Time Directive, obliging employers to offer workers a four-day working week and supporting a living wage.

These interventions are likely to reduce the cultural importance placed on Power and Wealth values, thus helping us pave the way to a more sustainable, democratic and equitable society.

## Values-based food education

Food education can encourage Universalism, Benevolence and Self-Direction values through active learning, deliberative reflection and communal solidarity.

A values-based approach to food education means that people:

1. **Connect the dots** by situating food as an issue interconnected with a whole host of social and environmental causes. This means considering the project's wider impact, looking not just at 'information learned' but also the social relationships or community involvement inspired. In designing the project, people can start by asking what values lie behind the outcomes desired, and designing an event based on these, seeking to understand the numerous ways the issues are connected.
2. **Co-create projects** with the people they affect. Active, creative input from participants helps engage Universalism, Benevolence and Self-direction values, and it models a collaborative and empowering approach that can be transferred across other situations.
3. **Look inside as well as out** at the values organisations promote internally, how they make decisions and how they support people. The values encouraged within an organisation are those most likely to guide its plans and decisions. Allowing staff greater freedom to participate and make decisions will likely encourage Self-direction and Universalism values.
4. **Measure what matters**. By focusing too much on single, quantifiable outcomes (like the uptake of individual food-related behaviours) we can overlook outcomes that are harder to measure (like social relationships) or not normally considered relevant (like a team's internal structure). Digging a little more into the nature of the values engagement means asking, for example, how deeply are people involved? Energy may be better spent reaching a few people on a deep level, for instance, than getting large numbers involved passively or on a shallow level.

Being conscious of values means considering:

- **The values people bring:** considering the conscious design of the event, and what motivates people to take part. Organisers may intend to build relationships between different groups in their community, for instance, but participants might be more interested in getting a free lunch.
- **The values expressed:** listening to the way that people talk, and pulling out words and phrases suggesting bigger narratives about (say) food poverty, security or production.
- **The values engaged by the event:** evaluating the impact of the day itself. Were people's values engaged by, for example, creative interaction with the topic, or were they told what to think? Were they active participants or passive consumers engaging in a transaction? Were unhelpful stereotypes about food and social groups challenged, or were existing divisions reinforced?

The key point is this: if the values of Benevolence, Self-direction and Universalism are strengthened in society, either through food education or by other means, then this will help increase people's concern and action on the key social and environmental issues of our time – including the complex issues surrounding food.

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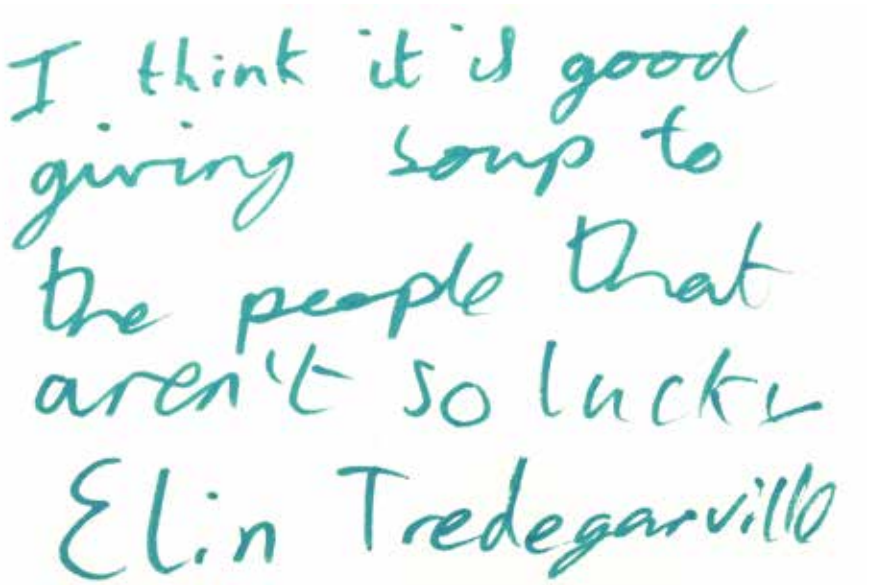
# The Case Studies

Over the course of the project a series of food education events were run in five different locations across Wales. These were designed to trial the values approach described in the preceding section. Lessons drawn from evaluation of these events is presenting in the next section.

Events were run with a range of partners to support longstanding projects in each area, sometimes building on previous food education events with Organic Centre Wales (OCW). The leadership and format of the events varied in each case, reflecting the differing geographies of Wales, including:

- Rural and urban locations.
- A range of demographics.
- A range of cultural and ethnic mixes.
- A range of socio-economic situations.




They included:

**Aberystwyth: Exploring Organic Sector Values**

This event was run by OCW to engage businesses involved in their Better Organic Business Links (BOBL) programme. It aimed to:

- Collectively re-engage with the core values that brought participants to organics in the first instance.
- Review the communications material that OCW were using in order to inform future strategy.
- Inform the way the individual businesses operated – both in terms of communications and in other aspects of their business models.

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**Aberystwyth University: The Student Food Experience**

This event was run by OCW in partnership with staff at Aberystwyth University (AU) as a way of engaging the university community. It aimed to:

- Bring together staff, students and the local community, and promote a sense of shared purpose around food.
- Identify the opportunities and barriers to healthy, sustainable eating and waste management on campus and explore the student experience of this.
- Identify ways that the university could work to support students better to develop more sustainable practices – joining up excellent research with practical action.

**Newtown's 'Our Future as a Food Town': Developing a Shared Community Narrative**

This event was run by partners in Newtown including Cwm Harry, Mid Wales Food and Land Trust and Neath Port Talbot College. It aimed to:

- Create a shared understanding amongst the partners of what values motivated their engagement in local food projects.
- Discuss how a values approach supports behaviour change.
- Begin to co-create a narrative which reflects partners' values and effectively communicates the combined work of local food projects in Newtown.

**Cardiff Soup Stories: Food Poverty & Diverse Communities**

This event was run by St German's Church in partnership with Work With Meaning and the Cardiff Food Council. It aimed to:

- Provide an inclusive space for a diverse community group to meet, using food to bring people together.
- Help people recognise the value (and not cost) of food - raising awareness about food waste, local access to food banks and the justice of fair food.
- Gain a grounded community perspective on policy issues such as food poverty.

**North Wales: Sharing Experiences and Values of Welsh Local Food through Intergenerational Learning**

This event was run by staff from Bangor University in partnership with community members from Llanfrothen and Penrhyndeudraeth. It aimed to:

- Support intergenerational learning and social exchange around food in a traditional North Wales community.
- Record historic and traditional food practices from the local area, including local recipes and the types of foods eaten within the community.
- Promote greater reflection and awareness of contemporary food choices, reconnecting community members to the local economy and food system.

## The Values Approach

The values framework detailed in the preceding section informed the design and delivery of each event. All events included:

**Sharing a meal:** whether this was a bowl of soup or several courses, all of the events focused on the physical act of sharing and eating food. The rationale here was to connect people very literally with food, so they could talk whilst they ate, and the act of eating would prompt reflections. Discussions were related to the food people were eating – some was locally-sourced and prepared, for instance, some organic, and some recovered food waste. This was designed to encourage active and participatory learning. The act of sharing food also relaxes participants and includes them in a less formal and more open setting, in contrast with traditional notions of teaching and learning.

**A participatory approach:** this meant people were welcomed to express and explore their viewpoints rather than being recipients of information. To do this, facilitators supported group discussions and ensured that all participants were heard. Different methods of engagement were also used, which did not necessitate purely verbal feedback, so that people could express themselves in different ways, such as comments on post-its or through drawing diagrams and other images.

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*Anthony Pugh*

## Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

In describing the ways people formulate, negotiate and express values we needed techniques that would explore and capture subjective experience and social relations. We therefore chose a qualitative approach.

This involved analysis of:

- Individual interviews with participants and partners (before and after events).
- Facilitators' records of group discussions (including an overview of what was said, how it was said, and how people related to one another).
- Written feedback from participants during the events and afterwards.
- Participant diagrams (for example, values maps as shown in the Framework that were annotated by participants during a workshop).
- Visual minutes (a representation of a discussion or workshop, created in real-time and including pictures and words).
- Written reflections from partners, event organisers, and facilitators (including observations on levels of participation and how deeply participants were engaged).

Coding was used to organise and draw out common themes from the data, including:

- Responses to different questions posed.
- The different values expressed and elicited.
- The different frames used in communications.

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*Siwan Adams*

# Common Conversations

One of our intentions was to host events that brought together different actors across the food industry. Our events reached a diverse audience (including students, elderly people, children, community growers, farmers, caterers, town councillors, teachers, church groups, migrant communities and scientists). Despite the diversity of aims and audiences of the public events, there were certain frames around food that people commonly expressed.

- **Good food should be available to everyone.** Our participants rejected a sense of elitism, or notions that 'good food' was something for a specific social group. This was prompted by discussions of perceived barriers to buying organic or fresh and local food; as well as conversations around food festivals and tourism which have become associated with niche forms of consumerism. Participants across the case studies reacted against this exclusive framing, stressing values of Universalism and Benevolence.
- **Knowing where our food comes from.** The provenance of food was a commonly cited concern. From a values perspective it was connected with Self-direction, as participants wanted to be able to make informed and independent decisions; Security, as they wanted to know that their food was safe and healthy; and a Sense of Belonging (a Security value), as they sought connection with people (growers and suppliers) and the land.
- **Food as pleasure, not indulgence.** Taste and the physical experience of eating is important and enjoying food means you appreciate where it comes from. But participants also noted that too much indulgence can lead to unhealthy, unfair and unsustainable behaviours in which food is treated solely as a commodity. This demonstrates the need for a careful balancing of Hedonism values with wider concerns.

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- **Looking beyond money.** People did talk about money but we found that it didn't dominate the conversations, as the values approach allowed for a much broader discussion. Economic irrationalities were noted, such as the inconsistency between fretting over the expense of food, and then eventually throwing it away. People also emphasised issues like social justice, which they factor into their 'economic' decision making in considering where food comes from. For example, retailers in the Organic event held in Aberystwyth framed their interactions with suppliers in the following terms *"we want to make sure everyone in the chain gets what they need to get…"* Elsewhere, participants connected economic priorities with concerns for local resilience and the need for strong, flourishing communities. This was framed in terms of Universalism, bringing about social value through meaningful jobs, and a sense of pride and confidence we associated with Self-direction rather than Wealth or Power. Consequently, we see that money *per se* often isn't the primary concern or motivator, and that economic concerns can involve a complex mix of values.
- **An information deficit?** There was a big emphasis from our participants on the need for 'awareness-raising', based on an assumption that a deficit of information is the problem. The values approach suggests that lack of information is not the main cause of inaction, and instead we need to consider a range of social factors. Whilst many participants did appreciate this, people often talked about food issues as if information was the answer. It is important to consider this in terms of how events are framed and facilitated, potentially emphasising where a values approach can enhance information transfer, and also pointing out when a lack of information is evidently not the root of the problem.
- **A shortage of skills.** Digging deeper into the perceived lack of food education noted above, participants emphasised that skills were in greater demand than simply information. This included cooking, preserving, composting, gardening and foraging, and there was a strong sense that these were a precious link to older generations. Skills were therefore often connected with values of Tradition and Self-direction. This type of learning also creates deeper, more enduring connections across issues: *"if we grow, we know where food comes from, we appreciate it more and we learn…"*
- **Getting back in touch with food.** The need for skills was also presented as a desire to develop Unity with Nature and Meaning in Life, through greater sensitivity to considerations forgotten and squeezed out by the current food system. Participants wanted to become more aware of what is in season and how the soil system works to affect the quality of food. This is not just education but a different way of engaging with the world.

While the events brought people together in the spirit of a collective and joined-up response to food issues, many participants continued to emphasise the need for single-issue behavioural changes (on waste reduction or buying habits, for instance). Similarly, participants often talked about the people who needed to change as 'they', referring to 'the general public' as in remarks like 'they don't understand organics'. This is important in terms of framing collective identity and avoiding divisions between in-groups and out-groups which can affect people's ability to relate to each other and determine who is seen as responsible for particular forms of change. At Aberystwyth University for example, the 'us and them' framing might divide students, staff and managers by allocating each different responsibilities.

# Lessons Learnt

1. How can we use values to inform the delivery of successful food education events?
   - How is a 'values approach' different to other models of education?

A values approach to education is not focused on a particular set of skills or facts to be learned, although these may well be included. Instead, the focus is on revealing the purpose and meaning of the food system for people and communities. It is an approach that encourages people to connect food with deeply-held personal values and consider the topic in a way that avoids set roles, such as a 'consumer' or 'nutritionist' or 'competitor'. A values approach encourages active participation in the design and format of an educational experience, rather than passive learning. It also challenges people to understand food issues such as sustainability or security in the context of broader social and environmental issues, rather than as an isolated and unconnected issue to be addressed.

   - How do people respond to the values approach in food events?

In this project, people made connections between food and values in a variety of ways: through exercises designed precisely for this purpose, which asked people to reflect on the values model we discuss in the Framework; through facilitated discussion topics that did not explicitly mention the word 'values', like 'Is food sourcing important to you?'; and through general chit-chat over a shared meal.

The feedback from participants was broadly positive, and it was clear that events served the purpose of offering a space for reflection on food not normally granted in everyday life: *"The event made me see very clearly again just how connected food is to every aspect of life, locally and globally, and to all issues - social, environmental, economic, psychological …"*

We also observed that food seems naturally to allow engagement on a deeper, emotional level. This included reflections on experiences growing up and reference to families, friends and communities. Our experiences suggest that it is easy for people to get into deeper issues quite quickly when discussing food, with participants at our events sharing personal stories and emotions that they might not have in other situations. This suggests that this approach to food events is a great way to build connections between people and foster a shared sense of identity, motivation and care for one another.

2. What are the implications of a values approach for the wider food system?

Across our diverse set of events, the values model was a helpful tool for understanding aspects of the food system which might not otherwise be connected – from an individual's motivation (for example, what motivates someone to care about waste, or recycling, or food poverty) to community initiatives (for example, what brings diverse groups together) to wider societal structures (for example, what a particular policy is likely to encourage or discourage). Overall, we found the following:

- **Enhancing Universalism and Benevolence though food is relatively easy.** Many people identify with them (supporting community-building through local food or sharing mealtimes, for instance). This has the potential to impact on wider issues by undermining Achievement, Power and Security values related to body image, health (mental and physical), performance and so on. Without having to tackle these issues head-on, we can therefore decrease their salience and prevalence in society.
- **Food has enormous potential as a social equaliser.** It is immediately understandable, fun and emotional for people of different ages, classes, regions and nationalities. We all eat! This was particularly notable where diverse ethnic groups came together to share their traditions and recipes, but equally relevant in intergenerational discussions.
- **Values help connect food to other issues.** Focusing on values enables a move away from single-issue learning. Our events demonstrated that measures to tackle waste, wellbeing and poverty can and should align effectively. Getting

*Alice Ridding*

people to consider values and motivations allows participants to look beyond narrow issues, and engage with the deeper motivations that underpin a variety of actions. This was particularly evident with the Cardiff soup events, where participants made soup with food provided by Fareshare Cymru, which would otherwise have been wasted - alerting them to the prevalence of this problem. Sharing the soups then enabled a diverse migrant community to come together to exchange their traditional recipes and collectively engage with concerns that many faced in terms of food poverty.

- **Values help us move beyond our differences.** Whilst our events demonstrated a number of disagreements between participants on their food behaviours and attitudes, focusing on values allows a way to dig deeper and find commonalities in our aligned values. Identifying these values then enables people to understand each other's positions better and move towards a more sympathetic - if not fully aligned - position. For instance, participants differed in their shopping behaviours and reactions to supermarkets; or their preference for traditional over hi-tech farming methods. In future we would like to explore how strongly conflicting positions such as those around meat-eating and genetic modification could be resolved through this approach.

Though the values approach can be powerful in introducing new learning or understanding the complexity of the food system, it is not enough on its own. It is important to look also at the social and material context, for instance cultural meaning, socioeconomic factors and food chains. A focus on values should not stop us from questioning all aspects of the world in which we live, and the reflective learning which it encourages should be grounded in action and experience.

# Advice for Educationalists

- **Using values implicitly or explicitly?** Our case studies tried both approaches, and ultimately it depends on the aims of your event or programme. Some of our events were intended to share the values theory, framework and approach with participants explicitly so they could then apply it in their work. Other events were more concerned with bringing people together to share values around food indirectly through various conversational topics. You can apply a values approach very effectively without using the framework explicitly. Consider what you want your participants to take away, and what you have capacity to deliver.
- **Stories and brands.** Our case studies suggested a distinction between 'branding' (with its commercial connotations, and hence association with Achievement or Power values) and developing shared narratives which unite and motivate community projects. Participants can be disengaged by what they perceive as a shallow exercise in marketing, and the co-development of a narrative can reinforce more helpful values.
- **'Forcing' our values on others?** There is legitimate sensitivity about this, but we also need to acknowledge that nothing is value-neutral. It is better for people to know what they stand for, and act consciously and authentically in line with their own values, than simply replicate a status quo that comes with its own 'values baggage'.
- **Aligning aims and participant experience.** Consider what you want people to take away from the event, how are you going to facilitate that, and whether any contradictions are present. For example, a commercial presence, or a focus on metrics like sign-ups or funding potential may engage Power or Achievement values which may be unhelpful at a community event aimed at bringing people together.
- **Values in action.** Consider how the organisation of your events, including interactions between partners as well as participants, reflects your values. Positive experiences we noted included making more time for listening and a participatory ethos. Challenges noted included funding and resource pressures, which can promote competition, and time limitations as people struggled to balance other work pressures.

Anthony Pugh

- **Make time for deliberation.** Deeper engagement can't be rushed. People need to be able to relax, to open up, to connect and to share. Working with new people in particular is very demanding in terms of building up shared agendas and understandings. New ideas similarly need time to work through and may require repeated engagements. Our experiences highlight the need for sufficient groundwork and preparation with partners before and after events. Additional interactions may be needed and being responsive to these requirements is important, so factor this in from the start. During events, timetable activities with adequate time for practical aspects and deeper conversations to be worked through. We tried to allow an hour per activity, with set-up and data-capture. The more ambitious your objectives, the more time you need.
- **Make space.** It is also important to think about where you will be working. How will participants interact? Will people be comfortable? Is the space practically fit for your purposes? Will it seem welcoming or provide a 'safe space' for participants? Will participants talk easily, hear you and have space to carry out activities? Remember that you will be nurturing a participatory ethos - don't let the space counteract that. The meal format worked well here, with people sitting around tables in small groups.
- **Sharing a meal is a great way to learn about food.** You are learning by doing and making the issues real. You are also enabling bodily association with the topic, which supports deeper learning and memory formation. Talking about waste whilst cooking or eating a meal creates a physical memory of realising the problems and how to tackle them. This is much more powerful than a classroom setting or anywhere else separated from the act of making, eating or even wasting food. Whilst this insight is not unique to a values approach, what we emphasise here is the importance of connecting bodily experience with deeper motivations.
- **Pay attention to the food.** If you provide a meal, choose the food carefully. Was it produced sustainably? Who grew it, and how healthy is it? If you can, ask around locally for suppliers who can tell you the story behind their food. The food itself is central to the experience, not only to promote 'active' forms of learning for participants, but also for the partners involved in running events.
- **Be creative**. Use diverse approaches to engage participants and record feedback. We used visual minutes as a way to record discussions, whilst also supporting participants to review and reflect on the conversations emerging. This is more fun

and visually stimulating than textual records on their own, and offers alternate avenues for expression and communication. This Is Rubbish (a campaign against food waste) have used theatre and performance see (**www.thisisrubbish.org.uk/projects/edible-education-ongoing**). This is helpful to avoid the sense of delivering 'a lesson' and allows participants to get more involved, physically and emotionally.

- **Acknowledge emotions.** Feelings of virtue and shame were discussed by participants in our events to explain their motivations for acting on sustainability. Peer pressure and self-esteem can be powerful influences which we need to acknowledge, but also take care not to manipulate people or induce anxieties which work against the positive values of Benevolence and Universalism. Instead, appealing to positive emotional drivers, as outlined in many of the themes discussed above, can be equally useful.
- **Take care not to confuse values.** People can use the values terms in a way that doesn't map exactly on to the definitions in the Common Cause report. For example, Tradition was discussed in diverse ways in the case studies. It is useful to drill down to the deeper motivations in order to avoid confusion; in this case connecting with the value of Wisdom (a Benevolence value), Unity with Nature (a Universalism value) and Independence (a Self-direction value). This is also relevant to discussions where the need for Influence, Ambition and Wealth come to the fore. Are these the underlying motivations or a means to different ends?
- **After events.** Values can be (re-)engaged through simple, practical means - for example, participants at our events suggested that recipe cards (for meals and composting!) would illustrate the values of living simply, being creative, getting in tune with nature and sharing. Offering advice and support in formats that people can take away and use means that people gain clear guidance on how they can act differently to support the values they care about.

# Policy Evaluation

**How does current Welsh Government food policy engage with and reflect values?**

The Food Values project presents a new lens through which decision-makers can assess food-related behaviours, business links and education programmes. It emphasises the importance of values, emotion and identity in these behaviours, acknowledging the complexity of our relationships with food.

Analysing policy alongside educational events was important for our overall evaluation because policy informs the wider context in which our participants operated. Educating people to behave more sustainably without considering the links between individuals and societal frameworks is setting them up to fail. As outlined in the framework section, there is a feedback loop between citizens' values and policy. Attending to the role and influence of government policy – a critical component of this broader landscape – is therefore key to enabling social change.

We address a range of policy documents which connect with food. These include:

- 2007 - The Quality of Food Strategy
- 2009 - One Wales, One Planet
- 2010 - Food for Wales, Food from Wales
- 2011 - Farming, Food and the Countryside
- 2014 - Towards Sustainable Growth

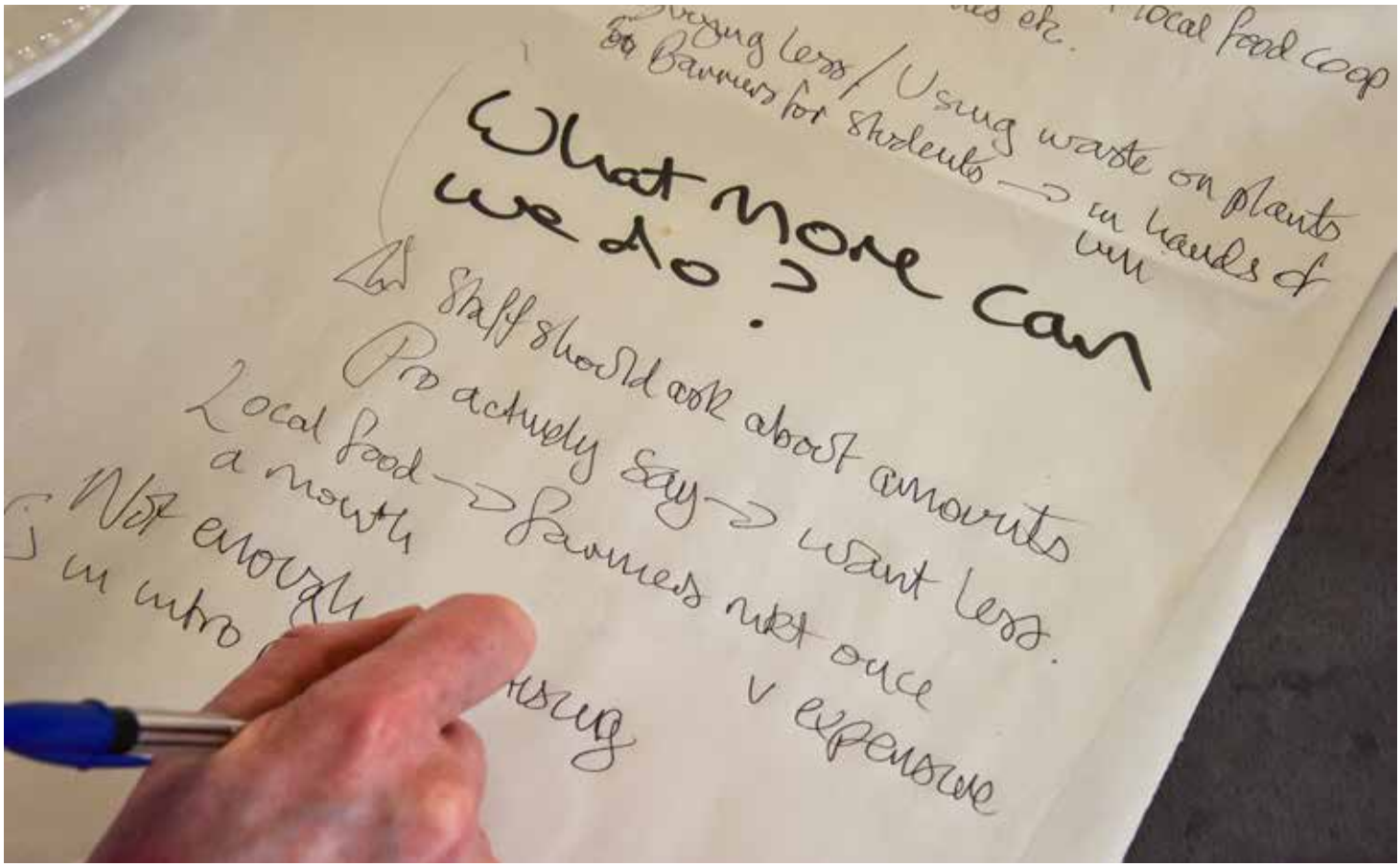
The framings of food issues in these reports have the following connections to values:
**Universalism and Benevolence:** Connecting food to people and place; involving people in a collective conversation and shared sense of responsibility; framing action on food as part of the broader goal of sustainability in Wales.

**Achievement and Security:** Emphasising economic priorities and the need for a competitive food industry; the need for national food security; targeting individual responsibility for action on food.

In Wales, food policy is made by a number of departments who have different objectives, such as health, farming and poverty reduction. The result is that food policy is often contradictory and sometimes difficult to define. Whilst some documents show ambitious strategies to cement equality, justice and sustainability into the food system, there have been challenges turning these into tangible action plans. The values approach, however, can provide a new way of looking at policy and finding a way to make Wales a sustainable country.

It is widely acknowledged that there is a skills deficit across the UK with regards to food production, knowledge of healthy diets, food preparation and avoiding waste. Consequent problems include agricultural land degradation, growing obesity levels and waste (a third of all food is wasted). Above all, this deficit demonstrates that food has lost its intrinsic value for many of us and the food system is now marked by this disconnect. People are removed from processes of production and food is treated as a commodity rather than an essential need. To overcome such complex and interrelated issues we need to look beyond the individual blame often assigned to such problems – as in the common focus on household responsibility for food waste rather than the wasteful practices of the food supply chain.

A values approach allows us to see such problems as symptoms of a systemic problem in society and to start exploring what really underpins our relationships with food. Values-led change could come from developing coherent messages across the food system, led both by government and civil society. Policy communications are an important part of this and there are useful exemplars to follow here including the Sustainable Development Narratives for Wales, which were developed by the Climate Outreach Information Network (COIN) and Welsh Government (further reading on p. 23).




Anthony Pugh

Measuring what matters in food is essential to developing action plans that reflect the concerns of the nation. This means seeing food not simply as a commodity, but also a human right, a part of our culture and history and a means of building community. In a time of stagnant salaries, growing poverty and increasing household costs, it is hard not to talk about price, but it is important to move beyond short-term economic frames. The Welsh Government's most recent food action plan *Towards Sustainable Growth,* talks about food in largely economic terms, with a top-line commitment to grow the food industry by 30% by 2020. This however builds on the strategy document *Food for Wales, Food from Wales,* which identified food culture, sustainability and well-being as key drivers for change, alongside market development, supply chain efficiencies and integration. Exploring the values we bring to bear in discussions about food helps to integrate wider perspectives and come up with creative new approaches. Understanding what people care about deep down is the first step to creating policy narratives that can bring about long-term change.

Priorities of government need to match those of the nation and listening to people at food events is one good way to gain insight into what kind of food system the people of Wales want. Considerable progress has been made to engage the public in conversations about the future of their nation, including through the Sustainable Development Charter and Wales Environment Link. Most notably, the national conversation The Wales We Want demonstrated the power and legitimacy of collectivising the policy process - offered space for national values and voices to inform the development of the Well-Being of Future Generations Bill. A values-based approach allows policy-makers to engage with what is important to the public and listen to *their* perspective.

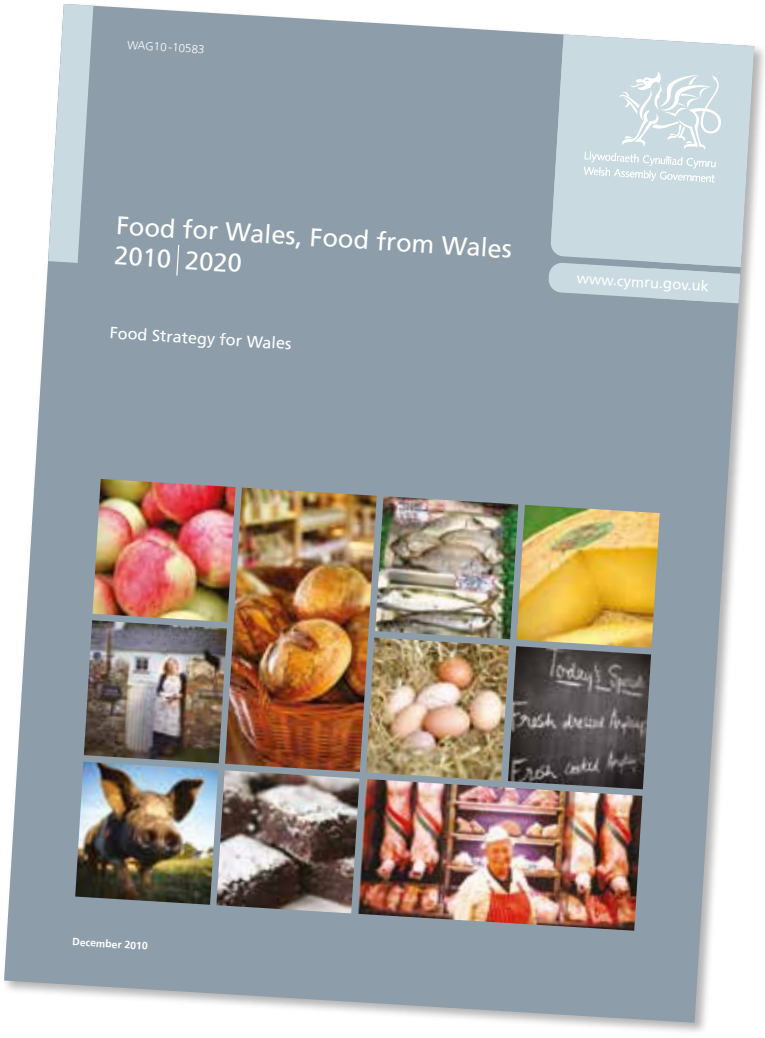
Connecting people, business and policy is essential to achieve comprehensive and long-term difference in the governance of Wales. Efforts are being made to link diverse businesses through the food supply chain. A key exemplar here is progress on public procurement, with a 2013 survey showing two thirds of food and drink purchases came from Welsh businesses, and there is scope to increase the amount of this that is actually grown in this country. People value their connections to food, be that knowledge of producers, supporting local vendors or communal eating. There is an opportunity here for government bodies to take the lead in best practice, for instance by encouraging staff to use their statutory volunteering time to engage in food projects in their local area.

Local communities are engaged in a broad spectrum of food activities that cut across different government portfolios. This can help integrate policy areas such as food production, food hygiene, healthy eating, waste minimization, sustainable tourism, transportation and rural regeneration, to name just a few. Food can be therefore be the interface in new policy formation. Three key bills proposed for 2015 include the Environment

Bill, Public Health Bill and Planning Bill Wales, and food's possible strategic role in connecting these policies should be considered.

Fifteen years ago the Welsh Government identified itself as an international pioneer, placing sustainable development at the heart of its constitution during the formation of the Assembly. The challenge since then has been sticking to ambitious policy aims, and setting achievable targets within the complexities of sustainability. Food has the potential to 'ground' the sustainability agenda in reality, linking the diverse and often separated policy sectors such as public health with rural land-use. It gives a space for Benevolence values to emerge and the sustainability agenda in Wales needs such real-life examples to influence behaviour changes, build cohesive communities and engage diverse voices around a common cause.

Values present a path for policy makers, community groups and education professionals to try out a new way of putting food at the centre of their work. It presents a new, positive and collaborative way to frame food, beyond the restrictions of a 'business as usual', short-term economic approach, to see the transformative potential food holds in building a sustainable future in Wales.




## Recommendations

1. **Use values in conversations between different parts of the food sector.**

   A lead could be taken from the Sustainable Development Narratives Framework developed by COIN to test new narratives and language for the Welsh Government to apply to public engagement (further reading on p. 23).

2. **Ground the sustainable development narrative in food**

   Food has a grounding quality that can reach out to people across Wales, and make sustainable development real. Gardens, kitchens, bakeries, farms - all these can be used to engage the public in this sustainability narrative.

3. **Highlight the cross-departmental position of food**

   As it implements the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, the Welsh Government could emphasise the role of food in drawing together the sustainability agenda by convening its own staff and representatives from outside to develop policy.

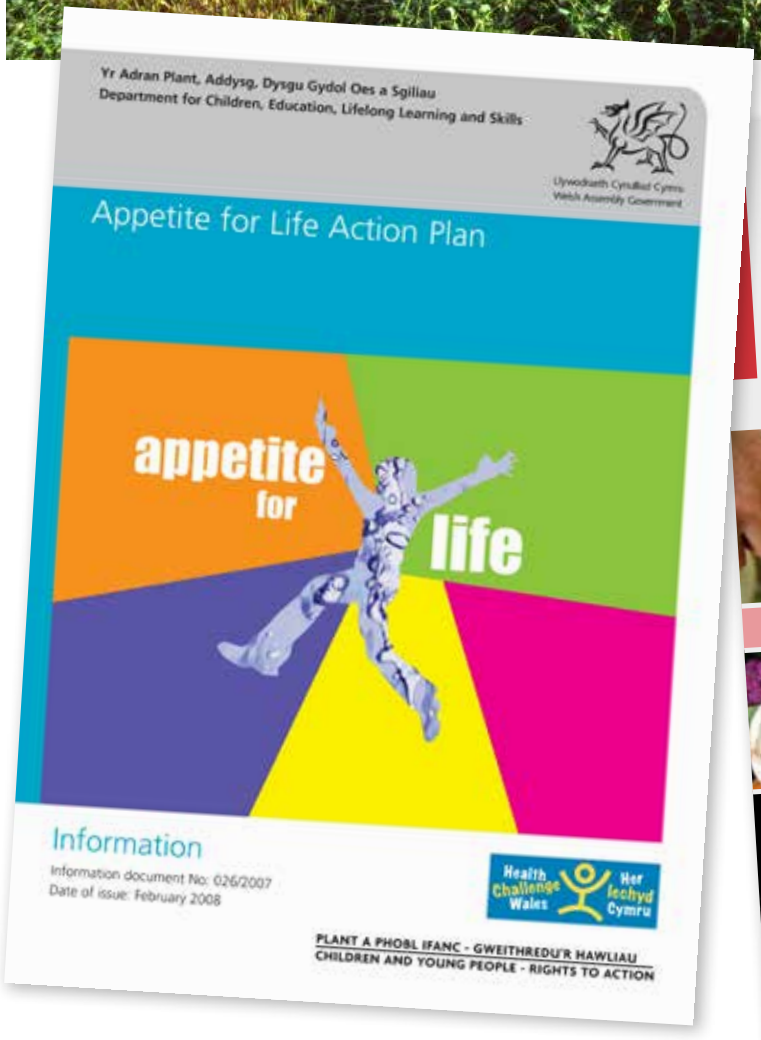
4. **Tell a compelling story**

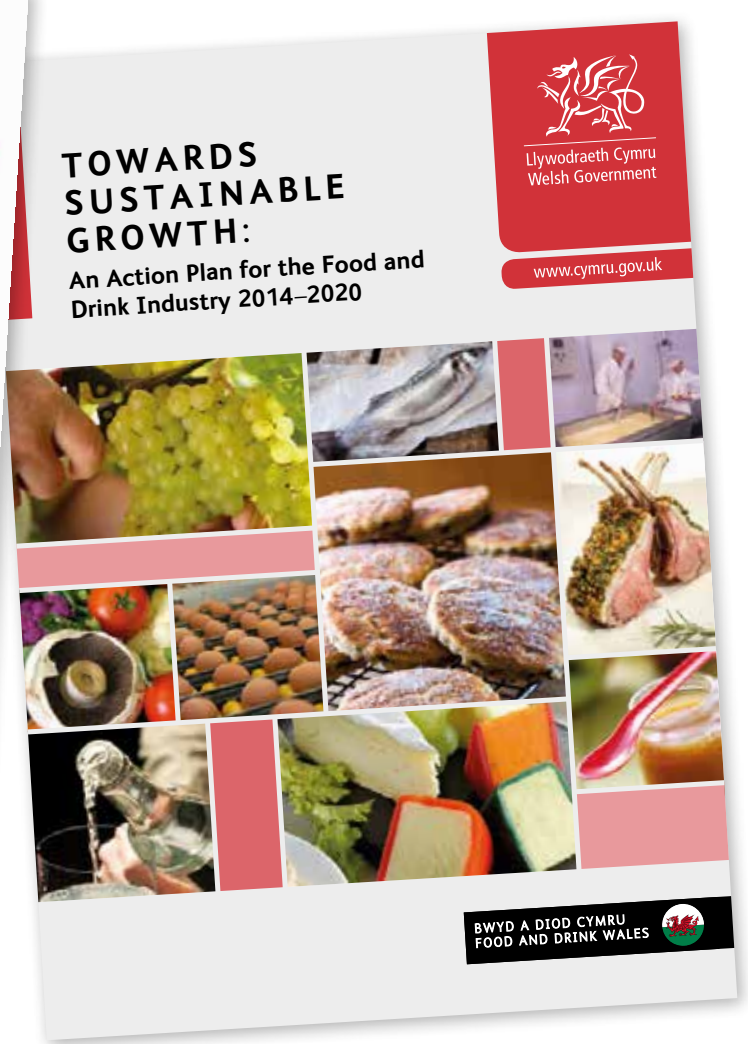
   Wales has cultural, social and economic strength in its food landscape, and a tradition of collaboration and education. The Welsh Government could emphasise this identity with a compelling narrative that draws on rich traditions and connects diverse voices.

5. **Start a Food Manifesto for Wales**

   Bringing people from different parts of the food system together to find common ground through discussions about values creates a collective sense of commitment. This is necessary if there is to be change at a societal level. A collective conversation and pledge about the food futures we want for Wales, involving both government and civil society, is therefore an important next step.

Jeremy Moore



# Next steps

This report has illustrated some of the ways in which a focus on values can be used to plan food education events, engage the public, and help form policy that will help create a sustainable Wales.

It is up to all of us to play a part in this. We hope that we have suggested some new ways in which schools, community groups, churches, local authorities, government and others can run food events or investigate food systems.

We are conscious that our work has concentrated on community contexts, and we could engage further with a wider range of industry figures including supermarket and supply chain managers, farm unions and levy bodies, farm consultants and extension staff, food-service providers, abattoir workers, bakers and food festival organizers, to name a few. We hope that there will be an opportunity to extend the discussion in due course.

In the meantime, do have a look at the "further reading" section below for more insights into a values-based approach and its importance for food.

Our blog **foodvaluesblog.wordpress.com** also includes a number of insights and testimonies from partners who have worked with us on this project, giving you an insight into why a values-based approach mattered to them, and what it has enabled them to take forward in their own projects. We will continue to update the blog with links to further outputs from this project in due course and a guide for organic producers is also available on the OCW website.

## Further reading


- Common Cause: The Case for Working with our Cultural Values. (2010) Tom Crompton, WWF-UK. Available at: **www.valuesandframes.org**
- Feeding Britain (2015) An All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the UK. Available at: **https://foodpovertyinquiry.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/food-poverty-feeding-britain-final.pdf**
- Transformative education and food. (2011) A position paper by the Food Working Group of RCE Cymru/Wales. Available at **https://foodesdgcwales.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/food-in-esdgc-wales-2011.pdf**
- Influencing Behaviours - Moving Beyond the Individual (2013) Andrew Darnton and Jackie Horne. Available at: **www.gov.scot/resource/0042/00423436.pdf**
- Sustainable Development Narratives for Wales (2013) George Marshall and Andrew Darnton. Available at: **www.climateoutreach.org.uk/coin/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Sustainable-development-narratives-for-Wales_2014-edition.pdf**