



Sustain Your Community | Community Development for Sustainability | A project funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation |

Delivered by EnviroCentre in collaboration with various community partners

| Evaluated by Effective Measures of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa

www.envirocentre.ca/initiatives/sustain-your-community

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Sustain West Carleton | Evaluation Report

Purpose

This evaluation report examines the findings for the final period of the three-year project (2014-2017) carried out by EnviroCentre to support environmental sustainability at the local level and expand assets for sustainability.

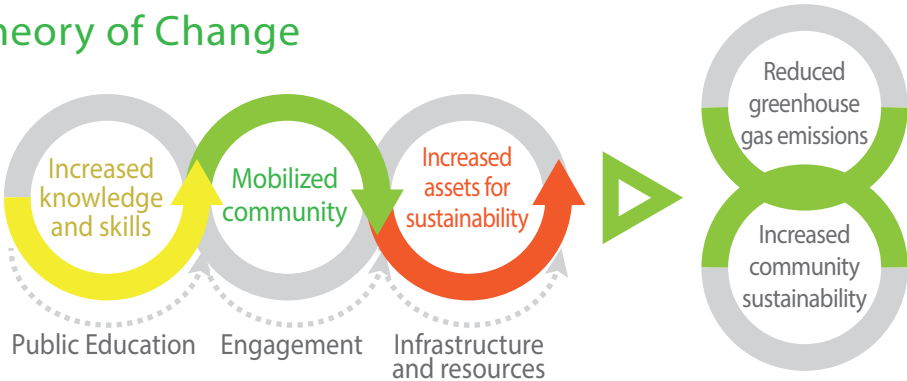


Focus of the Project

Develop community-led initiatives that engage residents and volunteers in projects that increase local sustainability practices and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in targeted communities.



Theory of Change



Sustain West Carleton | Theme: Food Security & Energy/Water

Resources used / participants getting involved, raising awareness and taking action to increase community sustainability

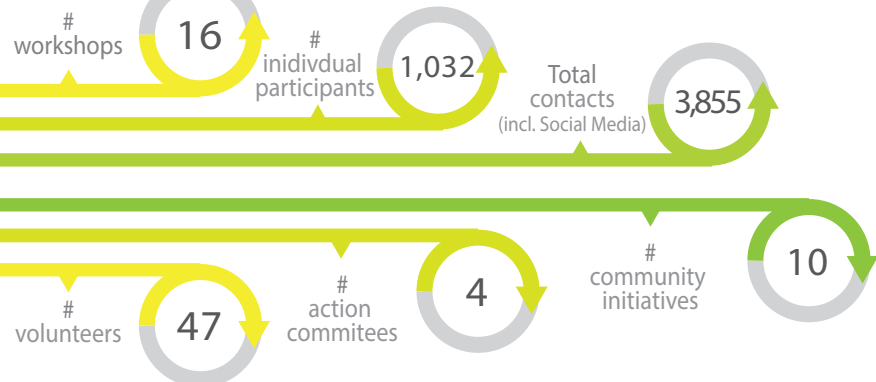
OUTPUTS How much did we do?

1

2

QUALITY How well did we do it?

Level of satisfaction reported by participants who completed surveys ▼



74.9% Yes

25.1% No

% of people involved in food initiatives who increased consumption of local veggies

71.4% Yes

28.6% No

% satisfied

"I would like to share extreme appreciation for all Sustain did for the Deep Roots Food Hub. I think we would be in a very different place, and not in a good way. Our volunteers are busy, especially those in the root cellar project. So Sustain was able to keep on top of all the moving parts. Just having dedicated hours was a critical success factor along with the style of intervention and flexibility. This allowed the volunteer work to move forward, and to keep people motivated and on track. It was a job extremely well done and we will really miss the support."

Board Member, Deep Roots Food Hub

"I really enjoyed working with the people in the Sustain project and at the EnviroCentre. They have great intentions and get the best use out of grant money to push these issues forward, and they're really good at listening to people."

West Carleton farmer

Positive changes and progression reported by participants, volunteers and coordinators ▼

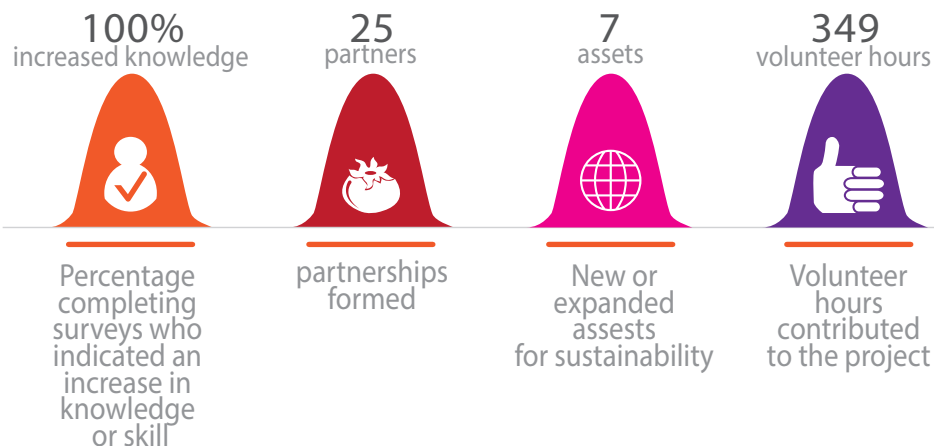
OUTCOMES How is the community better off?

3

4

LEARNING Feedback for improvement

Lessons learned that will help us move forward on GHG reductions and/or sustainability actions ▼



Lessons learned...

Project enabling factors were staff from the community to coordinate, partnership building skills and building on what exists.

The key issue in expanding production and consumption of local food is economics, not education.

Discussions around food security provide a good opportunity to explore issues of inequity and poverty with people from diverse backgrounds.

Context and challenges...

Creating sustainability-related infrastructure is very effective in supporting involvement in the long-term but bureaucratic challenges are a significant barrier.

It takes a very long time to build the relationships necessary for productive partnerships and longevity of efforts.

Food is under-valued so the ROI is not compelling for local food social enterprises. There is an inherent competition between increasing food security for low income residents and financial sustainability of a local food ecosystem (and farmers' incomes). This continues to impact collaborative work around food security.

Sustain West Carleton | 2017 Highlights

Most Significant Change

The most significant change was building a stronger network of stakeholders (residents plus public, private and voluntary sectors) working together around food security and the food system. The project drew residents in and connected them to on-going initiatives, built volunteer capacity and developed networks and partnerships to maintain the momentum. It has resulted in empowered volunteers, connections between residents and partners, and organizations and businesses aligning activities and working collaboratively. The project worked very intentionally to enhance what already existed, for greater impact and sustainability. A particular focus was supporting the Deep Roots Food Hub and initiatives at Stonecrest Elementary School.

Increased Knowledge & Skills

Workshops are a great engagement tool and over 250 participants indicated a commitment to increase their consumption and preservation of local foods. Local farmers benefited from the increased profile and infrastructure in support of local foods.

"Thanks to Sustain, we held the 'Great Big Crunch' event and it was a hoot. We had 800 people in the room all eating local vegetables and the series of workshops came right after that. Kids and parents got to see local food in action – that goodness right here in the community – and that it's not onerous to eat local, quick and healthy. The kids couldn't get enough of it. I don't know how much more effective you can get than that." - West Carleton participant

Mobilized Community

A key strength of the project was building relationships and making connections:

- bringing new partners to the various tables;
- bringing existing partners together to increase their impact (e.g. the Food Security planning process);
- significant support to leverage additional resources for partners (e.g. grant writing support); and
- capacity building (training, communications and strategy coaching).

The critical success factor in effectiveness of volunteers was the paid coordinator to support and coordinate. Volunteer training was very important, particularly when team members are very diverse and do not have the same base of knowledge.

Increased Assets for Sustainability (Year 3)

- A new community garden and water collection for an existing community garden
- The "Good Food in Corner Stores" initiative and new Good Food Box sites
- A business plan for a community root cellar (soon to open)
- Support to community supported agriculture enterprises
- Support for developing the outdoor classroom at Stonecrest Elementary School



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