

Impact Case Study: MK Food Passport Scheme & Independent Food Forum

How did Franzi get involved?

Franzi first heard about Our MK and the Citizen Ideas Competition while searching for local funding opportunities that would help realise her long-term aspiration to start an urban farm in Milton Keynes. Franzi then came along to the **Our MK Project Advice Workshop** on 29th July 2015, held at Community Action: MK's offices in Acorn House. The workshop helped Franzi to find out more about the MK:Smart project and better understand the competition's funding criteria, and tailor her application, which was submitted in August 2015. The judging panel was particularly interested in Franzi's ambition to create and foster an independent food scene in the city. Further support was provided to Franzi by the teams at The Open University and GrayMatter to help identify a data-gathering element in Franzi's project. This is how the concept of an MK Food passport was born. Franzi then submitted a revised application and was awarded funding for a project focusing on creation of **Milton Keynes Indie Food Forum and Food Passport**, becoming one of the first citizen-led initiatives funded by Our MK. In the meantime, Franzi's project page on the Our MK website also attracted lots of views and generated encouraging comments from other local residents in Milton Keynes, who were in favour of Franzi's idea to encourage a change in the food buying habits among the resident living in Milton Keynes. At that point Franzi has also started MK Food Revolution, a social enterprise through which she was going to promote the project to MK audiences.



What did the project do?

Franzi was awarded **£4,009** to develop and run the Food Passport scheme and undertake activities aimed at creating an independent food forum of local producers and retailers in MK. The funding covered printing of **100 food passports**, which included information on independent food vendors and producers in Milton Keynes as well as **10 food events** which took place between November 2015 and February 2016. With the money provided by Our MK, Franzi was also able to invest in a tablet, used to sign up people to MK Food Revolution via its website and to conduct surveys, as well as in other promotional items that helped to raise the profile of the scheme, that was new to the city. In the lead up to the launch of the Food Passport scheme, which took place on 21st November 2015 at Wolverton Farmers Market, Franzi successfully attracted attention from the local press, which resulted in online and offline articles in One MK and MK Citizen news. The passports were then sold at other farmers markets and via MK Food Revolution's website for £5. Franzi also showcased her project and delivered a presentation during the **MK:Smart Networking Event** held at MK College on the 5th February 2016.

The culmination of the Food Passport scheme was **MK FEAST**, a hugely successful event organised by Franzi at Bradwell Abbey on 22nd February 2015 that was supported by 25 local food and artisan sellers, and saw a footfall of over **3000** visitors, being widely reported in the local media. The event was supported by the Our MK team and was an opportunity for us to showcase MK:Smart and Our MK, and collect feedback from the passport holders and other visitors at the event on the impact that the food passports scheme had on their buying habits.



What added value did Our MK bring to the project?

- **Social enterprise and funding-related advice** - Franzi was able to access useful advice through our workshops as well as 1-2-1 meetings with the CA:MK infrastructure team.
- **Volunteer recruitment** - We advertised opportunities to volunteer as part of Franzi's project via DO-IT.ORG website.
- **Reaching wider audience** - We have actively promoted Franzi's project via numerous communications channels, including MK:Smart newsletter, Our MK website, CA:MK blogs and general newsletters, social media as well as through events, including MK:Smart Networking Event and CA:MK Funding Fair
- **Enhanced business reputation** - Franzi's project as well her social enterprise, MK Food Revolution, benefited from featuring in the MK:Smart film: "Our MK: Co-creating Smart Cities" and being mentioned in an interview at a local radio station, Secklow Sounds. We have also nominated Franzi for the National CSR, Community Hero Award and Nesta's New Radicals 2016 Award. This has helped to enhance Franzi's professional reputation as a growing and influential local business in Milton Keynes.

- **Enhanced brand recognition** - Funding awarded by Our MK has enabled Franzi to invest into marketing materials such the flyers, the banner and other promotional merchandise that increased the profile of Franzi's project at local events and on social media.
- **Building relationships with local organisations** - Using our existing knowledge of working with local Voluntary & Community sector in Milton Keynes, we have enabled Franzi to make connections with various community groups and organisations. This has resulted in Franzi's collaborations with organisations such as Transition MK, MK Christian Foundation, West Bletchley Community Council and the Sustainability Team at Milton Keynes Council.

How will Franzi's project continue?

Running the first round of the Food Passport Scheme has provided Franzi with useful learning on how to best engage with the local audiences in Milton Keynes on food-related issues, and Franzi has been telling us how determined she is to build on the experience of running this pilot project going forward. This, coupled by the overwhelming success of MK Feast, the final event that celebrated the first round of the MK Food Passport scheme, has inspired Franzi to **re-launch the Food passport scheme in summer 2016** as well as to continue working with the local food producers and sellers on **a programme of 'foodie' events** that will run between July and December 2016. Franzi has already scheduled **MK Feast 2**, which is due to take place on the 24th July and is making plans for a Christmas-themed **MK Feast 3** in December 2016. MK Food Revolution, established by Franzi at the start of the Food Passport project, continues to run as a successful (and more widely recognised) social enterprise. As an organisation, it now offers wider range of services and events, such as the hugely popular **MK Soup** event, run in partnership with MK Christian Foundation, and **catering services**. Franzi is also using the MK Food Revolution to communicate with her audiences through **regular newsletters** and is offering information on **how to start own food business** - as a way of sharing her skills and knowledge within this area.

Support Timeline

Date	Objectives	Met with
09/11/15	Project update meeting 1:1 project offer letter signed	AKD
20/11/15	Beer Tasting event at the Bucks Star brewery- an unofficial launch of the Food Passport scheme	N/A
21/11/15	Food Passport Launch at Wolverton Farmers Market	AKD
11/12/15	MK Food Forum Event at Concrete Cow Brewery	N/A
16/12/15	Project update meeting 2	AKD
21/01/16	Franzi attended CAPE Community Energy Workshop	AKD
23/01/16	Franzi ran a workshop at Community Action: MK's office in Acorn House on 'How to start your own food business'	RB/AP
26/01/16	Franzi presented at MK50 workshop, promoting MK Food Passport	N/A
26/01/16	Project progress meeting 3	AKD
05/02/16	Franzi run a stall and delivered presentation at MK:Smart Networking and Exhibition event, and provided cookies for the event as part of her business, Little German Bakery	ALL
20/02/16	MK Feast: Food Passport Final Celebration Event in Bradwell Abbey	ALL
07/03/16	Project update meeting 4	AKD
29/3/16	Final report submitted by Franzi	N/A