

Rose Vouchers for fruit and veg.

Lambeth project final evaluation



*Food Matters
January 2017*

Rose Vouchers for fruit and veg. Lambeth project final evaluation

Findings from the final evaluation workshops held at the Lambeth Children's Centres participating in the Rose Voucher for fruit and veg. project:

• Larkhall	10.10.16
• Maytree and Weir	11.10.16
• Clapham Manor and Heathbrook	14.10.16
• Jessop and Stockwell	14.10.16
• Treehouse and Jubilee	17.10.16
• Kingswood	20.10.16

Background

The Rose Vouchers for Fruit and Veg. is an Alexandra Rose Charity project designed and delivered in partnership with Food Matters and aims to promote healthy eating and combat food poverty by giving families vouchers that can be redeemed for fresh fruit and vegetables at local markets.

In Lambeth the project supports families with the provision of Rose Vouchers that can be redeemed at the stalls of participating traders at Brixton Market and in West Norwood. Working in partnership with local children's centres the project works with families with young children who are living on low incomes. The children's centre staff identify the families who could benefit most from the scheme as well as providing support such as cooking classes to build their skills and confidence.

Rose Vouchers supports families to adopt healthier lifestyles in the crucial years before school starts. The project also provides valuable income for market traders while acknowledging the important role they play in public health by providing a wide range of fresh fruit and vegetables at incredibly affordable prices.

The Rose Voucher for fruit and veg. scheme started in the Lambeth cluster in the spring of 2015. It focuses on parents of young families at 9 participating children's centres and fruit and veg. stalls in Brixton Market (Electric Ave. and Pope's Rd.) and in West Norwood (on the corner of Norwood Rd. and Chestnut Rd.). At the time of the final evaluation workshops 162 families were receiving Rose Vouchers in the Lambeth cluster and 68 participated in the workshops. This compares with 121 families at the time of the mid-scheme evaluation workshops of which 58 participated in the workshops.

Evaluation introduction

Purpose

Participatory workshops are held at the beginning of the Rose Voucher project prior to receiving any vouchers, mid-way through the scheme and at the end when vouchers are no longer being received or in the final few weeks of the scheme. The purpose of the workshops is to monitor and assess the impact of the project on the participants by identifying any changes in their shopping and eating behaviour and their attitude to the project and its impact on the food they consume.

Families participating in the Lambeth cluster had been receiving Rose Vouchers for up to 16 months at the time of the final evaluation (although some parents joined the scheme later and therefore had received vouchers for a shorter period at the time of the workshops).

Lambeth cluster time-line

April 2015	Contract signed and staff training workshops
Spring 2015	Families recruited and registered
June 2015	Start workshops for participating families
April 2016	Mid-scheme workshops for participating families
October 2016	Final workshops for participating families
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January 2017 (end)	Original project completion date
March 2017 (end)	Current project completion date

Methodology

The workshops use an approach based on Participatory Appraisal focused on establishing a relaxed and informal atmosphere and allowing project participants to openly discuss their feelings about the project and its impact without fear of judgement and in a mutually supportive environment. To achieve this the workshops use active processes and visual tools drawn on flip-charts to encourage engagement, facilitate participation and document comments according to each participant's capacity.

Tools

The workshops last approximately 1 ½ hours each and follow the same structure using the same tools to allow direct comparison during analysis of the workshop outcomes. Whilst focusing on a participatory approach the workshops also collect quantitative information to provide, where possible, evidence of behaviour change to verify the anecdotal and more qualitative examples of project impact. For this reason the workshops combine group discussion tools, participatory verification tools, tabular food diaries and pie charts.

Where possible the workshops are co-facilitated by two Food Matters facilitators. This allows the opportunity for group activities to continue whilst individual perspectives are discussed and recorded – particularly when there are issues around literacy or language.

Evaluation criteria

The basis for the project evaluation is the stated mission, aims and objectives of the Rose Voucher for Fruit and Veg. project:

Mission

- Tackle food poverty and support healthy eating
- Give families the spending power and skills for a healthy start
- Support local markets

Aims

- Give children the best possible start
- Support vulnerable families to access more fresh fruit and veg
- Positive diet-related behaviour change
- Stronger social links
- Boost the local economy by supporting local markets

Objectives

- Increase consumption levels of fruit and veg
- Increase variety of fruit and vegs: bought, cooked and eaten
- Increase attendance at Children's Centres
- Increase participation in health and wellbeing activities at CCs
- Increase spend at local fruit and veg markets

"The Rose Vouchers have really impacted positively in my life. I was lonely when I had my baby and didn't have much money, but when I started coming to the Children's Centre, I met friends and the Rose Vouchers helped me financially"

Participant from Jubilee Children's Centre



Findings

The individual pie charts and diaries provide quantitative information that can help to identify specific changes in shopping and food consumption behaviour. This evidence of the project's impact can be supported by the qualitative information gathered during the participatory exercises and discussion with participants at the workshops.

The findings from the participatory components of the workshops are summarised as theme statements and illustrated by comments written on the charts or on post-it notes by participants or as verbatim quotes recorded during the workshops.

The final workshop findings build on emerging findings from the mid-project evaluation in April 2016 and for this reason the themes identified in the earlier workshops are used as the structure for this report. In many themes the findings of the final workshops confirm the earlier findings and where this is the case additional illustrative statements and comments from participants are recorded. Where new findings have been identified these are included under either the existing theme headings or under new headings if required.

Themes

- A. Increased amount and variety of fruit and vegetables**
 - B. Financial support**
 - C. Improved health and wellbeing**
 - D. Behaviour change around food**
 - E. Behaviour change around food shopping**
 - F. Building stronger connections with the Children's Centres**
 - G. Positive attitude towards the Rose Vouchers**
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A. Increased amount and variety of fruit and vegetables

"Due to claiming the Rose Vouchers I am eating double the amount of fresh fruit than before I got them."

**89% of adults and 94% of children are eating more fresh fruit, and
90% of adults and 95% of children are eating more fresh vegetables**

The Rose Vouchers support families to increase the quantity and variety of fruit and vegetables they have in their diet.

A1. Participants eat more fruit and veg.

The rose Vouchers enable participants to purchase what they consider to be a significantly increased amount of fruit and veg. They are clear that the amount they are able to buy supports what they see as healthy behaviour around food. This confirms and expands upon the emerging findings from the mid-project evaluation.

- Families are keen to feed their families healthy food and recognise the importance of the Rose Vouchers in supporting them to do this. For some this supports existing positive food behaviour and attitudes whilst for others it supports changes and improvements.

5-a-day is only possible with RVs

I felt guilty that I couldn't wean and feed my child properly. Rose Vouchers helps me overcome the guilt.

Much more (fruit and veg.) than before – I know it's good for my body

Already conscious about healthy food and eating so eating a lot. Vouchers help with the cost

- Fruit and veg. is more visible in the house – in particular fruit that is displayed in a fruit bowl. This leads to an expectation in fruit being available and for many families this becomes the norm.

I like to have the fruit bowl on the table for kids.

We've got used to it – hard if it stops

Each time the fruit bowl goes down I feel sad

- The increased quantity of fruit and veg. that can be purchased is even more significant where the family includes more than one eligible child and/or where one of the children is under 1 year old.

When I first bought home all the fruit, everyone said "Wow! This is different! We are so happy. Where did you get money to buy this fruit?" This is big money stuff, a big impact. We had £12 the first time.

- The impact of the Rose Vouchers on the amount of fruit and veg. available is reinforced by saving up vouchers over 2 weeks and then buying a large amount of produce in one go.

Good haul if you save up the RVs over 2 weeks

Had to buy a trolley at Christmas as I bought all the fruit and veg. in one go – so heavy!

- Another way in which families benefit from saving their vouchers to use every 2 weeks is that they can stagger the impact of the different benefits they receive. This spreads the benefits and helps with family budgeting (see **section B**)

A2. Participants eat a wider variety of fruit and vegetables

The variety of fruit and veg. that families are buying is also increased as families are able to widen the range of fresh produce they buy.

- The vouchers help families to widen the range of produce they buy from a fairly narrow range of basic fresh produce to a much wider range, including treats, which can help to overcome fussiness over food.

Boys love raw crunchy veg. and they will experiment especially when they see mum eating veg.

Good variety of colour (of fruit and veg.)

Encouraging eating a variety of different fruit and veg

A treat I can get is mango/avocado

Having more options helps me and my daughter overcome being fussy

- When considering the end of the project participants saw a return to a more basic range of fresh produce or even a switch to frozen fruit and veg.

Without RVs I will (go back to) buy safer – less variety

Without RV I would buy just 1 type of fruit

(After the project) Shift to frozen fruit and veg. – cheap and easy to store

A3. Fruit becomes the snack of choice

74% of adults and 83% of children have been eating less sweets and savoury snacks.

- Awareness of fruit being available encourages behaviour change in the whole family particularly around snacking and breakfasts (see also **section D**). Before receiving vouchers some participants considered fruit to be either a lower priority to other foods (especially meat or sweet and savoury snacks) or to some extent a luxury and therefore not often available or visible in the house.

We as a family eat more fruit and less snacks - almost none

Now I put fruit in the bowl - not snacks

Use fruit and veg. as snacks

F and V wasn't high on my priority list

I use sweets as treats that way my daughter feels much happier when she gets them

A4. Overcoming risk when trying new fruit and vegetables

Emerging findings from the mid-project evaluation clearly highlighted the importance of Rose Vouchers in overcoming perceived risk when buying new types of fruit and veg. This was confirmed and re-iterated in the final workshops.

Before RV I didn't want to take the risk of spending money on stuff in case the kids didn't eat it. Now we can try stuff without worrying.

- Buying food that potentially will not be eaten (because it is produce the family are not accustomed to) is perceived as a risk – money wasted. The vouchers help to overcome this risk.

We've been trying new stuff

Trying f and v without having to worry

Started to experiment with other fruit and veg. that I wouldn't use before

- A small number of families also talked about experimenting with raw fruit and veg., new meal preparation techniques and dietary options.

Experimenting with fruit and veg. raw and crunchy

Kids like experimenting with colourful fruit and veg. raw

Allowed me to be a bit more experimental e.g. beetroot and spiralizer for courgette noodles

RV takes the risk out of trying new things and cooking new meals

Tried being a vegan for 2 weeks – now I eat much less meat

A5. Enabling families to buy imported fruit and vegetables

For many immigrant families – particularly those of West African and the Caribbean origin – a strong emphasis was placed on the opportunity provided by Rose Vouchers to buy culturally significant imported fruit and vegetables and to cook meals as they would in their country of origin. This helps participants to maintain a cultural connection with their original home and supports the emotional well-being of often vulnerable and isolated families.

RV goes a long way - it really helps. Allows us to have a cultural connection and meals.

I am able to teach my daughter about fruit I know from the Caribbean

It's our food so you have to get it

Yam/plantain - used to be once in a month. Now I can alternate yam one week, plantain the next - it becomes more regular.

I couldn't buy this before

B. Financial support

“Every penny counts. £3 a week (makes) such a huge difference.”

20 comments on the positive financial impact of the Rose Vouchers

For some families on very low incomes the financial support that the Rose Vouchers provide is absolutely vital. Budgets fluctuate and at times for some families Rose Vouchers make the difference between being able to feed their family and not.

B1. Providing vital financial support

- For a small number of participants – in particular those receiving vouchers but not eligible to receive other benefits – the vouchers are a life-line.

Every penny counts. £3 a week (makes) such a huge difference.

Vouchers really helped when I had such little money - £120 for two weeks

People rely on the vouchers

As highlighted in **section D** the vouchers encourage positive changes in behaviour around food. However, it should not be assumed that because families are financially vulnerable they don't have good dietary and nutritional behaviour and attitudes. For some families who already try to prioritise fruit and veg. and who prepare meals from scratch the vouchers support their existing positive behaviour through providing additional financial support and helping to relieve stress.

Less worry financially

- In families where fruit and vegetables have always been important the vouchers effectively free up money that would otherwise have been spent on fruit and veg. so that it can be used to cover other costs.

Already conscious about healthy food and eating so eating a lot. Vouchers help with the cost.

*Vouchers free up money that would have been spent on fruit and veg. – used to help my son to attend an after school homework club
(The mother's English is not strong enough to provide the support he needs)*

Using vouchers for fruit and veg. use saved money for other things

Whilst many of the most vulnerable families are not working, families can still struggle to afford healthy diets even when one or even both parents are employed. The working poor

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are not the immediate focus of the Rose Voucher project and will usually not meet the project's eligibility criteria. However, a family's financial situation is constantly changing and some participants described drifting in and out of eligibility for the Rose Vouchers.

- For some families being in work doesn't necessarily address financial factors influencing their access to fresh fruit and veg.

I'm working now so I don't get RV - and even when I am working I can't afford to get fruit. Not benefitting from working.

B2. Supporting changes in behaviour around budgeting and planning the food shop

70% of families say they are more thoughtful about their food shop

In **Section D** findings indicate that families receiving Rose Vouchers and engaged with the project often become more thoughtful and aware about the food they buy and cook. Being more conscious of their diet and food shopping habits helps them to identify ways to improve their behaviour around food. Similarly the Rose Vouchers encourage participants to be more conscious of the way they use their money and benefits to provide food for their families.

- Many families felt that they were being more careful about how they spent their money when buying food and when deciding between food and other items. Strategies are developed to make the most of available budgets and to plan ahead how, and on what, to spend money.

I always think and plan before I shop or buying any food

(Rose Vouchers) helps me to save a little bit of money

I make a plan - what do I need from the market and what from the supermarket

I make a list

RV has changed how we buy food (budgeting, lists, using the market)

Looking for better value for money – e.g. buying a whole pineapple rather than prepared cuts

I try to buy less clothes - I'm being more careful about budgeting

This was particularly apparent when participants looked ahead to a time when they would no longer receive Rose Vouchers.

- Families identified strategies to continue buying fruit and veg. after the end of the project.

I will have a good look at my budget to keep fruit and veg. in my shop

I will shop around to get bargains

I will be more careful about budgeting (generally)

I will need to make sacrifices elsewhere

Will cut back on desserts and treats

It is usually assumed that food is the flexible budget item – i.e. when budgets are tight and something has to give families will spend less on food because other costs (in particular, utilities such as gas/electricity) are more rigid. However, one participant suggested that she would protect and maintain the food budget by exploring ways to be more efficient about her household energy use.

- The habits developed during the project help to establish fresh food as a higher priority in some participants' budgets.

(Fruit's) a bit expensive but I know I have to buy it for (my daughter). I will try to use less of my top-up gas card

C. Improved health and wellbeing

“Vouchers give me a massive push – taking care of yourself.”

18 comments on the health benefits of the Rose Voucher scheme

92% of families say they are feeling healthier

Sections A and B show how receiving Rose Vouchers helps participants to become more thoughtful about the food they buy, what they eat and how they make the most of the money they have for food. Being more thoughtful about food helps participants become more aware of how food affects their health and wellbeing.

C1. Increasing health awareness

Participants not only draw direct links between their changed diet and health benefits but also comment on feeling more empowered to influence their family’s health through the food they can now provide.

- Participants acknowledge that the Rose Vouchers support them to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

Keep trying more fresh, healthy fruit and veg. good way to make body healthier. Move away from fast food.

Helps me feel more in control – Not just going to the doctor

I felt guilty that I couldn’t wean and feed my child properly. RV helped me to overcome the guilt.

Good way to make my body healthier

Eating healthy food is good for my family

The project has also had a direct impact on specific aspects of participants’ health and wellbeing.

C2. Improving digestion

Participants see improved digestion and regular bowel movements as an important impact on the health and wellbeing of their families and were happy to talk openly and easily about this topic at the evaluation workshops. This is testament to the participatory and relaxed approach and facilitation of the workshops allowing participants to open up and share what could be considered to be sensitive personal issues.

- Throughout the Rose Voucher project in Lambeth and other project locations participants have commented on the impact of eating more fruit and vegetables has had on their digestion. As two participants in the mid-project evaluation put it:

My son is going for a no. 2 every day – before he was not regular – he is now more happy

Previously my son was prescribed pills for constipation – this changed in the first 2 weeks of receiving Rose Vouchers

Additional comments from the final workshops reiterate this important health impact.

Eating fruit I go more to the toilet

More regular, less constipation, better shaped tummy

(My daughter) is finding it easier to go to the toilet

C3. Other perceived health impacts

Participants also attributed a number of other health improvements to their increased consumption of fruit and vegetables. Whilst it is not always possible to draw direct causal links it is important to acknowledge that this is their perception – that the changes result from their improved diet. In the workshops it was suggested that other factors could be involved but that the fruit and vegetables may have been a contributing factor along with the increased awareness discussed in **section C1**.

Energy levels

- Participants talked about feeling more energetic – both themselves and their children – and saw this as a positive impact of eating a healthier diet.
- Many saw this as a result of increased vitamin intake in their diet

Child said he has got more energy from eating fruit and veg and knows it's good for his health

I have noticed my family has more energy and sleep better

I personally feel less tired, my daughter is always on the go. (Feeling healthier)

Energy – more veg. – feel a lot lighter, not so lazy – more energy – tummy not full up

Kids getting less colds, more calm and having more energy. Kids calmer, less hyperactive, they can sit and concentrate

Skin complexion

- Participants also reported that their complexion had improved greatly since eating more fruit and veg. saying that they had less spots and clearer skin.

People ask what I put on their skin - it looks more healthy. More fresh fruit and more water

Skin better – open pores

Weight loss

- Participants attributed weight loss – in both themselves and their children – to changes in their diet since using vouchers. In particular this was attributed to more fruit and vegetables, less carbohydrate, fewer snacks and a switch from red meat to fish and poultry. This benefit could also be the result of greater awareness of diet and health generally.

Lost weight from eating fruit and veg. - more healthy

I now eat less red meat and more fish – I want to lose weight

Daughter is slimmer as she eats less junk food - crisps and biscuits. Now she eats porridge, banana, apple

I lost weight (eating fresh fruit)

I am losing weight because of eating fruit, used to eat 4 slices of toast but now I have a banana in the morning

Eyesight

- One mother was convinced that her daughter's eyesight had improved since she began eating more fruit and vegetables. She attributed this to an increase in her vitamin intake.

Child's eyesight improved

Vitamin and Iron levels

- The same mother had also been able to stop taking iron supplements as her deficiency had been addressed by the increased consumption of green vegetables.

I don't need iron tablets

More vitamin C so less dry lips and palms

C4. Improving emotional wellbeing

95% of families are feeling happier, saying they have been getting out more, socialising and feeling less stressed financially

The Rose Voucher project supports families that are financially vulnerable to be able to buy more fresh fruit and vegetables. However, many (though by no means all) of the families that meet the eligibility criteria for the project are also socially isolated, lacking in confidence and emotionally vulnerable. A number of issues can influence this, including: an inability to find work, language or literacy barriers, discrimination and ethnic isolation. Whilst the Rose Voucher project doesn't specifically aim to address these complex issues many participants commented on the project's impact on their improved socialisation and overall emotional wellbeing.

- In **section A5**, the importance of access to imported fruit and vegetables helping to maintain cultural connection was highlighted – a direct link between the fresh produce and emotional well being.
- **Section B1**, highlights the financial support provided by the Rose Vouchers and indicates how this helps to overcome the stress associated with financial vulnerability.

Other factors are more closely related to the social aspects of the project and the way in which it is organised.

- Collecting the Vouchers each week strengthens the connection with Children's Centres and the support they provide and helps to establish a bond between the families participating in the project. This is discussed more in **section F**.

The rose vouchers have really impacted positively in my life, I was lonely when I had my baby and didn't have much money, but when I started coming to the children's centre, I met friends and the RV helped me financially

- A number of participants commented on the simple fact that the need to pick up Vouchers each week and use them in the market gives them a reason to leave the house. This is particularly true for new mothers many of whom said they feel

isolated when caring for their new baby – a situation which is exacerbated by social or ethnic isolation.

Getting out more - to the market, Children's Centre etc. It socialises us

Gives you an incentive. It motivates you to come to the Children's Centre

Although I used to visit the Children's Centre before, the vouchers are an incentive

D. Behaviour change around food

“Inspired by vouchers - kids eating more fruit and veg. - beetroot, sweet corn etc.”

49 comments on positive behaviour change around food resulting from participation in the Rose Voucher project

Findings discussed in **sections A B and C** show an increased thoughtfulness about food, diet, budgeting and health. This raised awareness is also manifested in the new habits families are forming around the meals they eat.

Improving eating habits RV has made this easier – something I wanted to do as I get older

RV helps me think more about my diet – supports me to change my habits to encourage my daughter to eat well. Good for me and her – e.g. less bread and rice especially

A key aim of the Rose Voucher project is to facilitate and support behaviour change towards a more balanced and healthy diet, particularly for new parents, their babies and young children. Responses from the workshops indicate not only that this happens but that it happens relatively quickly and in many cases the habits are strongly embedded and likely to continue even after the Rose Voucher project ends.

If you get used to it you are likely to stick to it – it took a good 2 months

Snacks reduced – now fruit instead – even after only 3 weeks!

This is in part due to the wrap-around approach of the Rose Voucher project:

- families receive support in the form of vouchers to buy more fruit and vegetables,
- they pick up tips and advice from market traders on how to use the produce and prepare meals,
- Children’s Centres provide recipes and guidance through cooking sessions
- families support each other by sharing recipes, food knowledge and sometimes even cooking together at home.

This results in significant changes in behaviour around meals, snacking and food storage.

D1. Cooking more meals from scratch

**80% of families say they are eating less ready meals,
72% of families say they are eating less takeaways and fast food, and
87% of families say they are eating more home cooked meals**

Families talked about changes in the way they thought about food and their habits around meals and food preparation.

- Having more fresh vegetables encourages participants to cook more meals from scratch and move away from convenience food and processed meals.

I prefer to cook from scratch at home because that is more healthy than processed food

More cooking because more ingredients

Take more healthy food, move away from the sweets and junk food. Children like to pay and count. Good practice. And they know which food is good for the body.

Me and my child eat a lot more home cooked meals as we can afford through RV.

Use internet for recipes / cooking repertoire increased / less ready meals & takeaways

Cooking things that we used to buy from takeaway

I love eating a meal that I cook because I know the right veg. to put in

Limiting fast food or restaurant food to weekends and school holidays

- There are changes to the meals throughout the day – not just the main evening meal.

Eating fruit for breakfast instead of cereal - even if RV stop

Before I'd have an Iceland lunch but now I like more fresh food. I cook more. I am able to as I have more variety.

Now able to cook 2 meals a day – lunch and dinner – more variety so more opportunity to cook things - 2 different meals.

- Because more meals are cooked from fresh materials children are more involved in preparing food and meals are more often eaten together as a family.

My children are more involved with cooking meals

Cooking together - she likes to help me pour and help get things out of the fridge

I love eating together with my family because when we eat together the meal tastes (better) and you have more appetite

D2. Cooking better balanced meals

**31% of families say they are eating less meat and
70% say they are eating more fish**

A number of participants talked about the way in which their meals were changing as a result of more available vegetables. These families already cooked from scratch but their meals focused on filling carbohydrate and meat and included fewer vegetables.

- Increased availability of vegetables has resulted in a change in the balance of the meal: less carbohydrate and less red meat (often goat).

Much less meat and carbs - more veg.

Need to eat less of other food to fit in fruit and veg. so we eat less rice etc.

Less pasta and more veg. on the plate. I have to use it because I bought it. I made the change because I could - kids easily adapt to changes.

My Jollof rice is changing – less of the rice, more of the veg.

Now I add all my veg. to Jollof rice. Eat less rice as a portion as I have more veg. on the plate. Tummy is full of veg. so you don't need as much rice.

My kids used to say "I can't eat the veg. because my tummy is full of rice". So now I use less rice because it's possible to have more veg. with RVs

More colour, less rice and bread, more salad and fish

More veg. means less meat and less rice

Veg. fills you up and is better for you

- Raised awareness of food and health issues has not only resulted in eating more vegetables but also in a switch from red meat to fish and poultry.

More fish and chicken but now no red meat. Veg fills you up and better for you. You want lighter meat with it so more fish. I feel lighter, I don't want heavy, stodgy food anymore.

(Fish) Healthier to eat than meat

Less red meat, more fish - because I want to lose weight

I used to buy red meat but I don't now – I buy chicken and fish and more veg

Fish has increased – I don't want to eat meat so much

Experimented being vegan for two weeks. Now eat much less meat

D3. Exploring ways to store and keep fresh food

As well as experimenting with recipes using fresh vegetables some participants have explored ways to keep fresh fruit that would otherwise be wasted if it wasn't eaten quickly enough. This was particularly true for some soft fruit from Brixton Market which was occasionally very ripe and had a short 'bowl-life' before going rotten.

Freeze bananas and grapes and freeze orange like ice lollies which are good for teething. Pumpkin & banana loaf when bananas brown - easy cook recipe. Juicing and freezing

Pumpkin soup popular in (our) house. Make apple jam. Only since vouchers - before it was only one piece of fruit.

Didn't make juice before. Now son complains if he doesn't have carrot juice. Appetite changed in house. Mum eats more / no more iron problems. Freezes fruit in the small bags for summer / kids. Never did before. Makes smoothies regularly.

Will find ways to preserve fruit and veg to avoid waste

D4. Switching to fruit and vegetables for snacks

The possibility of having fruit in a bowl at home encourages a switch in behaviour around snacking. The focus is much more on fruit as a snack than on shop bought biscuits, sweets and crisps. This is highlighted particularly in snacking away from the home.

- Families are regularly using raw vegetables and fruit as a snack-on-the-go

Fruit used more as a snack on the go. Grapes, oranges, bananas, cucumber, tomato in container

Tend to give my son fruits when he wants his snacks

Snacks on the go – fruit

Kids don't ask for crisps after school – learned to swap crisps for fruit

E. Behaviour change around food shopping

“RV made me realise how (many) things are much cheaper in the market than supermarkets”

59 positive comments about using the market and the West Norwood fruit and veg. stall

94% of participants say they shop more at the market

The Rose Vouchers introduced participants to Brixton Market as a source of good value, good quality fresh fruit and vegetables. Some said they already used the market and so the vouchers supported existing shopping decisions but allowed a widening of the variety of produce they purchased.

Participants from Kingswood Children’s Centre used a fruit and Veg. market stall in West Norwood rather than Brixton Market.

For a small number of families at Lark Hall Children’s Centre the distance from where they lived to Brixton Market was enough to dissuade them from fully engaging in the project. The cost of travelling to the market by bus outweighed the value of the Rose Vouchers.

Bus fare more expensive than vouchers

Bus to the market is expensive

It's not worth coming for just £3 of vouchers after child reaches 1 year old.

E1. Switching from supermarkets to the market to buy fresh fruit and veg.

- Rose Vouchers encouraged participants to shop for fruit and veg. at Brixton Market and the West Norwood stall instead of at local supermarkets based on a comparison of value for money and quality of fresh produce. Some participants used a combination of the market and supermarket.

When you shop at the market you get more for your money

I shop more at the market thanks to the vouchers. Before I used to shop at the supermarket.

Shop more in the market than before, able to save money and divert to other foods

I have a reason to use the market more because I have the vouchers

More meat and veg in market and much cheaper. Cheaper than Lidl, fresher and looks better.

Used to get fruit and veg in local supermarket but now just from market.

Just go for grapes, bananas and strawberries. I use vouchers and Sainsburys. I don't think I will change my market habits, I shop all over.

- Most comments about the produce were very positive in terms of quality and variety

Quality is amazing

W. Norwood stall has good produce and is clean

Need Derek (Brixton Market) for West Indian products

Good variety of veg. at market

- A small number of comments suggested that quality varied between different stalls and that you needed to shop around within the market for best value.

Bowls – quality issue – over-ripe

Get what you pay for

Bad quality and going off

Over ripe in the market

E2. Encouraging shopping for other food and goods at the market

- Families using the market for fruit and veg. also shop for other items helping to boost the market economy.

Also go to the butchers

Never used to go to butchers. Now I buy in market, butchers tell me how to cook it etc. Used to think butchers were dirty.

*Had to buy trolley at Xmas as bought all Xmas fruit and veg. – so heavy!
Never used to go in market before. Now get clothes etc.*

E3. Enjoying the atmosphere of the market and developing a rapport with market stall holders

- Many families described how much they enjoyed the market and the shopping experience

Saturday go with kids - they like to choose stuff and like the busy market

Before RV - never went to market. Don't like the smell of meat. Road was quite rough (surface). Now they have resurfaced much better.

Love hustle and bustle of market.

Kids love to choose what they get - they want to try stuff

Like to go with kids so they can pick it - makes it fun for them.

- Participants value the friendly and trusting relationship that develops with the stall-holders. This works both ways because the stall holders also appreciate the new customers coming to their stalls.

We have a rapport with Kelly- a friendship.

You can ask Derek when it's best to eat - e.g. a pear or avocado. He will say "it's not good today, eat it tomorrow". I ask him if it's good. I trust him. I tell him if it's not good. We have a relationship.

Kelly - best price. Replaced stuff that went off (strawberries). She said I can bring back anything that's not good. Honest, trusting relationship

Woman and son traders - will mix and match, very flexible. Do a deal for what recipe you want e.g. lasagne. End of season deals. Get suggestions from girls on the first stall e.g. best potatoes for roasts and suggestions to try new stuff

Develop friendships with stall holders, really nice ladies.

Derek also really nice, he says "come again - I need you!" and "this is good for me".

They have good selection on offer. Several things for £1. Quite low cost. Sell things in halves

Stall holder tells us what/how to cook stuff e.g. carrot cupcakes

F. Building stronger connections with the Children's Centres

"Rose Vouchers gives you an incentive. It motivates you to come to the Children's Centre"

Both adults and children have benefitted from a closer connection with the Children's Centres

77% of families say they are visiting the Children's Centre more

F1. Encouraging families to visit Children's Centres at least once every week by locating Rose Voucher collection there.

- Participating families have developed much stronger connections with the Children's centre and they have been introduced to a range of relevant sessions and courses

Rose Vouchers gives you an incentive. It motivates you to come to the Children's Centre e.g. chatter time

Incentive to come every week (to Children's Centre) - eg cooking time, baby massage, chatter time, stay & play, healthy eating lifestyle.

Massive incentive to come to Children's Centre

Relationship with Children's Centre. Need to come to get RV, kids can play, I can relax. Motivation to come. RV motivates me to come here.

Although I used to visit the Children's Centre before, the vouchers are an incentive

F2. Helping families overcome isolation, encouraging integration and boosting confidence

- Both adults and children have benefitted from being part of the Rose Voucher project through engaging more with the Centres as well as socialising with each other.

Connection with children's centre is good for my wellbeing - getting social connections and help

I have more friends from coming to the CC

Connection in group stronger. Kids do chatter time together

By visiting the Children's Centre I have made friends along with my child and have been introduced to different events etc and information.

Helps my daughter interact with others much more

Help my children to meet other children and also help her improve her speech

My daughter's learning how to play with others and learn new songs

Help my kids with their speech and they feel confident

- Families are encouraged to participate in a wide range of sessions according to their interests and needs

The Children's Centre has helped me and my child develop through courses, information, day trips and children's classes

Mostly my daughter loves attending cooking course, interested about food.

Using the centre for stay and play, advice and voucher collection

Now attending sessions with baby

Twice a week, as my little boy starts weaning

I do a course in parenting every week

- At the Jubilee Children's Centre workshop participants commented on how much they enjoyed the workshop itself and the opportunity it provided for the cohort of Rose Voucher recipients to come together at the same time and place.

I don't want to leave (the workshop)

G. Positive attitude towards the Rose Vouchers

"I use them with pride – they don't feel like a benefit"

Participants in the Rose Voucher project have a very positive opinion of the vouchers appreciating the bright and engaging design and styling of the vouchers themselves. They also recognise the importance of the human dimension of the project. Rose Vouchers are not perceived as just another financial benefit focused on fruit and vegetables. Participants recognise that the Rose vouchers support the development of strong social relationships between participants as well as with the market stall-holders and with staff and volunteers at the Children's Centres.

Conclusions

The Rose Voucher project in Lambeth has been evaluated using a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation tools used in facilitated participatory workshops alongside self-completed diaries and pie charts. This enables us to understand the impact of the project from the perspective of the participating families. This report presents anecdotal evidence from discussions and guided sessions during the workshops and corroborating statistical evidence derived from the diaries and impact matrices to provide a robust evaluation of the scheme's impact against its stated mission, aims and objectives.

Mission

The evaluation findings demonstrate that the project in Lambeth has fulfilled its mission of **supporting local families experiencing food poverty**, helping them to **explore healthy eating opportunities** by **building their spending power**. In doing so the project is also **supporting local markets** where the Rose Vouchers are used.

Aims

- The project has also achieved its key aims by focussing on **young children in vulnerable families** specifically helping them to have **better access to fresh fruit and vegetables**.
- For many families fresh **fruit and vegetables have become a higher priority in the food shop** and the **vouchers help overcome risk** associated with trying new fresh food.
- The improved access to fresh produce alongside advice, guidance and support from the Children's Centres has **encouraged and facilitated positive diet-related behaviour change**.
- This includes an **increase in families cooking meals from scratch** and a **change in the balance of meals** away from red meat and less starchy filling meal components (rice, pasta, cassava).
- This has in turn resulted in **improved health and wellbeing**, in particular improved digestion and emotional wellbeing.
- Participants have also developed **improved budgeting skills** and more **thoughtful shopping behaviour** – using their financial resources in a more considered way.
- The organisation and structure of the project helps to **bring participants together as a strong cohesive social group allowing mutual support and overcoming social isolation**.
- By focusing on local markets the project encourages their use – and a switch away from supermarkets – **boosting the local economy** through **increasing the trade of stalls selling fruit and vegetables** as well as other fresh produce stalls – in particular butchers – and other market items.

Objectives

Finally, the Lambeth project has clearly met its objectives of **increasing the quantity and variety of fruit and vegetables consumed by participating families**, supporting **more regular use of the Children's Centres** where the vouchers are collected and where participants attend relevant sessions are attended, and **increasing the spend in local markets** – in particular on fruit and vegetables.

The approach to evaluation developed in the Rose Voucher pilot projects in the London Boroughs of Greenwich and Hackney and applied here in Lambeth is an integral part of the Rose Voucher methodology. Evaluating the project against its targets is a necessary and important aspect of any project of this type, particularly for funding and commissioning agencies and for those running the project and wanting to improve its impact in the future. However, the experience in Lambeth has demonstrated that perhaps the greatest value of the evaluation process is the way in which it helps participants to become more aware and thoughtful about the impact of the project on different aspects of their lives. By setting in place regular opportunities for participants to consider the impact of the project participants become more conscious of the changes that are happening.

The facilitated participatory workshops are designed to allow participants to hear each other, share experiences and opinions and validate each other's perspectives. Through this process participants are encouraged to think more about the choices they are making and the changes they are experiencing. The pie charts and diaries enable a more personal consideration of how different foods are prioritised, how food is budgeted for and behaviour around shopping and meals. With additional support and encouragement from Children's Centre staff participating families feel proud of the changes they make and this helps boost their self-esteem and confidence.

The Rose Voucher project achieves much more than improved access to fresh fruit and vegetables for vulnerable young families. The families who engage with the project become stronger, happier and more confident and are able to recognise and acknowledge the importance of the steps they are taking towards a more positive experience around food, cooking, meals and shopping and ultimately the health and wellbeing of their families.

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