



# Welcoming A Greener Future 2015-2021 Evaluation Summary

by the Centre for Human Ecology

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# Evaluation Summary

From 2015 to 2021, Edinburgh-based charity The Welcoming (TW) ran a programme of activities titled 'Welcoming A Greener Future' (WAGF). The programme was funded by the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). Funding criteria included significant reductions of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) emissions, as well as other social and environmental benefits to the target community. TW's target community were 'New Scots' – refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants seeking support upon arrival in Edinburgh.

This evaluation's focus is how WAGF successfully (1) meets the needs of its participants, (2) connects social and environmental benefits in holistic ways, and (3) builds participants' capacity and capability. The evaluation is based on a review of project documentation, including all available WAGF reports to the CCF, an online survey of participants and two online focus groups, one with staff members and one with participants, conducted in January 2022.

The evaluators observed that, true to TW's stated ethos and values, WAGF was responsive to the needs of participants around improving their sense of belonging, safety and building inclusive community. Furthermore, many of the different WAGF programmes and activities, while having clearly defined remits and CO<sub>2</sub>e reduction targets (usually specified by CCF guidelines), were broad-ranging and linked up in synergy with projects within the broader umbrella of TW. WAGF had four streams – energy efficiency, waste reduction, food growing and community engagement and education. All streams made an impact on the wellbeing of the participants, as they benefited from English classes, practical advice on everyday living, support against social isolation, education and training towards finding work, and inclusive community spaces.

A particular strength of the programme was its success in integrating social and environmental benefits. Home energy efficiency visits that provided service users with operating knowledge of the Scottish housing and utilities systems, as well as tools to save money. Swap shops and community fridges provided new migrants with household and clothing essentials in a dignified

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manner, as well as reducing waste. Food growing activities reduced food miles and supported participants in their social integration as well as involving time spent outdoors, improving physical health. There were also unexpected outcomes in terms of nurturing capability and leadership among participants through volunteering opportunities and, in some cases, career progression within TW itself. The programme also raised awareness about climate justice and made links to people's experiences of migration: An important point of engagement were English classes which incorporated learning about climate change and sustainability.

TW is well placed to play a key continuing role in the belonging and well-being of New Scots in Edinburgh, and its work may become more critical in the future given likely trends of increased migration, climate change-induced displacement and increased energy and food costs. The evaluators conclude that follow-up activity from WAGF should build from the solid base of current work and concentrate on continuity with an integral way of working, informed by the links between social and environmental justice.

**The evaluators' recommendations include:**

- »» Recognition from funders and policymakers for the benefits of TW's holistic and inclusive work, and for the need of flexible and inclusive targets and performance indicators to ensure unintended positive outcomes are identified and documented.
- »» Development of an integrated food justice approach that links food growing, sustainable food systems and the social and cultural aspects of food.
- »» More advice and advocacy work on home energy efficiency, and integrating this with wider collaboration and consultation with local and national policymakers and housing providers.
- »» TW may wish to incorporate some appropriate, trauma-informed monitoring and evaluation on health, belonging and wellbeing among migrant communities.
- »» Deepen and expand work on climate justice in Scotland, and work with researchers to feed into policies around the vision for a just transition.
- »» Consideration of increased provision for children and young people, and development of inter-generational practice.

Commissioned by:



Written by:



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