

Changing the Story

Irish charities supporting communities through sharing surplus food



Contents Page

Footprints Women’s Centre in West Belfast	04
Using food to empower people and the local community	04
Key impacts of Belfast Footprints Women’s Centre	06
Challenges for Footprints	11
Taking steps – what you can learn from Footprints	12



Key words (a-z)	Explanation
Empower	To give someone more control and power over their situation.
Food sharing	Sharing good food for free or low cost, instead of wasting it.
Foodbank	A non-profit, charitable organisation that shares donated or surplus food with people in need.
Social enterprise	Businesses that work to improve the lives of people.
Social supermarket	A shop that sells food more cheaply than retailers to those who are living on low-incomes or experiencing poverty.
Surplus food	Good food that, if not used soon, will go to waste.
Sustainable	Something that can continue for a long time without having a harmful impact.
Wrap-around services	Additional services to support a person's wellbeing like counselling and financial advice.

Footprints Women's Centre

Using food to empower people and the local community



Footprints Women's Centre in West Belfast provides support services for women and children. These services are based on using surplus food. The centre uses food as a tool to get women involved with the centre. It then provides other supports that helps women and their families including:



Socially



Mentally



Economically

Overview



Footprints Women’s Centre uses a social supermarket model to provide food at lower prices. Alongside this, it provides a safe community space that offers a range of services. These include:



Childcare



Community Café



Training & education



Events



Counselling & crisis intervention



Community Garden

The centre supports women and their families by:



Providing positive pathways to a better future



Giving women a sense of personal well-being



Making affordable food available

Key impacts of Belfast Footprints Women's Centre

Footprints empowers through connections

Footprints provides peer support groups:



A senior group



A migrant women's group



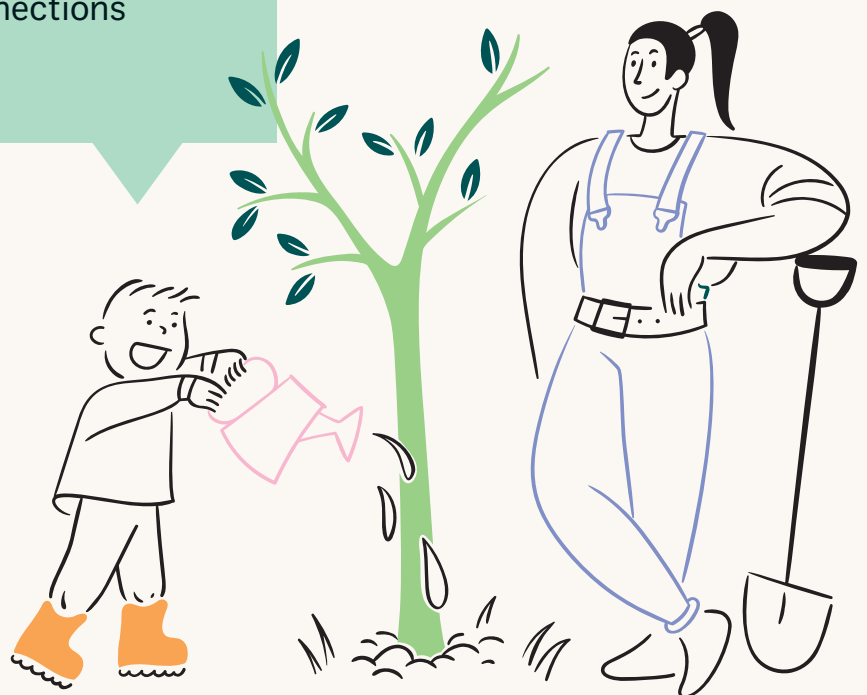
Cooking groups



Support group for mothers

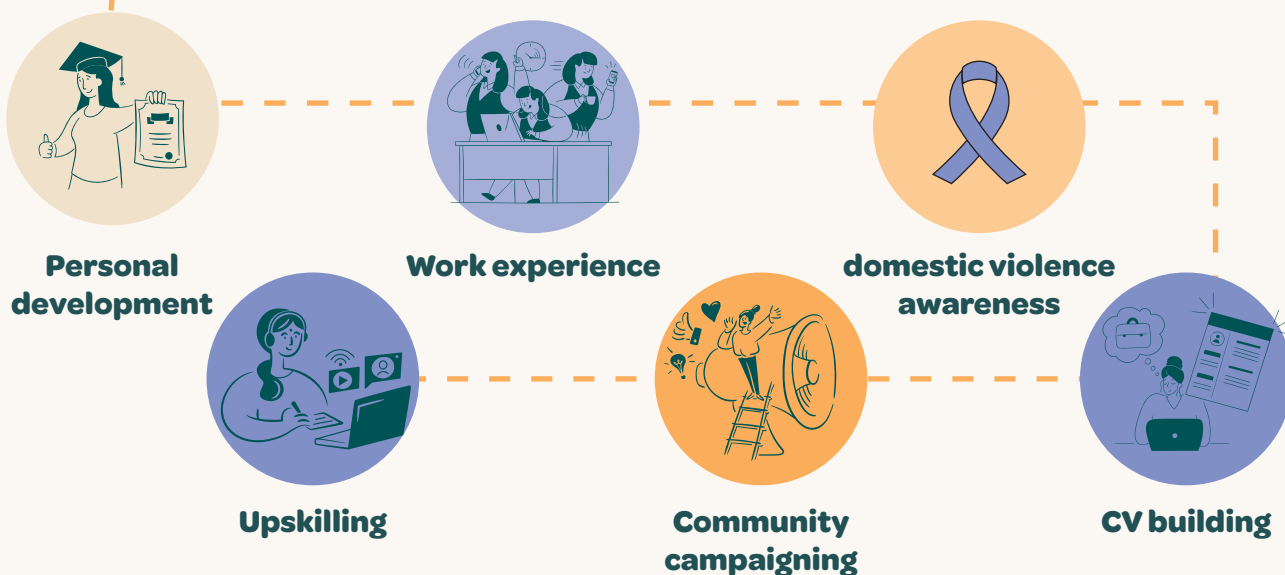
Vital connections for women and children

Community-based support networks are important for mental health and well-being. They are vital connections for women and children.



Footprints builds confidence through training and personal development services

Footprints training includes:



This is supported by a childcare service at the Footprints centre, so mothers can take up any of the courses without worrying about finding a childminder.

Footprints supports disadvantaged women on a journey to independence

Footprints meet the short-term needs of women using their services by providing them with food security. It also caters for their long-term needs by tackling the root causes of food insecurity. This supports women on their journey to becoming confident and independent.



Footprints creates a safe space for women and children

Footprints supports a community through its surplus food-sharing service, providing women with a safe space to connect and grow together. Children visit the café and go to the supermarket. This approach removes stigma and provides a welcoming and warm environment for those facing food insecurity.



Impact – Footprints feeds families with dignity

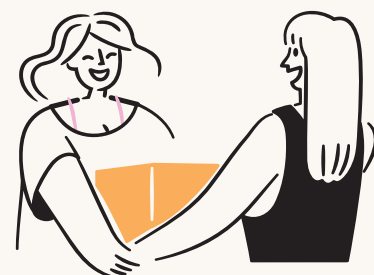
A social supermarket is different to a traditional food bank, where people have little or no choice on what they receive. It feels just like a normal supermarket and operates in a similar way. But it has much cheaper prices. Shopping for their own food and choosing what they buy allows people who are struggling financially to feed themselves and their families with dignity.



Footprints Women's Centre empowers through food services

Footprints shares surplus food

Footprints use surplus food that would otherwise be wasted. Most of its food items are sourced from their local surplus food distribution organisation, Fareshare.



It also gets donations from local retailers (for example Tesco) and uses fruit and vegetables from the community garden. Footprints educates women who use its services on the value of surplus food and how to avoid food going to waste.

Social supermarket opened in 2017

Footprints' social supermarket opened in 2017, and it was the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. It represents a lifeline for women and their families in the Colin area of Belfast.



Community drives Footprints

Most of the team are local women and Footprints is the largest community employer in its area.

Growing through partnerships

Footprints has created many links with organisations in the wider Belfast area. Partnerships help to support projects, raise awareness and provide employment opportunities to the women on Footprints' training courses.

Its community kitchen and mobile kitchen help to make Footprints' positive impact visible to partner organisations. This, in turn, encourages them to give more support to Footprints' projects.



Enabling community engagement

Footprints operates in an area of Belfast which experiences high levels of unemployment and poverty. The centre has created its services to empower women who come to Footprints and ensures they keep their dignity.

For example, Footprints provides childcare that enables women to do its courses and learn new skills. Empowering women who use their services helps to build trust in the organisation and engagement with the community as a whole.

Government funding used to set up social supermarket

Footprints set up the social supermarket through Government funding. To continue its growth and ensure its sustainability, Footprints is looking for corporate funding opportunities and is moving towards a social-enterprise model. Social enterprise models are businesses that work to improve people's lives.



Challenges for Footprints

“Developing sustainable solutions to support women and their families”

Footprints successfully show how surplus food can be used for projects that help to tackle food poverty instead of it going to waste.

“Getting funding for the projects”

Accessing funding is a challenge for all community and voluntary organisations. The organisation is always looking to grow its services, but every project needs a large amount of funding. To address this challenge, Footprints:



Has increased its partnerships with businesses



Offers catering for business events



Looks for government funding opportunities

In addition, Footprints uses local and national media as well as social media to raise awareness of its valuable work and need for financial support.

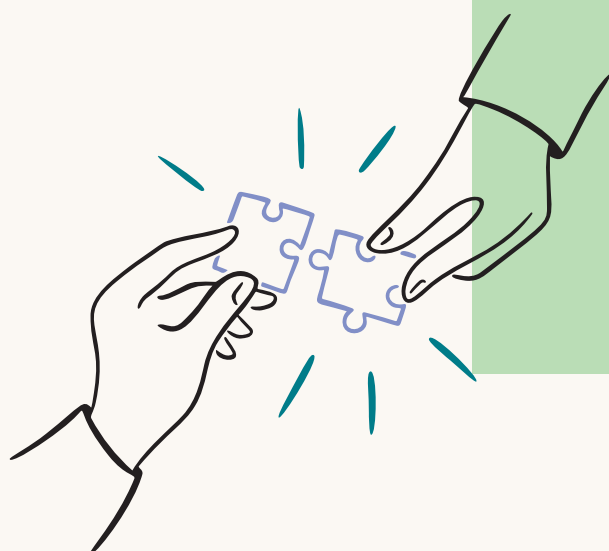


Taking steps – what you can learn from Footprints

Get in contact with FoodCloud

As a charity partner to FoodCloud, FoodCloud can support you to:

- **Organise and collect good food that otherwise would be wasted**
- **Connect you with other local organisations involved in food sharing.**



We can also provide resources and education tools to help you start your food sharing project. We will make sure your project includes everyone in the community working together for a world where no good food goes to waste.

Further information and resources:

[foodcloud](https://www.foodcloud.org) ↗

[footprintswomenscentre.org](https://www.footprintswomenscentre.org) ↗

[fareshare.org.uk/faq/faq-centres/northern-ireland/](https://www.fareshare.org.uk/faq/faq-centres/northern-ireland/) ↗

