

# The PATHWAYS Project

Creating the  
infrastructure to support  
knowledge and resource  
sharing between people  
working towards small-  
scale, diverse farming in  
Jersey.



**PROPOSAL**

Prepared by India Hamilton and Milly Warner

# local food systems //

## LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS //

A local food system (LSF) of small farmers is a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of a particular area (FAO 2018).

LFSs tend to focus on climate positive agriculture and seed sovereignty, whilst also having health and economic benefits (FAO 2018). In a recent study by the New Economics Foundation (NEF), the social return on investment for a small organic farm to table marketplace shows a greater cost benefit ratio than industrial farming, charities or frontline services (ORFC 2021). LFSs supported by small-scale farming practices are considered to be a pathway towards inclusive global development. Currently one third of all food is wasted, and the shorter supply chains of LFSs contribute towards waste reduction. Small-scale farming practices also reduce chemical use, soil compaction alongside improving water management; all of which are factors that contribute towards living within the Planetary Boundaries. Reduced carbon emissions are also linked with reduction in tractor use, seed saving, food miles, composting and fertiliser schemes.

## SMALL-SCALE FARMING REALITY //

In the developed world small farmers are nearing extinction. In the local Jersey context, since the 1990's there has been a drop in dairy farmers from 283 to 13. It is noted by many that this shows a lack of resilience within the industry. Over a similar time period the local potato business has largely shifted to the UK mainland. The average age of a small-scale farmer in the UK is 65 years old, whilst only 3% of farmers are under 35. The problems with this are twofold; there are less people moving into farming which creates a greater concentration of power and leads to overall weaker food systems, as well as a potential for damaging knowledge loss between generations.

Finding a solution to support smallholders is less than simple. Studies show that smallholders suffer from a multitude of problems; a lack of designated infrastructure, lack of financing and loans, lack of suitable education, social safety nets due to being landless, marketplace barriers, and policy designed to support large-scale export programmes. At the same time, it is also clear that islanders have a strong interest and ample energy in support of local small-scale farmers.



# opportunities & risks //

## AIM //

The aim of the PATHWAYS programme is to support LFSs and provide infrastructure to help people access and undertake agroecological farming. The programme also creates opportunities to transfer knowledge across the generations. Additionally, the PATHWAYS programme aligns with the Jersey's Common Strategic Policy by building a skilled and varied economy that upholds the heritage of the Island.

## VALUES//

PATHWAYS is a plan for supporting local small-scale farmers by drawing upon international examples, local wisdom, value-led approaches and innovative land-use methods which will support new farmers into the industry and transition existing farmland into sustainable and locally-owned farming and food systems. The values-led approach sets the parameters of farming practice, profit and community that are synonymous with ecological principles, local livelihoods and community-based prosperity.

## RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES //

SCOOP has spotted risks, gaps and opportunities in the local agricultural ecosystem. It is difficult to move into agriculture as the barriers are off-putting and a generation of smallholder growers will potentially miss the opportunity to share their local knowledge. There is an absence of formal education programmes and suitable infrastructure for small, diverse and nature-based farming practices designed for the local market. There is a lack of understanding of the scope of different ways in which land can be managed in order to produce food whilst also achieving conservation and carbon-reduction targets. The LEAF audit, as set out in the island plan, only currently works for large export-based farmers, and leaves areas of cropland diversity farms and growing spaces predominantly unmanaged. SCOOP is best placed to develop the PATHWAYS programme as over the last 2 years it has grown a value-led marketplace with 300 members, 5 organic farmers and 35 local producers selling within a not-for-profit marketplace. This gives us both the experience and the local knowledge to ensure PATHWAYS success.

# SCOOP PATHWAYS//

PATHWAYS will be split into three sections. This three-pronged approach creates a degree of community autonomy over the project, as well as developing a goal-orientated programme. During the previous two years' of research for the PATHWAYS programme, the following factors were highlighted:

1. All farmers are different
2. All land has a specific land-use directive
3. All market opportunities are different
4. Farming is a sliding scale of practice
5. Everyone is at a different stage within the learning process, and each person has differing intentions.
6. All participants share similar values based in "ecological" principles.

The three-pronged approach is divided like this:

- Section ONE: knowledge sharing
- Section TWO: community notice board
- Section THREE: FARMSTART; an education programme focused on people looking to build a business in agro-ecology.

## BUILDING THE PROGRAMME //

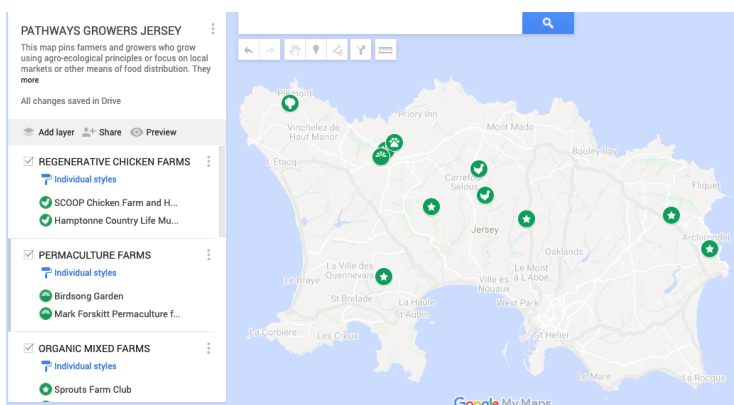
Jersey is full of growers. The first process is to map the growers who are interested in sharing knowledge and learning about small farm techniques. It is important to build upon existing farming infrastructure and also support people currently working in agriculture. The stakeholder map will also enable us to see the interconnections between different individuals, and create a clearer vision of the opportunities for workforce and resource sharing in line with our collaborative and regenerative principles. The first part of the PATHWAYS programme highlighted an extensive community of people who are engaged within the farming network. The mapping will ask the following questions:

- Who are the farmers?
- What is expected of them, and would they like to do open farm days?
- Are they interested in open gardens?
- Who would offer education possibilities? (see part 3 for more details)
- What type of space would promote retired farmers' engagement?

## MAPPING GROWERS//

Through GoogleMaps we have designed an interactive map which locates growers and their growing information.

The map is available to the participants of PATHWAYS



# Section ONE // knowledge sharing

## GROWERS OPEN DAYS//

We will set up growers open days. This includes:

- Setting up a year planner for growers to choose times that suits them.
- Create a simple booking system.
- Send invitations through the PATHWAYS networks.

This feeds into PATHWAYS section three: FARMSTART. Growers will be asked to allow members of the FARMSTART programme onto their farm for communal learning.

## PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING//

In order to build on the evolutionary process of PATHWAYS, people who take part in the farm visits will be asked to share what they have learnt, and what they gave in return over the visit.

Additional ideas to generate peer learning could be generated throughout the duration of the PATHWAYS programme.

This feeds into section two which provides a platform and marketplace for the needs and offerings connected to small farming.

# Section TWO// community notice board

## HOW DOES IT WORK? //

The initial launch of the project is decidedly low-tech. This is to ensure the greatest inclusivity and accessibility for islanders who are not confident or comfortable working digitally. The notice boards will be divided into two columns; "things needed" and "things given". The boards act as a connective infrastructure, mapping the needs and resources of our community and creating an open space for knowledge sharing.

The community notice boards would be set up in the following locations across the island:

- SCOOP
- Potential to collaborate

A whatsapp group will be set up to coordinate the people overseeing the boards. When a notice is added to one board, it would also be posted to the whatsapp group to be replicated on the other boards. This will facilitate a cross-island network of PATHWAYS.

## WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES? //

In order to ensure that the board achieves its collaborative purpose, it is necessary to outline some basic guidelines. These are:

- The board is intended for people whose livelihood is agriculture.
- Intended for people working on small-scale, local food systems centred around agroecological and permaculture principles.
- Workers' rights and fair pay.
- Reciprocity and exchange.

## INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION //

The emphasis on intergenerational knowledge sharing within the PATHWAYS programme puts limitations on the use of social media and online platforms. The message board acts as a capacity building mechanism, enabling peer-to-peer collaboration. It is designed to create space to facilitate connections, which will then be developed in-person, allowing for wider social learning and networking. It will be an informal notice place which will allow people to find land, and landowners to find workers. Ultimately the notice board aims to act as an accelerator for those beginning to enter the world of agroecological farming.

Alongside the connective purpose of the notice board, it will also act as a means to gather information about what the community needs and can give with regards to agroecological growing. By providing space for people to express their interests, either as landowners or as growers, the notice board will act as an illuminative tool through which to show the interest webs which exist within Jersey's growing community. Alongside the noticeboard, infographics may also be a useful communication tool which are digestible by most audiences. Face-to-face learning and exchange is desirable, and when COVID restrictions permit, this is what we aspire towards.



# Section THREE // PATHWAYS FARMSTART

## PATHWAYS FARMSTART //

The PATHWAYS FARMSTART programme is designed for people who want to develop a small-scale farming operation in Jersey. FARMSTART is a series of curated lessons where members are expected to take part in community knowledge sharing and offer services through the notice board. Each lesson is designed to encompass different elements of developing a small farm, and each member is welcome to come with different ideologies and unique positions. The subject matters have been drawn from discussions with people who are transitioning into agriculture. It is not specific to a type of farming practice, but it is defined by small farmers and the concept of a local, agroecological food system as described above. Each participant will be invited to outline their design ideas. Each lesson has been designed as a 2 hour programme, held at SCOOP over a period of 6 weeks.

- Local expert on the subject
- Presentation and material
- Working groups to build relationships.

## FARMSTART LESSON GUIDE FARM DESIGN //

This will provide a means to design the farm, and will take the shape of a workbook which discusses:

- Farming style
- Expectations and outcomes
- Farming size

## LEGAL AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION //

We recognise that one of the main challenges to setting up small-scale farming networks is the legal complexities over land-use rights. Therefore, we will set up access to the appropriate legal teams focused on land-use law and agricultural licenses. We will also include advice on financial planning, providing a basic "how to" guide of inherited wisdom for first-time farmers.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMMES //

As part of the PATHWAYS programme we hope to facilitate a wide educational exchange. Within this, we will create an education programme between established local farmers and the new generation, alongside fostering potential partnerships with international organisations.

- Part 1 - International networks of farmers
- Part 2 - Local experts who can teach what they want, whilst also explaining about education flows within the island.

## MARKET OPPORTUNITIES //

Understanding market opportunities is of foundational importance for new farmers. We will therefore create a programme which educates new farmers about different markets and their potential, exploring different avenues of income and possible partnerships through the food system.

## AUDIT TRAINING //

We will use SCOOP's connections to provide audit training which is specific to the local context.

## TECHNOLOGY //

Led by an expert in technology designed for small farmers, this lesson will aim to educate around the practical use of technology. For example, it will include how technology records production, biodiversity and other natural capital, alongside how it can be used as educational tool and broaden your farming community.

## DIVERSIFICATION AND MARKET INNOVATION //

There are two elements to this course; exploring a local and an international case study of improving the economics of local farming systems. We will look at what different people have achieved, and assess the tools and ideas which they used.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH //

Food safety is a key part of any sustainable food business, yet it's normally considered to be a barrier and red tape. This lesson seeks to bust those misconceptions and explore how to use food safety strategies as an advantageous part to your business. Examples of this could include on-site food process which adapt the value chain and generates more income, or composting and connecting with food waste outlets, alongside risk assessments

- Jersey Environmental Health team

\*People and organisations to be confirmed



# Looking forward //

## PARTICIPATION //

These are the methods we will use to ensure the programme responds to the communities needs.

- Clear communication of the PATHWAYS values of peer-to-peer knowledge exchange.
- Accessibility of the community notice board
- Broad marketing which encompasses different sections of society
- Checking that participants are happy and comfortable with the format of communications through both formal (questionnaire) and informal (chats) feedback.
- Feedback from design and workshop sessions using a human-centred design thinking methodology (framing questions / gathering inspiration / generating ideas / testing & prototyping ideas / storytelling)
- Regularly taking suggestions for improvement and new project and collaboration ideas
- Importance of mutual respect and welcoming of all voices

## COLLABORATION //

We are now looking for islanders who would like to collaborate in the PATHWAYS programme. Please get in touch with [india.hamilton@scoop.org.je](mailto:india.hamilton@scoop.org.je) for more information. We also welcome feedback; if you have ideas about how to make this programme even better, please let us know!

