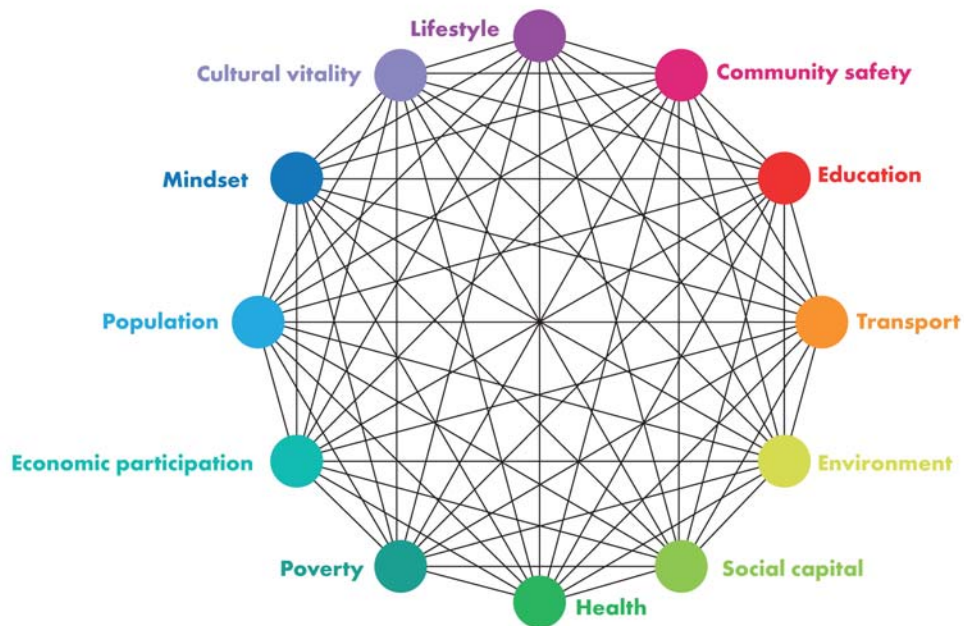


How can we make Glasgow a place where everyone grows more food?

A Glasgow Game event

Understanding Glasgow



www.understandingglasgow.com

Date: Tuesday 25th March, Toryglen Community Centre, Glasgow

Hosted by: Urban Roots

Facilitated by: Andrew Lyon, International Futures Forum & Bruce Whyte, Glasgow Centre for Population Health

The Glasgow Game

Andrew Lyon and Bruce Whyte introduced the Glasgow Game. They described it as a way of looking at twelve important issues in the city and their connections to each other (see mandala image below). The plan for the day was to use the available information, and participants own knowledge and understanding, to develop points of view on these issues in relation to a key question of importance to Urban Roots and its volunteers.

Bruce explained that the game is often played using information that is available on the Understanding Glasgow website (www.understandingglasgow.com). However we also know that some groups will not always have access to IT facilities. In this particular playing of the game we were trying out some resources that have been developed to be able to play the game offline using paper summaries of information. The team facilitating the game were keen to get feedback from the people playing today as to how this worked for them and how the resources could be improved.

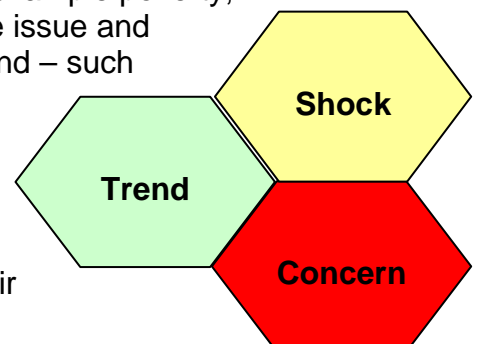


The game is played in three rounds. In the first round, key trends, disruptions and concerns are identified and reported for each of the twelve issues in the model (see mandala above). In the second round, participants explore the connections around these issues, and in the third and final round, statements about what needs to be done to improve matters in each of the twelve issues are devised and read out by participants. To play, each table were provided with summary sheets containing key pieces of information on each of the twelve issues. The question the group agreed to address was:

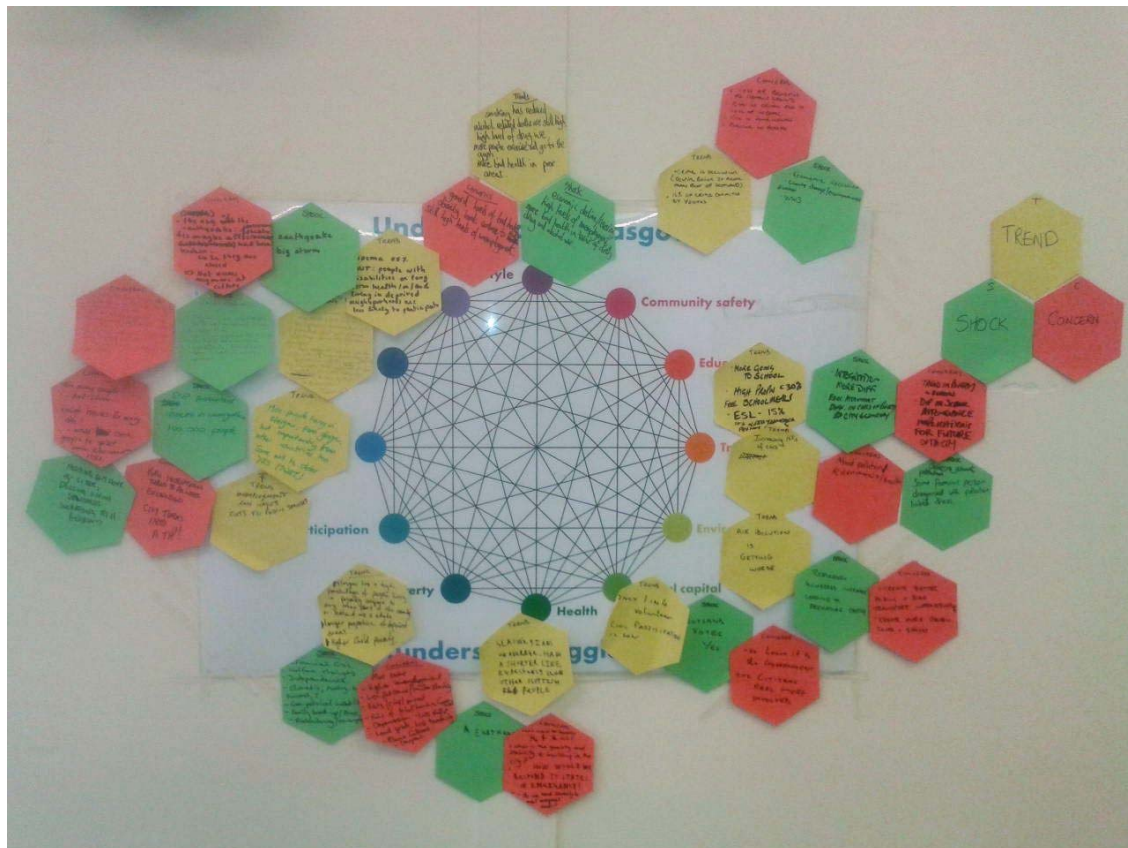
“How can we make Glasgow a place where everyone grows more food?”

Round 1: identify key trend, disruption and concern

Participants organised themselves into eleven groups, one for each of the issues with transport and the environment doubling up into one group. Andrew asked Abi, Manager of Urban Roots, to play the role of the Lord Provost of Glasgow who had just been invited to New York to present Glasgow’s perspective on each of the twelve issues being addressed. Each of the twelve tables became the cabinet committee for its issue (for example poverty, education, and so on) and was asked to investigate the issue and report on a **key trend**, a disruption or **shock** to that trend – such as a deep economic recession, civic disorder, public service collapse – and a key **concern** should the shock become a reality. Since the ‘Lord Provost’ had a video conference booked with New York in half an hour’s time, committees had twenty minutes to investigate and two minutes each to report back on their key trend, disruption and concern.



After twenty minutes or so, committee spokespersons reported back on their trend, disruption and concern. Responses were written on coloured cards and these were stuck to the appropriate part of the mandala frame. A photo of the completed frame is shown below.



The groups reported back as follows:

Community safety

Trends:

- Crime is declining (despite being twice as high as the rest of Scotland)
- 15% of crime committed by youths.

Shock:

- Economic recession
- Climate change/environmental disaster.
- WW3.

Concerns:

- Loss of benefits to certain groups
- Rise in crime due to loss of income
- Rise in homelessness
- Decline in health.

Culture

Trends:

- Cinema 55% attend
- BUT: People with disabilities or long-term health issues and living in deprived neighbourhoods are less likely to participate.

Shock:

- Earthquake
- Big storm.

Concerns:

- The consequences of the earthquake: damage to museums, theatres, cinemas so they are closed down therefore no access to places of culture.

Economic participation

Trends:

- Unemployment
- Low wages
- Cuts to public services.

Shock:

- Nothing gets done, e.g. litter
- Declining living standards
- Increasing mental health issues.

Concerns:

- Population increasingly turns to alcohol
- Excluded
- City turns into a tip.

Education

Trends:

- More going to school
- High proportion (approximately 30%) free school meals
- English as a second language is 15%
- 10% older teenagers are not in employment.

Shock:

- Integration more difficult
- Education attainment different in circumstances of poverty and this has implications for the city's economy.

Concerns:

- Trend in poverty might affect schools
- Dip in school attendance has implications for future of the city.

Lifestyle

Trends

- Smoking has reduced, alcohol deaths are still high
- High level of drug use
- More people exercise and go to the gym
- More bad health in poor places.

Shock:

- Economic decline/recession
- High levels of unemployment
- More bad health in terms of diet, drug and alcohol use.

Concerns:

- General levels of bad health
- Obesity levels continue to rise
- Still high levels of unemployment.

Population

Trends:

- More people living in Glasgow, from Glasgow, but importantly from other countries too
- Some will be older (>50 up 28%).

Shock:

- SNP announced increase in immigration
- 100,000 people.

Concerns:

- Too many people? – don't know
- Enough houses for everyone?
- Would some groups be upset
- Possible riots.

Poverty

Trends:

- Glasgow has a high percentage of people living in poverty compared with any other part of the country or Scotland as a whole
- Larger proportion of deprived areas
- Higher child poverty.

Shock:

- Financial crisis
- Welfare changes
- Independence
- Climatic, flooding, bad harvest

- Geo-political instability
- Family breakup stress
- Redundancy/unemployment.

Concerns:

- More crime
- Higher unemployment
- Less patience/understanding
- Riots/civil unrest
- Rise of totalitarian government
- Depression – fewer rights
- Land grab – less humanity
- Blame culture
- Despair.

Social capital

Trends:

- Only one-in-four volunteer
- Civic participation is low.

Shock:

- Scotland vote 'Yes'.

Concerns

- Negative: leave it to the government
- Positive: citizens feel more involved.

Health

Trends:

- Glaswegians on average have a shorter life expectancy than other Scottish people.

Shock:

- Earthquake

Concerns

- Who would be hardest hit?
- What is the quality and stability of buildings in the city?
- How would we respond to states of emergency?
- Do we have capacity to meet everyone's needs?

Transport

Trends:

- Increase in the number of cars.

Shock:

- Some famous person diagnosed with pollution-linked illness.

Concerns:

- About pollution, environment, health.

Mindset

Trends:

- Apathy, negativity and defeatism prevailing in less affluent communities
- If 85% of population feel 'no involvement' with their community then this may be the effect?
- Has Margaret Thatcher got something to do with it ("There's no such thing as society")
- If people are constantly under something whether it is a housing association, DWP, supermarkets, government, the weather (and Westminster) they will naturally become apathetic
- Decisions made without consultation.

Shock:

- Scottish independence or... not!
- People take on more responsibility
- We will all need to contribute to keep the country strong
- We will no longer have the excuse that the English are to blame
- Argument from 'Soil, Soul and Society' (Alastair McIntosh) re history of oppression.

Concerns:

- Nothing will change – if we got independence we will transfer the apathy and discontent to Holyrood
- We'll still actually be oppressed by Edinburgh-based public school career politicians
- Chance that things will be more right wing
- Danger that England will try and sanction us and stop us becoming prosperous – therefore more apathy.

Environment

Trends:

- Air pollution is getting worse.

Shock

- Respiratory illnesses increase leading to premature death.

Concerns

- Create better public and bike transport infrastructure
- Create more green zones and space.

Round two: exploring connections among the twelve issues

Participants then organised themselves into groups which looked at the connections between the various issues raised in round one. To do this we formed four groups. Each of these groups was formed of the participants from three issue groups from round one, for example, community safety, health and mindset. Each of the four groups was asked to consider the following:

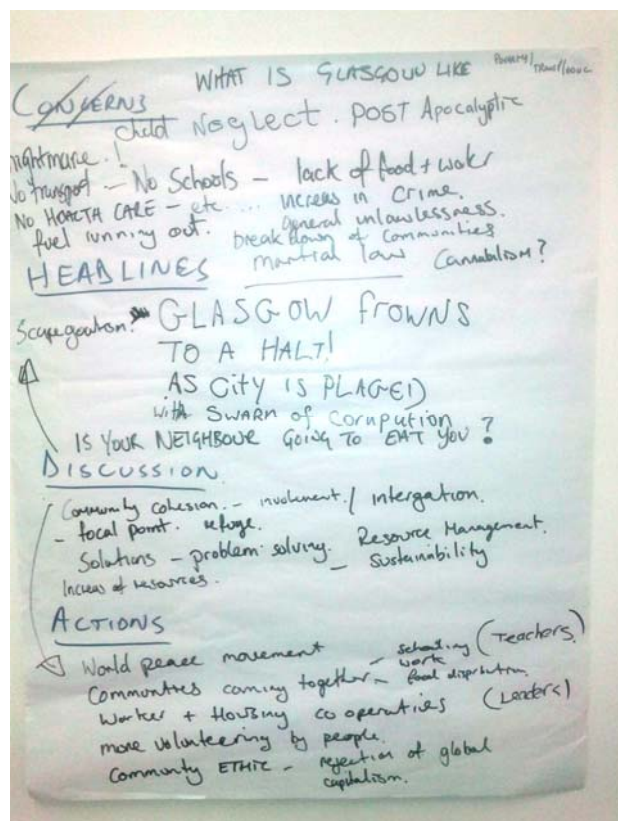
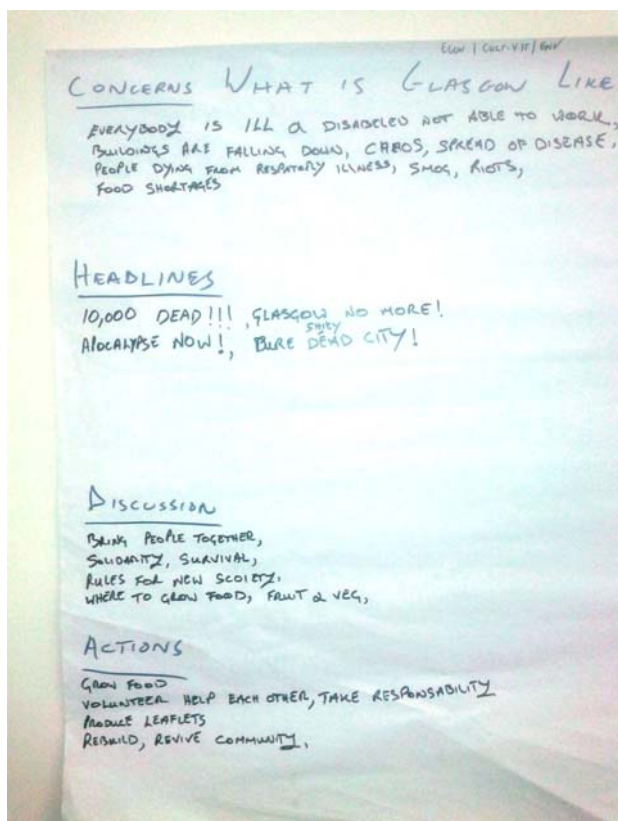
What would the city be like if their combined concerns all came to pass at the same time?

What might the headlines be in the news if this happened?

What would they be talking about here at Urban Roots?

If this happened, what might they do to get out of this situation or to prevent it happening in the first place?

The groups wrote their answers to these questions on flip charts which were displayed on the wall. The feedback is given below.



Economic participation / cultural vitality / environment

Concerns – what is Glasgow like?

Everybody is ill and disabled not able to work. Buildings are falling down, chaos, and spread of disease, people dying from respiratory illness, smog, riots, and food shortages.

Possible headlines

10,000 DEAD!!!

GLASGOW NO MORE!

APOCALYPSE NOW!

PURE DEAD (SHITY) CITY

Discussion

- Bring people together
- Solidarity, survival
- Rules for a new society
- Where to grow food, fruit and veg.

Actions

- Grow food
- Volunteer. Help each other. Take responsibility
- Produce leaflets
- Rebuild, revive community.

Poverty / transport / education

Concerns – what is Glasgow like?

- Child neglect, post apocalyptic
- No transport, no schools, lack of food and water
- No healthcare and so on.
- Increase in crime
- Fuel running out
- General lawlessness, breakdown of communities. Martial law
- Cannibalism.

Possible Headlines

GLASGOW FROWNS TO A HALT AS CITY IS PLAGUED WITH SWARM OF CORRUPTION

IS YOUR NEIGHBOUR GOING TO EAT YOU?

Discussion

- Community cohesion. Involvement/integration
- 'Scapegoatism'
- Focal point, refuge
- Solutions – problem solving. Resource management
- Increase of resources
- Sustainability.

Actions

- World peace movement
- Communities coming together – schooling (teachers) work, food distribution
- Worker and housing co-operatives (leaders)
- More volunteering by people
- Community ethic – rejection of global capitalism.

Health / mindset / community safety

Concerns – what is Glasgow like?

- Deprived areas. Poor quality housing > hardest hit
- Struggle for resources – Having just become independent > Ask for support from England.
- Will people pull together to survive?/Survival of the fittest?

Possible headlines

URBAN ROOTS RENAMED AS 'SOCIETY'

SALMOND SWIMS FOR THE PACIFIC

MAN FOUND WATCHING TV AT THE BOTTOM OF CREVACE

SCOTS NOT GENETICALLY DISPOSED TO DEAL WITH EARTHQUAKES

APOCALYPSE SAVES SCOTLAND

WOMAN TRIES TO LIGHT FAG OFF LAVA POOL

ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS REMAIN STANDING

SALES FOR LAVA LAMPS FALL DRAMATICALLY

COOKING WITH LAVA

Discussion

- Urban Roots suddenly in a lot of demand
- Bikes on motorways
- Supermarkets = poly tunnels.

Actions

- Survival skills: enabling / hand to mouth / skill Learning / retention in the future
- Emergency seed swaps, food banks, cooking, quick growing, bushcraft, new volunteer training, eating wild food
- Sets the basis for a more motivated and skilled society.

Population / lifestyle / social capital

Concerns – what is Glasgow like?

- Health board staff will be overworked
- Low healthcare/hospital staff, fewer services – harder to see a doctor
- Bad eating continuing
- Migrants (← fleeing wars) coming to Glasgow for work/better lifestyle.

Headlines

USER PAYS HEALTH

MORE PEOPLE DIE IN OUR HOSPITALS

RACISM AT WORK

Discussion

- Weekend. What we had done
- Not happy to pay to see doctor or for prescription.

Actions

- Parliament building & stand outside (health services)
- Welcome messages for migrants in Glasgow/schools on TV, radio
- Emma's cooking to include everyone
- Get shops to sell healthy stuff and ban sweets and high calorie, salty foods
- Criminal assault – policed
- Buy healthy drinks (smoothies), sandwiches, salads.

Round 3: wisdom circle declarations

Following a break for lunch we reviewed the feedback charts on the wall. Andrew reflected back to the group the things he was seeing in this feedback in particular he asked: Why wait for an earthquake to do this? He suggested that maybe we are doing some of this already in Urban Roots? May be we are smarter than we think?

We then moved into the final round of the game. Here participants were asked to go back into their twelve original groups, representing the 12 domains (or issues). Each group was asked to consider the key question which we began with:

“How can we make Glasgow a place where everyone grows more food?”

In answering this question, groups were asked to consider what they now knew about all of the issues having heard about them from other groups in rounds one and two. Each group was given a declaration sheet and asked to make a declaration about what needed to be done and to feed this back.

So in the final part of the afternoon a wisdom circle was set up and each of the 12 original domain groups was given a space for a spokesperson to make their declaration. Each spokesperson was handed a talking stick before they made their declaration and participants were invited to listen deeply to the declarations without interrupting the speaker. The talking stick was then handed to the next spokesperson. As this took place a ball of wool was also passed to each spokesperson to demonstrate the interconnected nature of all the issues. Participants were asked to work together to make a pattern with the wool, to not pull too tightly nor to let it become loose. By the end of all the declarations an interconnected web had been formed between the participants.



Each spokesperson started with the same statement:
*“From the perspective of responsibility for (insert name of group for example **poverty**) it is our considered view that, in order to make Glasgow a place where everyone grows more food, it is essential to....”*

The statements for each group are shown around the mandala – see page 14.
Conclusion

These declarations from the wisdom council ended the game. Andrew, Bruce and Alison who had facilitated the game promised to draft a note containing all the main points of feedback. It was suggested that this could feed into ongoing conversations about Glasgow becoming a sustainable food city. A number of the participants are also creating a garden at the front of the centre, as part of the course that they are involved in. It was suggested that the game helps puts this work into a city-wide context.

The facilitators thanked the participants for staying with the game even though the framework and language may have seemed difficult at the beginning. They then asked participants for their feedback about playing the game as this was the first time we had played it in an offline version.

Overall people had enjoyed the game and found it useful and interesting. It had helped the group to see that all these issues were connected where as before they might have seen them as standing alone. They thought it was useful for community groups to understand this. One person mentioned that what they liked best about playing the game was that there were no winners or losers. Although some of the language and the framework for the game were a bit hard to understand (or grasp) most people felt that the process did

work. The information they were given explained the concepts such as 'social capital' and people enjoyed the discussions and learning what these terms mean. The feedback received was very useful and will be fed in to the process of developing the game further and using it with other groups.

Declarations made in wisdom circle¹

Cultural vitality: 86% of Glaswegians took part in cultural activity in the past year. So we need to do actions for 14% of Glaswegians who didn't attend cultural events. For example, we could do cultural events around community gardens to involve this 14%. Create an 'I'm sharing food' culture.

Mindset: Educate yourself, think for yourself and act for everyone.

Economic participation: Get people involved to be willing to care and tend to food plots. Take more responsibility for green spaces and generally keeping the space tidy and nice to look at. Volunteer, get involved.

Poverty: Increase education/classes in horticulture. Bring more land over to food production and utilise existing spaces. Allocate more finances and resources to growing food locally. Trade surplus food/produce to fund, promote, and expand. Place a greater value on growing your own food (social value). Realise the potential benefits: health, economic, environmental, cultural, personal wellbeing and development.

Lifestyle: All services will have a food garden that is user-led. Urban Roots or equivalent can support these. Giving people the opportunity to see food growing as something they could do.

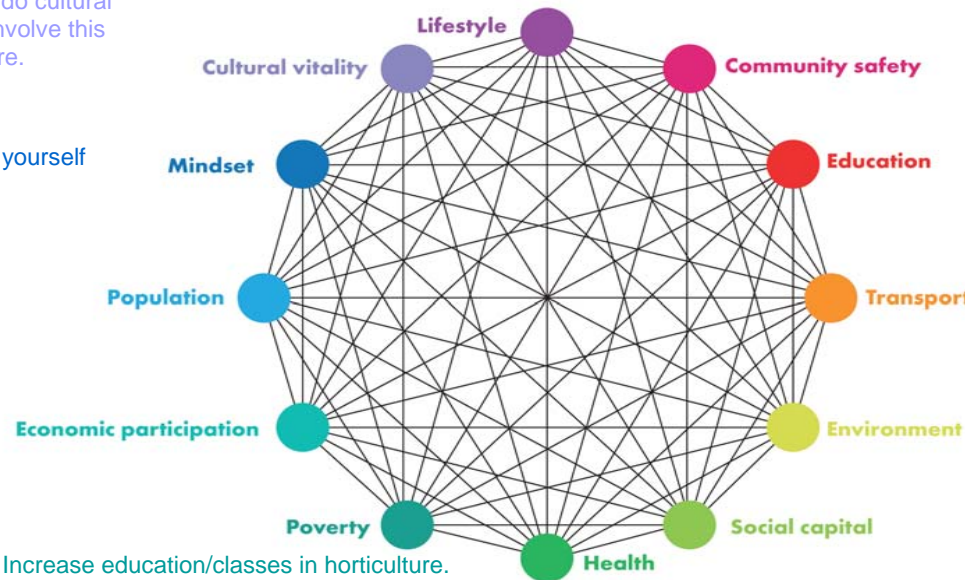
Community safety: Maintain green sites allocated for food growth for example litter picking, prevent vandalism and so on. Help to educate people on health and safety concerns, growing the right crops and use of fertiliser and so on.

Education: Have food education classes to teach children how to grow food. Increased learning about food.

Transport: Create a supportive culture to help people, such as incorporating food growing as a core element of the national curriculum throughout the school system from 5-16 year olds and beyond. Reduce pollution. Support people through mentoring.

Environment: Cut car use to reduce pollution, plant more trees and change the use of green spaces in our city. Gardening is the solution!

Health: Roll out state-funded health food growing, cooking and eating, courses across all communities in Glasgow e.g. schools, health centres, hubs, community centres, homes, derelict land, the workplace and so on. Leaders will prepare for redundancy as they hand over skills and leadership to the communities. Accessibility for all will be a primary concern.



¹ The population and social capital domains were not explored in this game.