

GROW TOGETHER

Project report

FEBRUARY 2020

Enliven Victoria



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1. Project overview

Grow Together was a pilot project undertaken in partnership with the Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre (SMRC), to address a rapidly growing reliance on food relief services within Greater Dandenong, Casey, Cardinia, and Kingston local government areas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project involved mobilising the community and local businesses to put together 5 varieties of “planter kits” (consisting of planter bags, potting mix, seedlings, fertiliser, and simple growing resources which included instruction sheets which were made available in multiple languages).



These were distributed to 205 individuals and families who are experiencing hardship and food insecurity and were interested in growing their own food. Generous donations were received from Seasol, The Hive - Grow Well, Eat Well, Be Well program, Galaxy of Plants Nursery, and Food for Change Foundation, as well as grant funding from City of Casey and City of Greater Dandenong.



In order to help community members to continue their food journey beyond the garden and into the kitchen, our Grow Together booklet was developed and included in each planter kit. Electronic copies are available [here](#).

The teams at enliven and SMRC worked together at The Hive Community Garden in Braeside Park to prepare over 1200 seedlings and 205 kits, and commence distribution to community members on 22 October 2020, via Cornerstone, SMRC, Wellsprings for Women, and SE Community Links. The second stage of the project was

undertaken on 29 October 2020 and distributed to clients of Casey North and Cranbourne Information and Support Service, and Kooweerup Regional Health Service.



A private Facebook group for participants was also established to promote a sense of community connectedness, to allow growers to share their stories and tips for success. The Facebook group included growing resources and videos, including a video to demonstrate how to set up the planters and commence the growing journey.



For more information about this project, including details of how to replicate, please email Cinzia Theobald (Project Manager) cinzia@enliven.org.au.

“The aim of the project was to build the capacity of our local community to grow, harvest, and consume fresh produce at home.”

2. Project design

2.1 Project partners

This project was funded by the City of Greater Dandenong and City of Casey as part of their commitment to supporting food security. Below is a description of the key project stakeholders.

2.1.1 enliven Victoria

enliven Victoria is a not-for-profit health promoting organisation based within the City of Greater Dandenong, City of Casey and Cardinia Shire local government areas. enliven has an extensive history in working to support and build the capacity of vulnerable community members including refugee, asylum seeker and migrant communities as well as food security and climate change. enliven project staff oversaw the project planning and implementation, with consultation from SMRC.

2.1.2 SMRC

SMRC is a not-for-profit community-based agency, providing services to migrants and refugees living in the southern region of Melbourne, covering the local government areas of City of Greater Dandenong, City of Casey and Shire of Cardinia and surrounding areas. Designated SMRC staff provided advisory and engagement support to enliven staff for the duration of the project.

2.2 Donations

This project was supported by our generous donators listed below.

2.2.1 Galaxy of Plants Nursery

Galaxy of Plants Nursery is a wholesale nursery based in Tooradin who kindly donated high quality seedlings including eggplant, capsicum, basil, spring onion, dwarf beans, cos lettuce and Lebanese cucumber.

2.2.2 The Hive – Grow Well, Eat Well, Be Well program

The Hive is a project funded by Parks Victoria and facilitated by SMRC. The Hive is a community garden located in Braeside Park, Braeside. Staff from The Hive kindly donated some seedlings including tomatoes as well as their gardening and harvesting expertise. They also volunteered their time and space to assist with putting together the planter kits before distribution.

2.2.3 Seasol

Seasol kindly donated 200 units of products (Powerfeed 750ml) which was included in the planter kits.

2.3 Purchases

See 'Project Budget' on page 10.

2.4 Composition of the packs

There were five varieties of planter kits, each with a different combination of two or three seedlings. The five varieties of planter kits were distributed at random, therefore the recipients did not get to choose which variety they preferred. Initially the plan was to provide choice but logistically during COVID-19 restrictions this proved too difficult. If clients were able to collect their planter and seedlings directly from a community garden such as The Hive this would have been easier to facilitate.

Contents of each planter kit included:

- A rectangular or circular fabric planter bag (manually fitted with eyelets)
- x2 (deep circular planters) or x3 (rectangular) varieties of established vegetable and/or herb seedlings
- x1 25L bag premium potting mix
- Seasol product (750ml Powerfeed)
- Instruction sheet to assemble planter kit
- Grow Together Booklet
- Grow Together flyer (Appendix 1)
- The Hive – Grow Well, Be Well, Eat Well program promotional material.

2.4.1 Development and translation of Instruction Sheets

Included in each of the five planter kits were Instruction Sheets (electronic copies available [here](#)). They provided a step-by-step guide about how to set up the planter box and plant the seedlings. Each Instruction Sheet differed slightly to reflect the contents of each kit. To ensure equitable understanding of these resources, they were written in Easy English and translated into eight languages using Poloran translation service. Languages were selected based on local demographic and client data and included Arabic, Dari, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Khmer, Sinhalese and Tamil. Copies of these were printed and distributed with the rest of the planter kits to our distributor organisations.

2.4.2 The Grow Together Booklet

In order to help community members continue their food journey beyond the garden and into the kitchen, our Grow Together booklet was developed and included within each pack (click [here](#) for electronic copy). The booklet was co-developed by staff from SMRC and enliven. It includes topics such as food preservation techniques, decreasing food waste, healthy eating guidelines, seasonal food guide and some recipes that feature the plants provided in the planter kits.

2.5 Distribution

The Hive Community Garden, located in Braeside Park, was used as the central distribution point for the planter kits. A team of staff from enliven and SMRC worked together to receive deliveries and put together the elements of the planter kits. These were then distributed to partner community organisations for distribution to community.

2.5.1 Distributor organisations

We had seven organisations who partnered with us (including project partner SMRC) to assist in identifying individuals and/or families that are experiencing hardship and food insecurity and would benefit from receiving a Grow Together planter kit. These organisations were chosen on the basis of existing relationships with both SMRC and enliven. Staff from these organisations were continuing to see their clients during the pandemic restrictions and some were also involved in food relief.

Below is the list of distributor organisations:

- SMRC – main project partner
- Cornerstone
- Wellsprings for Women
- South East Community Links (SECL)
- Casey North Information and Support Service
- Cranbourne Information and Support Service
- Kooweerup Regional Health Service (KRHS)

2.5.2 Written instructions for distributors

To allow for partner organisations to easily distribute planter kits, enliven staff put together written instructions outlining the contents of each planter kit to ensure the right amount of seedlings etc. were distributed. See Appendix 2.

2.5.3 Facebook Group

The Grow Together Online Community Group was created to provide a platform for recipients (and other local community members) to connect, share and learn from fellow community members on their growing food at home journey.



3. Final Distribution

The original aim for distribution was 100 planters to City of Greater Dandenong and 50 planters to City of Casey. However, as we received more donations, we were able to supply a total of 205 planter kits.

Table 1 below outlines the amount of planter kits distributed via each distributor organisation.

Table 1: Total Distribution of Planter Kits

Distributor	Quantity Provided for distribution	Planter Distribution		
		City of Greater Dandenong	City of Casey	Cardinia Shire
SMRC	67	35	31	1
Wellsprings for Women*	24	10	3	-
Cornerstone**	30	24	5	-
KRHS	10			10
SECL	35	28	7	-
Casey North Information and Support Services	20		20	
Cranbourne Information and Support Services	20		20	
TOTAL	206	97	86	11

**Only distributed 13 due to lack of staff capacity*

***Only distributed 29 as one kit was left too long without water, so wasn't viable for distribution*

4. Project Budget

See below tables outlining the project expenditure and donation value.

Table 2: Total Expenditure

Items purchased	Enliven	SMRC
Eyelets and eyelet pliers	\$23.45	
Twine	\$6.00	
QIS packaging (brown bags for resources kits)	\$102.31	
10 rectangular planters eBay	\$89.96	
60 circular planter bags eBay	\$201.54	
Printing of booklet	\$653.50	\$653.50
30 deep front opening planter bags	\$390.30	
80 rectangular planter bags	\$619.80	
32 rectangular planters		\$247.92
Translations of "how to" material and consent forms 8 languages		\$2,252.05
Additional Seedlings Stage 2 - basil	\$63.84	
Potting mix stage 1 - 206 bags		\$1,707.74
Delivery X 3		\$525.00
Seasol X 6 extras	\$53.94	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$2,204.64	\$5,386.21

Table 3: Donation value

Items donated	Approximate value	Donation source
Seedlings	\$3,600.00	Galaxy of Plants (NB excess stock delivered)
Seasol Powerfeed 750ml X 200	\$960.00	Seasol
TOTAL DONATION VALUE	\$4,560.00	

Total value (including donations, excluding staff time) = **\$12,150.85**

- **Value per planter kit** (N=206) = **\$58.98**

Total cost using grants obtained by enliven and SMRC funding = **\$7590.85**

- **Cost per planter kit** (N=206) = **\$37.03**
- **Cost per planter kit** (N=206) using grants obtained by enliven = **\$10.75**

5. Evaluation

5.1 Evaluation Plan

The following section outlines the process of evaluation for this pilot project.

5.1.2 Measures

In this evaluation, the qualitative measures include questionnaires and participant observations to enable an understanding of how the program was experienced by community members and stakeholders. The qualitative measures will be supported by longitudinal quantitative measures of change captured by planter recipients, SMRC and other stakeholder questionnaires.

5.1.3 Objectives

The evaluation sought to measure achievement of the following objectives:

- Increased appreciation of gardening by recipients
- Improved knowledge and confidence in relation to growing edibles

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- Evidence of extension of program benefits within community (such as commitment to ongoing growing)
 - Improved social participation (as a secondary measure dependent upon engagement with non-mandatory private Facebook group)
 - Determination of the feasibility, acceptability, and costs of conducting and extending the program
 - To assess the effectiveness of the partnerships between enliven and SMRC

5.1.4 Data Collection

Data was collected over a 3-month period and included:

- Principal questionnaire of 28 planter recipients
- Engagement with Facebook group (via social media metrics analysis)
- Stakeholder organisation surveys with SMRC, Cornerstone, SECL, KRHS, Information and Support Services (Cranbourne and Casey North) and Wellsprings for Women
- SMRC and enliven partnership evaluation survey in relation to the delivery of the program and potential for sustainability and extension (including evaluation of logistics, distribution, and partnership).

5.2 Evaluation Tools

The following section outlines the evaluation tools used for project stakeholders and project recipients.

5.2.1 Questionnaire for planter recipients

A qualitative questionnaire was conducted by both enliven and partner organisations to planter kit recipients. Questionnaires were conducted via phone approximately three months after having received the planter kits. See Appendix 3 for questionnaire.

5.2.2 Questionnaire for distributors

A questionnaire using a mixed methods approach was sent via email to partner organisations who assisted with community distributions approximately three weeks after distribution of planter kits. This questionnaire aims to better understand the thoughts and experiences of the distributor regarding the planter kits. See Appendix 4 for distributor questionnaire.

5.2.3 Partnership analysis (enliven and SMRC (including The Hive))

A short survey was developed using Vic Health’s partnership analysis tool (click [here](#) to access tool). This was sent to staff at SMRC to assess the partnership between enliven and SMRC for the duration of this project. See Appendix 5 for raw data of the survey.

5.3 Evaluation results

The following section outlines the results from the surveys and questionnaires conducted by both planter recipients and project stakeholders.

5.3.1 Planter Recipients

The following provides a summary of the feedback received by recipients of the Grow Together planter kits. For full evaluation results see Appendix 6.

Of the 28 recipients who provided feedback:

- **86%** had *not* grown vegetables before receiving Grow Together planter kits.
- **96%** thought the Grow Together project/receiving planter kits was a ‘good idea’.
- **100%** thought that instructions to set up the planter kit were easy to understand. A couple of recipients relied on carers and/or community distributors delivering planter kits to help set it up for them.
- **75%** were ‘very successful’ in growing their produce they received. Those who were not as successful reported that the tomatoes died in the small planter bag, or they had to transport it to a larger pot, in which it died due to plant shock. Others noted they went away, and some produce had died upon their return.
- **89%** reported they would continue to grow vegetables beyond this project. As majority of recipients had not grown their own food before, this project had “sparked an interest” in growing food as quoted from one of the participants.
- **18%** reported that the planter bags were too small and most had to buy bigger/taller planter boxes or pots to transplant the plants into. Two participants noted that they struggled to reach

the planter bag as it was too low due to having physical constraints (e.g. disability, back pain) so they had to put it on a table and/or transplant the plants to a raised garden bed for better accessibility.

- **71%** had nothing to note when asked what could be done better next time. They enjoyed receiving the vegetables and trying something new.



5.3.2 Distributing Organisations

The following text provide a summary of analysis from evaluation survey from SECL, Wellsprings, Cornerstone, KRHS, I&S Support Services. For full evaluation results see Appendix 7.

Overall, most organisations were extremely pleased with the quality of the planter kits, with the exception of one organisation who ranked quality of seedlings as 'not very pleased'. Further comments were made by this organisation explaining that the spring onion seedlings were quite delicate and when talking to their clients who received such planter kits, clients found these seedlings were too weak and died. As planter kits (including seedlings) were delivered on a Thursday, which followed with a public holiday on the Friday, it was noted by some organisations that this made it difficult for them and put them under pressure to deliver kits prior to the long weekend. The organisation that delivered planter kits to clients on the following Monday noted that the quality of some seedlings had diminished. It is important to note that all seedlings were in excellent condition when delivered to each agency and any delay in distribution without proper care of seedlings in the interim would have results in reduced

quality. Every other agency commented that seedlings were in great condition, including our horticulturalist at The Hive community garden.

There were also issues in regard to birds eating the new seedlings once planted due to lack of netting/protection.

All organisations perceived their clients to be extremely pleased or pleased when receiving the planter kits. Three out of five organisations made use of the translated resources which were provided as part of the planter kits.

Overall, the organisations agreed to participate in this project again. However, some organisations felt like they were stretched beyond capacity when tasked with deliveries due to COVID restrictions and the high needs of their client. Comments were also made that some organisations might opt for fewer planter kits next time.



5.3.3 Partnership (SMRC)

Using the checklist score ranking provided by Vic Health (see [here](#)), the partnership between SMRC and enliven was a genuine and successful collaboration (score = 143). See Appendix 5 for full results. The Hive (community garden) was only just starting to establish an interest in gardening within the CALD community late November 2019. This partnership between enliven and SMRC helped to continue this interest in participants of the Hive during the pandemic from community gardening to growing food at home. The partnership provided clear goals and consultation between parties continued throughout as the initiative evolved. The partnership allowed to maximise the reach and capacity of the project through combined resources. It is thought that post-pandemic, future projects would create more

opportunities to strengthen community engagement and involvement (e.g. sewing group to sew the planter boxes).

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the staff working at The Hive were restricted with their hours allowed at the garden. This resulted in the staff unable to divide their time efficiently between the work needed to be done at The Hive and Grow Together. Therefore, the final stage of the Grow Together project, (ie getting the planter kits ready for distribution) felt a little rushed and workers were stretched to their capacity. Overall, SMRC would work again with enliven to replicate this project.

5.3.4 Facebook Group

This was an unsuccessful component of the project. There were no requests to join the group, therefore there was no engagement. This may be due to a number of reasons such as lack of promotion of the group or the demographic were not users of Facebook nor comfortable to connect with other using an online platform. Additionally, prior to the launch of Grow Together, The Hive had launched an online group for their local community gardeners that had similar functions to that of the Grow Together Facebook group. That is to support those beginning to grow their own food. It was members of The Hive online group that were also recipients of the Grow Together planter kits, therefore they already had an established online community they were connected to and there was no need for them to join another group.



6. Recommendations

Below is a list of some learnings we have taken from this pilot project and that we recommend for replication:

- More time to spend with distributing organisations to explain logistics of deliveries. Some distributor organisations noted during evaluation that more planning and preparation is needed to ensure organisations are equipped with the resources to receive, store and deliver planter kits.
- It was also recommended by distributor organisations to deliver planter kits on a Monday and not at the end of the week, particularly before a public holiday, to relieve time constraints when distributing.
- We would suggest utilising the smaller/circular planter bags. These were purchased late in the project but were cheaper, deeper and sturdier than previously purchased bags.
- Offering two planter kit varieties rather than five. Logistically it was too difficult to give choice to the clients as to which combination of vegetables and herbs they would prefer. In future, offering two or three choices in the smaller bags would be much easier to logistically manage. Each smaller bag is deep enough to grow eggplants and capsicum well and would more likely result in a successful growing experience. Choice could be offered if clients collected the planters directly from the distribution centre (The Hive community garden).
- Regarding translated material – it is recommended that agencies determine languages required by each client in advance so that planter kits can be prepared with the relevant translation in advance.
- All written (easy English) and translated material are available on the enliven website. Any changes to seedling combinations would require minimal translation costs.
- The Grow Together Booklet which describes healthy ways to prepare and cook vegetables, as well as other useful facts, is available on the enliven website to download or they can be professionally printed if preferred.
- Inclusion of nets in the planter kits would also reduce likelihood of pests and increase chances of a successful growing experience.

6.1 Cost of replication

In our experience donations were very easy to obtain and we were surprised at the level of generosity experienced. The costs to replicate this project are provided below for information purposes below (with no donations).

Please note that staff time was not factored into these costs and would be significantly reduced if replicated due to the availability of resources. Staff time would involve coordinating delivery of materials to a central space, assembly of kits and distribution to community members.

This project can be replicated with no donations, utilising the project material available from Enliven, at a cost of only \$38.86 per recipient (excluding staff time).

Table 4: Cost to replicate Grow Together project (N = 200 planter kits, zero donations)

Item	Cost	Saving	Comments
Written resources (including translations) provided by Enliven.		2,252.00	No new translations or resources required.
Circular bags at \$3.50 each (no eyelets etc required)	700		Can easily fit x2 seedlings
Professional printing of <i>Grow Together</i> booklets	1300		
Seedlings x400	2000		Estimated \$5 per seedling, two seedlings per bag
Seasol	1798		Powerfeed 750ml
Premium potting mix	1798		\$8.99 per 25L bag
Delivery	175		
TOTAL saving		\$2,252.00	
TOTAL cost	\$7,771		
Cost per recipient (N=200)*	\$38.86		*Excludes staff time

Whittlesea Community Connections made contact to replicate the project. Project materials and support were provided. For more information about this project, including details of how to replicate, please email Cinzia Theobald (Project Manager) cinzia@enliven.org.au.



7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Grow Together flyer (included in planter kits)



GROW TOGETHER



You will receive everything you need to grow your own food:

- A planter bag
- Potting mix
- Seedlings
- Grow Together booklet
- Instructions

Anyone can grow vegetables!
All you need is a small space, some sun, some water and a willing attitude!



Community



Health



Sustainability

Join our Facebook group to share your stories, your tips and tricks and photos with our community!
facebook.com/groups/growtogethercommunity

Proudly presented by Enliven and SMKC, with funding support from The Hive, City of Casey and City of Greater Dandenong. Donations gratefully received from Seakool, Gallery of Plants and Food for Change.



enliven

Appendix 2 – Written instructions for community distributors (example)

Distribution Instruction Sheet - Cornerstone

You will have received (in two deliveries):



- A box containing colour coded printed resource packs. There are 15 purple packs and 15 yellow packs in this box. **Each client is to receive one colour coded pack.**



- A box containing 30 planter bags. **Each client is to receive one planter bag.**



- 30 bags of potting mix. **Each client is to receive one bag of potting mix.**



- Seedlings (capsicum, spring onion, eggplant and basil)



- 30 empty labelled brown paper bags (15 purple and 15 yellow) and 30 bottles of Seasol PowerFeed. Place one bottle of Seasol in each bag. Place the required seedlings in the bags. Purple (1 eggplant seedling and 1 basil seedling per bag). Yellow (1 capsicum seedling and several spring onion seedlings per bag – please divide the spring onions received evenly amongst 15 planters). **Each client is to receive one bag of seedlings and seasol**

Please ensure that you match the seedlings to the appropriate colour coded printed resource pack. **For translated instruction sheets (purple and yellow round planter - front opening) please visit <http://enliven.org.au/?p=3600> and print these for your clients as required.**

The client can make up the kits at home – instructions are provided in the resource packs.

If you have any questions please contact me at cinzia@enliven.org.au

Please encourage clients to sign the consent form in their resource packs so we can evaluate this initiative and hopefully extend the reach. Please email completed consent forms to cinzia@enliven.org.au. For translate versions please go to <http://enliven.org.au/?p=3600>



Appendix 3 – Recipient questionnaire

- *Have you grown vegetables before?*
- *What did you think of the planter kits?*
- *How clear were the instructions for how to set up your planter?*
- *How successful were you in growing vegetables?*
- *What might have made it easier to grow the vegetables?*
- *Will you continue to grow vegetables?*

Appendix 4 – Distributor questionnaire

1. How pleased were you with the quality of the planter kits? (Please tick)				
	Extremely pleased	Pleased	Not very pleased	Not pleased
Planter bags				
Resource kits				
Translated resources				
Quality of seedlings				
Packs overall				

2. From your first impression, in general how pleased were the clients to receive these kits? (Please tick)				
	Extremely pleased	Pleased	Not very pleased	Not pleased
Planter kits				

- *Did you make use of the translated resources?*
- *Is there anything you would suggest we do differently next time?*
- *Would you participate in this initiative again?*
- *How many planter kits of the 'X' number received (approximately) were distributed to City of Casey residents and how many to City of Greater Dandenong residents?*
- *Other comments?*

Appendix 5 – SMRC Partnership survey results

Assessing the partnership between SMRC and enliven

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the statements below

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
There was a perceived need for the partnership in terms of areas of common interest and complementary capacity				Agreed. SMRC has only started with The Hive late Nov 2019 and was starting to establish an interest on gardening within the CALD community. This Partnership embedded the interest for participants of the Hive during the pandemic.	
There was a clear goal for the partnership				Agreed. Whilst it took a while for the clarity of Grow Together to evolve, SMRC was provided with clear goals of the project and was consulted at every stage of the project	
There was a shared understanding of, and commitment to, this goal among all potential partners				Agreed and in a collaborative way.	

Page 1

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
The partners were willing to share some of their ideas, resources, influence and power to fulfil the goal					Agreed. SMRC felt consulted and was able to contribute to the evolving ideas of the project.
The perceived benefits of the partnership outweighed the perceived costs				Agreed. Both enliven and SMRC were transparent with individual capacity to resource to the project, which benefitted the community by far. Ability to maximized on reach and capacity through combined resources.	
The partners share common ideologies, interests and approaches					Agreed. The communities were central to the project and SMRC felt very included over the consultation and inclusion processes, as

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Assessing the partnership between SMRC and enliven

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
					well as the evolving ideas.
The partners see their core business as partially interdependent				Agreed. Collaboration, Partnerships, co-designing etc ensures efficiencies over limited resources faced SMRC as we collectively tap into the same communities within the LGAs.	
There is a history of good relations between the partners					Agreed. Enliven has been supportive over SMRC's many projects, often bringing other agencies into a collaborative work – esp in the space of health
The partnership brought prestige to the partners individually as well as collectively				Partnership assist in fostering closer agencies connections and having enliven on board as partners	

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
				in many other projects, enables growth through learnings.	
There was enough variety among members to have a comprehensive understanding of the issues being addressed				Agreed on SMRC's point as representatives in Settlement services, Health services – Dietitian and aged care services were represented and provided with opportunities in sharing.	
The managers in each organisation (or division) supported the partnership					Agreed.
Partners had the necessary skills for collaborative action				Agreed.	
There were strategies to enhance the skills of the partnership through increasing the membership or workforce development				Agreed. Option were provided to engage with community members in sewing the planters however due to the restrictions in place, this became unfeasible. I would be recommending	

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Assessing the partnership between SMRC and enliven

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
				that potential projects (past the pandemic) would create opportunities in strengthening community engagement and involvement	
The roles, responsibilities and expectations of partners were clearly defined and understood by all other partners			Unsure. SMRC were invited on board and collectively – through consultation and collaboration, the roles and expectations were agreed upon. SMRC respected enliven’s lead and were happy to be provided the opportunity of partnership, which assisted in expanding the Hive – community gardening to Home grown – thus keeping		

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
			the interest of participants		
The administrative, communication and decision-making structure of the partnership was simple as possible					Agreed. One of our easiest partnership – received with great joy!
All partners were involved in planning and setting priorities for collaborative action				Agreed. Weekly meetings were established to discuss the planning and priorities, down to the delivery of the planters	
Partners had the task of communicating and promoting the partnership in their own organisations				Agreed.	
Some staff had roles that crossed the traditional boundaries that exist between agencies or divisions in the partnership			Unsure. The only staff that may have experienced a cross over within boundaries, was SMRC’s Dietitian		
The lines of communication, roles and expectations of partners were clear				Agreed with good documentations and communication set by enliven	

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
There was a participatory decision-making system that was accountable, responsive, and inclusive				Agreed.	
Processes that were common across agencies were standardised (e.g. branding, resource development).				Agreed with clarity around responsibilities over the FB page.	
There was an investment in the partnership of time, personnel, materials or facilities				Agreed.	
Collaborative action by staff and reciprocity between agencies was rewarded by management				Partially agreed - SMRC management were aware of the collaborative work however due to changes in SMRC Management, the completion of the project was not articulated nor recognition provided.	
The action added value (rather than duplicating services) for the community, clients or agencies involved in the partnership				Agreed.	
There were regular opportunities for informal and voluntary contact between staff from the different agencies and other members of the partnership			Unsure. SMRC staff felt the meetings were sufficient and could approach enliven where needed, esp		

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
			towards the planning of delivery of planters		
Differences in organisational priorities, goals and tasks were addressed				Agreed	
There was a core group of skilled and committed (in terms of the partnership) staff that has continued over the life of the partnership				Agreed. SMRC over the years has valued collaboration with enliven through various projects however, with changes within SMRC's management team, there may be a need to re-establish new connections at a management level.	
There were formal structures for sharing information and resolving demarcation disputes such as team meetings			No formal disputes were known or identified		
There were informal ways of achieving this such as via email				Agreed	
There were strategies to ensure alternative views were expressed within the partnership					Agreed. Enliven were opened to ideas and allowed for

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
					SMRC's view to be considered.
There were processes for recognising and celebrating collective achievements and/or individual contributions				Agreed. Lots of acknowledgement were made informally through email and hope to officially celebrate this at the completion of the project	
The partnership can demonstrate or document the outcomes of its collective work (eg evaluation report in progress and website developed)				Agreed	
There is a clear need/desire for and commitment to continuing collaboration in the medium term					Agreed with new connection made at the SMRC Senior Management level
There are resources available from either internal or external sources to continue the partnership				Agreed and similar synergies of the project with the Hive.	
There is a way of reviewing the range of partners and bringing in new members or removing some if the project were to be duplicated				Agreed and cast an expansion of this service to other LGAs.	

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Assessing the partnership between SMRC and enliven

Additional comments:

The only suggestion I would have is that I felt the project was a bit rushed and due to the closure, it became tedious to try and get our other staff contributing to this in a meaningful way. The distribution went well, however the preparation saw our 2 garden staff work way beyond their time trying to get their own plans completed and this project getting off the ground. Due to restricted hours allowed at the garden, we weren't able to divide the time between our garden project and this one. As a result, it was inevitable that we needed to get the planters ready for distribution.

This is not a criticism, it is an observation of what we could do better next time, hoping all will be back to normal.

The clients who received the planters, were extremely happy and Elisa will send you some photos of the proud growers of the produce.

All in all, a pleasure to work with enliven and looking forward to the next project, once we have built our clientele at the garden.

Appendix 6: Raw data from recipient questionnaire

Participant	Q1 <i>Have you grown vegetables before?</i>	Q2 <i>What did you think of the planter kits?</i>	Q3 <i>How clear were the instructions for how to set up your planter?</i>	Q4 <i>How successful were you in growing vegetables?</i>	Q5 <i>What might have made it easier to grow the vegetables?</i>	Q6 <i>Will you continue to grow vegetables?</i>
1	no	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Not really	Big planter Bag	No
2	yes	Not good idea	Very easy to understand	Not really - bag was not deep enough	Big planter Bag but not big enough	No
3	Yes - not since she has had an accident though	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Quite successful - cucumber was great how it grew in a bush, tomato too big for bag so (replanted to pot, grew about 5 tomatoes), lettuce grew, but she was too late in picking it	Planter bag was too small, as she (and others from SMRC) replanted to pots Bit of fun. Planter bag put on table so she didn't have to bend down	No - too much physical work
4	no	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
5	No	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful - capsicum, tomato	Nothing to say - choosing vegetables that are easy to grow is good	Yes
6	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
7	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	Big planter Bag	Yes
8	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
9	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
10	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
11	Yes	Good idea	Carer did it for her	Very successful - eggplant	Cannot bend on down as low as the planter bag due to having a disability. Carer made her a raised garden bed to put the plant in instead.	Yes
12	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
13	Yes	good idea	Very easy to understand	successful	nothing to say	yes
14	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
15	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
16	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
17	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Not really	nothing to say	Yes
18	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
19	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
20	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
21	yes	good idea	Useful to have people there who read through instructions with her	Very successful	nothing to say	yes
22	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
23	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes
24	yes	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Very successful	nothing to say	Yes

25	Yes	Good idea - got kids involved	Very easy to understand	Capsicum - going well. Tomato - died. Replanted.	Didn't use bags. Bought a bigger/taller planter box from Bunnings	Yes
26	Yes - husband does mostly	Good idea	Very easy to understand	Okay - eggplant (still growing), capsicum (not growing so much)	Different types of veggies next time (cucumber)	Yes
27	No	Good idea. "spring onions were different" (referring to he doesn't use them often before in cooking).	Very easy to understand	Very successful - capsicums, spring onions	Nothing - would just like to be more prepared next time. Ensure he's got the space set up etc.	Yes - sparked an interest
28	yes - recently in August. Zucchini & beetroot	Good idea - received soil & everything. Hard to source with covid-rush	Very easy to understand	Not really successful (they were away) - spring onions. Cucumber & lettuce died.	don't have much knowledge about plants. How much to water etc.	Yes - with family assistance

Appendix 7 – Raw data from distributor questionnaire

Questionnaires completed by the six distributor organisations were collated, see below. To ensure anonymity, the six partner organisations are lettered A – F.

1. How pleased were you with the quality of the planter kits? (Please tick)				
	Extremely pleased	Pleased	Not very pleased	Not pleased
Planter bags	✓✓✓✓✓	✓		
Resource kits	✓✓✓✓✓✓			
Translated resources	✓✓✓✓✓	✓		
Quality of seedlings	✓✓✓✓✓		✓*	
Packs overall	✓✓✓✓✓	✓		

* Tomatoes and basil grew but Spring Onion died. Seedlings were really delicate, didn't have enough strength to adapt to new soil. Also, birds ate seedlings when were planted due to having very young leaves.

2. From your first impression, in general how pleased were the clients to receive these kits? (Please tick)				
	Extremely pleased	Pleased	Not very pleased	Not pleased
Planter kits	✓✓	✓✓✓✓		

3. Did you make use of the translated resources?

- A. No, The easy English was easy enough to follow.
- B. Not sure, but we did distribute some.
- C. Not so much. People seemed to know what to do if their language was not English.
- D. Yes
- E. No
- F. Yes - we printed out one copy of the instructions in each language per kit and had the info sheets on hand for our team member to show the clients as they received the kits. Those who needed to take a photo of the appropriate page on their phones.

4. Is there anything you would suggest we do differently next time?

- A. No
- B. While it seemed like a nice and simple initiative for us at the start, with additional requests and follow ups, required some more work. We have been stretched to capacity. The delivery occurred just before a Public Holiday, there was a lot of pressure on us to distribute in a very short period of time and we were not ready for it. There would definitely be more planning and prep needed next time. The recipients were all receiving regular material aid. It means people have lived in extreme crisis for a period of time and planting three seedlings may not have been an activity that could make a lot of difference. [Name of organisation] are not able to incorporate any screening for this activity in their work; it would mean another question to add on the long list of initial assessment; and they have been overwhelmed with work. We made calls to clients ourselves, it took a lot of time. And we absolutely had no capacity to follow up for consent and/or explaining clients that there would be more follow up. So, for the future: a set of clear expectations on what exactly is expected from the distributing agency, apart from deliveries; clear indication of the size and weight of packs; the lifetime of the seedlings and what they are; and any follow up evaluation activities that will follow. In the hindsight, now I think we would not have taken on 35; but about 10-15.
- C. Not really. The whole project was extremely popular. Some people came back with transport if they were originally on foot to get their planter kits.
- D. Deliver on Monday instead of Thursday.
- E. No
- F. No

5. Would you participate in this initiative again?

- A. Yes
- B. Yes. Absolutely, with good planning and prep. Things will hopefully change for the better post-covid; and it will be easier to engage with clients to make sure we can achieve the best possible outcomes for the community.
- C. Yes
- D. Yes, definitely
- E. Yes, definitely
- F. Yes, definitely

6. How many planter kits received were distributed to City of Casey, City of Greater Dandenong or Cardinia Shire residents?

- A. All went to Cardinia
- B. X went to the City of Casey; the rest in CGD
- C. X went to City of Casey
- D. Due to receiving planter kits on Thursday, we could only manage to deliver to X clients in total, since no one works from the office on Fridays. Also, due to COVID 19 restrictions we didn't have enough capacity to deliver to our clients. Hopefully when next time we receive planter packs, they'll be more response from the clients and also we will not have limited capacity to deliver the kits to the clients. Delivered to X clients in Dandenong. Delivered to X clients in Casey.
- E. All to Casey residents
- F. X tp CGD, X to Casey

7. Other comments

- A. The community members were very pleased to receive their seedlings and planter boxes and excited to embark on their gardening journey.
- B. The resources and the packs are excellent. In the situation with covid and restrictions I believe we did the best job possible. And learnt a lot on how to do even better in the future.
- C. At the time of the project we had limited clients in the building, but the kits went in a couple of days, I was really surprised. If the project went ahead again we could move a lot more. People loved it.
- D. One client reported that Basil seedlings do not grow if transferred from one pot to another. Client didn't have any experience of gardening. Mature Seedlings will have a greater chance of growing, also Spring onion seedlings didn't grow due to being very fragile. Fabric Planters were really great.
- E. The planters are beautiful – such a great initiative! We are still giving them out quite slowly as we are not really open, but the people who have received them are loving them. We have a few green thumbs here, so we are keeping the seedlings alive and healthy, and we are committed to replacing them if the worst happens before they are all distributed.
- F. We distributed all except one planter kits (the plants in the last kit were looking a bit too sad after being left for too long.) Of those distributed, we have paperwork (Consent / Evaluation forms) for all but two. Two clients took two packs but unfortunately it wasn't marked on their paperwork which clients these were. Thank you again for including us in this project. Our team thoroughly enjoyed it, and the clients were really pleased.