PROJECT TITLE: SP0209 BUY YOUR OWN BULK

Please answer the following questions and return the completed form to the SPF Staff via e-mail.

Final Report prepared by Yu-Shing Ni, Alice Viala, Katharina Paul-Mercier,

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Actual Project Start Date March 2018 Actual Project End Date Project still running

Questions

1. Please summarize the project and its key accomplishments to date. In your answer, consider the impact your project has had so far on McGill’s campus(es).

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

Buy Your Own Bulk, also known as “BYOB” provides affordable and sustainable dry food to the Macdonald campus community of McGill University. This project allows the reduction of student food insecurity by providing low cost and wholesome foods to students and to sensitize the community on reducing their waste production. In the future years, BYOB also aspires to establish itself on the Downtown campus. We currently offer a wide range of food items in bulk through weekly sales during the fall and winter semesters. The products are low waste, organic and/or fair trade non-perishable food items, such as various grains, nuts, seeds, flour, dry fruits or legumes. There is a priority on selling locally produced items (for flour, some grains such as oats and some legumes essentially). Our main objective is to sell the food at lower prices than similar organic (and conventional) products offered by regular retailers as much as possible. As students from different programs and backgrounds, we are mindful of different issues linked to nutrition, food security, agriculture, environment and economics. Buy Your Own Bulk is an initiative that responds simultaneously to these issues. The team feels that being involved in this organization gives a sense to our fields of study. Being able to have an impact and positive influence on consumers’ choices and habits is also a motivation for our team members to be involved in the initiative. This fall semester 2019, we reached an average of 55 customers every week, with new customers weekly. We also successfully instituted a container recycling system, where people can donate their clean, empty containers (e.g. yogurt containers) for others to use. This way, we further reduce waste by saving containers to be reused to return benefits to the community. It allows people who don’t have or forgot their containers the chance to still buy products.

BYOB has a great impact on the Macdonald campus community as it represents an affordable source of sustainable food for students as well as staff directly on campus. Our sales continue to grow each semester as the organization gains increasing recognition and support from the community.

2. Please describe the key successes and challenges of your project. (Minimum of two examples for each)

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

Key successes:

So far, we have had about 49 different items in our inventory (current inventory being 45 different products). This is possible due to a sufficiently rapid turnover that allows us to purchase new products. We also communicate with our customers and try to supply products that they would like to be able to buy on campus. From these customer suggestions, we added pasta, tea, coffee, sesame seeds, peanuts, and some novelty items such as vegan gummy bears and candied ginger.
Having a current team of 21 volunteers is something we are really proud of, with 11 also being members of the executive committee. Our volunteers are all really committed and we know that this organization and initiative is truly functioning because of them!

Challenges:

The storage room for our products is currently a big challenge, as the one we previously shared with the Food Lab has been given back to the Entomology department. Unfortunately, the new room the Food Lab has been assigned to is too small to accommodate BYOB as well. We are still waiting for news from Christine Butler (responsible for rooms in the Centennial Center), and we are in communication with Professor Jim Fyles, who kindly offered us help. MCSS was unable to help us with this issue. We are hoping this storage room problem will soon be resolved, and we stay positive and are preparing ourselves to move our equipment and products.

Another challenge is making Buy Your Own Bulk’s services more known across campus. Since we are selling in the Centennial Center just once a week, it can be difficult to gain visibility. To reach more people and have a greater impact, we are planning to do small “pop-up” sales in the Macdonald-Stewart Building, and in the future, perhaps increasing the number of sales per week if the number of volunteers allows it. We also would like to do more events or workshops in Laird Hall so that students living in residence are familiar with BYOB and can have more convenient access to inexpensive and nutritious food.

3. What key points of advice or lessons learned would you give to other SPF teams either regarding your experience managing your project or the project itself?
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1/2 page or approximately 250 words)

An important lesson that we learned is that no matter how interesting might be your project, or how it could really give back to the community, there are many challenges to face while implementing it. Having contact within the community is definitely a great help; for example, our project would not have been possible without the help of different professors and faculty members of the Macdonald campus, such as Dr. Maureen Rose and Mr. Paul-Guy Duhamel (supervisor of the food lab), who were the first to help us with finding a storage room and lending us equipment to use for the sales.

4. What recommendations do you have for the future of this project to be continued and are there any opportunities for complementary projects? Who will take responsibility for the project’s future and how can interested persons be in touch? The SPF team will also be in touch with this contact for updates on the project’s progress in coming years, if ongoing.
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

It would be interesting to create an organization such as BYOB on the Downtown campus. If one day some people from the downtown campus want to initiate it, they could get in touch with the managers of BYOB through our email (byob.macdonald@gmail.com) or Facebook page (Buy Your Own Bulk).

5. Would you or your project team member(s) be willing to serve as a mentor to SPF project teams? Please choose one. If yes, SPF Staff will contact you with more information.
6. In your application, you listed the following sources of funding:

☐ N/a

Please confirm if you received this funding in the space below. In your response, please list the actual amount (in dollars) that you received. Note: If you received funding from a McGill Department or Unit, please attach a letter from its Financial/Budget Officer confirming the actual amount of support.

☐ N/a

(1,800 characters maximum)

7. Did you purchase equipment or make an installation on campus? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please briefly describe how these items will be maintained and used in the future.

(1,800 characters maximum)

We purchased different pieces of equipment such as 3 scales, batteries for the scale, spoons, funnels, food containers, aprons and a lockable shelf on wheels. All these are items are used every week during the sales operations. They are kept within a room along with the bulk food. These items are really important to us, as they allow us to be independent from the food lab and perfectly functional, as well as more efficient. In fact, we used to borrow scales, aprons, and even some spoons from the food lab kitchen, and before having the lockable shelf on wheels, we used to borrow 2-3 trolleys from the lab every morning and afternoon to carry all the bags from the basement (were our current storage room is situated), to the coat check where we sell the food. Setting up the stuff in the morning took us a 45 min, as now, when we are really efficient, it only takes us about 20-25 min. This economy of time also applies to the step of packing up the products and material after the day of sale. All these equipment pieces have made it a lot easier and enjoyable for our volunteers.

With the SPF funds, we also purchased a cash box, to replace the one we used to borrow from MCSS. This again, has allowed us more independence and efficient functioning.

Other equipment we bought was some gloves (for food safety), coloured tapes for organizing our containers in different coloured categories, and stickers with our logo. These items are kept in a storage box in the lockable shelf.

One item recently invested in was a coffee grinder. This new piece of equipment allows us to sell organic, fairtrade coffee, that can be ground on the spot. This has been greatly appreciated by our customers so far, and we have had good feedback. It also allowed us to do a small fundraising event, where we sold coffee for 1$. We think this will also be a great opportunity to have contacts with clubs such as Out of the Garden Project, or other organization, as they will be able to buy fresh coffee from us every week. Clear instructions on how to use the grinder have been provided to our volunteers, as well as instructions on the cleaning and storage.

The SPF funds also reimbursed the Square device we purchased. This device allows to keep track of the inventory and transactions, and makes it possible for our customers to buy using card.

During the previous summer, when no sales occur, our equipment was stored in the room mentioned above.
8. The following Key Success Indicators were indicated in your project application and selected for tracking. Please indicate the actual results that you have achieved in the “Actual” column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Key Success Indicators</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cupboards successfully installed</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scales, scoops, and funnels labelled</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inventory lists created</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there is a significant difference in the target numbers and the actual numbers achieved, please explain. If you have any additional information to share about these success indicators, please also include it below.

(1,800 characters maximum)

We have installed five cupboards to store the food in the storage room we have access to, which is enough storage space to meet our needs.

As for the scales, scoops, and funnels, we also have enough to operate efficiently.

9. Please report on your progress with the standard SPF Key Success Indicators in the “Actual” column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard SPF Key Success Indicators</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of volunteers directly or indirectly engaged in the project</td>
<td>21 (currently)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project</td>
<td>10 with official food safety course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding</td>
<td>19$ (from our coffee sale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of tons of GHG emissions reduced by your project</td>
<td>We were not able to calculate the GHG emissions related to our project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of partnerships or collaborations developed between the project team and other McGill administrative units, student groups, community groups, other universities, and/or other groups/organizations.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the last Key Success Indicator, please list the groups and/or organizations that you counted.  
(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

- Out of the Garden Project (OGP)
- DHNUS (Dietetic and Human Nutrition Undergraduate Society)
- McGill Global Food Security Club

If you have any additional information to share about the Standard SPF Key Success Indicators, please include it below.  
(1,800 characters maximum)

The number of GHG emissions reduced by our project is quite difficult for us to assess. However we are currently looking into being able to have an estimate of our impact in terms of ecological footprint. Once we find a way to calculate it, we would like to communicate the results with SPF.

10. Please indicate the McGill stakeholder groups that were involved with your project as a team member or collaborator/partner. Choose all that apply.

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- Administrative Staff
- Academic Staff
- Alumni

11. Please rate your project team's overall satisfaction with the support provided by the SPF Staff. Choose only one response.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied
- Satisfied

Very Satisfied

12. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team’s experience with the SPF  
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

We were very pleased to work with SPF for this project, and we are very thankful for all the help that was given to us. We somehow felt that the support was difficult to attain from SPF at first, particularly for the buying of food in bulk, which is the core of our project. However, the communication with SPF was really easy and efficient.

13. If there is additional information you would like to share about your project, please use the field below.  
(Unlimited characters)

To be able to buy our first food products for the initial inventory, Jonathan Leblanc (founder) had to make a personal loan. This loan was fully repaid by last April 2019. This was possible by having a bigger margin on certain products we were selling. Therefore, the prices of our products during the fall semester 2018 and winter semester 2019 were a bit higher than what is found in grocery stores for conventional products. However, we were able to bring the prices down this semester, and have a minimal margin for safety measures and to allow us to add new products to our inventory. We still have a small margin on our products to be able to make new orders and cover for potential losses of food.
14. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of professional growth? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. 
(800 characters maximum)
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Prefer Not to Share

Buy Your Own Bulk is a small food service operation, and therefore can be a good way to put in practice what we learned in Food Service courses (for Dietetics students). It also gave some of us a sense of what it would be like to hold a small business operation.

15. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of personal growth? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. 
(800 characters maximum)
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Prefer Not to Share

16. Which of the following skills or attributes has your team improved through involvement in your SPF project? Choose all that apply.

☐ Budgeting  ☑ Networking  ☑ Systems Thinking
☐ Communications  ☑ Planning  ☑ Teamwork
☐ Conflict Resolution  ☑ Problem Solving  ☐ Technology
☐ Leadership  ☑ Project Management  ☑ Time Management
☐ Listening  ☑ Public Speaking  ☑ Writing
☐ Mentoring  ☐ Stakeholder Engagement  ☐ Other (Please specify in the field below)
☐ Negotiating  ☑ Stakeholder Identification

Other:

17. Since starting your SPF project, has your team improved its knowledge of sustainability? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. 
(800 characters maximum)
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Prefer Not to Share

18. (Optional) If applicable, please list the total number of team members voluntarily self-identifying as members of marginalized communities:
Please identify the represented communities below. (e.g. women, Indigenous people, people of colour, LGBTTTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)

(1,800 characters maximum)

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING YOUR FINAL REPORT!

Please e-mail your report to the SPF Staff attaching any additional information that you would like to share about your project (e.g. other reports, research, documents, photos, etc.). Please note that this Final Report will be shared publicly on your SPF project’s webpage.