KATIE BRASH PRACTICE INQUIRY PROJECT 2025

Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment in Community Food Support: A Practical enquiry of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh

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Abstract

This practical research looks at Hays Pantry in Edinburgh as a community-driven project meant to solve food poverty and empower its members by means of dignity. Located in one of Scotland's most underdeveloped communities, the pantry runs under the Lifting Neighbourhoods Together project under Scottish Government Cash-First Approach and Community Learning and Development (CLD) guidelines. Using semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and narrative analysis among other qualitative approaches, this study looks at how the pantry affects its consumers, volunteers, and larger community. Important results show how the pantry supports resilience, social inclusion, and autonomy as well as systematic inequality, operational limitations, and volunteer support needs. The study supports dignity-centred solutions that transcend quick relief to solve the underlying causes of food insecurity, therefore contributing to debates on sustainable food support models. This paper offers understanding of how community-led food projects could produce long-lasting social change by combining theoretical viewpoints on empowerment, social justice, and participatory development.

Introduction

Community Renewal Trust (CRT) is a charitable organisation functioning in Bingham, Magdalene, and The Hays in Edinburgh, regions recognised as among of Scotland's most deprived according to the 2020 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The primary objective of CRT is to influence transformational and enduring change within communities by tackling poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. The organisation employs a person-centred methodology (Rogers, 1951), including employment, community development, health, and wellness initiatives to empower people and communities. CRT collaborates closely with residents to develop (Emery and Flora, 2006) Community Capital Framework, is a utilised approach to CRT practise. This approach evaluates community assets and deficits while encouraging participatory growth and resilience.

CRT's Methodology and Theoretical Constructs

CRT's highlighting "communities of place" and the importance of local identity and connection (Manzo and Perkins, 2006). Trust is fundamental to its connections, established via dependability and shared respect. This corresponds with Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, which emphasises dialogue, trust, and mutual responsibility as fundamental for empowering and enduring transformation.

CRT employs methodology grounded in community education and development ideas, emphasising strengths and developing lessons from obstacles. This corresponds with (Kretzmann and McKnight's 1993) Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) paradigm, which emphasises the use of community assets rather than deficit-oriented, paternalistic approaches. Freire's focus on recognising individual abilities promotes empowerment and self-determination. CRT's initiative-taking, systems-oriented methodology embodies resilience theory Ungar (2012) by promoting adaptability and well-being via positive interaction with adversity. By including stakeholders and tackling interrelated challenges, CRT conforms to systems thinking (Midgley, 2000), facilitating sustained, cooperative transformation.

Experimental Initiatives and Participatory Methodologies

CRT's Bingham office functions as an experimental branch, using Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which emphasises learning through practical experiences, reflection, and experimentation. CRT evaluates unique strategies, enhancing its techniques via adaptive learning procedures. This experimental emphasis corresponds with Participatory Development Theory (Chambers, 1997), which prioritises active community engagement in the formulation and execution of solutions. This approach also embodies Orlando Fals-Borda (1979). Participatory action research (PAR). This participatory research methods, emphasises the integration of academic research and grassroots activism. Collaborating with their communities to empower its members.

Action Research Reason and Bradbury (2008) further substantiates CRT's methodology, facilitating, specific, useful outcomes through ongoing planning, action, observation, and reflection. CRT's work exemplifies Everett Mitchell Rogers and F Floyd Shoemaker (1971) Diffusion of Innovations Theory by evaluating current approaches to mirror the needs of the community and promote more transformative improvement within the neighbourhood's social capital. CRT addresses intricate community concerns via voluntary participation. This voluntary participation builds social networks and the principles of trust and reciprocity within the community, significantly contributing to collective action and enhancing societal well-being, as explained by Putnam, R.D. (2000) Social Capital theory.

Transformative Community Development

CRT's initiatives emphasise transformation rather than ameliorative advancement, reflecting Margaret Ledwith's (2020) concept of transformational community development. This method aims to rectify systemic disparities while promoting enduring transformation. CRT meticulously evaluates community goals, improves resource accessibility, and sustains long-term participation, guaranteeing that its projects are both powerful and sustainable. Creating a better, fairer, and more democratic world, leading to the liberation of individuals dwelling within Freire, P. (1970). CRT neighbourhood has a high demographic of asylum-seekers. Bringing complex barriers and challenges to integration and blocking their ability to thrive. Critical Race Theory (Bell, 2008) examines urgent socioeconomic challenges such poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and social isolation as well as racism, which stem from systemic inequalities.

By integrating into communities, CRT promotes trust and dissolves conventional barriers between service providers and community members. This method corresponds with modern community development ideas, including active listening and cooperation to thoroughly meet local needs (Kelly & Westoby, 2018). CRT's participatory methodologies enable communities to recognise issues and collaboratively develop solutions, promoting self-sufficiency and resilience. This emphasis on structural transformation and human activity embodies the fundamental principles of participatory community development. Implementing the concepts of the Community Engagement Standards CRT guarantees that all community members' voices are heard. Encouraging a more transparent, equitable, and participatory procedures.

Alignment with CLD Principles

The concepts of CRT strongly correspond with those of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Standards Council, highlighting empowerment, cooperation, and respect. Both bodies emphasise self-determination, advocating for people' freedom to make autonomous decisions (Jesson, Matheson and Lacey, 2011) The strength-based approach of CRT and its emphasis on active community involvement demonstrate CLD's dedication to autonomy and personal development (Buchroth and Parkin, 2010). Inclusion is a mutual objective, with both entities endeavouring to provide fair opportunities and rectify structural inequities (McArdle et al., 2024)

CRT cultivates an atmosphere that prioritises diversity and inclusion, aligning with CLD's commitment to equality (McKay et al., 2020). Both organisations seek to enable people and communities to collectively surmount obstacles, promoting resilience and change (Kelly & Westoby, 2018). Moreover, CRT's focus on lifelong learning parallels CLD's commitment to experiential education (Townley, 2014). The common principles prompted my choice to join

CRT in November 2024 as a CLD associate and mature student studying Community Education at Dundee University. This position enables me to support CRT's purpose while adhering to my values of empowerment, inclusion, and cooperation. As well as CLD ethics standards.

My Positionality within CRT

Lifting Neighbourhoods Together project, is a cooperative endeavour that includes individuals, community organisations, service providers, and financial backers. The initiative seeks to alleviate poverty in our neighbourhood by collaborative efforts and fair involvement. In alignment with (Gramsci, 1971) theory of hegemony, the project acknowledges the role of dominant cultural and ideological forces in perpetuating inequality and aims to confront these power structures by empowering the community and advocating for alternative narratives of strength and resilience. My position allows me to use academic knowledge in a practical context, interact significantly with local communities, and assist CRT in nurturing resilience, strengthening capabilities, and promoting positive social transformation. This opportunity enables me to enhance my skills, broaden my comprehension of community development, and investigate the intricate relationship between theory and practice. Through collaboration with CRT, I intend to advance its transformative goal of addressing material poverty while challenging the hegemonic beliefs that encourage social exclusion, striving for sustainable and empowering solutions for the communities it serves.

Lifting Neighbourhoods Together Project

Hays Pantry, a component of the Lifting Neighbourhoods Together project initiated in 2021 amid the Covid-19 pandemic, functions as a community-oriented solution to food shortages and economic distress. Founded in collaboration with Places for People, a housing charity, the pantry originally offered emergency food aid during the epidemic but has subsequently evolved into a more comprehensive community resource. In alignment with contemporary community development concepts, the pantry emphasises inclusivity and reciprocal support, providing services including employment aid, welfare guidance, and dialogues concerning energy and fuel consumption. These initiatives correspond with the principles of empowerment, collaboration, and community led engagement in tackling local issues (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012). Furthermore, Classical Marxism influences the pantry's strategy by contesting the capitalist frameworks that sustain food insecurity and economic disparity. Hays Pantry mitigates the exploitation and alienation inherent in capitalist systems by dispersing resources and encouraging communal ownership, aligning with Marx's critique of capitalism and the necessity for social action to address class oppression (Marx, 2022). The pantry, originally servicing the communities of Hays, Magdalene, and Bingham, has broadened its

scope to encompass all Places for People tenants in Edinburgh, with membership increasing from 30 to over 90 individuals.

Hays Pantry was influenced by (Fraser, 2014) Justice Theory, which emphasises the significance of communal efforts in attaining social justice, especially through the redistribution of power and resources. Since its establishment, the community has articulated a distinct aspiration for a pantry that is "for the community, by the community," with the objective of addressing food need and fulfilling local requirements. The pantry illustrates participatory democracy, as individuals and communities actively engage in decisions that directly impact their lives. In contrast to representational democracy, which depends on elected officials for decision-making, participatory democracy stimulates direct engagement, collaborative discourse, and communal power-sharing. Hays Pantry exemplifies this model by engaging its members in decisions related to food distribution, so encouraging local communities to assume control over their resources. This method aligns with Rousseau's Social Contract Theory, which highlights communal agency, direct participation, and the common good principles that are vital to the pantry's mission and operations (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1968). Using these theoretical frameworks, Hays Pantry not only meets urgent practical necessities but also enables members to actively participate in transforming their community and confronting systemic inequities.

Hays Pantry Operational information

Hays Pantry operates every Wednesday from 11 am to 2 pm, offering free and subsidised meals, hygiene supplies, to anyone who attends. This project receives part funding from the Investing in Communities Fund (ICF) and is consistent with the Scottish Government's Cash-First Approach, which advocates for direct money support as a more empowering substitute for food banks. This method enables people to manage resources with dignity, addressing food poverty via autonomy and respect (McGee and Brock, 2002).

Hays Panty is part funded through Inclusive Community Fund (ICF) part of the Cash First Approach

The Cash-First Approach tackles the fundamental causes of food insecurity, including inadequate income and systemic disparities, by emphasising durable, structural solutions rather than temporary assistance. By reducing reliance on food banks and prioritising financial strategies such as access to social benefits and support services, it complies with the principles of Community Learning and Development (CLD). CLD theories promote addressing structural imbalances, promoting empowerment, and enhancing community resilience (Community Resilience Development Framework). A reference tool for the delivery of strategic

approaches to community resilience development, at the Local Resilience Forum level in collaboration with non-statutory partners (2019).

However, the success of such initiatives may also depend on individuals' habitus—their ingrained habits, dispositions, and perceptions shaped by their social backgrounds and life experiences (Bourdieu, 1990). These deeply ingrained patterns of behaviour influence how individuals engage with community resources and perceive initiatives like the Cash-First Approach, which seeks to tackle food insecurity at its roots rather than offering temporary relief. Habitus can help explain why community members may approach food assistance with reluctance or a preference for immediate, short-term support, rather than embracing structural change.

Pantry Membership growth in financial quarter 2 of ICF Funding

As Hays Pantry's membership grows, enquiries emerge about the nature of its assistance: is it revolutionary, tackling systemic food poverty, or just ameliorative, providing temporary relief? The Scottish Government's study, Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland, delineates four fundamental principles for tackling food insecurity: autonomy and agency, respect and recognition, support and empowerment, and sustainability. These ideas promote empowering food choices, eradicating stigma, cultivating self-sufficiency, and emphasising sustainable solutions. Reflecting the Cash-First Approach's emphasis on structural transformation, shifting from emergency food assistance to tackling economic inequality and poverty. Organisations like Nourish Scotland have launched the "Dignity in Practice" campaign, highlighting dignified, sustainable food systems that honour individuals' dignity.

(Fraser, 1998) differentiates between two approaches to social inequalities: transformational cures and ameliorative solutions. Transformational methods seek to transform systemic institutions that sustain injustice, targeting the fundamental roots of inequality. Unlike this, ameliorative measures mitigate the symptoms of inequality without confronting the foundational institutions. For example, whereas temporary financial assistance meets urgent need, it does not tackle the overarching economic structures that perpetuate poverty. Fraser contends that authentic and enduring social change requires a transition from addressing symptoms to enacting structural changes.

This research rigorously assesses Hays Pantry's contribution to promoting dignity and empowerment via its community food assistance program. Prominent theoretical frameworks, like (Rappaport, 1981) Empowerment Theory, (Saleebey, 2013) Strengths-Based Approach, and (Sen, 1999) Capability Approach, provide significant insights for evaluating how projects such as Hays Pantry might promote self-reliance and resilience. Furthermore, (Homans G.C 1958) Social Exchange Theory will be used to examine the mutual advantages and

interactions between the pantry and its members. The research evaluates, using these theoretical frameworks, whether Hays Pantry provides transformational assistance that addresses systemic food poverty or only gives ameliorative aid.

Importance of the Practical Inquiry

This study is crucial in illustrating how theoretical frameworks may guide and improve community development methods. (Townley, 2014) emphasises the significance of theory in the development of successful, sustained community-based initiatives. Grounding practice in theory offers insights into community dynamics, enhances engagement approaches, and guarantees successful evaluations.

The research provides Hays Pantry essential insights for developing efforts that correspond with community values and promote resilience. Empowerment Theory promotes involving people in transformational change that respects local viewpoints and promotes sustainable capability. (Denscombe, 2021) emphasises the significance of participatory techniques, whereby communities actively shape choices that impact them, promoting ownership and sustainability. According to (Margolis and L Pauwels, 2011) visual research techniques may enhance the representation of marginalised voices, while qualitative procedures (Alasuutari, Bickman and Brannen, 2008) promote social justice and inclusivity. By using these strategies, Hays Pantry may enhance its community involvement, enabling members to collaboratively develop programs that successfully serve local need.

This enquiry examines Hays Pantry's adherence to with CLD's empowerment concept, which entails improving the ability of people and communities to tackle challenges that impact them. Empowerment is founded on principles like human rights, social justice, inclusiveness, and collective action. Strategies such as community involvement, capacity building, and governance development promote friendly, non-judgmental settings in which people feel valued and driven to cooperate. Empowerment also tackles structural concerns of marginalisation and inequality, as examined in intersectional research on race and poverty (Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 1990) and community-based qualitative studies (International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, 2002); (Johnson, L. 2017). It facilitates sustainable transformation by participatory decision-making, cultivating a collective sense of accountability for the community's future (Rayner & Bonnici, 2021)

This question also examines the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which seeks to improve community involvement in public decision-making. The investigation assesses if Hays Pantry promotes community involvement and enhances the voices of its members in accordance with this legal goal. (Denscombe, 2021) emphasises that effective empowerment

methods need clear procedures for evaluating community impact and involvement. Gathering data to assess the efficacy of community efforts is crucial (McArdle et al., 2020), and qualitative methodologies such as theme analysis are vital for comprehending community experiences and empowering results (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Dignity and Nutritional Security

The examination evaluates whether Hays Pantry employs a respectful methodology in food assistance, acknowledging the fundamental connection between dignity and food security. (Dowler 2003) characterises food poverty as the incapacity to get enough, quality food in a socially acceptable way. Dignified food assistance challenges conventional charity paradigms by promoting access to healthful, culturally relevant food as an inherent right rather than a charitable gesture. (Fraser 1995) advocates for a transition from redistribution to acknowledgement within justice frameworks, highlighting the significance of enabling people to exercise autonomy in their dietary choices.

(Nourish Scotland's 2016) emphasis on dignity in food supply promotes inclusive, community-oriented settings where people engage actively rather than passively accept assistance. Empowerment via choice and engagement, as posited by (Batliwala 2007), is essential for addressing stigma in food programs. (Cranton 2016) underscores the significance of transformative learning in promoting individual autonomy. The report assesses whether Hays Pantry's programs, including volunteering and skill-sharing, mitigate stigma and improve participants' capacity to make informed decisions about their food.

Bell hooks' central idea is the role of love in transforming society. She defines love as an act of will—a commitment to the well-being of others and a practice that promotes healing, empathy, and solidarity (Hooks, 2000). In the context of food assistance, this philosophy aligns with the values of dignity, empowerment, and community care. This exploration assesses Hays Pantry's efficacy in promoting dignity and empowerment in the context of food poverty. This review employs theoretical frameworks and participatory approaches to assess whether the pantry offers transformational or ameliorative assistance, therefore providing significant insights for community-based food projects. This analysis seeks to enhance methods that promote resilience, dignity, and sustainable transformation. This analysis seeks to enhance methods that promote resilience, dignity, and sustainable transformation, encouraging both micro and macro level of change (R Warren Flint, 2013).

Methodologies of Research

This academic work uses a qualitative technique based on interpretivist and constructivist frameworks, aiming to develop a deep knowledge of the research topic. Rather than forecasting outcomes, which is typical of positivist paradigms (Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. 2005). The study method used to analyse Hays Pantry's role in nurturing dignity and empowerment within its community. (Yin, 2009) defines a case study as an "empirical investigation designed to comprehend a phenomenon within its natural context, using various data gathering methods to provide a thorough analysis of the topic." (De Vaus, 2001) contends that the "unit of analysis" in case study research might include persons, communities, organisations, or events.

This research gathers perspectives from pantry members, volunteers, and staff using semi-structured interviews and participant comments, enabling a comprehensive knowledge of the pantry's operations and potential areas for improvement. The interviews, which take 20 to 30 minutes, are held in person at Hays Pantry to create a favourable environment. Semi-structured interviews, as described by (Kvale 1996), provide a dynamic dialogue that facilitates the examination of critical themes such as dignity, empowerment, autonomy, and choice. Participants are asked for feedback to provide concrete recommendations for improving the pantry's offerings.

The interpretivist approach "emphasises the creation of knowledge via comprehending the many viewpoints and significances people assign to their experiences" (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study follows the criteria of co-produced research, highlighting cooperation, ethical participation, and practical consequences as outlined by (Banks and Westoby, 2019) Conducting interviews at Hays Pantry corresponds with (Brower, 25AD) ideas on community development, highlighting connection, support, and a feeling of belonging as vital for individual well-being and organisational involvement. Brower emphasises the significance of honest communication, collective experiences, and collaboration as essential strategies for fortifying communities. These principles enhance involvement and contemplation throughout the interview process, nurturing a more profound comprehension of the pantry's influence on its members.

Positionality

I have worked with pantry members and volunteers for over a year, cultivating robust, amicable relationships and acquiring significant insights into their lives. My insider status inside this group affects the research process. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 2009 TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story" emphasises that concentrating only on a "single story" might result in restrictive preconceptions. Narrative identity theory (Ricoeur, 1991) asserts that people

develop their identity via the narratives they create about themselves throughout time. This viewpoint corresponds with social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), which claims that reality is constructed via language and social interaction, contesting simple or inflexible conceptions.

Although participants' experiences in this inquiry constitute a segment of their life, it is crucial to recognise the complexity and variety of their overarching narratives. Understanding the complex structure of identity allows for a more sophisticated approach to tackling food insecurity as a multidimensional problem that goes beyond a single narrative of hardship.

Ethics

This investigation was conducted with ethics as a fundamental principle, ensuring that all methodologies respected participants' rights and upheld integrity throughout the research. Participants received a detailed clarification of the study's aims, their responsibilities, and their rights under data protection laws, including the ability to withdraw at any time. The material was communicated via a comprehensive Participant material Guide and permission form, in accordance with the ethical standards of community-based participatory research (Banks et al., 2018).

All obtained data was anonymised to safeguard participant identities, with personal information securely maintained on encrypted systems accessible only to me. The recruiting procedure was executed honestly, guaranteeing that people were free from force or improper influence (Denscombe, 2021). The research design emphasised dignity, promoting respectful relationships and cultivating a feeling of worth among participants, consistent with Community Learning and Development (CLD) concepts (Ledwith, 2020). Ethical permission was secured from the University of Dundee's Ethics Committee before data collection, in compliance with the University's ethical standards (University of Dundee, 2024) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (UK Government, 2018).

This study's ethical framework included ideas of transformational learning, aiming to empower participants by respecting their voices and experiences (Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 1991). This ethical framework assured the investigation conformed to the University's rules while nurturing respectful and inclusive behaviours throughout the enquiry process.

Literary Criticism

This investigation seeks to analyse empowerment inside Hays Pantry, using academic frameworks to indicate and evaluate the concept of empowerment. (Rocha, 1997) "A Ladder of Empowerment" describes empowerment as a sequential spectrum, starting with individual transformation and culminating in extensive systemic alterations. Rocha's ladder emphasises

that empowerment is contingent upon context, shaped by social, economic, and political forces. (Pigg's 2008) multidimensional approach similarly underscores the interrelated levels of individual, interpersonal, and communal development. Collectively, these ideas provide essential instruments for assessing whether Hays Pantry promotes human agency, collaborative engagement, and systemic influence.

(Ibrahim and Alkire 2007) define empowerment as the "process by which people or groups gain the ability to make choices and convert those choices into significant actions and results." This dual perspective—empowerment as both a process and an outcome—provides a thorough framework for analysing Hays Pantry's methodology. Their theory underscores the significance of human agency and institutional variables that either promote or obstruct empowerment, which is essential for assessing the pantry's efficacy in nurturing dignity and autonomy.

(Baillie, Skivington, and Fergie 2024) examine the operational aspects of community food pantries (CFPs) in Scotland, highlighting dignity as an "essential factor in alleviating food poverty and health inequities." They promote a strategy that enables people to make decisions about their diet, therefore diminishing the stigma sometimes linked to food aid. Nevertheless, practical obstacles, such restricted food access and dependence on excess contributions, may impede the complete achievement of dignity-oriented objectives. These practical limits underscore the conflict between the principle of empowerment and the limitations encountered by CFPs in providing decent services.

(Lopez et al. 2024) investigate Affordable Food Clubs (AFCs), illustrating how these efforts mitigate food poverty while nurturing autonomy and dignity. Despite the good consequences of AFCs, including improved eating habits, systemic concerns such as dependence on food banks continue to exist, highlighting the difficulties in tackling structural disparities. This reflects the circumstances of Hays Pantry, where empowerment programs, however beneficial, must navigate overarching economic and societal influences.

As a CLD practitioner, I use the Competent Practitioner Framework (2022), which emphasises self-determination, empowerment, and reflective practice in community development. This approach promotes cooperation with community members to meet urgent needs while cultivating enduring resilience. Dignity-centred methodologies, such as those used by Hays Pantry, challenge conventional charity frameworks by prioritising respect and autonomy rather than reliance (Shaw, 2006; Briscoe and Thomas, 2021)

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Nonetheless, dignity-centred practices alone cannot resolve the systemic reasons of food insecurity, including economic disparity and insufficient social safety nets. Systemic alterations, including governmental improvements to enhance income assistance and guarantee sustainable financing for community projects, are necessary (Gilchrist and Taylor, 2011). CLD practitioners must manage the balance between urgent assistance and sustainable change, pushing for legislative changes that align with dignity-centred approaches and nurture empowerment.

Final Assessment

Combining dignity-centred practices with systemic changes provides a dual strategy: meeting urgent needs and nurturing enduring, revolutionary results. This study assesses Hays Pantry's effectiveness in promoting empowerment and dignity among the problems of food insecurity by integrating these viewpoints. This study seeks to provide practical insights for improving the pantry's effectiveness and guiding larger community development strategies in Edinburgh.

Pantry Members Findings

This low-risk ethics investigation Low_Risk_Ethics_Form_Katie_Brash_2436923.docx, was carried out at Hays Pantry. Inviting members to participate. The selection criteria required that participants had a competent comprehension of both spoken and written English. The community's reaction was very favourable, with members eager to participate. In December 2024, five pantry members received official invitations to participate owing to my own capacity limitations, with each allocated specific assignment. Meetings were held outside pantry operating hours to provide confidentiality and a relaxed environment for conversations.

In the preliminary sessions, attendees were issued with a Participation Form Katie Brash 2436923.docx. detailing the objective of the inquiry, which is to assess the dignity and empowerment facilitated by Hays Pantry. An Informed Consent Form Template - complete 1.docx. was provided, outlining essential elements of the research, such as the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality, and the possibility to withdraw at any time without consequences. The paperwork outlined the study's methodology, including a 30-minute guided questionnaire pantry members question Katie Brash 2436923.docx and an optional follow-up discussion. It also identified dangers, such as emotional discomfort related to food insecurity discussions, and provided information on accessible support resources.

Participants were guaranteed that all obtained data will be anonymised and securely kept in accordance with the University of Dundee's data protection rules. Contact information for enquiries, complaints, or alternate formats was also included, promoting accessibility and

openness. These measures cultivated trust and enabled participants to make well informed judgements on their participation.

All five participants agreed to engage in guided questionnaire interviews, recognising that anonymised data may be used as case studies by Community Renewal Trust (CRT) and Places for People. Members were reassured that no personally identifying information would be gathered and that anonymised quotations might be used in the study's results. Participants conveyed assurance that their engagement will enhance Hays Pantry's operations and procedures.

The Informed Consent Form Template - complete 1.docx was reviewed, discussed and signed during the first meeting to ensure mutual understanding. Ethical compliance was maintained in accordance with CRT's Draft Research Ethics Policy-Procedure 2024 02 07 1 - Copy.docx, which outlines guidelines for ethical decision-making in research. These values include respect for participants' rights and dignity, compliance with UK GDPR, and voluntarily informed permission. The policy incorporates protections for vulnerable persons, consistent with CRT's objective to address poverty and inequality in Scotland.

In this procedure, I ensured that participants were well informed about the ethical rules regulating the investigation, including provisions for safeguarding their privacy and welfare. In-depth talks on the CRT Research Ethics Policy emphasised the inquiry's collaborative and open methodology. Upon consensus on all elements, participants signed their permission forms, formalising their participation and affirming the ethical integrity of the research.

The investigation upheld the highest ethical standards, cultivating a respectful and inclusive atmosphere that valued participants' well-being and dignity while collecting vital information to enhance the impact of Hays Pantry.

Analysis of Guided Questionnaire *pantry members question Katie Brash 2436923.docx*

The first question posed to participants was to the frequency of their visits to the pantry. All five members indicated their attendance on a weekly basis. Member A participated for four years, Member B for three years, Member C for two years, Member D for less than one year, and Member E for six weeks. This variety demonstrates the pantry's capacity to accommodate both long-term members and newcomers.

The second inquiry examined the services used by participants. All five identified food as their primary motivation for attending. Member A participated in pantry activities, including an energy-saving initiative that resulted in a £150 reimbursement. Member B used welfare counselling via the pantry, but Member C saw it as a social venue to mitigate loneliness.

Member D engaged in the walking group, while Member E used the pantry for internet connection and warmth owing to deprived home circumstances.

Question three asked how participants discovered the pantry.? All five participants referenced word of mouth, including endorsements from friends, families, support workers, and Facebook groups.

The fourth question examined participants' general experiences, specifically about dignity and respect. All five conveyed contentment. Member A had a warm reception, Member B appreciated the fellowship, and Members C and D reported uniformly favourable experiences. Member E, as a new member emphasised the encouraging atmosphere promoted by both staff and other members.

Participants were then questioned about their engagements with staff and volunteers. All five reported favourable interactions. Member A acknowledged the staff's efforts despite the demands of busy periods. Member B noted the staff and volunteers managed issues with professionalism, while Member E reported receiving discreet food assistance during periods of financial difficulty.

Question six examined the pantry's queuing system, which provoked varied responses. Member A expressed dissatisfaction with prolonged wait times and alleged abuses of the system, including persons bypassing the queue or manipulating membership regulations. Member B narrated amusing but tumultuous occurrences in the line, while Member D embraced the delay as an integral aspect of the event. Newcomer Member E originally saw the line as daunting but acclimated with time.

Question seven asked members to assess their shopping experience. Participants appreciated the pantry's format that allows members to choose their products, in contrast to conventional food banks. Members A and B emphasised the pantry's superior products and positive environmental impact of reducing waste, while Member E valued the availability of halal alternatives and amenities.

Question eight questioned staff and volunteer practices whereby food items chosen by members from the shelf and trays were presented to them rather than members picking items up themselves. Every participant expressed satisfaction with this approach, stressing its introduction during COVID-19 and its effectiveness in reducing theft and contamination.

The seventh question looked at whether the pantry empowered individuals or their neighbourhood. Every one of the five agreed. While Member E, who was first embarrassed using the Pantry. Also attributed their successful integration to the community through the

various pantry programmes. Such as ESOL classes, employability course, wellbeing activities and the prayer group.

The ninth inquiry examined the pantry's influence on well-being. All participants indicated substantial advantages, ranging from practical assistance to emotional bonds. Member C recounted assistance received during emergencies, while Member E emphasised the bonds established via the pantry, characterising staff, and volunteers as "Scottish aunties."

Participants further offered supplementary remarks. Member A described the pantry as "one in a million," but Member B recognised the changes over the years, including the implementation of rising costs of items, however valued the level of service provided.

Analysis of Narrative Data

The accounts of the members underscore the complex function of Hays Pantry:

1. Membership Duration: The diverse membership durations illustrate the pantry's capacity to cultivate enduring trust while being welcoming to newcomers.

2. Service Utilisation: Although food is the main attraction, the pantry's supplementary services, including social activities and internet access, cater to wider community need.

3. Queue Challenges: Problems related to the queue system indicate operational challenges and social dynamics, with individuals expressing both dissatisfaction and adaptability.

4. Dignity and Respect: Participants regularly saw themselves as being addressed with respect, in accordance with the pantry's principle of dignity-centred assistance.

5. Empowerment: The pantry promotes empowerment by mitigating stigma and providing programs that improve long-term well-being, including employment training.

6. Well-Being: The pantry's influence beyond just material assistance, offering emotional support and promoting a feeling of community.

7. Racism and Prejudice: An unexpected discovery was the participants' reports of discriminatory conduct shown by staff and members. These reports correspond with the notion of "food oppression" (Freeman, 2007), emphasising structural disparities that may arise within community services.

Principal Insights

Hays Pantry functions as an essential resource in mitigating food poverty, enhancing dignity, and cultivating community. Its concept, which prioritises choice and inclusion, stands in favourable contrast to conventional food banks. Nonetheless, issues like queue management

and occurrences of prejudice highlight the need for continuous improvements. By resolving these concerns, the pantry may enhance its objective of promoting a helpful and empowering atmosphere for all members.

Pantry Volunteer Findings Volunteers *staff and volunteer question Katie Brash 243623.docx*

This investigation included five volunteers from Hays Pantry, using similar methodologies to those used with pantry members to extract insights into their experiences and viewpoints.

Volunteer Demographics and Duration of Service

All five volunteers indicated their active involvement with Hays Pantry for more than a year. Four individuals said that they volunteered three days each week, underscoring their considerable dedication.

Perspectives on the Function of the Pantry

When asked about the pantry's basic purpose, every volunteer agreed that food distribution came first.

Dignity, Respect, and Environment

All five volunteers assessed the pantry as remarkably successful in providing members with dignity and respect. They collectively confirmed that staff and volunteers consistently offered a warm and friendly welcome.

Nonetheless, open-ended enquiries on the pantry's waiting system revealed apprehensions.

- Volunteer A: The wait might be excessively prolonged and disheartening.
- Volunteer B: Adverse weather conditions impact those waiting outdoors.
- Volunteer C: Experienced pressure to accelerate transactions at busy periods.
- Volunteer D: Observed that the line's expansion might dissuade prospective users.
- Volunteer E: Described the waiting system as the pantry's "least appealing" aspect.

Notwithstanding these apprehensions, volunteers described the pantry's environment as friendly, with expressions such as "one team," "family," and "extraordinary." The pantry promotes teamwork and reciprocal assistance among staff, volunteers, and members.

Empowerment of the Community

In response to questions about community empowerment, all five of the volunteers indicated categorically that Hays Pantry powers its neighbourhood. Their conceptions of empowerment included.

- Volunteer A: Supporting each other and promoting a culture of collective caring.
- Volunteer B: Facilitating avenues for reciprocal assistance during difficult periods.
- Volunteer C emphasised the pantry's function as both a food resource and a social gathering space.
- Volunteer D: Engagement in significant community initiatives.
- Volunteer E: Confronting challenges and offering nourishment and assistance.

The volunteers acknowledged the pantry's essential function in alleviating food poverty, promoting dignity, and enhancing social relationships.

Volunteer Empowerment

All five volunteers articulated a sense of empowerment in their positions while conveying diverse viewpoints on the problems encountered.

- Volunteer A: Gained empowerment from the team's friendship.
- Volunteer B: Perceived a lack of appreciation from the silent partner, CRT, noting little training and acknowledgement beyond pantry oversight.
- Volunteer C: Recognised the emotional burden of managing member expectations and systemic exploitation.
- Volunteer D: Derived satisfaction from supporting the pantry's objectives.
- Volunteer E: Recounted a heartbreaking narrative illustrating how the pantry emerged as a source of solace and purpose after personal bereavement.

Although volunteers experienced a sense of empowerment, operational challenges such as inadequate recognition, training, and emotional strain highlighted areas needing change.

Challenges in Delivering Respectful Assistance

Volunteers identified barriers that impact their capacity to provide respectful and empowering assistance:

- System abuse: Incidents of theft and avarice among members generated discontent.
- Emotional burden: Reconciling empathy with the pantry's resource constraints.
- Fairness and equity: Difficulties in addressing varied demands equally amid resource limitations.
- working fast given such a large queue. Restrains a personalised experience.
-

These issues highlight the emotional, logistical, and interpersonal intricacies of helping at the pantry.

Solutions Proposed by Volunteers

Volunteers provided pragmatic suggestions to tackle existing difficulties and improve operations:

1. Enhanced Financial Support: All volunteers underscored the need for more financing to guarantee enough resources and alleviate stress amid shortages.

2. Volunteer Training: Proposals included instruction on conflict resolution, support for vulnerable groups, and operating protocols to enhance confidence and cohesiveness.

3. Transport Resources: A request for a remunerated driver and a designated van, together with mileage compensation for those using personal cars.

4. Extended Operating Hours: Recommendations included increasing operating days or prolonging hours to accommodate rising demand and minimise wait times.

5. Self-Service Model: Enabling members to independently pick products to streamline the process and alleviate volunteer responsibilities.

6. Augmented Organisational Support: Volunteers commended Suzanne, Places for People, Impact Officer, although articulated discontent with the insufficient acknowledgement and assistance from CRT.

Summary of Results

The volunteers' insight highlights Hays Pantry dual function as an essential community resource and a means of empowerment for its volunteers. The pantry promotes a collaborative and respectful atmosphere; but structural concerns such as operational inefficiencies, mental distress, and insufficient organisational support pose significant obstacles. Mitigating these issues via enhanced training, acknowledgement, and infrastructure expenditures will be essential for the pantry's sustained success and the welfare of its committed volunteers.

Summary

The volunteers' recommendations highlight the need of tackling both operational and structural challenges to enhance the pantry's efficiency and volunteer contentment. Enhanced finance, improved transportation resources, specialised training, and fresh solutions such as self-service shopping were identified as critical areas for improvement. The feedback indicates a significant need for CRT to enhance support mechanisms for volunteers, ensuring their contributions are acknowledged and their difficulties are resolved. Implementing these improvements would enable the pantry to thrive as a crucial community resource while cultivating a more empowered and sustainable environment for its volunteers.

Conclusion

This investigation has shown Hays Pantry's role as a community resource for members and volunteers. The results show how the pantry fights food insecurity and builds community, resilience, and connection. Pantry customers can choose their own food and use career programs and social activities, highlighting its revolutionary potential. (Gandz, J., & Bird, F. G. 1996). emphasises ethical involvement and empowerment, emphasising the need for dignity in support networks. Volunteers' perspectives show how they both create and benefit from the pantry's supportive environment, emphasising the importance of agency in building ownership and community, as (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) emphasise. But the data also shows significant challenges that prevent the pantry from reaching its aims. The queueing system, little funds, and poor volunteer training impact members and volunteers. These difficulties correspond with (Bryman's 2012) examination of practical issues in community-based services, emphasising sustained solutions based on participant input. Food oppression in the pantry was found in this study. (Freeman's 2007) structural food inequality theory links these differences to socio-economic systems, particularly (Robinson, 2005, pp.71–100) racial capitalism. Food oppression is frequently analysed through the lens of structural inequalities, but its prevalence in community contexts like Hays Pantry shows that these processes are continuous and require localised remedies. Despite these challenges, the pantry's role in community empowerment is highlighted. Volunteers recommend creating a training budget, increasing stock money, and hiring more help. In accordance with the Scottish Government's cash-first policies, addressing these issues will improve the pantry's operations and enable it to serve as a dignified alternative to emergency food aid (Fairclough, 2003). Hays Pantry shows how community-oriented food programs can reduce food poverty and empower people. The pantry can strengthen its role as a source of community support, inclusiveness, and resilience by addressing issues and emphasising user and volunteer feedback. This study extends the body of research supporting dignity-centred food poverty solutions and emphasises the necessity for long-term, participant-driven solutions.

Word count 6428

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have a significant sense of purpose. People's roles have meaning in the bigger picture of the community and each member of the group understands how their work connects to others' and adds value to the whole. As members of community, people do not just want to lay bricks, they want to build a cathedral.

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Appendix 1

Ethical Approval for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Participants

FORM A: Application for ethical approval for low-risk projects.

Ethics Approval Number: 007

Katie Brash Student Number: 2436923

Name of Applicant	Katie Brash
Module/Group application	*(Yes/No)*
Module Code(s) (where applicable)	CO40006: Practice Inquiry Project (SEM 1-2 | 2024/25)
School	Dundee University
Division/Programme	Community Education

University e-mail Address	*redacted*@dundee.ac.uk
Title of Project	Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment in Community Food Support: A Practical enquiry of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh
Co-Investigators (with internal School or external organisational affiliation)	n/a
Projected Start Date	October 2024
Estimated End Date	January 2024
Funder (if applicable)	n/a
Version of Application (1, 2, 3…) *	2

* After revision, please update the version number before re-submission.

Students Only	
Level of Study (Undergraduate (UG); Taught Postgraduate (TPG); Research Postgraduate (RPG)	Undergraduate
Name of University of Dundee Supervisor	Dr Jean McEwan-Short

Note: Students must copy in their supervisor when submitting the application for review.

1. Project Overview

Please provide, with reference to the relevant literature, an overview of the research project providing a <u>short</u> explanation (maximum 400 words) of the research questions the project will address and why the study is justified.

Please write this section in a way that is accessible to a person who is not an expert in your field.

> **Project Overview**
>
> This study examines Hays Pantry in Edinburgh as a viable alternative to conventional emergency food provision, with the objective of encouraging dignity, empowerment, and sustained food security within the community. The research

examines if Hays Pantry offers a more dignified and powerful method of food assistance by interviewing 5-10 members and 13 volunteers.

Justification for the Inquiry

Although food banks are crucial during crises, they may not provide sustainable or powerful solutions to food insecurity. This study aims to determine if Hays Pantry promotes active community engagement and autonomy, providing insights into dignity-centred assistance that may influence better strategies for Hays Pantry in addressing food poverty within its community.

2. Aims and Objectives

What are the aims and objectives of the project?

2. Aims and Objectives

Aims

Evaluate the function of Hays Pantry in promoting dignity and empowerment. Examine the extent to which Hays Pantry employs a sustainable, community-driven, and respectful methodology in tackling food insecurity, potentially presenting a more dignified alternative to conventional emergency food provisions.

Objectives

1. Analyse Community Perspectives: Gather data on the perceptions of members, volunteers, and staff at Hays Pantry regarding its influence on dignity, choice, and empowerment through interviews.

2. Evaluate Empowerment Practices: Analyse the strategies implemented by Hays Pantry to enhance autonomy and self-determination among its users.

3. Identify Opportunities for Improvement: Utilise participant feedback to determine methods by which Hays Pantry can improve its support and engagement with the local communities of Hays, Bingham, and Magdalene.

4. Promote Improved Practices at Hays Pantry: Leverage findings to advocate for enhancements in Hays Pantry's methodology, emphasising dignity, empowerment, and efficient community-based food assistance.

3. Research Design and Methods

Please describe the design of your study and the research methods including information about any tasks or measuring instruments (validated or otherwise) that you will be using. *If you are using non-validated instruments (e.g., surveys or questionnaires[1] you have designed, interview questions, observation protocols for ethnographic work or topic lists for unstructured data collection) please attach a copy to this ethics application.*

Research Design and Methods

This qualitative research uses a case study methodology to analyse Hays Pantry's influence on dignity and empowerment in its community. The study focusses on documenting the experiences and perspectives of pantry members, volunteers, and staff. The research approach includes semi-structured interviews, and participant feedback to provide a thorough understanding of Hays Pantry's procedures and areas for improvement.

Research Methodologies

1. Semi-Structured Interviews - Participants: The research will consist of comprehensive, individual interviews with 5-10 pantry members and up to 13 volunteers or staff members.

- o Interview Guide: The semi-structured interviews will adhere to a predetermined guide addressing topics of dignity, empowerment, autonomy, and choice. This guide is sufficiently adaptable to accommodate further enquiries depending on participant feedback.

Interview Structure: Each interview will be guided by a questionnaire and will last 20-30 minutes and will occur in person at Hays Pantry, offering a pleasant and familiar environment.

Exemplary Interview Questionnaire Enquiries:

- o "Could you describe your experience with Hays Pantry?"
- o "How do you perceive support or empowerment from the pantry's services?"
- o "Do you believe you possess autonomy and influence regarding the food provided to you here?" How is it possible?
- o "In what areas do you believe Hays Pantry could enhance its support or methodology?"

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[1] Please provide details of any survey tools you intend to use. The University approved online survey tool is 'Online surveys' (formerly BOS). If you intend to use a different survey tool, please indicate the reason.

2. Participant input and Reflection- Purpose: This phase aims to collect constructive input from participants about Hays Pantry's existing procedures and avenues for improvement.

Procedure: At the conclusion of each interview, participants will be invited to provide more insights or recommendations. This input will provide actionable suggestions on how Hays Pantry may improve its strategies for dignity and empowerment.

- o Enquiries for Feedback: Examples of prompts include:
- o "What modifications, if any, would you prefer at Hays Pantry?"
- o What enhancements do you think could create a more supportive atmosphere in the pantry?"

Instruments for Data Collection

Interview Guide: A compilation of semi-structured enquiries will be used to conduct the interviews, permitting adaptability for probing queries contingent upon individual replies.

- o Checklist: A checklist will be created to maintain uniformity in documenting certain elements of the pantry's environment, activities, and interactions.
- o Feedback Prompts: A collection of prompts will be supplied to stimulate participants to provide honest feedback.

3. Data Analysis

Data obtained from interviews from comments from participant will undergo thematic analysis. This methodology will include field notes from interviews to discern recurring themes and patterns associated with dignity, empowerment, choice, and autonomy.

The results of this research will provide evidence-based suggestions to better processes at Hays Pantry, with the objective of strengthening its role in the promotion of dignity, empowerment, and sustainable support for the community.

4. Identification and Recruitment of Participants

How will participants be identified and recruited? Will your research involve participants outside of the UK? If so, where?

Please provide details on how and by whom they will be contacted; please also add information on any exclusion criteria, should they apply. *Please attach the wording of any emails, letters, social media adverts or other written approaches that you may use for recruitment purposes.*

Recruitment Procedure:

Identification and Recruitment of Participants

Participant Identification

The subjects of this research will consist of existing community members, volunteers, and staff members of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh, Scotland. Recruitment will be restricted to persons residing in the UK, particularly those who consistently participate in the pantry's activities.

Recruitment Process

 1. Authorisation from Pantry Management: Before recruitment, consent will be obtained from Hays Pantry management to do on-site research and to provide access to prospective participants.

2. Participant Outreach: Flyers and posters detailing the research will be shown at Hays Pantry, specifying the study's aim, goals, and participation criteria.

3. Introduction During Pantry Visits: I will be present and on-site during pantry working hours to present the study to pantry members, volunteers, and staff. This will facilitate persons in posing enquiries inside a comfortable, familiar setting, enabling them to make an educated choice about involvement.

4. Informed Consent Procedure: Interested parties will get an information sheet and a consent form. These papers will explicitly delineate the study's objectives, data management protocols, confidentiality measures, and the voluntary aspect of participation. I will review the information sheet with each prospective participant, address any enquiries, and get signed permission before participation.

5. Criteria for Exclusion

Participants must be a minimum of 18 years old, actively engaged with Hays Pantry (as a member, volunteer, or staff), and capable of providing informed permission. No exclusions will be made based on gender, colour, or socioeconomic status, since the research seeks to include a variety of viewpoints within the pantry community.

Materials for Recruitment

A recruiting poster and participant information sheet will be available at the pantry. The below wording will be used for flyers and instructive posters during first outreach:

Study Invitation "Assessing Dignity and Empowerment in Community Food Assistance: A Case Study of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh"

I will encourage members, volunteers, and staff of Hays Pantry to participate in a research project examining the impact of food pantries in encouraging dignity and empowerment. Participation entails a brief interview to convey participants experiences and viewpoints. Recruitment will not use social media, emails, or letters; outreach will occur directly on-site at Hays Pantry to engage the relevant participant group.

5. Informed Consent

How will you obtain informed consent? Are you satisfied that all participants have capacity to make their own decisions and understand the risks?

Please explain how and when participants will be informed about the scope of the research, what their involvement would entail and their rights under data protection legislation. *Please provide the participant information sheet and consent form with this application*; if consent is not obtained in written format (e.g., oral communication, deliberate action to opt-in to surveys or questionnaires), please provide details of how consent will be obtained and recorded. If the project involves photography or video- or audio-recording of participants, explicit consent will need to be given, where applicable this includes consent for someone not on the direct research team to have access to the participant's data (e.g. for transcription). Explain how you have considered and will address consent for the preservation and potential sharing and reuse of data.

Informed Consent

All participants will be informed of the study's objectives and methodologies prior to their decision to join, ensuring that engagement is entirely voluntary. No individuals have been pre-identified, and recruiting will be conducted publicly to maintain ethical standards.

Obtaining of Informed Consent

Informed consent will be secured from all participants before their participation in this enquiry. I will ensure that all participants exhibit the ability to make independent judgements and fully comprehend any risks and consequences related to their involvement.

Data Supplied to Participants

A preliminary briefing session will be conducted with each participant to outline:

- The objective of the research

- What their involvement will entail, including any activities they will participate in

- The potential risks and benefits associated with their participation.

- Their rights under data protection legislation, including the right to withdraw at any time and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality and data protection See Participation Information Guide

This session guarantees that participants are well informed prior to granting permission. A comprehensive Participant Information Guide and permission form will be supplied, which participants will examine and sign to affirm their comprehension and assent.

Data Preservation and Dissemination

Participants of the questionnaire guided enquiry will be notified that anonymised data may be preserved for prospective funding applications associated with the Community Renewal Trust and for social impact reporting with collaborators at Hays Pantry, including Places for People. The permission form will provide participants with the opportunity to decline future data sharing. All data sharing will adhere to data protection regulations, and any shared data will be anonymised to safeguard participant identity. Anonymised data may be shared with Places for People as subject for case studies and used as a reflection of practise.

Conclusion

In conclusion, informed permission will be acquired via a lucid and transparent procedure, guaranteeing that all participants are fully cognisant of their rights and the nature of the research. Confidentiality safeguards and ethical compliance measures will be maintained throughout the research.

6a. Data Management: Lawful Processing of Data

Data protection legislation[2] requires participants to be informed of the lawful basis for processing their personal data. At the University of Dundee, the normal basis for the lawful processing of personal data in research is that 'processing is necessary for the performance

2 The General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) and the UK Data Protection Act (2018). Further information can be obtained from the University of Dundee data protection website and the website of the Information Commissioner's Office.

of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller'. If you intend to use another lawful basis you must contact the University's Data Protection Officer (DPO) for advice and insert the lawful basis agreed with the DPO below.

Data Management: Legal Processing of Data
N/A

6b. Data Management: Planning

Please describe your plan for managing the data[3] you will collect during your project and how it complies with data protection legislation. Include information on:

i) The type and volume of data; ii) Where and for how long will the data be stored and what measures will be in place to ensure secure storage; iii) Whether the data will be anonymised or pseudonymised[4]; iv) How secure access will be provided to data for collaborators; v) Whether and how data will be shared for reuse by other researchers beyond the project (including details on any access restrictions); vi) Processes in place to erase and/or stop processing an individual participant's data (except where this would render impossible or seriously impair the research objectives)[5]; vii) Processes in place for individuals to have inaccurate personal data rectified, or completed if it is incomplete; viii) Who has overall responsibility for data management for the research project; ix) Arrangements for collection and transfer of data outside the UK.

Data Management and Adherence to Data Protection Legislation   This practical inquiry, "Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment in Community Food Support: A Practical Enquiry of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh," will comply with GDPR and institutional data protection regulations to guarantee safe and private data management.

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3 Note that staff and postgraduate research students are required to complete a research data management plan under the University of Dundee's Policy to Govern the Management of Research Data. However, providing you have included the information requested above, it is not necessary to attach a formal data management plan to this application.

4 (Article 4(5) of the General Data Protection Regulation describes pseudonymisation as: "The processing of personal data in such a way that the data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information". An example would be where a coded reference or pseudonym is substituted for personally identifiable data.

5 The right to erasure under the General Data Protection Regulation does not apply if erasing the data would prejudice scientific or historical research or archiving that is in the public interest.

Type of Data: Qualitative data derived from written notes based on guided interview questionnaires and devoid of any identifying information.

Data Storage Location, Duration, and Security Protocols

Storage Location: Data will be securely kept on a password-protected university server with encryption and backed up on a university-approved cloud platform.

Storage Duration: Data will be stored until completion of this report and then destroyed.

Security Measures: Access will be limited to Katie Brash student, and all physical copies of notes will be held in a secured, safe area inside Community Renewal Trust GDPR locked safe room.

Anonymisation: All gathered data will be completely anonymised. No identifying information on participants will be provided.

Erasure or Termination of Data Processing: Since the data is anonymised upon collection, withdrawal will be unnecessary after analysis. Any withdrawal prior to analysis will result in the deletion of all associated data.

Verification of Accuracy: Since no personal information will be presented, correction requests will pertain only to participant perspectives, which may be elucidated if participants examine summaries.

Responsibility for Data Management: The responsibility for data management is assigned to the applicant, Katie Brash, student at the University of Dundee.

Data Collection and Transfer Beyond the UK: No data will be sent beyond the UK, so guaranteeing complete adherence to local data protection regulations.

All original data will be destroyed on conclusion of this practical enquiry.

7. Other Permissions

Are any other permissions (e.g., from local authorities) required? If so, which?

Places for People – Hays Pantry is a partnership between Community Renewal Trust and Places for People.

8. Risks of Harm to Researchers and Participants

Risks of harm. Please detail any risks associated with the project. Does the research involve fieldwork (either in the UK or overseas)? Does the research incur a risk of injury or ill-health

above the level of risk prevalent in daily living? *If yes, please complete the relevant risk assessment form(s) (*general risk assessment form *and/or the risk assessment for* Travelling on University Work Overseas*) And submit with this application.*

Potential Risks for Participants

- Emotional Distress: Talking about experiences with food insecurity might be uncomfortable or make people feel vulnerable.

Potential Risks for Myself as a Researcher

- Emotional Impact: Hearing about others' difficult experiences with food insecurity could be emotionally challenging.

How I plan to address this:

- If I feel impacted emotionally by others sharing difficult experiences with food insecurity. I will contact my placement mentor D.B

Safety Concerns: Working in community spaces may come with some safety considerations, especially with vulnerable groups.

How I plan to address these:

- Providing Emotional Support: I will be mindful of any signs of discomfort and can connect participants with support services if needed.
- Maintaining Privacy: I will ensure all personal information is kept confidential, using pseudonyms and secure storage for any data.
- Clear Informed Consent: I will make sure everyone understands what the study is about, their role, and their right to withdraw at any time.
- Safety in the Field: I will conduct interviews in safe, designated community spaces (31 Bingham Avenue and 3 Hay Avenue) both spaces have wheelchair access.

9. Other Ethical Considerations

Are there any other ethical considerations relating to your project which have not been covered above? If so, please explain.

This research emphasises ethical governance, and I will follow informed consent, confidentiality, and reciprocity rules. Some important factors are:

1. **Mutuality:** Participant benefit is crucial to research. Food insecurity awareness, community empowerment, and equitable service delivery strategies are examples.

2. **Helping Participants:** Respecting participants' dignity, the study will provide meaningful suggestions to improve food insecurity solutions for vulnerable groups.

3. **Intercultural Awareness:** Due to the different origins of participants, the study will be sensitive to cultural variations in food, dignity, and community support. Inclusivity and respect for all participants need this sensitivity.

4. **Research Ethics in Practice:** Interview participants will need informed permission from all participants. Following Dundee University Ethics policy, ethical permission will be obtained, and all data will be managed privately to protect participant confidentiality.

6. **Dignity and Rights of Participants:** I shall treat all research participants properly and respectfully.

7. **Legal and ethical compliance:** UK GDPR and the Human Rights Act 1998 will be followed to ethically handle personal data and preserve participant rights in the study.

8. **Informed Consent:** I will ensure that volunteers understand the study objective and their tasks.

9. **Protecting Vulnerable Groups:** And vulnerable adults will be handled with care. All study will follow safeguarding rules to protect participants. I am PVG checked and hold a current certificate.

10. **Equality and Inclusion:** The study will follow the UK Equality Act 2010, promoting inclusion and removing obstacles to participation.

11. **Data Privacy and Security**

Anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly observed. The UK GDPR requires safe storage and disposal of sensitive data to prevent unauthorised access.

12. **Addressing Interest Conflicts: To** protect research integrity, conflicts of interest will be disclosed and controlled.

13. **Integrity and quality assurance:** I will conduct research with integrity and quality, ensuring that participant benefits balance risks and damage.

10. Documentation

Please list all attached documentation, ensuring that each item has a date and version number.

- Low Risk Ethic application
- Low Risk Ethics check list.
- Community Renewal Trust Research Ethics Policy
- Informed consent Form
- Participation Information Paperwork
- Agenda interview Volunteers Participation
- Questionnaire for Hays Pantry Members
- Participation invitation Poster

11. Declaration

By signing below I declare that I have read the University Policy for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Participants and that my research abides by these guidelines. I understand that the University will retain this application and associated documents.

Principal Investigator or Student

Name: K Brash   Date: 26/10/2024

Signature: *k brash*

Supervisor (for applications from students)

Name: Date:

Signature:

Appendix 2

Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment in Community Food Support: A Practical enquiry of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh

University of Dundee School Research Ethics Committee Application/Approval Number: 007

Katie Brash Student Number: 2436923

Hello, my name is Katie, and I am currently studying for a BA in Community Education at the University of Dundee. As part of my degree, I am conducting a practical enquiry in partnership with the Community Renewal Trust and the University of Dundee. You are invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide, please read the information below carefully. It explains why and how the research is being conducted and what your involvement would entail. If anything is unclear or if you have questions, please feel free to ask.

What is the purpose of the research?

This research, titled *"An Investigation into Food Pantries as a Community-Based Alternative to Food Poverty in Scotland: Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment,"* aims to explore the role of food pantries in addressing food poverty within Scottish communities. It examines:

- The extent and causes of food poverty.
- How food pantries operate as an alternative to traditional food aid systems
- Their impact on promoting dignity and empowerment among people facing food insecurity.

The study also seeks to provide insights and recommendations for policymakers on how to improve food pantries' role in addressing food poverty.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to participate because you are a member of Hays Pantry and actively engaged in the community. Your experience and perspective are invaluable to this study, as they can help us understand how food pantries like Hays Pantry impact individuals and families. Your feedback will contribute to a better understanding of whether current food aid systems meet community needs and whether innovative approaches, such as the Cash First model, might offer greater dignity and choice.

Do I have to take part?

No, participation is entirely voluntary. Choosing not to participate will not affect your access to Hays Pantry or result in any disadvantage. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation, and there will be no consequences. If you choose to withdraw,

please contact me before data collection is complete so I can remove your responses from the study. After anonymisation, it may not be possible to withdraw your data as it will no longer be linked to your identity.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire that should take around 30 minutes. The questions include both multiple-choice and open-ended options, allowing you to share your experiences and thoughts about food aid services, such as Hays Pantry. Your responses will remain anonymous, and you will not be asked for any information that could identify you personally.

You may also be invited to a follow-up discussion if you indicate interest. This will take no more than an hour and will only happen if you are open to sharing additional insights. The questionnaire can be completed in person at Hays Pantry or remotely, based on your preference and convenience.

Are there any risks in taking part?

There are no known risks to taking part. However, if discussing topics like food insecurity causes any discomfort, we can refer you to relevant organisations or support services. You are also free to skip any questions or discontinue your participation at any time without consequences.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there are no direct benefits to you, your participation will contribute valuable insights to help improve how food insecurity is addressed within the community. This research could inform future policies and practices at organisations like Community Renewal Trust and Places for People, supporting efforts to reduce food poverty and promote dignity. Your input will also support my development as a practitioner in community education, helping me learn how to better support and advocate for communities facing food insecurity.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. I will not disclose to anyone that you participated in the study, and any data collected will be stored securely. Your responses will be anonymised, meaning they will not be linked to your name or any identifying details. However, there are certain legal obligations to breach confidentiality if information reveals potential harm, danger to yourself or others, or relates to specific criminal activities. Outside of these rare circumstances, your privacy will be fully protected.

What will happen to the information I provide?

All data will be stored securely and managed according to the University of Dundee's data protection policies. If you withdraw from the study, your information will be deleted. Findings may be published in reports or academic papers, but all results will be presented in an anonymous format. You may request a copy of the published findings from the University's repository, Discovery, or by contacting me directly after the study is completed.

Data Protection

The University of Dundee is the data controller for this study, responsible for ensuring your data is processed in line with public interest or research requirements. If you wish to update, access, or erase your data, please contact me at *redacted@dundee.ac.uk.* If you wish to raise a complaint, you may also contact the University's Data Protection Officer at *dataprotection@dundee.ac.uk* or the Information Commissioner's Office (https://ico.org.uk/). More information on data protection at the University can be found here: https://www.dundee.ac.uk/information-governance/data-protection.

Complaints and concerns

If you wish to complain about the way the research is conducted, you may contact the Convener of the University Research Ethics Committee at https://www.dundee.ac.uk/research-governance-policy/non-clinical-research-ethics-contacts.

Alternative formats

If you require the Participant Information Sheet or Consent Form in an alternative format, such as large print or Braille, please let me know. Support with alternative formats can be obtained from Disability Services at *altformats@dundee.ac.uk*.

Thank you for considering participation in this research. Your insights could contribute to understanding and improving food pantry services for our community.

Guidance for Processing Special Categories of Personal Data

[not to be included in Participant Information Sheet]

Where researchers rely on Article 89(1) to process special categories of personal data, they must be able to meet the following requirements (and evidence how those requirements have been met):

- technical and organisational security measures must be in place to ensure the security and integrity of the data. These measures should be documented. Technical security includes things like physical security, encryption, access controls etc. Organisational measures include things like research contracts and associated data sharing/processing agreements, research data management plans etc. Please seek advice on these areas in the research design phase.

- the minimum amount of special category personal data must be used to achieve the aims of the research. You must be able to evidence that your research only uses the minimum amount of personal data and special category personal data.

- where you can work with anonymised data you must do so.

- where you cannot use anonymised data, you must use pseudonymised data if you are able. You should keep evidence of why you are unable to work with anonymised data.

- the use of identifiable data should be the last resort rather than a preferred option. If you are unable to use pseudonymised data, you should keep evidence of why that was the case.

- if you are working with identifiable or pseudonymised data, you must move to anonymised data as soon as you are able.

- your research must not cause any individual substantial damage (normally actual or financial harm).

- your research must not cause any individual substantial distress (normally emotional or mental anguish or harm).

- you may not process data in your research to make decisions or take measures in relation to any individual unless you are working in medical research that has approval from a research ethics committee (as defined in the Data Protection Act 2018).

- you may not identify any individual in the results or statistical outputs of your research. Please keep this in mind when reviewing datasets for release as open data.

If you are unable to meet the requirements, please seek advice from Information Governance (email: dataprotection@dundee.ac.uk) before proceeding.

Appendix 3

Informed Consent Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment in Community Food Support:
A Practical enquiry of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh
Katie Brash Student Number: 2436923
Ethics Approval Number: 007

1. Taking part in the study	Yes	No
1a. I have read the Participant Information Sheet, or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.		
1b. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions, and I can withdraw from the study at any time during data collection, without having to give a reason.		
1c. I understand that taking part in the study involves a one-to-one guided questionnaire interview enquiry.		
1d. I understand there is risk no personnel or health risk in participating		

2. Use of the information in the study		
2a. I understand that information I provide will be used for a practical enquiry Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment in Community Food Support: A Practical enquiry of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh.		
2b. I understand that there will be **no** personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I live.		
2c. I agree that anonymised direct quotes can be used in research outputs.		

4. Signatures

Participants Name:	
Participants Signature:	
Date:	

By signing above, you are indicating that you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and that you agree to take part in this research study.

Name of Researcher:	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	

For participants who have difficulty reading the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, and/or signing the consent form, there is an alternative form of gaining informed consent.

Participants Name:	
Date:	

[Researcher completes participant's name and date]

Participants unable to sign their name should mark the box instead of signing:	

I have accurately read out the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form to the potential participant. To the best of my ability, I have ensured that the participant

understands what they are freely consenting to and have completed the Consent Form in accordance with their wishes.

Name of Researcher:	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	

If the participant is unable to mark the box but can indicate consent orally, or in another manner, then the signature of the researcher will be sufficient. In such cases the researcher should indicate below how consent was given.

Form of consent for participants unable to provide a signature or to mark the box:

5. Study contact details for further information

Katie Brash, *redacted*@dundee.ac.uk

6. Alternative Formats

The researcher should offer to provide a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form in alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille). Advice on alternative formats can be obtained from Disability Services (email: altformats@dundee.ac.uk).

Appendix 4

Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment in Community Food Support: A Practical Enquiry of Hays Pantry in Edinburgh

Katie Brash Student Number 243692: Ethics Code 007

Section 1: Experiences with the Pantry

1. How often do you visit the pantry?

  - [] Weekly

  - [] Biweekly

  - [] Monthly

  - [] Occasionally

2. What services do you primarily use at the pantry?

  - [] Food distribution

  - [] Clothing or household items

  - [] Support services (e.g., financial advice)

  - [] Other (please specify): _____

3. How did you first hear about this pantry?

- [] Referral from a friend or family member

- [] Social media or online search

- [] Local community event

- [] Other (please specify): _____

Section 2: Dignity and Respect

4. How would you rate your overall experience at the pantry in terms of feeling treated with dignity and respect?

  - [] Very satisfied

  - [] Satisfied

  - [] Neutral

  - [] Dissatisfied

  - [] Very dissatisfied

5. Do you feel that you are greeted in a friendly manner and spoken to with dignity by the pantry staff and volunteers?

  - [] Yes, always

  - [] Most of the time

  - [] Sometimes

  - [] Rarely

  - [] Never

  - Additional comments:

_____

6. What are your views on the queue system at the pantry?

  - _____

7. How would you describe your shopping experience at the pantry?

- _____

8. Currently, only pantry staff and volunteers are allowed to pick up products, meaning members cannot handle the food items themselves. Are you satisfied with this approach?

- [] Yes, I am satisfied

- [] No, I would prefer to handle the items myself

- Additional comments:
_____

Section 3: Empowerment and Support

Does the pantry empower you or your community?
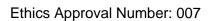
- [] Yes

- [] No

- Why:

Section 4: Overall Impact

10. How has using the pantry affected your overall well-being?

- [] Very positively

- [] Positively

- [] Neutral

- [] Negatively

- [] Very negatively

Additional Comments:

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with the pantry?

Appendix 5

Ethics Approval Number: 007

Katie Brash Student Number: 2436923

Ethics Statement

FOR research by Community Renewal Trust and all group subsidiaries

The document covers Community Renewal Trust SCIO, Roma Life CIC (trading as Rom Romina), Caledonia Funeral Aid CIC (including Caledonia Cremation brand) and Community Renewal Training & Consultancy Ltd plus any other subsidiary in this group.

It is intended to provide guidance for our ethical decision making for research work including academic research and consultancy that we deliver or commission. It covers all staff and functions.

Community Renewal Trust is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards and principles in the conduct of all research. This document sets out the principles underpinning the ethical conduct of research and defines the process for the objective and rigorous review of research.

Given that research represents only a small element of the work that Community Renewal Trust undertakes this policy is intended to be proportionate to the needs of the charity and is not intended to cover the many other charitable activities of the organisation.

The following principles underpin all research to be conducted:

- Research will only be conducted where there is a clear link to our charitable objects and our aim to end persistent poverty and inequity in Scotland.
- We will always respect the rights, interests, and dignity of participants in research.
- All research will be undertaken in accordance with any relevant common law or legislation, including UK GDPR.
- It will operate within the Human Rights Act 1998 and Council of Europe Convention.
- Informed consent will be obtained from participants to enable participants to take part voluntarily. Consent should always be given freely and without conditions. For under 16's, consent will be obtained from a legal guardian. Any incentives will be declared and will be in line with appropriate guidelines.
- Additional measures will be taken with vulnerable participants.
- All activities will be covered by our policies on safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- All activities will be covered by our Equity Policy and at minimum adhere to the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Incentivised participation will only be based on encouraging people to want to participate, they should not only be participating to claim a reward.

- We have an obligation to protect research participants wherever possible from significant harm because of the research.
- The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and any agreement on anonymity will always be respected.
- Care will be taken with collecting, handling, and storing sensitive, classified and/or personal data. Data will be stored securely, protected from unauthorised access, and held in line with UK GDPR policies.
- Sensitive, classified and /or personal data will be disposed of appropriately in line with legal and client requirements.
- Any conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest, will be declared, recorded, and dealt with appropriately.
- The design of research and its conduct will always aim to ensure integrity, quality and provide benefits that outweigh any potential risk or harm.
-

Approval is required for any research including activities or aims that have not already been established as customary practice in Community Renewal Trust's research. Individual researchers must seek approval if needed and must take an over-cautious view on what they consider to be established frequent practice. The Community Renewal Trust CEO (or equivalent) makes all initial decisions on research ethics. Where there is a concern raised about a research ethics decision by the CEO (by any participant or staff member), or the CEO is unavailable the Chair will make a final decision on behalf of the Community Renewal Trust board.

Training or guidance in this policy (internal or external) will be offered to all staff involved in new research.

Misconduct in research ethics will be treated as potential disciplinary action.

A selection of examples relevant to misconduct: breach of confidence or confidentiality; stealing IPR or data (including plagiarism); unfairly misrepresenting participants views or data (except where this is reasonably done for anonymity); influencing participant's input without noting this process in the research findings; making commercial gain from not-for-profit research; proceeding with research without seeking to clarify research ethics position or consent; failing to comply with duties in law.

If you have any concerns about research ethics or would like to discuss an approach in more detail, please contact: John Halliday, CEO.

Appendix 6

This form is for use only in research where Community Renewal Trust, under the Ethics Policy above, have determined that a participant consent form covering ethics is needed. The content can be amalgamated into other forms (e.g. where additional data sharing is needed, or a funder requires a particular form of words on their own consent form).

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- You have read and understand a Participant Information Sheet outlining this research and your role in it.
- You understand that there are no expected potential risks to you in your participation.
- You are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion or remuneration).
- You consent for any personal data[1] collected to be used as part of this study.
  (DELETE THIS above BULLET POINT **ONLY** *IF* you are using the legal basis for processing personal data necessary "to undertake academic research in the public interest" – AND *if* the data cannot be anonymised. If any kept data CAN be anonymized, this bullet point should stay)
- Any questions you may have about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily.

[1]*Personal data refers to information in any format about an individual who can be identified directly or indirectly from that information. It includes but is not restricted to information such as date of birth, ID number, or location and may include sensitive information such as health, ethnicity and opinions expressed. Once personal data has been completely anonymised so that it is impossible to re-identify the individuals concerned it ceases to be personal data. Community Renewal Trust may use anonymised data as summary statistics or for analyses but only where it is truly anonymous.*

PARTICIPANT

DATE

_____

Participants Name (Printed)

_____

Participant's signature

_____

_____

_____

Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)   Signature of person obtaining

consent.

Evaluating Dignity and Empowerment in Food Pantries: Staff and Volunteer Questionnaire

Katie Brash Student Reference Number: 2436923

Ethics Code: 007

Section 1: Role and Experience

How long you been working or volunteering at the pantry?

- [] Less than 3 months

- [] 3-6 months

- [] 6 months - 1 year

- [] Over 1 year

2. What is your primary role at the pantry?

- [] Food distribution

- [] Clothing or household item distribution

- [] Support services (e.g., providing financial advice)

- [] Other (please specify): _____

3. How often do you typically work or volunteer at the pantry?

- [] Weekly

   - [] Biweekly

   - [] Monthly

   - [] Occasionally

Section 2: Dignity and Respect

4. How would you rate the pantry's approach to treating members with dignity and respect?

   - [] Very effective

   - [] Effective

   - [] Neutral

   - [] Ineffective

   - [] Very ineffective

5. Do you feel that members are greeted warmly and treated with dignity by all staff and volunteers?

   - [] Yes, always

   - [] Most of the time

   - [] Sometimes

   - [] Rarely

   - [] Never

   - Additional comments:

   _____

6. What do you think of the current queue system in terms of promoting a respectful and dignified experience for members?

   - _____

7. How would you describe the overall atmosphere and interactions within the pantry?

- _____

Section 3: Empowerment and Support

8. Do you feel that your role at the pantry helps to empower members or the community?

- [] Yes

- [] No

- Why: _____

9. Do you feel you are empowered in your role to support pantry members effectively?

- [] Yes, I feel very empowered

- [] Mostly empowered

- [] Neutral

- [] Not very empowered

- [] Not empowered at all

- Additional comments:

_____

10. Do you feel the pantry provides adequate support resources (e.g., financial advice, signposting) to meet members' needs?

- [] Yes, fully

- [] Yes, partially

- [] Neutral

- [] No, needs improvement

- Additional comments:

_____

Section 4: Overall Impact and Suggestions

11. How do you feel your work at the pantry has impacted your own sense of fulfillment or well-being?

  - [] Very positively

  - [] Positively

  - [] Neutral

  - [] Negatively

  - [] Very negatively

12. Are there any challenges you face in your role that affect your ability to provide dignified and empowering support?

  - _____

13. Do you have any suggestions for improving the pantry experience for members or for staff and volunteers?

  - _____

Additional Comments:

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience working at the pantry?

This work has been prepared and presented by me, in my own words *Mrs Katie Brash*