

The City Bridge Trust

Bridging Divides: Application for a grant



About your organisation

Organisation Details

Name of your organisation:

The Garden Classroom (TGC)

If your organisation is part of a larger organisation, what is its name?

In which London Borough is your organisation based?
Islington

Contact person:
Ms Marnie Rose

Position:
CEO

Website:
<http://www.thegardenclassroom.org.uk>

Social Media Accounts:
**Twitter @grdnclassroom Instagram
thegardenclassroom1 Facebook
facebook/GardenClassroom**

What Quality Marks does your organisation currently hold?
Quality Badge for the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom

Legal Status

Legal status of organisation: **Charitable company**

Charity Number:

~~06759008~~ **1168587**

Company Number:

06759008

CIC Number:

Bencom Number:

When was your organisation established? **26/11/2008**

Aims of your organisation:

The objectives of The Garden Classroom are to support the physical, emotional and social benefits that come from having a connection with nature.

We target disadvantaged people in London.

Main activities of your organisation:

TGC's main work is delivering a programme of high quality outdoor learning activities in natural environments for London's disadvantaged children, young people and families in local parks and green spaces. This typically is in the form of a 2 hour or whole day fully resourced nature session focussing on natural topics eg bees, trees, science, food growing, habitats etc.

TGC also delivers a programme of nature activities for the wider community in the parks and gardens of NE London: Little Explorers under 5's drop in, Acorn Club (age 6-12), nature activities at events including festivals, parks department events and camping.

TGC is part of the London National Park City movement. In 2018 we instigated a 2 week programme of green space events with Islington's Public Realm & Greenspace / Parks dept.

TGC is also a key London voice in the national movement to address the lack of nature connection prevalent in London's children due to the disadvantages inequality brings.

Your Staff & Volunteers

Full-time:	Part-time:	Trustee/Board members:	Active volunteers:
0	4	7	16
Do you have a Safeguarding policy? Yes			
Are the following people in your organisation subject to DBS checks?			
Paid Staff Yes	Volunteers Yes	Trustees / Management Committee Members Yes	

Property occupied by your organisation

Is the main property owned, leased or rented by your organisation?	If leased/rented, how long is the outstanding agreement?
Leased	25mnths with intent to renew

Environmental Impact**What action have you taken in the past year to progress environmentally sustainability principles and practice?**

TGC has a green housekeeping / environmental policy which is adopted as a daily routine in all activities and programmes. From keeping a compost bin, using FSC paper and recycling all paper, plastics, glass and aluminium the team also walk and cycle (we have 2 charity bikes that are used by the team). We are also looking at leasing or investing in an electric vehicle to support our programmes that are equipment heavy. In meetings we use screens rather than paper printouts.

Finance Details

Organisation Finances

	Year of most recent audited / examined accounts	Current financial year forecast	Next financial year budget
End of financial year date	31/08/2017	31/08/2018	31/08/2019
Grants & donations:	£188,207	£201,863	£177,175
Earned income:	£51,256	£60,422	£99,164
Other income:	£4	£0	£0
Total income:	239,467	£262,305	£276,339
Charitable activity costs:	£178,701	£218,084	£290,535
Cost of raising funds:	£15,470	£20,873	£15,000
Other costs:	£0	£0	£0
Total expenditure:	£194,171	£238,957	£305,535
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end:	£18,128	£19,165	£20,000
<p>What is your organisation's reserves policy? TGC Trustees have agreed a formal reserves policy which is £18,000-23,000 at 31 August.</p>			
<p>For your most recent financial year, what % of your income was from statutory sources? 1-10%</p>			

Organisational changes

Describe any significant organisational changes to your structure, financial position or core activities since the date of your most recent accounts.

Previous to last year our reserves were set quite low. We reviewed this in light of notice periods in contracts and service contract liabilities and we have been able to keep to the new reserve level at £18,000 which is a significant and important positive change in the charity as it grows and consolidates its service.

Grant Request

Which of the Trust's programmes and priority areas will your application deliver?
Connecting the Capital/Growing, greening and environmental projects

Which of the programme outcome(s) does your application aim to achieve?

Please describe the purpose of your funding request in one sentence.
Towards the part time salaries of two core members of staff - the Education & Community Manager and Finance Officer (equivalent one full time post) for years 4 & 5.

When will the funding be required? **04/04/2019**

Is this request to continue work that is currently funded or has been funded in the last year by:

City Bridge Trust?

Another funder? (if so which)

Yes

How much funding are you requesting?

Year 1:	Year 2:	Year 3:	Year 4:	Year 5:
£0	£0	£0	£28,925	£28,525

Total Requested: £57,450

What 3 main differences or outcomes do you want to achieve through your funding proposal?

We will have contributed towards the improved mental health and sense of wellbeing of 5000 because they have engaged in activities in local natural environments and experienced the benefits. Many will develop a long term relationship with their local green space which will lead to long term benefits.

10 volunteers (over the two years) will have raised self esteem and sense of purpose through making a significant contribution to a local charity, supporting children's learning and meeting their own personal targets agreed at the start of the volunteering induction (Includes at least 5 new volunteers).

Theory of Change programme: TGC will have improved clear and concise communication locally, regionally and nationally of the main positive changes that occur as a result of participating in TGC activities.

What are the main activities or outputs you will deliver to achieve these differences?

A minimum of 150 x half day outdoor education in natural environments sessions (or equivalent).

A minimum of 5000 people per year (TGC operational and financial year 1 Sept - 31 Aug) minimum.

Outdoors in natural environments out of school/holiday activities for children age 5-12. Minimum 600 children (over two years).

Working with consultants Coalition for Efficiency TGC will undertake Level 1 Nesta Theory of Change programme, funded by Progress UK. This will involve all staff (4) long-term volunteers (5) and Trustees (7).

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You and your grant request

What, specifically, are you applying for (your project)?

The Garden Classroom is specifically applying for two years of funding for the continuation and development of the project it has been delivering over the last three years. The funding will contribute to two core salaries: our Education & Community Manager and Finance Officer (totalling one full time post).

Our consolidation project / programme funded by CBT has been incredibly successful over the last three years and we have met or exceeded all of the targets set to date. Given this success we have opportunities to grow our work with schools locally, introduce new programmes and services and link with new beneficiaries. We plan to open an accredited outdoor education and learning facility for teachers (the only one in central London) in 2019 which will be administered by the Education and Community Manager.

How will the project described achieve your stated outcomes?

Continued funding in years 4 & 5 for our Education & Community Manager will give us the stability and confidence to introduce new programmes, services and offers for our users and to build our reputation for providing local support.

Funding for our Finance Officer (FO) will enable TGC to continue its upward trajectory in terms of establishing new and improved systems for good central financial data analysis and presentation. In the last year for example our Finance Officer (who was a TGC volunteer prior to her appointment as paid staff) has completed AAT Level 2 training earning a distinction. Over the next year we would like the FO to complete her AAT Level 3 training, train to use and establish the new Sage online software we have recently adopted and to continue to improve TGC's financial housekeeping and refine financial data presentation with the M.D. and our incoming Treasurer.

How do you know there's a need for this work?

The fact that year by year TGC delivers more education sessions and more community work is indicative of the growing understanding within the London community of the benefits of spending meaningful time in natural environments.

An increasing number of schools block book sessions throughout the year meaning we can do less marketing and less one-off sales and spend more time on resourcing, planning and delivery.

Our model of schools connecting with local nature is directly in line with government policy (25 Year Environment Plan, Jan 2018) and we are part of a consortium (shortlist of three) bidding for a major Defra project bid for schools' nature connection work.

In the past we used a freelance book keeper and the education manager role was a 3 day a week post. Having these established posts now in our core team has been crucial to the consolidation and growth of the charity.

How will the work be delivered - specifically, what will you do?

We will continue to deliver outdoor learning and nature connection activities; this year we plan a minimum of 150 sessions to primary schools in NE London. In 2019 we will deliver a new Urban Forest Schools service in parks and gardens in NE London, based on our 2018 pilot study. Headteachers have indicated great interest in this programme and we propose to start working with four schools, delivering a six week taster session, in April. This will benefit 120 pupils from schools with high disadvantage and we expect this programme to grow into a significant part of TGC's portfolio. We will provide family nature discovery activities at a minimum of four community events and will hold at least two weeks (300 + participants) of nature connection holiday clubs. We will be recruiting and training 5 volunteers per year. We have specific targets for improving our financial systems.

Why are you the right organisation to do this work?

On 26th November 2018 we celebrated 10 years of providing education in natural environments and the fact that we have survived as a small charity and grown year by year suggests that the excellent reputation we have established is a service that schools and families value. We are responsive. We've taken on board the increasing concern about children and young people's mental health and we are developing programmes, such as our Urban Forest School project, which provide a balance to the noisy, frenetic lives many children lead. We're increasingly asked to be a voice for outdoor education in London, most recently at the national conference of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom in November this year. Our strong partnership with LB Islington thrives and grows. They are proud of our achievements and work to create new opportunities with us. We have engaged trustees and staff, ready to move forwards.

How does your work complement and not duplicate other services within your area?

We still believe we offer a unique service in our emphasis on working with schools in parks located close to schools thus cutting down on travelling time, developing school staff confidence and children's sense of ownership of their local park. A major nearby development, Woodberry Wetlands, has specialist education officers offering school sessions but public transport is poor and only the closest schools can access it. Islington's Ecology Centre offers some science-related school sessions but we do literacy and maths sessions there, taking inspiration from nature and we have also set up an apiary and delivered 47 bee education sessions this year. We opened a new education site right on the border of the City of London, Quaker Gardens, which has been a popular offer amongst the very nature deprived schools in the South of the borough. Our Little Explorers under 5's programme at Kings Square was also a success.

How will you ensure that your project will hear and represent the views and needs of disadvantaged people and/or diverse communities?

First thing to say is that all the schools we work with are disadvantaged with about 50% pupils entitled to free school meals. To some extent we rely on teachers to represent these disadvantaged children. If the teachers didn't think our services were benefitting and responding to the needs of their disadvantaged pupils they would not keep coming back and paying for our services. However we do listen to pupils' views too, asking them for feedback on full-day sessions and all feedback is used to ensure that we continually improve and refine our sessions. An example is the mental health issue which teachers particularly highlighted in the most disadvantaged schools. To meet the needs of these pupils we devised a whole new programme which will be launched in 2019.

How does your project engage and empower individuals and/or communities to come together on this issue? Will you be working with people who are particularly excluded?

One of the most special things about nature is that it can be enjoyed by all, regardless of age, sex, social, economic, ethnic, religious status and what language you speak. In our very diverse community a love of nature and a respect for the natural world is a great equaliser, a great common passion. So our volunteer gardening days, our community events, our nature walks programmes attract a diverse audience. A good example is our Little Explorers project, held in three parks this year. Parents and toddlers (some targeted by working with Family Action, some drop ins) meet informally in their local park once a week during the summer. We lay on nature activities and gradually they form new relationships with each other and nature which endure after our input is finished. They come together because they see the benefits their toddlers are gaining from being outdoors in nature.

Is the focus of your project meeting an already identifiable need (acute or otherwise) or are there elements which are preventative and/or incorporate early action?

There is an already identified need for children, young people and families in disadvantaged urban areas to have opportunities to gain the benefits of having a connection with nature. Time spent in the natural world can improve people's mental health and wellbeing. Extended time in natural environments coupled with challenging activities can lead to improved self confidence, self esteem and resilience which can lead to better transition to secondary school and a better chance of thriving in life.

Who might you need to work closely with in delivering this project - whether before, during or afterwards?

Our key stakeholder, London Borough of Islington's parks department provide venues for all our Islington activities, are 100% supportive of the project. We have good experience of working in partnership with local third sector organisations, e.g. Family Action, King Henry's Walk Garden and strong existing relationships.

Schools are our main beneficiaries and over the past ten years we have worked with most schools in Islington, some more closely than others. As we've said before, some schools now block book sessions. We anticipate our new Urban Forest Schools programme will enable us to develop new associations and create new opportunities.

Our aim as a funder is to help people move positively between any of the four stages of Surviving, Coping, Adapting and Thriving. For your project at which of these stages will most people begin their journey?

The vast majority of schools in Islington have at least 50% of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM). Our closest school, Newington Green Primary, is not untypical. With 460 pupils 65% are eligible for FSM and 68% of pupils have English as a second language. While we don't have access to more detailed data we know anecdotally that there are a significant number of refugee pupils in the school. Many of these children will have complex home situations, possibly poor housing and school will be their safe place. They'll be coping but potentially failing to thrive. Our project takes them out of their tarmac playground to places where they can find peace, beauty and a sense of optimism. In natural environments they become different, happier people. As one teacher said, "She never talks in class, out here she's laughing and playing. Great to see."

Will there be any elements of this project that will help you or your beneficiaries to reduce your environmental footprint?

As part of The Garden Classroom's continuous drive to reduce our environmental footprint we are on a mission to acquire an electric van. Previously we have hired diesel vans when we needed to do large deliveries but with increased activity we believe an electric van will be justified. We continue to have 100% staff travelling on bicycles to get to sites around Islington.

Funding required for the project

What is the total cost of the proposed activity/project?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Cost of Education & Community Manager including salary, with annual 2.5% rise in September, 3% pension, HMRC, insurance, BT/Comms	0	0	0	30,000	30,650	60,650
Cost of Finance Officer including salary, with annual 2.5% rise in September, 3% pension, HMRC, insurance, BT/Comms	0	0	0	7,705	7,905	15,610
Training costs of AAT Level 3 for Finance Officer	0	0	0	2,500	0	2,500
TOTAL:	0	0	0	40,205	38,555	78,760

What income has already been raised?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Trading income and project funding towards Education and Community Manager	0	0	0	8,030	8,030	16,060
Traded income towards Finance Officer	0	0	0	2,000	2,000	4,000
TOTAL:	0	0	0	10,030	10,030	20,060

What other funders are currently considering the proposal?

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL:	0	0	0	0	0	0

How much is requested from the Trust?

Expenditure heading	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Education and Community Manager costs	0	0	0	21,970	22,620	44,590
Finance Officer costs	0	0	0	5,705	5,905	11,610
AAT Level 3 training costs	0	0	0	1,250	0	1,250
TOTAL:	0	0	0	28,925	28,525	57,450

Who will benefit?

How many people will directly benefit from the grant per year?

5,000

In which Greater London borough(s) or areas of London will your beneficiaries live?

**Islington
Hackney
Haringey
Camden**

Does this project specifically target any groups or communities?

No - open to everyone

This project will specifically work with the following age groups:

This project will specifically work with the following gender groups:

This project will specifically work with the following ethnic groups:

If Other ethnic group, please give details:

This project will specifically work with Deaf and disabled people:

No

This project will specifically work with LGBTQI groups:

No

This project will specifically work with other groups or communities:
NE London schools, Islington & Hackney residents (but not limited to this i.e. we are able to work with Camden, Haringey, Lambeth etc.)

How will you target the groups/communities you have identified? What is your expertise in providing services for these groups?

Through schools, social media, working with Islington Council's parks department.

Are there any groups or communities you think your organisation will find hard to include through this project?

No

If yes, please specify which groups or communities? Where possible using the categories listed above.

If yes, what steps will you take to make your services accessible to and meet the needs of the groups/communities you have identified?

Declaration

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, all the information I have provided in this application form is correct. I fully understand that City Bridge Trust has zero tolerance towards fraud and will seek to prosecute and recover funds in every instance.

Please confirm: Yes Full Name: **Marnie Rose**

Role within Organisation: **Founder & Director of Strategy & New Programmes**