

City of London Enjoying Greenspaces Grant End of Project Report 2019

Introduction/Summary

Funding was awarded by the City of London's Enjoying Greenspaces grant to increase the engagement between families, particularly mothers and daughters, and West Ham Park in Newham, east London.

The project aimed to achieve this initially through engagement with families at local primary schools (via cricket and aerobic coaching sessions) during the late winter and early spring months. During the summer school term and holiday, this engagement was then used to move the activities to West Ham Park.

Overall, the project succeeded in achieving its stated aim.



Statistics

Aerobics sessions for mothers - total mums attending = 72

Girl's cricket sessions at primary schools - total girl's attending = 64

Primary school cricket competition in West Ham Park - total girl's engaged = 82

West Ham Park activities - total mums engaged = 32, total girl's engaged = 22

Summer activities in West Ham Park - total mums engaged = 38, total girl's engaged = 28

Report on Activities

Initial engagement was established through the provision of aerobics sessions for mothers and "girls only" cricket sessions at three primary schools local to West Ham Park. These sessions took place from February to July 2019 and aimed to engage both mother's and daughters in regular physical activity.

During the Easter school holiday, outdoor sessions in West Ham Park were gradually phased in with evening cricket sessions for girl's and regular aerobics or walking sessions for mothers.

To mark the beginning of this transition, we ran a mother's and daughter's festival on Mother's Day (31st March) in the park. Attended by 20 mums and 25 children (predominantly girls), the festival featured activities including small cricket games, walking, races and various other small games and activities.



It was expected, given the local demographic, that the uptake for the regular outdoor sessions may be slow to begin with - mother's had a preference for the privacy of sessions taking place in primary school halls and families were reluctant to let their daughters attend evening sessions in the park.

These two factors were evident when the outdoor sessions first began. Over time, however, we began to break down these boundaries and we eventually had a strong regular attendance at each of these sessions.



Photo: awards ceremony for the mothers who took part in the aerobics classes at Elmhurst Primary

As part of our wider engagement, we ran a girl's primary school cricket festival in West Ham Park for 10 primary schools local to the park. This gave us an opportunity to engage with participants beyond the three focus schools for this project and, in turn, potentially attract a new audience to engage with the park and the activities taking place within it.



In total, 82 girls took part in the festival and, of these, 15 re-engaged with other activities that we ran in the park.

The festival also captured the imagination of the primary school teachers who attended and, using a combination of school funds and our own, we will be running another girl's festival in West Ham Park in September.



During the summer school holiday we stepped up our efforts even further to develop an engagement between local people and West Ham Park. Throughout August, we ran a West Ham Summer Cricket Camp for both boys and girls aged 6 to 16.

The camp ran 3 days a week for 3 hours per day and included a family day once a week. The regular camp sessions provided an opportunity for children to learn a new skill and take part in regular physical activity whilst enjoying the benefits of being in West Ham Park.

The family days achieved the same goals, but also allowed parents to get involved in their own sessions and take part in activities with their children. We found that these sessions worked particularly well in engaging with girls who enjoyed taking part in activities with their parents.



To mark the end of the summer activities and the project as a whole, we ran a big family festival in West Ham Park on Thursday, 29th August. The festival was a huge success with over 150 participants taking part in a variety of activities from cricket games to dance and beach ball volleyball.

We were delighted to see so many of our project participants turn out on the day and their improved engagement with the park was evident. Some of the families brought home made food and refreshments for everyone to enjoy and the sense of community was very strong.

At the end of the festival, we held a special awards ceremony for everyone who had taken part and children received various prizes including plastic cricket bats and balls.



Summary and Outcomes

As a result of this project we have successfully developed an engagement between local families (particularly women and girls) and West Ham Park. Over the course of the project, we have seen over 300 people take part in activities in the park.

The feeling of community and the improved links between local people and the park has been palpable throughout the project and never was this highlighted more than during the end of summer festival.

Seeing families come together to enjoy the park filled us with immense pride and we are very grateful to the City of London grants team for awarding us with the funding to make this happen.

