

Come Outside! Case study

Raising awareness and confidence to take part in outdoor activities, increasing levels of physical activity and building relationships between mothers and daughters

The group
Mill Park Community
Project
Supported by
Cardiff West Communities
First Cluster
Start date
July 2015
Total participants
13
Number of sessions
7
Session types
Cycling, camping

ABOUT THE GROUP

The Mill Park Community Project is a community led initiative to regenerate a small inner city park in Ely, Cardiff. This was previously a poor quality open space that attracted anti-social behaviour but through the efforts of volunteers the project has achieved impressive outcomes.

The project received support from Cardiff Council Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme, Communities First, Cylch Meithrin Trelai Nursery, Herbert Thompson Primary School and Welsh Government Tidy Towns.

Improvements made to the park include installation of a multi-use games area (used during school hours by the school and opened up to the public at all other times), removal of some fencing, providing play equipment, and installing an art hoarding via a series of community arts workshops. This work has resulted in an improved physical environment, increased accessibility and use of the open space by a variety of groups, and a reduction of anti-social behaviour.

The Mill Park Community Group is entirely made up of mothers from the local area. When the Come Outside! Coordinator consulted with them it became clear they wanted to take part in activities that would strengthen the relationships with their teenage daughters.

There were barriers to taking part in physical activity from geographical limitations due to location within an inner city ward, to socio-economic constraints as well as limitations of knowledge about opportunities in the outdoors.



What the support organisations said

“There are positive memories that they are now talking about that will stick with them long term. They are doing things together as mothers and daughters and it’s giving them that time together - many have younger children and it’s giving them that time away just to spend time mother and daughter and not just dealing with the little ones”

“They’ve done a lot more than they thought they were capable of – they’ve taken on a lot in the last couple of days especially. One said: ‘I want to keep this exercise up – I’ve been feeling really good the last couple of days’”

“All of her [beneficiary’s] younger children have bikes, and she’s now talking about getting a bike herself”

“At the start ... I was hoping they would have more confidence in being able to access the outdoors as a resource for their families individually and the group as a whole, and I feel like they’ve achieved that. The cycling particularly has motivated them”

COME OUTSIDE! ACTIVITIES

The group received support from Kate McCabe, Come Outside! Regional Coordinator, to take part in several outdoor activities over the summer of 2015.

The group began by learning to set up and pack away tents in preparation for an overnight camping trip. During their camping trip they took part in cycling sessions, including routes on roads, and kayaked at the Cardiff International White Water Centre. For many of the group, it was their first time doing a number of these activities.

The sessions were well attended and enjoyed by the group.

IMPACT ON THE GROUP

Whilst a number of the group were already taking part in some form of physical activity, it was largely walking locally with children and dogs and there was relatively little strenuous exercise being done.

All of the mothers and daughters now report that Come Outside! has had an impact on them, specifically increasing their knowledge of and confidence to engage with new types of outdoor activities. Outdoor activities now feel more accessible and achievable for the group.

The daughters particularly commented that the activities with Come Outside! had changed their attitudes towards activity. They had thought about being fit and active to stay healthy but were previously limited by ideas of how to do so. The majority of the daughters have now got access to bikes of their own and are using cycling as a means of transport around the city and to college.

The mothers have also subsequently started cycling with their younger children on safe routes in Cardiff parks.

What the participants said

“I didn’t even know I could ride a bike”

“That centre today – it’s really close to where we live. I never knew it was there – they do so many things. [child’s name] would love that”

“I’ve never been that distance before – walking or riding”

“Now that I’ve done some exercise I feel like I want to do more. I must have lost a stone!”

“I’m proud of myself and I’ve got a lot more confidence”

“I’m glad to be out and about doing stuff, especially with all my close friends and my kids – we wouldn’t normally have the chance to do this. It’s been a nice break for me to not be a full time mother”

“Kate boosts your confidence in the community – knowing she’s there to help. No other groups provide that kind of support”

The group had previously only got together via the Mill Park Community Project but Come Outside! has enabled them to access activities locally enabling them to keep fit and socialise. Being active in a group has been cited by individuals as improving the bonding between parent and child, generations and peer groups. There was a clear sense of pride and achievement amongst the group.

IMPACT ON THE ORGANISATION

Although the group had self-organised before with impressive outcomes, their awareness of and confidence to arrange outdoor activities has increased as a result of Come Outside! support.

The group now have access to camping equipment wholly due to Come Outside! and they are working together to purchase further items towards future camping trips.

Previously, the group would not have known about community resources such as Pedal Power, a charity that makes cycling accessible to all. Accessing bikes would have previously been a barrier to the uptake of this activity for the group. By using this service they have increased their knowledge of what is available and their confidence to use this resource.

Ely Communities First are now working with the group to develop cycling further by setting up a bike hire scheme for the local area.

November 2015

