

FINAL REPORT: BGCI *Communities in Nature* project

February – Sept. 2012



Partners:

The University of Leicester Botanic Garden

Mosaic Disability Services

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1. Executive summary

The University of Leicester Botanic Garden was awarded a grant from BGCI to conduct a project (*Feel Green*) that contributed to the Garden's social role by providing and expanding learning resources for people with disabilities. The Garden benefited by conducting the project in partnership with MOSAIC, a local organisation that provides services for people with disabilities. Participants came from four groups, totalling 28 people plus their carers. The programme offered the chance to engage with topics relating to education for sustainable development. Activities centred around horticulture, plant uses, the environment, and art. Four workshops were taught across six sessions, together with a family celebration event at the end. Evaluations were very positive, both from the clients and the Mosaic staff. This was our first experience of this type of programme and we recommend adopting an experienced partner organisation to facilitate delivery. The legacy of this programme will be that we shall continue to work in partnership with *Mosaic* and offer the workshops to other similar groups; the possibility of establishing a special gardener post is under discussion.



2. Introduction

In 2009 Botanic Garden Conservation International (BGCI) supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, launched a research programme into the social role and relevance of UK botanic gardens. During 2010 and 2011, BGCI supported three UK botanic gardens to develop their social roles through a programme of workshops, and funded small-scale research projects entitled 'Communities in Nature: growing the social role of botanic gardens'. In 2012 a further four sites were chosen, one of which was the University of Leicester Botanic Garden. We focussed on a community of local people with disabilities in a project called 'Feel Green'.

3. Project Development

We have several groups, including special schools, who regularly bring people with disabilities to visit the Botanic Garden. Feedback from these groups indicated a clear need for more activities and specialist programmes. This need is especially acute because there are very limited resources, few venues and specialist services in the city and county for people with disabilities. It is this cohort that our proposal was aimed at.

The Garden is keen to increase its visitor numbers and it is important to us that we achieve a balance of people from a broad variety of backgrounds. To this end we entered into discussions with two local organisations that provide for people with disabilities: *Headway* (for head-injured patients) and *Mosaic* (which co-ordinates disability services). We wanted to develop suitable programmes for such people, especially those with an interest in gardening / plants / tactile experiences / the environment. We recently had nearly all our paths resurfaced and widened to accommodate wheel-chairs, and accessible toilets had been installed. Interpretation material is also at an appropriate height. Anecdotal evidence suggested that such visits have increased, but we had not yet engaged with this community group in a more systematic way. After extensive discussions with our potential partners and with BGCI, it was agreed that, in order to give us as wide an experience as possible but also to simplify the administration, we should work with a single partner who would be *Mosaic*.

Many people in the wider community are unaware of the Botanic Garden and what it can offer. We hoped this project would widen community participation with the Garden and help us meet the requirements of our mission statement, in which our social role is specifically mentioned.

In devising the programme we wanted to cover a range of Garden topics and took advice from both *Mosaic* and *Headway* staff about appropriate activities and daily schedules. Four full-day workshops were devised that dealt with the following topics and concluded with a family celebration:

1. World-wide plant collections - tropical / temperate environments;
2. Plant collections – herbs for food and medicine;
3. Sustainability – climate change;
4. Sculptures – as an outside art gallery.

It was clear that the bulk of the teaching should involve hands-on and visual activities rather than simply verbal. Having agreed the workshop topics and detailed content, planning discussions with *Mosaic* focussed on choice of venue; resources needed; changing facilities and personal care; and Botanic Garden staff training. The last comprised a half-day training session provided by *Mosaic*. It addressed the social role of disability, appropriate language, and highlighted case studies and scenarios.

The nature of our client-group meant that we had to pay special attention to our facilities. In particular, the Botanic Garden accessible toilet does not have space for a hoist. Arrangements were made with a nearby University hall of residence to use their facility for those who needed it. *Mosaic* clients also experience many difficulties with transport and to mitigate this, our workshops were planned for full days on the days the client-groups were already scheduled to meet.

The venue for the events was a specially purchased marquee.

4. Project Programme

Objectives

- 1) To contribute to the University of Leicester Botanic Garden's social role by providing and expanding learning resources for people with disabilities.
- 2) To offer engagement with topics relating to education for sustainable development to a wider community audience.

Clients

There were four different groups of *Mosaic* clients who met at different times. The groups were: 9Teen (3 clients), Nicky's group (11 clients), Friday Verve (8 clients) and an Arts & Craft group (6 clients). There was considerable variation in ability across the different groups.

Timetable

| Date | Session | Target group |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 10 th May | Training session by Mosaic | Botanic Garden teacher team |
| 14 th May | Session: Tropical & temperate plants & planting | 9 Teen + Nicky's group |
| 1 st June | Session: Tropical & temperate plants & planting | Friday Verve |
| 8 th June | Session: Herbs culinary and medicinal | Friday verve |
| 11 th June | Session: Herbs culinary and medicinal | 9 Teen + Nicky's group |
| 28 th June | Session: Climate change: importance of water | Arts and Craft group |
| 5 th July | Session: Sculpture | Arts and Craft group |
| 12 th July | Family celebration, incl. parts of sculptures session + herbs session | All participants + families |
| 13 th Sept | Meeting reviewing social role of Botanic Garden | All stakeholders + BGCI |

Content

| Theme of the day | Activities | The Client's finished products |
|--|---|---|
| Tropical & temperate plants & planting A.m. - temperate P.m. - tropical | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit <i>north end of Botanic Garden</i>. Look at different types of planting and different flowers and use of colour 2. Return to base and each client has a patio planter pot and some compost and a trowel. Learn about how to plant the plants. Clients choose from a selection of bedding plants. 3. Water and learn about the importance of watering 4. Lunch – eating packed lunch together 5. Visit the <i>temperate and tropical houses</i> and look at the plants and relate to food crops 6. Return to base and plant a pepper seed and a ginger cutting | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A large plastic patio planter containing a selection of summer bedding plants 2. A small flower pot containing sweet pepper 3. Seeds 4. A small flower pot containing a ginger 5. cutting. |
| Herbs A.m. – culinary P.m. – medicinal | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn about herbs and their uses. 2. Visit <i>the herb garden</i>, touch and smell. 3. Make labelled bags of chopped culinary herbs. 4. Lunch 5. Learn about herbs used in medicine 6. Make hand creams with aqueous cream and essential oils. 7. Make a bottle of massage oil. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A packet of mixed herbs 2. A pot of hand cream 3. A bottle of massage oil. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Climate change A.m. - desertification P.m. -pond life; leaf rubbings | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the <i>desert house</i> and the <i>south Arboretum area</i> 2. Compare the number of crop plants and speak about how these are affected if the climate is very dry. 3. Collect leaves, sticks etc. from ground 4. Create climate change boards- using found objects, sand + compost + gravel on whiteboards 5. Lunch - eating packed lunch together 6. Learn about the importance of water for plants and animals. 7. Pond dipping activity 8. Leaf rubbing activity – rub, cut out and stick to create a picture | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A feely board / picture made from natural materials 2. A pattern / picture using leaf rubbings. |
| Sculpture A.m. – sculpture exhibition tour P.m. – willow weaving | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the <i>sculpture exhibition</i> and discuss likes/ dislikes, setting 2. Return to base and make own sculpture from clay 3. Lunch – eating together in cafe 4. Learn about willow weaving and create a sculpture using circles and make woven leaf shapes. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An individual sculpture made from clay 2. A group sculpture made from willow |
| Family celebration A.m. - share experiences; clay sculptures; culinary herbs P.m.- Botanic Garden tour | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using display table of artifacts from the sessions and photos stuck on the walls discuss each activity together. 2. Opportunity for those who had not previously tried culinary herb or clay activities 3. Lunch – celebration meal in café and an opportunity to try soup with herbs made by a group at Mosaic 4. Opportunity to visit the Garden with families | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A packet of herbs OR 2. A sculpture made from clay |

5. Photographs

Tropical & temperate plants & planting



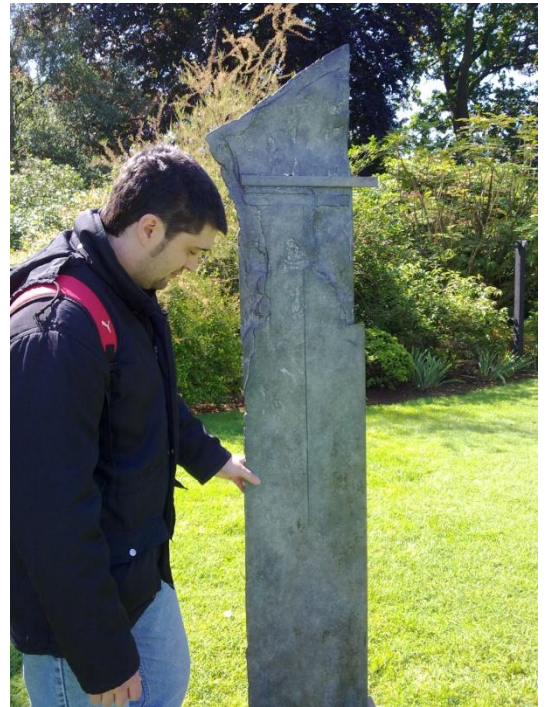
Herbs: culinary and medicinal



Climate change: importance of water



Sculpture



Family celebration



6. Evaluation results

Verbal comments received on the workshop days were very positive. For example:

“Thank you so much for letting us come” and “Oh I am enjoying this”.

Evaluation forms were distributed after every workshop session to both the clients and carers. The questions were provided by BGCI.

Evaluation questions for clients

Please can you write about how you felt about your visit.

1. How did you feel during the activities in the gardens?
2. How much did you feel you could join in the activities?
3. Did you interact with other people during the activities?
4. How did you feel during the visit? What did you like? What didn't you like?

Client evaluation form returns:

| Workshop | No. of client forms returned |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Tropical & temperate plants & planting | 11 |
| Herbs: culinary and medicinal | 15 |
| Climate change: importance of water | 2 |
| Sculpture | 2 |
| Total | 30 |

Client responses

| Tropical & temperate plants & planting | <i>Positive answers</i> | <i>Negative answers</i> |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Q1 How did you feel during the activities in the Garden?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have enjoyed it today and found it really interesting 2. Good and happy 3. I enjoyed the activities 4. I enjoyed the gardening 5. All good 6. 'Alright. OK' 7. Happy 8. Pleasant/happy/enjoyed the experience 9. Enjoyed the activities 10. Fantastic it was breath-taking. So much to do. Loved it. 11. Really excited | <p>We could not hear what was being said outside</p> |
| <p>Q2 How much did you feel you could join in the activities?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have planted some seed 2. I joined in a lot with planting seeds. 3. I joined in with everything 4. All of us planted seeds 5. Learnt a lot making plants 6. 'Yeah a little' 7. I could join in well. 8. Very involved in potting up plants 9. Was able to join in with them 10. I felt I could join in all activities fully | |
| <p>Q3 Did you interact with other people during the activities?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes x 5 2. I did interact very well during activities 3. I tried to 4. 5. We helped each other 6. Opportunity to interact if wanted to 7. I interacted with everybody | <p>'Can't remember'</p> |
| <p>Q4 How did you feel during the visit? What did you like? What didn't you like?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I liked all of the visit 2. I liked planting plants 3. I enjoyed visit to Botanical gardens 4. I did like the planting 5. I loved the garden 6. 'I liked it all' 7. I liked the flowers. Very good to be sat in the garden. 8. Enjoyed being with the group in a very pleasant environment 9. Liked the planting session going round the tropical greenhouse looking at all the named plants in around the garden 10. I liked most of it especially the Koi carp, tropical house and the amount there was to do. Staff were friendly and very helpful and I learned a lot. 11. I liked the tropical house. | <p>But I didn't like the greenhouse because it was too hot</p> |

| Herbs: culinary and medicinal | Positive answers | Negative answers |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Q.1 How did you feel during the activities in the Garden?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I enjoyed the centre 2. I enjoyed it 3. Very good 4. Brilliant, happy 5. OK learnt something different 6. Good enjoyed it 7. Very good 8. I enjoyed looking at the different plants 9. I enjoyed the activities 10. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed looking and touching the plants / herbs. 11. I enjoyed it 12. I enjoyed the activities and touching the herbs. 13. I found it very interesting 14. I really enjoyed it 15. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed touching the plants. | <p>I didn't enjoy the cold weather I felt cold Weather wasn't nice! I felt cold.</p> |
| <p>Q.2 How much did you feel you could join in the activities?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I felt I could join in x8 2. I interacted very well with the group and teachers were very informative 3. I joined in very well 4. I have joined in a lot 5. Yes I felt I could join in a lot 6. I could join in all the activities 7. I joined in all the activities 8. Yes. A little. | |
| <p>Q.3 Did you interact with other people during the activities?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes x8 2. Yes everybody 3. Yes very well 4. Yes especially Lesley 5. Chris assisted me with activities 6. Yes I enjoyed 7. Yes I did especially asking and answering questions 8. 9. A little bit. | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Q.4 How did you feel during the visit? What did you like? What didn't you like?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I liked the gardens 2. I liked the herb, healing balm and making it. I liked putting the herbs in the bag 3. Great, everything, nothing 4. (Great) I loved everything about the activities that we did. There was nothing I did not like 5. Liked learning something new. Liked making herbs / oils. 6. I enjoyed everything we have done today 7. The plants + herbs were great 8. I enjoyed everything! 9. I liked it all but preferred the hands on activities. 10. The healing balm and massage oil- I liked it. 11. The healing balm and massage oil – I enjoyed it. 12. I liked it all. 13. | <p>Didn't like the weather it was raining. Didn't like the weather.</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | <p>14.I liked everything.</p> <p>15.I found it all very interesting. I enjoyed chopping the herbs up best.</p> <p>16.I enjoyed it. I liked making the healing balm and massage oil. I enjoyed making the herb bag. Enjoyed Ann putting 'healing balm' on hands and touching herbs/ plants.</p> | <p>I didn't like the wet weather!</p> <p>Didn't like the weather.</p> |
|--|--|---|

| Climate change: Importance of water | <i>Positive answers</i> | <i>Negative answers</i> |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| <p>Question 1</p> <p>How did you feel during the activities in the Garden?</p> | <p>1. I enjoyed pond dipping I hadn't done this before. I liked doing the board with different leaves etc.</p> <p>2. Very nice. I enjoyed drawing the leaves.</p> | |
| <p>Question 2</p> <p>How much did you feel you could join in the activities?</p> | <p>1. Yes I took part in everything.</p> <p>2. Easy to join in.</p> | |
| <p>Question 3</p> <p>Did you interact with other people during the activities?</p> | <p>1. Yes, I spoke in the group</p> <p>2. Yes</p> | |
| <p>Question 4</p> <p>How did you feel during the visit? What did you like? What didn't you like?</p> | <p>1. I enjoyed everything.</p> <p>2. Like walking around the gardens. Nothing I didn't like.</p> | |

| Sculpture | <i>Positive answers</i> | <i>Negative answers</i> |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| <p>Q.1</p> <p>How did you feel during the activities in the Garden?</p> | <p>1. Good I enjoyed them</p> <p>2. They were very good.</p> | |
| <p>Q.2</p> <p>How much did you feel you could join in the activities?</p> | <p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. Yes I joined in everything</p> | |
| <p>Q.3</p> <p>Did you interact with other people during the activities?</p> | <p>1. Yes- sometimes</p> <p>2. Yes I spoke a lot.</p> | |
| <p>Q.4</p> <p>How did you feel during the visit? What did you like? What didn't you like?</p> | <p>1. Like – making clay sculpture. Didn't like – nothing.</p> <p>2. Like – all of it. Nothing I didn't like.</p> | <p>Sometimes tired.</p> |

Evaluation questions for Mosaic carers

Please can you write a short report on each participant's reactions / behaviour during the visit.

1. **How did the participants feel during the activities in the gardens?** You may give an overall description of their mood but please include some evidence where the participants showed their emotional response e.g. was there a particular activity they seem to be happy, or was there an activity that they didn't like. Please describe the incident/reaction. Please also state whether there were any particular reactions to interacting with plants.
2. **How engaged were the participants during the activities?** Please describe participants' reactions that show their engagement or disengagement with the activities
3. **Did the participants interact with each other during the activities?** Please describe in what way they interacted. Describe any reactions to specific activities.
4. **How did the participants feel during the visit?** Describe what they liked, what they didn't like- record participants' responses/reactions.

Mosaic carer evaluation form returns:

| Workshop | No. of staff forms returned |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Tropical & temperate plants & planting | 4 |
| Herb; Culinary and medicinal | 9 |
| Climate Change: importance of water | 1 |
| Sculptures | 1 |
| Total | 15 |

Note: Some of the carer forms refer to the whole group others to one client who was unable to complete their own evaluation form.

Mosaic carer responses

| Tropical & temperate plants & planting | Positive answers | Negative answers |
|--|--|---|
| Q. 1 How did the participants feel during the activities in the Garden? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They seemed happy, excited about what they were doing 2. A lot were excited about the tropical house 3. They liked then oil smells and textures of some of the plants 4. When the group arrived they were a little glum due to the wet weather but soon overcame this when we were in the bright warm tent and got into all the interesting activities 5. The participants appeared to enjoy the activities in the gardens, taking an interest in the oils and plants / herbs demonstrated. | On the other hand the weather did prevent spending more time out in the garden. |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. She seemed to enjoy getting her hand in the soil to feel the texture a bit but not to get right in as she pulled her hand out. She enjoyed choosing her coloured pot, nodding and smiling when we said purple. She seemed to enjoy being outside in the gardens 2. We enjoyed walking around the gardens in the sun especially listening to the fountains and seeing the fish. The best activity was the planting- feeling the soil, smelling the flowers. | Seemed a bit distressed when we were inside at times. |
| <p>Q. 2 How engaged were the participants during the activities?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They were very engaged 2. Very engaged 3. Quite 4. The group engaged really well, they could join in everything. | But the weather may have distracted them a bit |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Putting her hand in and out of the soil. Nodding and smiling when picking pot colour and flowers. 2. The participant was most engaged when planting the pots as she could get more hands on. She enjoyed the changing temperature in the green-houses. | Less during the walk around the gardens. |
| <p>Q. 3 Did the participants interact with each other during the activities?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes they did. They helped each other. 2. Talking to each other about the different coloured flowers. 3. Sharing plants and smelling them 4. Yes they did they passed herbs round to each other and answered questions. | |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laughing/smiling met new people from the other group who spoke to her to which she was smiling. 2. She laughed at others to tempt the fish to the top of the water by the fountains and also laughed when she threw mud over the person assisting her to plant the pot. | |
| <p>Q. 4 How did the participants feel during their visit?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They want to come back! 2. Went home happy. 3. They enjoyed the visit walking round the grounds, chopping and making their own oil balm etc. 4. Felt interested in what certain herbs could do. | |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laughed/ smiled / nodded 'yes' 2. She enjoyed going around the gardens, greenhouses and planting the pots. | She got bored at times when there was a lot of talking |

| Herbs: culinary and medicinal | <i>Positive answers</i> | <i>Negative answers</i> |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Q. 1 How did the participants feel during the activities in the Garden?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participants enjoyed looking at the plants and touching, smelling plants / herbs. 2. Overall believe the participants enjoyed their time at the gardens. They seemed to particularly enjoy learning about the functions of different herbs and plants. 3. The group enjoyed it. 4. Everyone seemed to enjoy the different activities | <p>The weather ruined the enjoyment to some extent as the participants felt cold.</p> |
| <p>Q. 2 How engaged were the participants during the activities?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participant I was assigned to was active during the whole process / activities. He was in a very happy mood (laughing and making jokes). He was most interested in the healing plants. 2. The participant really enjoyed being able to smell the herbs and feel the leaves. She was able to show which smells she likes and which she didn't. | <p>Some more than others and this was particularly apparent when they had to guess the plant from a certain description</p> <p>However some did seem to lose interest when making the healing balm and massage oil becoming distracted and complaining of being bored</p> |
| <p>Q. 3 Did the participants interact</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participants enjoyed the activity and listened to the teachers. The participants engaged with making the massage oil and healing balm. 2. The participants appeared very engaged in the activities 3. Very well informed 4. Yes everyone seemed to enjoy to participate. 5. As a whole the participants appeared engaged during the activities. Many engaged by touching and smelling the products shown. | <p>When there was lots of talking there was little engagement.</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>with each other during the activities?</p> | <p>and massage oils were made and during lunch. There were conversations and a sing-a-long.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Participants interacted with each other by laughing, joking and helping each other. This was when making the oil and balm and the guessing game. 3. Very well. Very informative. 4. When doing the quiz. 5. The majority of the participants seemed to interact very well during the activities, sharing the products being passed around and engaging in conversation with one another. | <p>You may need extra support when doing talk for volume.</p> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He was asking other participants to identify plants they knew or have learnt their names and remember. He wrote some of the plants names on paper. 2. She smiled at people when out on the walk in the garden, but other than that was quite focused on her own experiences of smells and feel of things. | |
| <p>Q. 4 How did the participants feel during their visit?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participants liked the making of massage oil and healing balm. 2. Enjoyed every activity during the visit. 3. Enjoyed it 4. In general they liked it 5. The participants enjoyed the interaction with one another and the touching of plants | <p>The participants did not like the weather. Disappointed in weather which lead to not being able to take a proper tour of the grounds.</p> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He reacted well to the activities and liked the smell of some of the plants. The participant enjoyed the visit. 2. She engaged well when smelling and feeling different plants, smiling at the smells she liked. | |

| Climate change: Importance of water | <i>Positive answers</i> | <i>Negative answers</i> |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Q. 1 How did the participants feel during the activities in the Garden? | 1. They seemed really happy! The weather was really off putting! | |
| Q. 2 How engaged were the participants during the activities? | 2. Very well. They enjoyed it so well. | |
| Q. 3 Did the participants interact with each other during the activities? | 3. Smiling and chatting away with each other. | |
| Q. 4 How did the participants feel during their visit? | 4. There wasn't anything they didn't like. What a lovely day! | |

| Sculpture | <i>Positive answers</i> | <i>Negative answers</i> |
|--|--|-------------------------|
| Q. 1 How did the participants feel during the activities in the Garden? | 1. Yes I think they enjoyed the experience, trying something new. A new skill with the willow weaving they thrived. Enjoyed the sculptures saying what they liked and didn't – getting involved. | |
| Q. 2 How engaged were the participants during the activities? | 2. They got fully involved and did really well contributing a lot to the piece we made together. | |
| Q. 3 Did the participants interact with each other during the activities? | 3. Yes everyone chatted to each other and encouraged and complimented each others work. | |
| Q. 4 How did the participants feel during their visit? | 4. I think they enjoyed everything. | |

7. Lessons Learned

Mosaic staff / clients

Nearly all of the comments on the evaluations were very positive and cited many different parts of the sessions. There were more than 120 positive responses overall, with 14 negative comments about the weather and a further 12 mentioning the following areas:

1) *Difficulty hearing outside*

We took note of the comments about the difficulty of hearing outside with the very large group in the very first session. We ensured in subsequent sessions that the talking part was inside or that the group was all together. The situation largely stemmed from clients asking individual questions as they toured the garden with the answers being given to them personally rather than to the group as a whole; some felt, however, that they would have liked to have heard too.

2) *Not engaged during talking parts*

The ability range was very wide indeed and interest at one level was disengagement for others. This was impossible to avoid. All activities however had something in them at different parts for all abilities and this is reflected by other positive comments on the same forms.

3) *The healing balm activity*

Only one evaluation form (from a carer rather than a client) out of 24 mentioned this activity at all negatively.

Botanic garden teaching staff

All BG staff enjoyed the workshops and spoke very positively about their experiences. Three points were raised, two of general relevance and one specific to us:

1. *What clients remembered.* It became clear that the visual and kinaesthetic experiences were remembered better than the verbal. Simply listening to information or watching a demonstration was not sufficient to engage the participants. For example, when repeating the herb activity we ensured that individuals were more involved with handling all the herbs, with guessing by smell which of the essences we were using, and that they took part in a quiz.
Unfortunately the weather was against us to support the theme of the climate change day. As although we had talked about how the changes we would experience with less rain fall we were actually experiencing torrential rain and hail storms! Therefore although they enjoyed the activities on the day probably the overall theme did not stay with them.
2. *Listening to clients.* It is important to allow time for listening to individuals who want to talk about their disability and how it impacts on their lives.
3. *More client information required.* In future we would request more information about the individual clients before arrival and even attend an in-house session with each group before their session at the Botanic Garden. This had been discussed but we ran out of time to fit this in. Abilities range very widely and there is no such thing as an 'average' client. Advance knowledge of individuals would allow us to tailor the programme more closely to the clients' needs.
4. *Venue.* The marquee worked very well as a base. However it was considerable work to put up and take down and this could only be realistically done at the start and end of the project. This had serious implications for the grass and therefore the flooring had to be taken up and refitted regularly through the project's duration.

In addition the area in which the marquee was placed, (to be near the accessible toilet and not interfering with the sculpture exhibition) was in an area open to the public and adjacent to a University hall of residence. Therefore no equipment could be left overnight including all tables and chairs. This added considerably to the time and effort required to bring over all the required equipment and furniture each time for the sessions.

8. Report on Stakeholders' Meeting (13th Sep. 2012)

In attendance were representatives from:

- BGCI
- The Botanic Garden: The Education Team, Gardeners, the Friends
- Leicester University: Estates, Press & Marketing Office, ESD Group, Environment team
- Barnsdale Gardens

AGENDA

- 1) Welcome and overview
 - a) BGCI & Communities in Nature programme
 - b) importance of botanic gardens to community & University in delivering key governmental agendas and policies (in particular environmental, health, higher education)
 - c) aim of the workshop
- 2) Garden mission statement
- 3) Feel Green project
 - Leicester BG experience and the importance to Mosaic
- 4) Current visitor profile at UBG
 - a) statistics
 - b) comparative profiles from other botanic gardens and museums
 - c) discussion
- 5) Leicester BG plan re improved visitor facilities
- 6) Future projects
 - a) extension
 - b) special gardener post
- 7) Next steps
 - Growing the social role of the Leicester BG
- 8) Financial issues
 - a) current University financial position-constraints
 - b) funding opportunities
- 9) Publicity requirements
 - Discussion
- 10) Wrap up

The discussions held resulted in agreement on four action points:

- 1) To conduct a visitor survey to find out more about the 52,000 annual casual visitors to the Botanic Garden.
- 2) To market the work of the Botanic Garden more widely and have a closer relationship with the University Marketing team.
- 3) To continue to apply for external funding to support the work of the Botanic Garden.
- 4) To consider the use of student volunteers in addition to the usual complement. The idea would be to investigate both classroom assistant work and community events management at the Garden with a wider sustainability agenda working towards a Leicester Award.

9. Outcomes

- 1) *A marquee.* The 6 x 10 m marquee can be used as an additional classroom area during the busy summer period for either adults or children. It is hoped that the marquee can be set up in our 'field' area of the Botanic Garden during March – October each year and used as a classroom. This area is not grassed or open to the public so the flooring could be left down and groups such as *Mosaic* and others could use this as a base and groups could have a planting area near this. Work would be needed to make the field area accessible to wheelchairs. It is behind a lockable gate which would mean furniture and equipment could be stored there between sessions.
- 2) *Workshops.* The series of four full-day workshops: Tropical / temperate plants & planting, Herbs: culinary and medicinal, Climate change: importance of water and Sculpture were very successful and can form the basis for future sessions with *Mosaic* clients or other groups. The workshops can stand as discrete sessions or as a series of four. Headway and Halifax Drive Care Home have already expressed interest.
- 3) *Relationship with Mosaic.* This project has been the first time *Mosaic* and the Botanic Garden have worked together. Both parties would like to continue client visits in the future. However without project funding neither *Mosaic* nor individual clients can afford to cover the staff costs and resources with the workshops as they currently stand. Therefore the workshops will need to be adapted so they can be run on the client's subscription money. Ideas already discussed are:
 - a) having 60/ 90 minute workshops to reduce staff costs;
 - b) having an area of the Botanic Garden for *Mosaic* clients for planting so patio planters and pots would not have to be bought;
 - c) creating a herb garden at the *Mosaic* centre.
- 4) *Special gardener post.* Perhaps most importantly as a legacy of the project, we plan to create a special gardener post at the Botanic Garden to support visits and horticultural work by volunteers with special needs. The work experience would contribute towards a number of academic qualifications, such as NVQs. Leicestershire County Council has expressed an interest in co-funding this post.
- 5) *Widening community engagement.* All the above outcomes will contribute to our drive to widen our audience of people who visit the Garden.

10. Budget

| <i>Project Activity</i> | <i>Rates</i> | <i>Award amount</i> | <i>BG matched funding</i> | <i>Actual spend</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Staff time to develop Mosaic sessions | 3 days @ £200 | £600.00 | | £1,400.00 | 7d @ £200 |
| Staff time: Mosaic session delivery | 10 days @ £200 | £2,000.00 | | £1,452.00 | 7d @ £200 + training |
| Staff time: evaluation (3 staff @0.5 day + 1 staff @ 1day) | | £500.00 | | £500.00 | |
| Staff (BG) time: attendance at BGCI workshops (x3+Leicester) | | | £600.00 | £600.00 | |
| Travel to BGCI workshop X 3 staff, rail fares | 3 workshops x 3 staff @ £150 | £1,350.00 | | £570.10 | |
| Building work: greenhouse conversion | | £3,500.00 | | £2,257.03 | marquee |
| Tables – adjustable height | 8 @ £150 | £1,200.00 | | £373.27 | |
| Chairs for non- wheel chair users | 10 @ £14 | | £140.00 | | |
| Raised bed planter | 2 @ £140 | £280.00 | | £0.00 | |
| Raised beds | 2 @ £30 | £60.00 | | £0.00 | |
| Session consumables: compost, seeds, pots, trays, tools, etc. | | £170.00 | £60.00 | £594.49 | =£654.49-£60 |
| Non-gardening workshop resources | | £150.00 | | £845.56 | incl. family celebration |
| Project management, incl. publicity & reporting | 7 days @ £200 | not budgeted | | £1,400.00 | |
| | | | | | |
| Total | | £9,810.00 | £800.00 | £9,992.45 | |

Budget Note

The actual cost of various items differs from the budgeted costs in several places. This was largely due to the fact that the programme underwent considerable revision in consultation with BGCI and Mosaic.

11. Conclusion & recommendation

As a consequence of the overall success of the workshops, we are now confident that we could offer programmes appropriate to a wide range of special needs again.

We would recommend that other Botanic Gardens who would like to do something similar should enter into a close partnership with an appropriate organisation.

12. Bibliography

Anonymous. 2010. Towards a new social purpose: redefining the role of botanic gardens. Pp. 1-12. BGCI, Kew.

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MENCAP website: <http://www.mencap.org.uk/all-about-learning-disability>