



**SOCOPA**  
**young ecology**  
**adventurers**

**Future programme development**

November 2018

# FUTURE PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Leicester Young Ecology Adventurers programme responds to the social and economic circumstances of one of England's most disadvantaged communities on the St Matthew's estate in Leicester. Children and young people have limited experience of the natural world and few opportunities to engage with it in an organised way.

Our objectives all focused on broadening young people's world view, introducing challenges and exposing young people aged 11-15 of Somali heritage to the natural environment.

In 2017 SOCOPA received funding of £49,821 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver the 2-year project. We worked in partnership with the Canal and River Trust, the Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre, the John Muir Award and Cardiff University's Sustainable Places Research Institute to develop the programme.



CRT arranged for volunteers to help with activities such as lock keeping as well as arranging boats to take us through the Saddington Tunnel.

Parent volunteers also got involved and a smaller group of young people presented their work to CRT's Chief Executive Richard Parry and other senior staff Sean McGinley and Liz Fleuty.

We established an on-line blog to record the programme's activities and engaged a 17-year old photographer to document the programme and set up a web site to document the programme (see <https://youngecologyadventurers.weebly.com/>)

In 2018 the programme was shortlisted as a Finalist in the Education and Skills category of the Living Waterways Awards.

## 2. KEY FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMME

- In both years the programme was over-subscribed and sadly we had to turn young people away. Altogether 42 young people (19 girls, 23 boys) took part in the programme and achieved a John Muir Award. No-one dropped out!

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- Young people learned how to 'canoe' using kayaks and were supported by staff from the Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre. Our aim was to use the kayaks as way to explore 'the ecology' of the waterways. This involved identifying common bird, animal and plant species as well as the wider waterway environment (history of the canal, uses of the river, growing confidence in the water etc.), and some basic research techniques including setting camera traps and assessing water quality.
- Some of these activities worked better than others and not all the young people found it easy to focus their attention. Some of the younger children were more focused than the older ones.
- The structure of the programme was over-ambitious at times and we tried to do too much in the first year. We changed arrangements in the second year, allowing more time for activities, responding to some behaviour issues and we found smaller groups worked much better.
- The involvement of parents and female Somali support staff worked really well. Their participation in the activities, including kayaking, was particularly helpful. In year two we engaged two youth workers who made a big difference in keeping the groups focused and sessions well prepared.



### 3. HOW COULD THE PROGRAMME DEVELOP?

All those involved in the programme are keen to see the work continue. For SOCOPA we want to continue to provide opportunities for young Somalis to experience the outdoors. The canals and rivers of Leicester and Leicestershire provide a great setting to facilitate this.

We'd like to:

Create a more open access youth programme that met weekly and explored environmental themes. Working in partnership with other organisations to open up opportunities and experiences would be essential but the direction of the programme and what young people did would be negotiated between the young people themselves and the staff/ volunteers. Themes and issues that might be covered include:

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- Fundraising for and organising a summer trip away to an interesting location to explore the outdoors (canal or river trail; national park/ YHA? Coastal/ marine experience etc.). John Muir Trust have provided us with some great contacts to help with this.
- Working to create a garden or adventure/ activity area on a patch of land (e.g. the neglected strip of land adjacent to Crafton Street East in St Matthew's). We've been in touch with the Mayor Peter Soulsby and local councillors about this.
- Campaigning on an issue that young people feel strongly about (important it comes from young people).
- Having the opportunity to take part in a regular programme of skills activities – e.g. working towards Paddle Plus or Duke of Edinburgh/ John Muir Award.
- Developing filmmaking, web design, blogs/ vlogs and photography as a form of expression; holding exhibitions and events.
- A strong theme around 'making stuff' – learning basic woodwork and craft skills; learning how to make a fire; cooking – making jam or cordial/ juices from foraged fruits etc.
- Horse-riding and other activities that expose young people to the countryside and contact with animals.
- Creating an opportunity for parents to get involved (though not so it discourages young people to attend).

These are just some ideas. The challenge is to create a model that is sustainable financially and yet not too dependent on a single funder. Young people are up for fundraising – a group of the young women who participated have already begun to plan some activities.

The budget below provides an indication of the costs for setting up a core programme that would run throughout the year. We are benefitting from the HLF investment in that set up and planning costs for programme design, partnership development and evaluation frameworks etc. are already in place or require only minor updating.

# LEICESTER YOUNG ECOLOGY ADVENTURERS INDICATIVE BUDGET 2019

2019

Activity	Cost description	When	Qty	Unit cost £	Sub-total £	Notes
Set up and project management costs	Days	Mar-Dec	20	225.00	4,500.00	2 days/ month
Senior youth worker	Days	Mar-Dec	240	12.00	2,880.00	6 hrs/ week for 40 weeks
Youth worker	Days	Mar-Dec	160	9.00	1,440.00	4 hrs/ week for 40 weeks
Travel costs to LOPC, horseriding and other trips	Travel	Mar-Dec	10	75.00	750.00	Assume £60/ month
LOPC kayaking and instructor fees	Activity	July - Aug	8	160.00	1,280.00	12 canoes and staff x 8 sessions
Horseriding instructor/ attendance fees	Activity	Mar-Apr	24	20.00	480.00	Estimate based on Mere Lane, Oadby; 12 lessons in a group of 4
Room hire for regular youth club	Room hire	Mar - Dec	120	15.00	1,800.00	St Matthew's Neighbourhood Centre; 40 weeks, once a week for 3 hrs
General activities/ equipment budget	Activity	Mar - Dec	10	75.00	750.00	Estimate per month
Refreshments and other incidental costs	Refreshments	Mar - Dec	40	7.50	300.00	Estimate for 40 weeks; e.g. juice, fresh fruit
John Muir Awar registration costs	Activity	Mar - Dec	30	1.00	30.00	Estimate 30 young people to complete
Evaluation review Cardiff University	Evaluation	Mar - Dec	5	550.00	2,750.00	Estimate 7 days incl travel costs
Celebration event: venue/ food and drink	Refreshments	Dec	1	120.00	120.00	University of Leicester
Print/ copy photos, reports, displays, learning materials	Printing	Mar - Dec	1	400.00	400.00	Estimate
				<b>TOTAL</b>	17,480.00	



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