

## Evaluation of Big Barn's Crop for the Shop project Ernest Cook Trust



### Location of beneficiaries:

1. Linden Primary School, Evington, Leicester
2. Abbey Primary Community School, Belgrave, Leicester

Overall reach: 120 children and 60 parents

Duration: 11 months

Beneficiaries: Boys and girls (6-9 years) and families



### Objectives:

1. Teach children how to grow their own vegetables
2. Teach children the importance of sustainable food sources
3. Increase children's awareness about the origins of the food they consume
4. Teach children and families how to eat healthily
5. Encourage entrepreneurial skills in children
6. Strengthen mathematical skills within the children
7. Teach children about the environment

Our **Crop for the Shop** project has achieved all of its intended outcomes. Amongst the children we worked with, there was a significant lack of awareness about where food comes from; with a large portion of participants not being able to name basic fruit and vegetables.

Teaching the children and their families about the importance of healthy eating and food facts was vital in the areas of Evington and Belgrave as, through research, we realised a marked gap in provision of such activities.

By engaging with these disadvantaged children in a familiar environment but using a method which they have never encountered, they have thrived and exceeded the project's aims.

Questionnaires were sent to the participating schools, Linden Primary School and Abbey Primary School, and were completed by members of staff who observed each session.

With **1 being the Least** and **5 being the Most**, we found that the schools rated the effectiveness of the project in meeting the needs of the individual children between **4-5** and said that they all strongly agree that they would encourage more children to take part in the project.

These individuals also stated that they noticed a marked improvement in the following skills within the children:

- Mathematic skills
- Literacy skills
- Environmental knowledge
- Communication
- Geography skills

**Quotes from the respective schools:**

*"All activities were well planned and adequate resources were provided."*

*(Pearl Wright, Linden Primary School)*

*"The fact the project included both KS1 and KS2 (worked well). It was classroom and outdoor based which was great in getting children into a new environment. It also gave them an idea about where some of our food comes from."*

*(Julian Sahu, Abbey Primary Community School)*

*"Farm visit and harvesting very exciting/different for these kids."*

*(Claire Walker, Linden Primary School)*



**What worked well?**

-The introduction of the parents coming into the classroom environment and taking part in the healthy lessons with their children was extremely well-received by the young participants. They were encouraged by the presence of their parents and therefore inserted more effort, and paid more attention, in the session.

-Also, the children particularly enjoyed taking the food to the local shop for sale; it gave them a great sense of satisfaction to know that their hard work was going to help their local community.

-This project attracted the attention of the BBC who will use the premise of the project as a storyline for a children's programme on the CBeebies channel. (Unfortunately the BBC cannot give credit to the project, our organisation or the Ernest Cook Trust).



### What can we improve?

-**Big Barn** would like to see more schools participating in the project. When we approached schools about the possibility of taking part in **Crop for the Shop** the vast majority of schools declined due to time restraints placed on teachers and the various other commitments the school has. We are looking into ways in which we can make the project attractive to schools and ways of minimising the misconceived perceptions which schools think this project will have upon their time and resources.

-We would also like to introduce a wider range of vegetables for the children to harvest. By doing so we will be broadening their horizons as these children have next to no knowledge about the fruit and vegetables.

-We were required to carry out extra sessions at the schools during the summer holidays which incurred extra costs (please see below):

#### Abbey Primary School

- 4 extra sessions each at 2 hours per session.
- 3 bags of compost totalling £10.

#### Linden Primary School

- 3 extra sessions at 1 hour per session.
- 3 bags of compost totalling £10.

For future sessions we will ensure that we plan for such eventualities.

**Crop for the Shop** was devised, managed and delivered by Leicester-based social enterprise **Earth Buds**.

