



## Event case study: Full Circle, St Paul's Youth & Family Project "Science Extravaganza"

We ran an evening of science activities for our youth club. Our aim was to introduce science to a group who do not have regular access to after-school or holiday activities, and who may not have aspirations to aim for a job that requires STEM skills or to undertake further education in these areas.

The target audience was young people aged 8-13. Our youth centre is one of the only places for young people to meet and gather in Bristol's most deprived wards, and the demographics of our young people are 90% BME, mostly Afro-Caribbean and Somali.

### *People involved in planning and running*

- Two staff
- Two volunteers
- Two collaborating organisations – Full Circle and Aspiration Creation Elevation (ACE)
- External contractor (Fun Science)

### *Main steps of the organisation process*

- Getting the idea

Full Circle is always looking for ideas to use in activities with kids, as we work with youngsters aged 8-19 every week, and money is tight for the families we work with. Much of what we are given is donated to us in-kind, including fundraising support from a professional fundraiser. She knew of the BSW grants, and also knew that we were always looking for opportunities to expose our young people to new learning opportunities. As our young people rarely have the opportunity to be exposed to science-related projects outside of school, the idea of getting involved in British Science Week seemed like an effective way to create a new learning opportunity for participants.

- Organising and creating

We had the constraint of working through a youth centre that opens in the evenings, rather than a school open on weekdays or a private party that can work at weekends, when many science-based activities suitable for this age group are scheduled. Despite this we managed to arrange an engineering challenge in the first half of the evening, combining a learning opportunity with a fun activity – this was an activity that I had found to be fun at school 25 years before. Then we arranged for a presenter from *Fun*

Science to run demonstrations in the second half. We promoted the event through flyers, posters and social media (Facebook and Twitter). As our group regularly attends club nights we were able to promote the evening over several weeks.

- Delivering

The evening went well thanks to good preparation and team work on behalf of staff. Children took part in the team engineering challenge first: they had to construct towers out of craft paper to hold aloft a chocolate egg for 15 seconds.

Then the *Fun Science* demonstrations included making a 'volcano' from household chemicals, using a Van der Graaf generator and making slime. The kids generally engaged well and enjoyed the fun.



- Results and feedback

We were very pleased that 16 children attended this event, aged between 8-12, as well as two parents. This was despite holding the event not on a regular club night. We got positive feedback by means of a feedback form filled in at the end of the evening, on which all participants indicated that they enjoyed the activities.

- Next steps

We hope very much to hold similar activities in British Science Week 2016.

## **Successes and challenges**

We were very pleased to have been able to complete these activities with a group of kids who rarely have access to extracurricular activities or to science outside of school. These are challenging kids and families to work with, and so scheduling activities was difficult. This led to us having to hold two activities on one night rather than more activities across multiple nights, which was our original plan. Because we were slightly overambitious in what we could run during BSW, we rededicated some resources to a longer-term project on gardening and plant growth over the course of the spring rather than holding additional activities during the week.

We were pleased with numbers, particularly as we managed to reverse the typical pattern of majority-boys in attendance, with an evening that was majority-girls. We do, however, for local reasons, face challenges in bridging divides between the Afro-Caribbean and Somali communities. Both Afro-Caribbean and Somali youngsters attend our regular club nights, although no Somali youngsters attended the science evening – perhaps representing a challenge in our ability to get the message out through community networks to this group compared to others.