

## Executive Summary

The Freestyle Environmental Visual Audit (FEVA) is a six week initiative established to tackle environmental issues in the Wallacetoun area of Ayr. The initiative involved pupils from P4/5 becoming local environmental monitors, examining their community alongside partners, family members and wider community members.

Education and awareness inputs were provided by a wide range of project partners. After which pupils were asked to monitor their communities and record what the environmental issues and assets were in their community. The community assets identified by the pupil's along with, issues and photographs were recorded on a form prior to being collated in class. The recorded issues were then passed on, by email and letter, to agencies, departments and shops that were responsible for addressing the issue.

This initiative delivered real action and engagement led by young people who highlighted issues of concern to them. FEVA empowered young people to be responsible for their community, take action against environmental issues and raise awareness of the dangers of discarded drug paraphernalia.

FEVA has had positive benefits for the local primary school and wider community and has strengthened partnership working within the area. By developing of a multi-agency, intergenerational project young people were shown in a positive light, through taking responsibility and making positive changes in their community. The initiative has also contributed an increased pride and ownership within the community.

This project won the Strengthening Community Engagement and Resilience Safer Communities Award in 2016.

## Background and Aims

Wallacetoun had a large number of environmental issues from litter and dog fouling to fly tipping. The Head Teacher at Newtown Primary School was keen to build on previous multi-agency work to tackle concerns raised over the inappropriately disposal of drug paraphernalia, and to develop a multi-agency intergenerational project which would have had an impact on environmental issues, whilst educating young people to the dangers of issues such as fire raising, dog fouling and discarded alcohol and drug paraphernalia.

The initiative was driven by P4/5 students who conducted surveys in their local community and reported issues and concerns to the relevant agencies.

## Activities

Prior to the implementation of the project P4/5 children were given presentations by partners on specific aspects of the environment, including public organisations, third sector and private companies. These partners included:

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Services
- Waste Management
- NHS
- Housing
- Environmental Health
- Community Safety

All partners informed their organisations of the initiative to ensure a good response to letters and emails sent by pupils requesting action to tackle problems.

Wallacetoun was divided into four zones for the purpose of the audits. The environmental audits took the form of a collection sheet which recorded environmental incidents by zone, street, location and issue. The sheets also challenged the children to look at community assets that could help to manage the issues.

Once the data had been collated, letters and emails were disseminated to the agencies that would be able to assist with the issue identified. The response to these was very positive with organisations, departments and business owners embraced the positive message of the project.

The young people were encouraged to bring along family members or friends to walkabout audits which meant the project also engaged with parents, grandparents and the wider community. Within the community local tenants and residents group took an active interest encouraging community members to engage. This diverse engagement within the community led to interest being raised from other community members keen on finding out more about the project.

## Impact

As a result of this project, young people have become more interested and aware of environmental issues within their community, and have been shown to be valuable and responsible citizens in tackling these issues. They have demonstrated through group discussions that they are now more aware of environmental issues, how they can avoid adding to problems, and how they can contribute to resolving issues within their community. Pupils have also discussed their appreciation for some of the assets they have within their area, such as a play park, multi-use games area, green spaces and shops.

The following positive outcomes have been observed:

- Reduction in vandalism around the school. ‘We are able to have new plants, resources and huts and things without them being wrecked.’
- Children are much more community aware and will readily tell us if something has happened in the community and who was involved. Children have identified where people have fly tipped and tell staff.
- Parents are taking time to sit in the school garden after school to let their children play safely.
- Reduction in number of legal high packets found around the school – children had been bringing them to staff when they found them.
- Parents engaging more readily in community based events – gardening club had over 20 parents attending.
- Parents more likely to raise environmental/community concerns at Parent Council meetings – with solutions rather than just voicing problems.

Partners provided feedback on the outcomes which identified a reduction in the cost of lifting fly tipping and litter in the area. The aim is to continue to foster engagement with schools, young people and the wider community.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Following each six week project the activities, inputs and outcomes are evaluated and examined to assess if any changes are needed.

Of the 12 initial problems identified, eight were resolved by the time of the final audit. This equates to a 67% success rate in resolving issues and provided the young people with positive outcomes strengthening their belief in engagement and their actions.

### Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

Engaging in a community project through the children resident in the community resulted in a far wider reaching project that saw engagement from family members, other residents, community and housing groups and project partners. By taking an early years approach and introducing environmental change at the child level has had the positive outcome of spreading the project message to a much larger audience than was initially expected.

Agencies continue to work in partnership to highlight issues at the earliest opportunity and there is a range of further initiatives planned:

- **Community Clean Ups** – involving community volunteers to improve the area, and impart environmental and safety information.
- **How Clean is Your Close** – initiative targeting closes that have fallen into a state of disrepair, are unclean or that have an accumulation of flammable material gathered in stairwells.
- **Intergenerational Music Project** – school will be working with a local sheltered housing unit, who have an interest in developing a musical workshop leading to a dance event.

- **Kit & Caboodle** – The school will be working with Ayr United Football Academy on environmental initiative that will see the recycling of football kits. Literacy, numeracy and environmental education will be promoted through all football sessions undertaken.
- **FEVA** – The FEVA initiative will start again with the next raft of P4/5 pupils in the first term after summer.

## Resources

The project did not have any formal funding with the only cost being ‘in kind’ hours donated by department and agency personnel. The costs attributed to the repairs conducted as a result of the audits lay outside the parameters of the project and were not included in the budget. The ‘in kind’ hours varied between partners with commitment ranging from 2 to 16 hours.

### Practice Note Information

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SCSN Topic Areas:	
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