

Project title: The Baytree Science Club

Length/time: Every Wednesday afternoon during term time from 4:30 until 5:45pm

Overall purpose (why is your organisation involved in this project?): Getting children from disadvantaged social backgrounds interested in science

Aims:
To interest children from disadvantaged backgrounds living in the Borough of Lambeth (London) in science.
To teach a scientific approach, based on observations and experiments.
To involve local primary schools in our activities.
To produce a handbook of simple, cheap and safe science experiments suitable for primary school children.
To widen access to interactive science teaching.

Brief description (including target audience):
The Baytree Science Club (BSC) is an after-school science workshop for 8-11 year-old girls from Brixton. Over the last two years, we have been teaching scientific, mainly biological, concepts in experiment-based classes to children from ethnic minorities and/or disadvantaged social backgrounds. With the help of a BBSRC Community Award, we organised 'The Cell Exhibition and Show', an interactive science show attended by about 80 primary school children and their teachers. Eighteen girls are attending the current BSC which takes place on Wednesday afternoons (4:30-5:45pm) at the Baytree Community Centre, Brixton. This term's topic is 'Aquatic Life'. From January 2005, we will explore our surroundings in a course about 'Biochemistry at Home'. The current course is supported by a BBSRC Small Grant Award for Public Engagement.

Outcomes:
The children develop an interest in exploring their surroundings.
Their performance in science classes at school improves.
In the long term, the BSC may affect their career choices.

Follow-on activities from this project:
Teacher training courses.
A handbook with science experiments for teaching of science to children.

Key barriers and how were they overcome:
Our main problem was lack of discipline during the classes. This problem was partly overcome by introduction of stricter rules and by working with smaller groups. Discipline was also improved by giving the children more practical experiments to do and by introducing quizzes and competitions. A positive effect of these changes is that the children show more interest in the scientific topics.

Evaluation method: Questionnaires and worksheets.

Tips and lessons learnt: Classes that involve the children in experiments work best.

Budget (including staff time):

Less than 5K	5-10K	10-20K	20-50K	50K+
√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Project contacts and partners:
Astrid Wingler (a.wingler@ucl.ac.uk)
Brigitte Meunier (b.meunier@ucl.ac.uk)