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# Evaluation of the Govanhill Play Project

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Arrivo | Consulting

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background to the evaluation

In June 2015, the Jeely Piece Club was successful in bidding for funding from Inspiring Scotland's Go2Play Play Ranger Programme to deliver a play programme in Govanhill, in partnership with the Daisy Chain project.

The project aimed to fill a recognised gap in play services in Govanhill, but also recognised the potential for free play<sup>1</sup> to act as a vehicle for social integration by bringing together children from diverse ethnic and cultural groups through play.

The Jeely Piece Club commissioned Arrivo Consulting to carry out an evaluation of the project.

### Project description

The project had two linked strands:

- A Community based programme
- A Schools programme

Over the life of the programme, the Jeely Piece Club was successful in engaging a total of 597 children in play activities.

- 469 participated through the Schools Program
- 128 participated in the Community based programme of which:
  - 94 children participated in Street play (Summer holiday and October week)
  - 34 participated in the After school play club

The project was also successful in delivering outcomes for children. There is evidence that children who participated in both elements of Project have:

- developed confidence and social skills through play,
- played with new children and formed new relationships through play, contributing to better social integration, and
- participated in outdoor activities which increased levels of physical activity, contributing to health and wellbeing.

### Community based programme

#### • Summer Holiday Programme

The Summer Holiday Programme delivered 14 full day sessions (2 days per week) over a seven-week period. In total the Jeely Piece Club delivered 84 hours of play. The Programme was very successful in engaging children and their parents in play activities. In total, 68 children engaged in play over the period of the Summer Programme. 49 parents also participated at some point over the programme (accompanying children or getting involved with the play).

<sup>1</sup> Free Play is defined any play activity which is 'freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated' (Scottish Government, 2013).

- **October holiday**

The Jeely Piece Club also delivered a play programme during the October school holiday week. This programme had lower levels of participation. 26 children attended and there were few children participating more than once over the week.

- **After-school Play club**

Over the period (November to March 2016) the Jeely Piece club delivered an after school Play Club in Govanhill. 34 children in total have attended the club. There is now a core of around 10-15 children who attend regularly, and other children who have attended periodically.

### **Schools Programme**

The Jeely Piece Club worked with four primary schools in Govanhill to provide access to outdoor play for children. This was delivered during school hours to classes ranging from P2 to P6. Four schools participated in a seven-week programme of play activities.

- Annette St Primary School
- Cuthbertson Primary School
- Holy Cross Primary School
- St Brides Primary School

The programme achieved a very high level of engagement with children through the schools. In total 469 children engaged in play activities over a seven-week period through the school programme.

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of classes participating</b>	<b>Profile of participating classes</b>	<b>Number of children participating</b>
St Brides Primary School	4 classes	2 X P2 classes 2 x P6 classes	108
Holycross Primary school	6 classes	3 x P2 classes 3 x P3 classes	152
Annette Street Primary School	4 classes	2 x P4 classes 2 x P5 classes	102
Cuthbertson Primary School	4 classes	2 x P4 classes 2 x P6 classes	107

### **Quality of delivery**

Teachers reported that the quality of delivery of the Programme by the Jeely Piece Club was high.

- The activities delivered by the Jeely Piece Club were appropriate to the children's age and stage of development.
- The activities were well organised and the Jeely Piece Club delivery team demonstrated good team work in working with the children.
- The Jeely Piece Club staff also demonstrated good control of the group, good understanding of children, an ability to create good relationships with children.

## **Outcomes and impact of the project**

The project has been successful in delivering outcomes for children through play. This chapter reviews its wider impact on the schools, community and the Jeely Piece Club and the extent to which the project has been successful in achieving its purpose.

### **Contributing to the outcomes of the Go2Play Play Ranger Fund**

The project was funded by the Go2Play Play Ranger Fund. This section reports on the extent to which the project has contributed to the achievement of the Fund outcomes.

#### **Outcome 1: Improved social skills, confidence and self-esteem are demonstrated by children participating in play activity**

There is evidence from both the Community Programme and the Schools Programme that children developed confidence and social skills through play. These skills enable children to participate in other activities and contribute to better social integration.

#### **Outcome 2: Improved health, wellbeing and physical activity is demonstrated by children participating**

The project was successful in introducing children to outdoor play and more physically active forms of play.

- Evidence from the schools' programme shows that:
  - Children had more energy during sessions and could play continuously without breaks
  - Children asked for less breaks and the length of a game/activity could be extended.
  - Some teachers reported that children were using the games during play time, which meant that more children were physically active during break times too.
- Feedback from parents and children at the community programme show that children who would have been playing indoors (typically playing with computers or watching TV) enjoyed the outdoor play and were more motivated to participate in physically active play than they otherwise would have been.

Although it is difficult to demonstrate increased health and wellbeing over the short timescale of the programme, learning from other projects suggest that introducing free play in the early year's stage is the critical first step on a pathway to a physically active life.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Outcome 4: Parents and carers grow in confidence and let their children play outside more**

The project was clearly successful in getting children (who otherwise would not play outdoors) engaged in outdoor play, but it is unrealistic to expect that a seven-week project could influence parental confidence and attitudes to safety (which are key

<sup>2</sup> Learning from investing in Active Play and Youth Sport, Robertson Trust and Inspiring Scotland. <http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/38761/Active-Play-Youth-Sport-Infographic-smaller-file.pdf>

barriers to outdoor play) in the longer term.

In Schools, teachers reported that they were more aware of the benefits of outdoor play, and most teachers reported that they were more likely to take children outdoors during class time.

### **Outcome 5: Parents/carers/children demonstrate/feel a growth in community spirit and appreciation of their neighbourhood**

There is evidence to demonstrate that the project has been successful in enabling children from diverse communities to interact and build relationships which contribute to better social integration (for example, children from different communities playing together at school, families from Govanhill bringing their children to the Play zone in Castlemilk).

### **Impact on schools**

The schools programme sought to encourage social integration, support language learning and provide opportunities for teachers to learn about play approaches.

- **social integration**

Teachers and children reported that play provided a vehicle for children to interact with other children who were not in their immediate friendship group. There was evidence of the development of new social links/friendship groups in classes.

- **support language learning**

Teachers identified that the project improved social skills (the social aspects of play such as following rules, taking turns etc.) but also improved speaking and listening skills. For children who have English as an additional language (EAL learners), play provided an informal but inclusive environment which gave EAL children the confidence and motivation to speak in English.

Some teachers also reported that the play programme built children's confidence to engage in other activities in class.

- **provide opportunities for teachers to learn about play approaches.**

All teachers recognised the benefits of play and reported that they were more likely to consider using play activities to support children's learning and development in future (although many of the schools already use outdoor learning and play activities in teaching due to the mixed level of language skills in the class).

### **Has the project been successful in embedding play within the schools?**

The project was successful in introducing more play into schools and introducing teachers to more play based approaches to learning.

Teachers learned some new games and activities and the majority of teachers reported that they were likely to continue to use many of the games (learned from the sessions) with their class.

However, the long term impact of the project on schools could be improved through

more direct work with teachers to develop a clear shared understanding of the vision and purpose of the project.

### **Impact for the community**

The funding for the project only allowed the Jeely Piece Club to deliver a short-term project, but the project this has confirmed both the need for the service and confirmed that play can 'make a difference'.

The Jeely Piece Club is committed to the development of sustainable play services for Govanhill and is starting to explore funding options and developing plans for creation of local jobs through engaging and training local volunteers to become paid play workers in future.

### **Impact on the Jeely Piece Club**

The development of the new project in Govanhill has built the confidence and capacity of the organisation for further project development.

As a result, the Jeely Piece Club is considering a new strategy for development of its services into new (geographic) areas. This strategy will increase the levels of play provision in communities of need and support the sustainability of the Jeely Piece Club in the longer term.

### **Learning from the project**

A number of key learning points have emerged from the planning and delivery of the project. These lessons should inform the development of the Jeely Piece Club's strategy for future service development.

#### **The need to invest more time in scoping and developing relationships with key partners**

The challenges in implementing a project in a new area have highlighted the amount of lead-in time required to plan and develop a strategic approach to community engagement. Any new project development should build in time for scoping of the area and developing relationships with key local organisations.

#### **Longer timescale required to develop 'trust based' relationships with communities**

Although the Summer Programme was successful in engaging with local families, it attracted fewer children from the Roma community than anticipated. The project demonstrated that services are not always taken up by the target client group, especially where these are communities who are most disengaged from services. It takes time it takes to 'embed' new services in community.

Other research<sup>3</sup> on the play sector has indicated that a 'trusted local organisation' is often a critical success factor in engaging children in play and other activities.

It takes time for communities to develop trust in a new organisation. This has implications for delivery organisations and for funders – funding short term projects will not deliver long term outcomes for communities, and funders have to be prepared to invest in services over a longer timescale to enable services to become embedded in communities and for communities to develop trust in service providers.

### **Developing a shared purpose and vision for the project**

The success of any project requires all partners to have a shared vision of the purpose and outcomes.

The short lead in time for the project affected the capacity to engage effectively with schools. As a result, some of the class teachers were less aware of the overall purpose of the project.

In future, the Jeely Piece Club would want to spend more time working with the school (including class teachers) to develop a clearer shared understanding of the purpose and outcomes of the project to maximise the opportunity to embed 'play' approaches in each school.

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<sup>3</sup> Learning from investing in Active Play and Youth Sport, Robertson Trust and Inspiring Scotland. <http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/38761/Active-Play-Youth-Sport-Infographic-smaller-file.pdf>



## Introduction to the evaluation

In June 2015, the Jeely Piece Club was successful in bidding for funding from Inspiring Scotland's Go2Play Play Ranger Programme to deliver a programme which would engage children in Govanhill in play. The bid sought to work in partnership with another local Govanhill partner, the Crossreach Daisychain project.

The project aimed to fill a recognised gap in play services in Govanhill, but also recognised the potential for free play<sup>4</sup> to act as a vehicle for social integration by bringing together children from diverse ethnic and cultural groups through play.

The Jeely Piece Club commissioned Arrivo Consulting to carry out an evaluation of the project.

The report summarises the outcomes and impact of the project, and considers the extent to which the project has achieved its original vision and purpose.

## Methodology

Arrivo Consulting was involved in the design of the evaluation framework and in developing evaluation tools which were implemented by the staff of the Jeely Piece Club.

The Jeely Piece Club staff had been trained in the use of evaluation tools through the delivery of the Active Play Programme, so had the in-house expertise to implement the evaluation tools.

Arrivo Consulting then carried out an analysis of the information collected by the Jeely Piece club staff which included:

- A review of the monitoring information produced
- Review of observation sheets used to record evidence of outcomes through play
- Review of survey completed by children who attended the summer street play programme and afterschool club
- Review of feedback from parents who attended the summer street play Programme
- Review of a survey of teachers at the 4 primary schools

Arrivo Consulting also carried out further primary research:

- Interviews with 6 teachers and 1 head teacher
- Interviews with the Chief Executive and staff of the Jeely Piece Club.

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<sup>4</sup> Free Play is defined any play activity which is 'freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated' (Scottish Government, 2013).

## Background to the project

### The Jeely Piece Club

The Jeely Piece Club is a charitable organisation based in Castlemilk, Glasgow which supports children and families through the delivery of high quality nursery and play services. The Jeely Piece Club operates from Castlemilk, but also provides outreach services to other communities.

The Jeely Piece Club has benefited from investment and support through Inspiring Scotland's Go2Play Programme which has helped to build the capacity and skills of the organisation to develop and deliver innovative services. The Jeely Piece Club is now recognised as a centre of excellence, carrying out innovative, exciting and challenging work in the field of play, Early Years and children's services.

### Govanhill

The project was delivered in Govanhill, a neighbouring community in the south side of Glasgow. Govanhill is an area of multiple deprivation and the most culturally diverse community in Scotland. An analysis of recent deprivation statistics shows:

- 4 of the 12 data zones making up Govanhill are within the bottom 15% of data zones in Scotland.
- One of these data zones occupies the bottom 5% of data zones in Scotland

The area demonstrates high levels of relative deprivation

- 3,796 (25.6%) of the adult population is described as 'income deprived' which is similar to the Glasgow levels (25.1% of adults in Glasgow) but considerably higher than levels across Scotland (13.1% SIMD 2012),
- 2,300 (22.5%) of those of employment age are 'employment deprived'. This shows higher levels employment deprivation than the Glasgow average (19.2 SIMD 2012) and significantly higher than the Scottish average (12.9% SIMD 2012).

It is an area which with a high population density, and suffers from associated problems of overcrowding and pressure on local infrastructure and resources.

It is an ethnically diverse area – there are 52 spoken languages in the communities in Govanhill. It is now Scotland's most ethnically diverse community with 40% of local residents from ethnic minorities.

In recent years the area has seen an influx of immigration from Eastern Europe, including a large Roma community<sup>5</sup>. Research shows that the Roma community (predominantly Slovakian) suffers from extreme poverty, live in poor quality and overcrowded housing and have limited access to health and other services. Many have no or very little English as a second language.

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<sup>5</sup>Estimated 3,500 – 4,000 people - Social Marketing Gateway (2013) *Mapping the Roma Community in Scotland: Final Report*. Glasgow: The Social Marketing Gateway.

## The purpose of the Govanhill Play Project

In 2015, Inspiring Scotland invited applications for play organisations to deliver new services through its Go2Play Play Ranger Fund. The focus of the Go2Play Play Ranger Fund in 2015 was to support play providers to develop new, or expand existing, play ranger provision for vulnerable children and disadvantaged groups and to support the outcomes sought in Scotland's Play Strategy.

### What are Play Rangers?

Play Rangers provide opportunities to access free play provision within a community – on street corners, in local parks or woodland. They encourage children to attend the free open access sessions and provide comfort to parents /carers who may not be able to normally allow or enable their children to play outside. Although the play rangers are qualified play workers, the play at these sessions is facilitated and encouraged by Play Rangers but not led by them. (Inspiring Scotland website)

The Jeely Piece Club identified that there was a gap in the provision of play services in Govanhill, but also recognised the potential for free play<sup>6</sup> to act as a vehicle for bringing together children from diverse ethnic and cultural groups to encourage social integration in the area.

The project model was developed from previous Play Ranger provision delivered by Jeely Piece and other Play Charities across Scotland. It followed the Play Ranger Toolkit Guide <http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/38774/Play-Ranger-Toolkit-March-15.pdf>

The Jeely Piece Club consulted with Glasgow Life, the Education Department of Glasgow City Council, Daisy Chain (a local early years provider in Govanhill which is already connecting with the Roma community) and with the four primary schools in the area to develop a proposal to deliver a new project under the Go2Play Play Ranger Fund.

The project had two main elements:

- A community based programme providing:
  - Street play during the school summer and October holiday period aimed at engaging local children and encouraging integration through play.
  - An after-school play club which was delivered twice a week from community centre in Govanhill.
- A school based programme which provided outdoor play sessions in four primary schools in the area during term time.

<sup>6</sup> Free Play is defined any play activity which is 'freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated' (Scottish Government, 2013).

## **Community based programme**

### **Holiday Programme**

The holiday programme was aimed at engaging local children and encouraging integration through play.

The Jeely Piece Club developed a partnership with Crossreach's Daisy Chain project, a project in Govanhill that uses play-based interventions with parents and children to promote attachment and improve the lives of children.

Daisy Chain was already engaging some Roma families in its services and it was anticipated that the street play would complement services, providing more opportunities to engage older children (up to 12) from the Roma community. It was originally planned to deliver the play programme at the same time as a Daisy Chain was delivering a project aimed at for parents and younger children – thereby providing something for older siblings of the families who used Daisy Chain.

Daisy Chain also has a bi-lingual outreach worker. As part of the partnership project, the outreach worker promoted the street play to Roma families and provided 'on site' support at the Street Play to provide interpreter services as required.

The Community based programme also aimed to raise awareness of community facilities and encourage children and their families to use the facilities in the area. As part of the programme, the play workers introduced children to other parks and facilities in the area, and at the end of the programme organised a trip to the Play zone in Castlemilk.

### **After school play club**

In an effort to increase the level of play provision for children in the area, the Jeely Piece Club started an after-school club in November 2015 which provided opportunities for play on two evenings a week.

This was initially delivered in the Larkfield Centre, but following advice from local agencies, the Jeely Piece Club moved the play club to the Daisy Street Neighbourhood Centre.

## **Schools Programme**

The schools programme aimed to work with four primary schools in Govanhill.

- Annette St Primary School
- Cuthbertson Primary School
- Holy Cross Primary School
- St Brides Primary School

The school population of the primary schools in Govanhill reflects the diversity of the community each of the schools have pupils from a variety of ethnic groups. All of the classes have children who are EAL learners (English as an additional language) and in most classes there are children who speak little or no English. There are also children who have no previous experience of school.

The schools programme offered access to outdoor play through sessions delivered by the Jeely Piece club during class time in each of the four schools.

The Play programme also sought to introduce children to other facilities in the area and each class was offered a session at the Play zone in Castlemilk. The programme also culminated in a play day in a local park which brought together children from all four of the school involved in the programme.

### **Anticipated outcomes**

The project was funded under the Go2Play Play Ranger Programme. As such, the Jeely Piece Club designed a project which would deliver the outcomes of the Play Ranger Programme.

The outcomes that the Jeely Piece Club sought to deliver were:

- Outcome 1: Improved social skills, confidence and self-esteem are demonstrated by children participating in play activity
- Outcome 2: Improved health, wellbeing and physical activity is demonstrated by children participating
- Outcome 4: Parents and carers grow in confidence and let their children play outside more
- Outcome 5: Parents/carers/children demonstrate/feel a growth in community spirit and appreciation of their neighbourhood

### **Wider aspirations for the project**

- **For schools**

The introduction of play programme in partnership with the Jeely Piece Club offered the opportunity for schools to achieve a range of complementary outcomes:

- Social integration
  - Play would provide a fun way for children from diverse communities to interact and build relationships.
- Language development
  - Play provides opportunities to develop children's language skills in an informal setting.
- CPD for teachers
  - A professional development opportunity for teachers to develop play skills, leaving a legacy of play skills in the school.

The project also contributes the achievement of GIRFEC outcomes by providing opportunities for children to be active, healthy, nurtured and included.

- **For the Jeely Piece Club**

The Jeely Piece Club has experience in the delivery of 'outreach' projects, but the scope and objective of this project - to develop and embed play services in a new area - was a new development opportunity for the Jeely Piece Club.

The Jeely Piece Club wanted to build the skills and capacity of the organisation to deliver new projects and services, but also to learn from the experience to inform future

business development plans aimed at extending the provision of services into new areas and improving the sustainability of the organisation.

## Review of project delivery

This chapter summarises the activities delivered by the project through the Community based programme and the Schools Programme.

### Community Programme

#### Summer Holiday Programme

There was a very short timescale between the approval of funds and the establishment of the Holiday Programme. However, the Jeely Piece Club was very successful in developing and delivering a street play programme in a very short timescale.

Delivery of the Holiday Programme commenced in July 2015. It delivered varied outdoor play activities for two days each week during the school holidays.

The Programme delivered 14 full day sessions over seven weeks (84 hours of play in total).

The Programme was very successful in engaging children and their parents in play activities. In total

- 68 children engaged in play
- 49 parents also participated at some point over the programme (accompanying children or getting involved with the play).

However, the project had aimed to engage with the Roma community in Govanhill, but few Roma families/children participated in the project. The majority of children and families who attended were from the Asian community in the area.

Although Daisy Chain provided a bi-lingual outreach worker who helped to promote the project and supported the delivery of the project (providing interpreter services for those children and families who did engage in the project) the project struggled to engage large numbers of children from the Roma community.

The Jeely Piece Club continued to promote the project through face-to face meetings with other local organisations that worked with children and families in the area.

The project was very popular among the children and families who attended, with many children (and their parents) attending every session, despite the bad weather.

#### October holiday

The Jeely Piece Club also delivered a play programme during the October school holiday week based from Larkfield centre in Govanhill. This programme had lower levels of participation and despite promoting the programme, only 26 children attended and there were few children participating more than once over the week.

### **Afterschool Play club**

Consultation with local organisations and with families who had used the summer Holiday Programme had identified that there were very few 'out of school' opportunities for children. The Jeely Piece Club therefore established an after school play club in order to meet this need and to embed play services in the community.

However, although parents and other local organisations identified that there was a gap in provision for children in Govanhill, it has been difficult to embed the play club in the area.

Participation in the club was initially very low and following consultation with local organisations, the Jeely Piece Club changed the location of the club to Daisy Street Neighbourhood Centre in an attempt to make it more accessible to children in the area. It was also promoted at the schools where the Jeely Piece club has delivered the Schools Programme.

Over the period of delivery (November to March 2016) 34 children in total have attended the club. There is now a core of around 10-15 children who attend regularly, and other children who have attended periodically.

The play club provides children with opportunities for a range of different play experiences but the Jeely Piece Club have incorporated games and physical activity into the club to encourage children to be more physically active.

### **Schools Programme**

The Schools Programme operated in four primary schools in Govanhill. The play team delivered a seven-week programme of play activities in each school.

Schools identified which classes they wanted to target for the play activity, based on their assessment of need for additional support (for example those classes where there was a recognised need to build confidence, to build language skills or to build greater cohesion in the class).

This resulted in the participation of children ranging from Primary 2 (5-6 year olds) to Primary 6 (10-11 year olds).

The programme achieved a very high level of engagement with children through the schools. In total 469 children engaged in play activities over a seven-week period through the school programme.

School	Number of classes participating	Profile of participating classes	Number of children participating
St Brides Primary School	4 classes	2 X P2 classes 2 x P6 classes	108
Holycross Primary school	6 classes	3 x P2 classes 3 x P3 classes	152
Annette Street Primary School	4 classes	2 x P4 classes 2 x P5 classes	102
Cuthbertson Primary School	4 classes	2 x P4 classes 2 x P6 classes	107

The play activities were delivered during class time, so the play activity was additional to the physical activity that children already receive at school in Physical Education classes. The sessions were planned to increase children's levels of physical activity. All sessions were delivered outside, providing an opportunity for more out-door play for the children and introducing them to games and activities that could play in the playground and elsewhere.

Most class teachers were involved in the delivery of the sessions. They supported the play team, but also got the opportunity to learn new games and activities and to observe the children's levels of participation in new activities.

### Quality of delivery

We asked teachers for feedback on the quality of the delivery of the Programme and on the appropriateness of the activities (in relation to children's age/stage of development).

Teachers were very positive about the quality of delivery and identified the following strengths in the delivery team:

- Well organised activities/good team work within the Jeely Piece Club delivery team
- Good control and understanding of children
- Ability to create good relationships with the children:
  - Warm, friendly and enthusiastic staff
  - Fun and approachable

*"The staff are very enthusiastic – the children loved interacting with them"*

*"The children were happy, nurtured and motivated"*

*"A simple idea, very well executed"*

The play staff had encountered some challenges with 'giving instructions' as some classes have children with little or no English, but they had relied on demonstration to help children to understand.



The only aspect of delivery which teachers suggested for improvement was to use more formal language rather than colloquial language in the play sessions. As many of the children in the primary schools in Govanhill are EAL learners (English as an Additional Language) and school is the only place that they hear English, teachers emphasised that all adults working with the children are language 'role models' and it is therefore important to use standard English to support language learning.

- **Were the activities relevant to the children's age/stage of development?**

All teachers reported that the activities delivered by the Jeely Piece Club were appropriate to the children's age and stage of development.

*"The pitch and pace of activities was well suited to the physical aptitude and language development"* (From survey of teachers)

*"They succeeded in engaging all the children – the activities were simple enough for everyone to understand, but interesting enough to keep them all engaged"* (interview with teacher of class where some children who have very little or no English)

*"The staff provided an activity for a child who has difficulty working with others"* (From survey of teachers)

Only two teachers commented that the programme of activities was a bit repetitive, and that they would have preferred progressive activities. However, other teachers commented that the repetition of activities was positive, creating a bank of activities that children remembered and could engage in easily.

## Outcomes for children

The project has been successful in delivering outcomes for children. This chapter reviews the outcomes of the two strands of the project: the community programme and the schools programme.

### Community Programme

The Summer Street Play Programme was the most successful element of the community based programme in terms of the numbers of children who engaged in this element of the programme.

However, there is evidence that children who participated in each element of the community based programme have:

- developed social skills and confidence through play
- met new children and formed new relationships (contributing to social integration)
- were introduced to new activities and to outdoor play (contributing to health and wellbeing)

### Children developed social skills and confidence through play

There is evidence that children are developing confidence and developing social skills through play. These skills enable children to participate in activities and contribute to better social integration.

The case studies below demonstrate how the project has supported the development of social skills and confidence.

#### Developing social skills

'R' is an 8-year boy. He attended the Summer Play Programme.

R has quite a forceful character and could be quite domineering. He didn't listen very well to instructions when playing team games or involved in group work, and could be quite dismissive of other children. As a result, it was difficult for him to cooperate with other children.

In order to improve his ability to play with the other children, the staff team started to give him a role in leading games and in demonstrating the rules to others. He responded well to the opportunity to be a leader and to 'give instructions' but as a result, also seemed to better understand the importance of listening to instructions.

The staff noted that he got better at listening to instructions but also that he seemed to respect other children when they were 'leading' the games. As a result, he found it easier to play with other children.

### **Developing confidence**

'A' is 5 years old. He attended the Summer Programme sessions with his Mum. He was very shy and lacked confidence to participate in group activities and communicate with other children. His mum got involved in the games to encourage him to participate in the activities.

Over the weeks, 'A' became more confident and could participate without his mother.

At the end of the Summer Programme, the Jeely Piece Club organised a visit to the Play zone (play facility in Castlemilk). 'A' was confident enough to go on the trip without his Mother.

### **Improving social integration**

The community based play programme has provided opportunities for children to interact with children that they otherwise would not know. As a result, children have formed new friendships and relationships which contribute to better social integration.

From a sample of 14 children who participated in the summer programme:

- All 14 children reported that they had played with new children
- 13 of 14 children said that they had made new friends.

A sample of eight children who participated in the after-school play programme, all eight reported that they had played with new children made new friends through the club.

Play staff also collected a number of case studies and examples of the impact of the play programme on individual children. An example is provided below.

### **Improving social integration**

R is nine-year-old girl. Her family has recently come to Scotland from Romania. She speaks very little English.

Initially R came along to the Summer Programme but was not confident in joining in with the activities. She has little experience of participating in organised group activities, didn't know the games that the children were playing and the language barrier meant that they couldn't communicate with the other children

However, another child C, who was the only other girl of a similar age, decided to befriend R. C asked the translator to translate basic words that would allow her to communicate with R, and started to encourage her to play. The two girls got involved in rounders and dodgeball. R's mother was delighted that she had made friends and left her for an hour on their own at the street play.

As a result, R (and their mother) became regular attenders at the street play sessions.

Although the language barrier persisted, R became more confident about joining in and was clearly enjoying herself. Although communication was limited, she made friends with other children through the physical activities - playing at skipping, rounders etc.

At the end of the Programme, her mother told the play workers that R was much more confident about starting school (she hadn't been to school before) because she had such a positive experience with local children at the street play.

### **Introducing children to new activities and outdoor play**

The Summer Holiday Programme was delivered outdoors. It aimed to introduce children to outdoor play and to engage children in more active forms of play.

The Programme has been successful in engaging children who would not normally play outside and in introducing them to more physically active play.

- Of 14 children aged between 5 and 11 years old who attended the Summer street Play Programme, only 3 said that they would be playing outdoors if not at the Play Programme.
- The other 11 responses involved playing at home with the majority of responses being screen-related sedentary activities:
  - Watching TV (4)
  - Playing on computer/iPad (3)
  - Playing Play station/Xbox (2)
  - Reading/games (2)
- 12 of 14 children reported that that they had 'done something new at street play'
  - the examples they gave were all active, outdoor activities (water games, swingball, ball games etc.).

Feedback from parents confirmed that there were few facilities in the area for children and that children usually played indoors. Parents reported that if not for the Holiday Programme, their children would probably have been playing indoors during the summer holidays.

Parents reported that children were more interested /motivated to play outdoors as a result of the programme.

### **Increased interest/motivation in outdoor play**

A parent of three children explained that she struggled to take her children to activities in the area because her children were of different ages/stages. However, all of them could engage in the street play.

If it hadn't been for the street play, she reported that the children would probably be 'at home, playing indoors with computer games'.

The children have been setting an alarm clock so not to miss the start of the start of the street play sessions.

R is 5 years old. His mother said that usually he plays indoors with x-box or on the iPad.

Since attending the street play, R has been introduced to lots of new activities and has become much more interested in outdoor play. Now likes to invite his cousins over to play in his garden and he shows them the games he learnt at the play sessions.

Although the after-school play club is delivered indoors, it includes a range of different activities and always incorporates active play and games.

- seven of eight children said that they usually played indoors and gave examples of sedentary activities (computer games etc.)
- seven of the eight children said that they had played new games/activities that they had never done before.

*"I like to play with my new friends. I like to play games with the staff. Duck, Duck Goose is my favourite"* Boy, 7 years old

*"It's actually so much fun"* Boy, 7 years old

## Schools Programme

The schools programme sought to encourage social integration, support language learning and provide opportunities for teachers to learn about play approaches.

14 teachers from the four primary schools gave feedback on the impact of the programme through survey or interview. Only one teacher did not identify any impact of the project on the children or on their own learning.

### Improved social integration

Teachers identified that the play activities provided opportunities for all children to be involved and as a result they identified:

- Children, especially EAL children becoming more confident about participating in 'whole class activities
- Children communicating more with each other during play
- Children supporting each other irrespective of ethnic group
- Children playing with and interacting with other children who were not in their immediate friendship group
- The development of some new social links/friendship groups

*"Children with limited English are more confident in participating in whole class activities"* (From survey of teachers)

*"it was very inclusive – it supported the whole team ethos in the school"* (From survey of teachers)

*"it encourages bonding in the class"* (From interview with teacher).

*"the children who are new to English felt a sense of achievement because they could be involved in the whole session"* (From survey of teachers)

*"the children were on an equal footing in this class - this is one of the few things that the class can do together"* (From interview with teacher).

*"it was very inclusive - they developed an activity around the needs of a boy with additional learning needs"*

### **Improved social integration**

'A' has additional learning needs and the staff found it difficult to encourage him to participate with his class mates. As a result, he was left out, but also missing out on the physical activity.

The staff devised an activity which 'A' could do on his own. They developed an obstacle course to encourage his physical activity and gave him support to develop his physical skills while the other children played other games.

When A was confident on the obstacle course, the staff introduced the other children to it.

Because he was more confident, he was able and willing to participate with the other children in his class, allowing him to be included in a whole –class activity.

### **What the children said**

Children reported that the play sessions had given them opportunities to play with and interact with children that they didn't usually play with.

*"It's so good we get to play together - we don't usually play with each other."*  
(Girl, Age 10)

For some children, the opportunities to interact with others at the play sessions had resulted in the development of new friendships.

P is Romanian. After three play sessions she told the play staff that she had made friends with two classmates at the play sessions. Now she has people to play with a

break time as she didn't have friends to play with before.

Teachers also reported a number of specific examples where individual children had been included through play.

*"There are eight children in my class with little or no English and one who hasn't been to school before – the play sessions were an opportunity for them to join in"*

*"Two boys in the class who were quite isolated got involved with the rest of the class through the games"*

*"It has helped three new children (with very little English) to assimilate"*

*"One child in my class (EAL) has been teaching the games to three new children (EAL) so that they can join in"*

Another benefit of the play sessions identified by a number of teachers is that play sessions taught the children a set of common games which allows them to play together in the playground.

Teachers reported that children from different cultures frequently lacked a set of 'common' games which would allow them to play together. Some of the children have never been to school before and have little experience of the social elements of play. The play sessions had given the children a set of common games that they all knew and that they could play together. Teachers noted that some of the children were initiating the games (learned at the sessions) in the playground, and that had allowed children who often 'stand about on their own' to get involved in the playground.

*"It has provided a structure to 'play' at playtime. Children who were reluctant to join in, now 'know the rules' so they can join in too."*

*"Children, especially those with little English are becoming more confident to participate"*

### **Impact on children's learning**

We asked about the impact of the play programme on children's learning. It must of course be recognised that the programme lasted only seven weeks, so it is important to be realistic about the potential impact on learning.

Teachers reported that the play sessions had provided good opportunities for the development of social skills. For example, teachers reported that they had seen evidence of children developing a range of 'soft skills' at the play sessions including:

- Following instructions
- Taking turns
- Awareness of rules/'playing fair'
- Tolerance of rules and different abilities
- Team working

- Problem solving

*"They [play staff] emphasised the 'rules' of the game and things like 'taking turns' throughout the session – the children had to listen and follow instructions"*

The other area of impact was on children's speaking and listening skills. Teachers reported that the informal atmosphere (and the children's interest in participating) had given some (EAL) children the confidence and motivation to speak in English.

*"You could see them – really listening to the rules"*

*"They were more willing to speak in English during the games"*

*"They learned some new vocabulary through repetition of words in the games"*

*"M [who had very little English] has learned his colours and the names of his classmates through playing the games"*

*"They chose a boy who has little English to lead a game. He had to instruct the other children – he was leading the play"*

Some teachers also reported that the play programme had resulted in increased confidence among some children, which had enabled them to better engage in activities in the class.

*I have a boy in my class who has very little English. It is very difficult for him to participate in the class. He doesn't engage with me at all, and he doesn't usually engage in activities.*

*During the play sessions he was really involved – it's the first time I've ever seen him smile and laugh.*

*At the session at the Playzone, he came up to me to ask me to help him with his costume – that's the first time he has ever spoken directly to me. (Teacher)*

### **Promoting outdoor play and physical activity**

All of the schools' sessions were delivered outdoors to promote outdoor play and increase levels of physical activity.

Although the programme lasted only seven weeks, play staff saw indications that children were increasing their levels of physical activity through the sessions. Staff observations included:

- Children had more energy during sessions and could play continuously without breaks
- Children asked for less breaks and the length of a game/activity could be extended.



Some teachers reported that children were using the games during play time, which meant that more children were physically active during break times too.

### **What the children said**

M Age 6: *"I love being outside"*

H age 9: *"I get to play and gets loads of exercise I wouldn't get."*

A Age 7: *"I like playing the games and having a juice break - the ladies are fun"*

S Age 10: *"I like playing all the games and that it is outside in the fresh air"*

T Age 9: *"Exercising whilst playing fun games - I love it"*

### **Has the project been successful in embedding play within the schools?**

We asked teachers:

- If they were more likely to consider using play activities to support children's learning and development in future, and
- if they were likely to continue to use any of the play activities (learned from the sessions) with their class.

All teachers recognised the benefits of play and reported that they were more likely to consider using play activities to support children's learning and development in future (although many of the schools already use outdoor learning and play activities in teaching due to the mixed level of language skills in the class).

There is also evidence that teachers learned some new games and activities and the majority of teachers also reported that they were likely to continue to use many of the games (learned from the sessions) with their class.

*"I've learned lots of new games to use with the class – it's always good to get new ideas and resources that you can use"*

*"I've been using the games as warm up in PE lessons"*

*"The children ask for the games at PE – they love them"*

*"The play staff introduced the class to hockey at one of the sessions – I've been doing that with the class in PE"*

However, while all of the teachers were very positive about the quality and immediate impact of the play programme, some were less clear about the vision and purpose of the

project, and were therefore less clear about how the project would influence the culture within the school and 'embed' play approaches in the longer term.

## Impact of the project

We have already reported on the outcomes that the project has delivered for children in Govanhill. This chapter reviews its wider impact and the extent to which the project has been successful in achieving its purpose.

It summarises the extent to which the project had delivered outcomes which contribute to the Go2Play Play Ranger Fund, but also the extent to which it has achieved the aspirations of the schools and the Jeely Piece Club itself.

In reviewing the outcomes, it is important to remember that this was a short-term project (the School programme and the Summer Programme operated for only seven weeks) and expectations of outcomes in that timeframe must be realistic.

## Contribution to the outcomes of the Go2Play Play Ranger Fund

The project was funded by the Go2Play Play Ranger Fund. This section reports on the extent to which the project has contributed to the achievement of the Fund outcomes.

### **Outcome 1: Improved social skills, confidence and self-esteem are demonstrated by children participating in play activity**

There is evidence from both the Community Programme and the Schools Programme that children have developed confidence and social skills through play. Confidence and social skills enable children to participate in other activities which contributes to better social integration.

### **Outcome 2: Improved health, wellbeing and physical activity is demonstrated by children participating**

The project was successful in introducing children to outdoor play and more physically active forms of play.

- Evidence from the schools' programme shows that children are playing the games learned through the project in the playground, increasing their levels of physical activity at school.
- Feedback from parents and children at the community programme show that children who would have been playing indoors (typically playing with computers or watching TV) enjoyed the outdoor play and were more motivated to do physically active play than they otherwise would have been.

Although it is difficult to demonstrate increased health and wellbeing over the short timescale of the programme, learning from other projects suggest that introducing free play in the early year's stage is the critical first step on a pathway to a physically active life.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Learning from investing in Active Play and Youth Sport, Robertson Trust and Inspiring Scotland. <http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/38761/Active-Play-Youth-Sport-Infographic-smaller-file.pdf>

#### **Outcome 4: Parents and carers grow in confidence and let their children play outside more**

Only the Summer Street Play Programme had the capacity to contribute to this outcome. Parents identified the 'safe environment' as one of the reasons for allowing their children to come to the summer programme. The project was clearly successful in engaging children who otherwise would not play outdoors, but it is unrealistic to expect that a seven-week project could influence parental confidence and attitudes to safety (which are key barriers to outdoor play) in the longer term.

There is evidence to suggest that teachers have been influenced by the project. Teachers reported that they were more aware of the benefits of outdoor play, and most teachers reported that they were more likely to take children outdoors during class time.

#### **Outcome 5: Parents/carers/children demonstrate/feel a growth in community spirit and appreciation of their neighbourhood**

The project has had a lesser impact on parents and carers (parents have been engaged through the community strand, but there is no parental engagement through the Schools Programme) but there is considerable evidence to demonstrate that the project has been successful in enabling children from diverse communities to interact and build relationships which contribute to better social integration (for example, children from different communities playing together at school, families from Govanhill bringing their children to the Play zone in Castlemilk).

### **Impact for the schools**

The schools programme sought to encourage social integration, support language learning and provide opportunities for teachers to learn about play approaches.

- **social integration**

There is evidence that children who were socially isolated in the class have been included through play, and that children with little or no English have been able to join-in. The play programme is one of the few activities that all children, irrespective of language or physical ability could participate in.

Teachers and children reported that play provided a vehicle for children to interact with other children who were not in their immediate friendship group. There was evidence of new social links/friendship groups in classes.

- **support language learning**

Teachers identified that the project improved social skills (the social aspects of play such as following rules, taking turns etc.) but also improved speaking and listening skills. For EAL learners, play provided an informal but inclusive environment which gave EAL children the confidence and motivation to speak in English.

Some teachers also reported that the play programme built some children's confidence to engage in other activities in class.

- **provide opportunities for teachers to learn about play approaches.**

All teachers recognised the benefits of play and reported that they were more likely to consider using play activities to support children's learning and development in future.

- **Has the project been successful in embedding play within the schools?**

The project was successful in introducing more play into schools, introducing teachers to more play based approaches to learning and providing teachers with some additional play activities to use.

- Most teachers reported that they were more likely to consider using play activities to support children's learning and development in future.
- Most teachers reported that they were more likely take children outdoors during class time.
- Most teachers had learned some new games and activities and the majority of teachers also reported that they were likely to continue to use many of the games (learned from the sessions) with their class.

However, the long term impact of the project on schools could be improved through more direct work with teachers to develop a clear shared understanding of the vision and purpose of the project.

## **Impact for the Jeely Piece Club**

The project has built the skills and confidence of staff and the capacity of the organisation. It has also influenced the strategic development of the organisation.

## **Learning and development for staff**

The project has increased the skills and capacity of delivery staff.

- **Increased understanding of cultural diversity**

Inspiring Scotland brokered training for staff on understanding cultural diversity which has helped staff to develop their awareness and understanding of different cultures and the impact on children's attitudes and behaviours to play.

- **Increased confidence and morale in delivery staff**

While all staff at the Jeely Piece Club are experienced play workers, the delivery of the project required staff to respond to new and different challenges involved in working in a new area and with diverse cultures. Staff have risen to the challenge and taken responsibility for the development of the project, which has in turn resulted in increased confidence and morale among individuals and in the organisation.

## **Organisational development for the Jeely Piece Club**

The success of the project has increased the capacity, confidence and profile of the Jeely Piece Club.

- **Built new skills and capacity for project development and implementation**

The development of the project built the skills and capacity of the management team in the development of new partnerships with stakeholders in Govanhill. The implementation of the project also highlighted some weaknesses and gaps in the Jeely Piece Clubs organisational structure and processes. The delivery of the project has resulted in the development of additional staff training and improvements in management structures and processes.

The learning from this project has informed the Jeely Piece Club's approach to the development of a new project in the Priesthill area. In particular, the Jeely Piece Club now has a better understanding of the scoping and development work required before moving into a new area.

- **Raised the profile of the Jeely Piece Club in Govanhill**

The development and delivery of the project has increased the profile of the Jeely Piece Club as a play provider in Govanhill. The Jeely Piece Club has developed a new network and new partnerships with organisations in Govanhill. The project has also enabled the Jeely Piece Club to develop relationships with families and the community

- **Raised the national profile of the Jeely Piece Club**

The project has helped to increase the profile of the Jeely Piece Club at a national level. Govanhill Play was featured at the National Play Conference at Murrayfield, Edinburgh where three partners who are involved in the delivery play based projects in Govanhill (Jeely Piece Club, Crossreach and Homestart Glasgow South) jointly presented how play was addressing the challenges faced by the Govanhill community.

The Jeely Piece Club was also invited by Scottish Government and Inspiring Scotland to make a presentation at the four nations play symposium in Belfast 2016 on the innovative work in Govanhill which is funded through the Go2Play investment. As a result, the Jeely Piece Club is developing a national profile for innovation in the delivery of play and children's services, and raising the profile of play as a mechanism to address community cohesion.

- **Influencing the development strategy of the Jeely Piece Club**

The success of the project has built the confidence of the Jeely Piece Club to pursue a new development strategy. The strategy seeks to develop new play provision in new geographic communities - increasing play provision in communities of need and building the sustainability of the Jeely Piece Club in the longer term.

## **Impact for the community**

The funding for the project only allowed the Jeely Piece club to deliver a short-term project, but the project has confirmed both the need for play services in the community and confirmed that play can 'make a difference'.

The success of the project in the short term has raised the confidence and commitment of the Jeely Piece Club to seek to develop and embed play services in the Govanhill area in the longer term.

The Jeely Piece Club is now has committed to the development of sustainable play services for Govanhill and is scoping plans to embed play services in the area. The Jeely Piece Club is starting to explore funding options and developing plans for creation of local jobs through engaging and training local volunteers to become paid play workers in future.

## **Learning from the Project**

A number of key learning points have emerged from the planning and delivery of the project. These lessons should inform the development of the Jeely Piece Club's strategy for future service development.

### **The need to invest time in scoping and developing relationships with local organisations**

There was a very short lead in time between approval of the funding and the start of the Summer Programme. This meant that the planning and development process was probably too short – there was little time to carry out a full scoping exercise in the area to find out what other organisations were doing, and how the project could work with local organisations and complement existing service.

The Jeely Piece Club had recognised that it did not have local knowledge and relationships with the Roma community and developed a partnership with a local organisation, Daisy Chain who was already working with the community and had existing links and relationships. However, it became clear that a more strategic approach to engagement of the Roma community was required.

The Jeely Piece Club has recognised that more time is required in scoping and developing links with a range of local organisations to develop a strategic approach to engagement in a new area.

### **Longer timescales required to develop 'trust based' relationships in communities**

Although the Summer Programme was successful in engaging with local families, it attracted fewer children from the Roma community than anticipated. The project demonstrated that services are not always taken up by the target client group, especially where these are communities who are most disengaged from services.

Other research<sup>8</sup> on the play sector has indicated that a 'trusted local organisation' is often a critical success factor in engaging children in play and other activities. It takes time to build relationships so that communities develop trust in organisations.

There are lessons for the delivery organisations about the time it takes to 'embed' new services in community. There are practical barriers to overcome – understanding the

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<sup>8</sup> Learning from investing in Active Play and Youth Sport, Robertson Trust and Inspiring Scotland. <http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/media/38761/Active-Play-Youth-Sport-Infographic-smaller-file.pdf>

specific needs of the local community, understanding how to engage the local community, developing relationships with local organisations who can signpost and refer people to the project, but more importantly, it takes time for communities to develop trust in a new organisation.

There are also lessons for funders – funding short term projects will not deliver long term outcomes for communities, and funders have to be prepared to invest in services over a longer timescale to enable services to become embedded in communities and for communities to develop trust in service providers.

### **Shared purpose and vision for the project**

The success of any project requires all partners to have a shared vision of the purpose and outcomes.

The short lead in time for the project affected the capacity to engage effectively with schools. Although the schools were keen to participate in the project, the short lead in time (which was also further restricted by school holidays) meant that much of the development time was spent on the practicalities of implementing the project (arranging the programme to fit the timetabling needs of each of the schools) with less time communicating with schools around the key purpose and outcomes. As a result, some of the class teachers were less aware of the overall purpose of the project.

In future, the Jeely Piece Club would want to spend more time working with the school (including class teachers) to develop a clearer shared understanding of the purpose and outcomes of the project to maximise the opportunity to embed 'play' approaches in each school.