

Community Ideas Hub Case Study

Family cycling adventure

Overview

The 'Family Cycling Adventure' is a place for primary school children and their parents to develop and practise their cycling skills. Groups of six to eight families are accompanied by two trained instructors, as well as a number of volunteers per session. The programme is targeted at families who do not currently cycle, or have never cycled before.

All sessions begin inside a large space, such as a hall, community centre or church. As families become more confident, these sessions can be taken onto the roads. Participants are also provided basic maintenance training and advice on purchasing affordable bikes, as well as storage solutions to suit individual living situations.

At the end of every term, there is an opportunity to participate in an 'adventure ride', which is planned by the staff, volunteers and parents. This ride is both on and off-road cycling and should be treated as an end of term celebration. The purpose of the adventure rides is to show families how cycling can be a fun activity, and hopefully they will continue to have their own family adventures by bike in the future.

The project has the added value of providing quality bonding time for families, as both parent and child are learning a new skill together. It also encourages social interaction between families.

Volunteers should be recruited to assist in the delivery of the session – preferably existing cyclists. As the project develops, opportunities should be made available for volunteers to assist the cycling instructors in the delivery of sessions.

Sessions should take place once a week during the school term. Sessions should last two hours, and take place after school and work (5-7pm).

Target audience and engagement

- The key target audience is families with primary school aged children. Where possible the project should be offered to low income families, or those with limited access to bikes.
- Engagement is through schools and children's services in the area. Social media can also help to reach those who may not be fully engaged with their children's schools.
- Posters and flyers, available both at events and for targeted promotion, can help promotion also.

Reach

- Medium (50 – 70 beneficiaries including family members)

Requirements

- Adult and children's bikes of various sizes
- Helmets of various sizes
- Maintenance kit
- Basic spare bike parts
- Hi-Vis vests

Resources needed

Cycle Instructor x 2 :

- Run the cycling sessions.
- Ensure participants feel confident and well looked-after.
- Instructors must be qualified and experienced, preferably with experience working with families.

Project Manager:

- Oversee the project ensuring the participants feel safe and are enjoying their time
- Ensure all funding criteria and documentation is met (if required).
- Run risk assessment for safeguarding, injuries and also to identify any other concerns which may affect project delivery.
- Gather feedback from participants.
- The Project Lead should have the requisite level of DBS. Understand health and safety needs (preferably First Aid trained).

Volunteers:

- Help participants with the sessions and provide encouragement.
- Contribute to overseeing activity and potentially fix any equipment issues.

Storage space:

- You will need somewhere to store equipment. This can be at the building you run the sessions (providing there is the space and you have permission). Alternatively you could ask at a community centre or another local business with storage room. Your council may be able to provide you with information regarding contact details. You could also use a shipping container, if anyone is willing to lend you one, otherwise one could be purchased. Try to keep this as close to the location of the sessions as possible.

Costings

Child Bikes of different sizes (£100 per bike) x8	£800
Adult Bikes of different sizes (£200 per bike) x8	£1,600
Cycle Instructor x 2	£1,800
Helmets (adult and child)	£500
Maintenance kit and spare parts	£150
Project Manager	£900
Volunteer Expenses x 2	£200
Hi-Vis vests	£40
Community Hall Hire	£0 – £1,000 (depending on location and whether you have this amenity already)
Storage (if applicable)	£500

Top tips and key learnings

- In the group sessions, try to keep the number of participants to a minimum, with a maximum eight families per session. This makes for a comfortable environment, and closer friendships are more likely to be formed. It also means participants get much more one-to-one time with the instructor and volunteers.
- Try to keep the sessions fun and relaxed!
- Ensure you involve the parents in the planning of the adventure ride, so they can plan their own rides after the project has concluded.
- Gain an understanding of whether participants are more confident riders after taking the session. This can be done by a 'hands up' survey or with a questionnaire.
- Make sure parents and carers feel their child is safe, so they don't feel the need to be by their side all the time. This will allow children to engage in peer-to-peer teaching, and parents and carers to engage with each other.

Maximising local contacts

- Utilise networks to recruit participants, or even get in kind support. You can contact volunteer organisations and local centres, community centres, schools, etc.
- Engage with your council – they may be able to lend you equipment, help market the project and help secure a space.
- You might find that a local shop is willing to provide water and snacks, or that a local café is happy for you to direct participants to them for toilet facilities.