

safe routes to school

safe roots for communities



“Safe Routes to School: Safe Roots for Communities” is Groundwork’s Single Regeneration Budget (SRB5) pilot programme in London. It is managed by Groundwork’s Regional Office and delivered by Groundwork West London and Groundwork Hackney in Hammersmith & Fulham and Hackney.

The programme uses community co-operation and communication to change ideas and ways of thinking by involving communities in the improvement of safety along routes to school. The work is all locally developed and relevant, and is resulting in research that will help spread the good practice being developed.

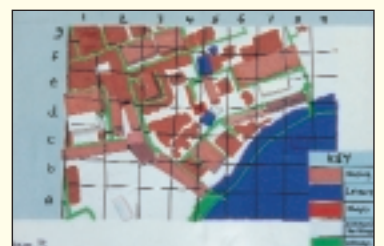


Unlike most 'Safe Routes' schemes, this programme has two distinct and equally important angles - safe routes to school and safe roots for communities. Groundwork believes that the process of involving local schools and communities is key to effectively improving safety along routes to school.

The situation in London is very different in nature to that in other areas of the country - higher pollution levels, better public transport and higher youth-accident statistics. Through curriculum-based working and community-based learning, Groundwork is helping children to assess their routes to school and develop their own ideas about how they can be improved.

Some examples of the work occurring are outlined below:

- △ Using photography and video to record problem areas and the views of pupils, parents and community members.
- △ Promotion of cycling through bike maintenance and cycle training.
- △ Using speed guns and vehicle counts to gather data about the dangers faced on their routes.
- △ Using drama to explore road and personal safety issues.
- △ Plotting routes to school on computerised maps in geography.
- △ Analysing survey results in Maths using IT.
- △ Designing practical and artistic solutions to problems faced in Design Technology and Art classes - such as designing bike shelters, or a creative light trail through a park.
- △ Looking at personal safety and transport choice through literacy.
- △ Developing a web site recording the process as the project unfolds helping children become more familiar with computer technology.
- △ Designing and running a poster competition to promote sustainable transport and road safety in business studies.
- △ Producing a travel plan in conjunction with the Hammersmith and Fulham Urban Studies Centre. The plan detailed routes to school, local history, surveys conducted and listed 17 recommendations. This work is now available on line - www.la21.org.uk/saferoutes



Locally generated ideas

From the outset, there are no preconceived ideas of what physical improvements are required. All the ideas are generated through the work that the local pupils undertake. This means that solutions devised are directly related to the problems in the local area. Not only does this make the work more efficient by meeting the actual need, it helps make it more lasting as people feel that they have a stake in the work.

The children have worked with local communities and their families to develop new ideas. Their work and enthusiasm has enabled the community to see the children as part of the solution and not the problem. The work has helped bring the community together and realise they can make changes.

The programme has also enabled local companies, schools, shops and community groups to work together for the first time. By involving the community in the planning process, Groundwork has been able to help



the local authorities to incorporate local needs and aspirations into proposals.

The physical results can include improved cycle paths, more attractive routes, safer environments, a decrease in car use and more active and independent young people. These changes have a profound impact on the sense of civic pride.

Making the most of the work

The web site being developed through this work will also serve as a useful tool. It will provide ideas and guidance to teachers and community members involved in such projects as well as helping people to learn more about sustainable transport issues.

The scheme is being monitored by academic institutions, both for health benefits and for good practice. Queen Mary, University of London is developing best practice guidance notes on the use of Health Impact Assessments in project planning. Educational packs are also being developed to assist schools in the practical implementation of 'safe routes' lesson planning.



Safe Routes to School: Safe Routes for Communities

The 3-year programme has received £900,000 from the Single Regeneration Budget through the London Development Agency. The total programme value is currently estimated to be over £2 million. For further details on partners and projects, contact Groundwork's Regional Office.



Groundwork is an environmental regeneration charity putting the theory behind sustainable development into practice. From small community projects to major national programmes, Groundwork believes in using the environment as a tool to engage and motivate local people to improve their quality of life. Groundwork Regional Office is the accountable body and responsible for overall management, with the programme delivered by Groundwork West London and Groundwork Hackney, in partnership with the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and Hackney.

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