Urban River Basin Enhancement Methods

How to do social appraisal

Work Package 7

nef (new economics foundation)
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Summary

The aim of this work package was to develop a social appraisal tool that:

- identifies all stakeholders in any river rehabilitation project
- generates information about how citizens perceive the urban environment
- enables citizens to participate in consultations about any rehabilitation project
- generates indicators against which urban watercourse rehabilitation can be measured

The report starts with two issues that are relevant whatever method is used. Chapter 2. is about identifying stakeholders. Chapter 3. discusses the various aspects of citizens' perception of the urban environment on which information might be generated. Chapter 4. discusses how to choose an appropriate appraisal tool.

For the purposes of this project, **nef** has adapted a social appraisal tool called Prove It! that has been tried and tested over several years, by **nef** and other organisations. Prove It! is most relevant to:

- Smaller projects
- Participative projects
- Projects where information is desired on 'social capital', the relations between citizens and the effect on those relations of urban waterways projects. (However, Prove It! can be adapted to measure other aspects.)
- Projects where the desired evaluation is formative (that is, learning as you go along) rather than summative (demonstrating impact at the end of the project).

Chapter 8 provides sources of alternatives for situations in which Prove It! is less appropriate.

For situations where Prove It! is appropriate, the remaining three chapters are designed to give users a good feel for it. Chapter 5. introduces it, explaining where it has come from and how it has been used. Chapter 6 describes it, and gives the website where readymade tools for gathering and analysing data may be found. Chapter 7. describes the experience of organisations in the UK that have tried out the latest version of Prove It! This is complemented by deliverable 7.2, which describes the experience of Urbem partners in trying out Prove It!

1. Introduction

Article 14 of the Water Framework Directive of 2000 specifies that Member States shall encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the implementation of the Directive and development of river basin management plans.

The objective of this work package is to develop and review an audit tool which:

- identifies all stakeholders in any river rehabilitation project
- generates information about how citizens perceive the urban environment
- enables citizens to participate in consultations about any rehabilitation project
- generates indicators against which urban watercourse rehabilitation can be measured.

We sought these characteristics in the appraisal tool:

- simple to apply
- quick, so that it can facilitate a decision making process
- suitable for urban planning
- up-dateable, as the community expectations and opinions change with time
- applicable to cities across Europe

The tool described in this report is an adaptation of one developed by **nef** over several years, called Prove It! Over time it has become simpler to apply. But there is a price for this, shown in the table below.

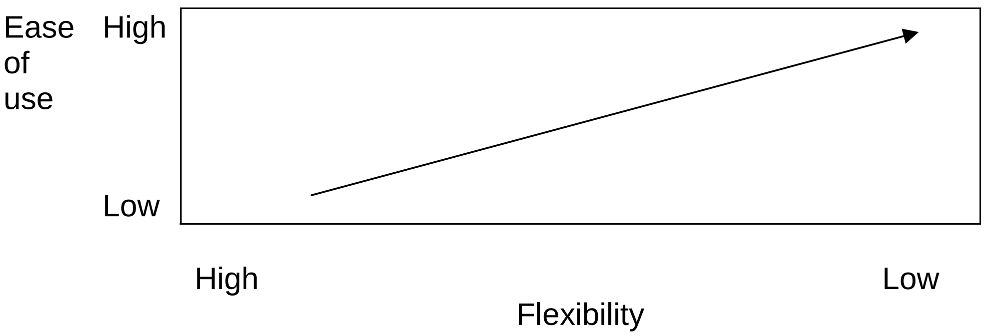

Figure 1.1 The trade-off between ease of use and flexibility

This means that Prove It! is not always the right tool to use. There is a saying that when the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. We don't want that to be the case here. So we have tried to explain when Prove It! is appropriate and when it is not.

This report therefore covers the following in its remaining chapters:
2. Identifying stakeholders. This chapter is relevant whatever tool is used.

3. Deciding what to measure. This chapter is relevant to most tools. Prove It! itself mostly generates information about social capital[1].
4. Choosing the appropriate tool
5. Introduction to Prove It!
6. The Prove It! toolkit
7. The experience of the Prove It! pilots
8. Alternatives to Prove It!

There is one aspect of social appraisal that is not covered in this report: the technicalities of surveys and statistics. This is very well covered on the free Research Aids section of www.surveysystem.com. There is additional material in a handbook on Prove It! which can be downloaded from the **nef** website at http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_publicationdetail.aspx?pid=2
This provides more specialized advice in the urban renewal context, although one or two details may be specific to the UK. The table below shows some of the questions that arose during the testing of Prove It!, conducted as part of Urbem, and where answers are to be found.

Table 1.1 Surveys and statistics: questions and answers

Question	Where to look for the answer	
	Surveysystem.com	Prove It! handbook
Alternatives to face to face interviewing?	Survey design/interview methods (covers bulk mail and the internet, among others)	How to survey?, p62 compares street polls, door-to-door and telephone interviewing.
Achieving a representative sample	Survey design/selecting your sample Sample Size Calculator	Who to survey?, p59
Combining quantitative and qualitative questions	Survey design/question types	
Trying out your questionnaire	Survey design/Pre-test the questionnaire	Trial run/training, p65
Avoiding interviewer bias	Survey design/Other General Tips	
Motivating members of the public to take part		Groups, p63 (parts of chapter 2 below are also relevant)
Dealing with qualitative answers to quantitative questions		Collecting stories as well, p65
Providing feedback		Chapter 10:

[1] Leading US academic Robert Putnam describes social capital as 'features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and social trust, that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit.'

		Communicating Progress, p71

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2. Stakeholder analysis

2.1 Public participation guidance for the Water Framework Directive (WFD)

This can be found at:
http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework_directive/guidance_documents/participation_guidance&vm=detailed&sb=Title (p18)

The key point in this document is summarised in the title of section 7.1.1: 'Change in attitude: stakeholders as partners in water management'. We recommend particularly Section 2.4 'Who should we involve?' and Annex 1 'Public participation techniques 1. Stakeholder analysis and 12. Monitoring and participatory evaluations'.

This chapter attempts to parallel what is said about stakeholder analysis in the guidance, without duplicating it. We do however borrow the definition of a stakeholder that starts the next section.

2.2 What is a stakeholder?

The guidance says (p18):
'Interested party (or "stakeholder")
Any person, group or organisation with an interest or "stake" in an issue, either because they will be directly affected or because they may have some influence on its outcome. "Interested party" also includes members of the public who are not yet aware that they will be affected (in practice most individual citizens and many small NGOs and companies).'

Another definition, in the context of natural resource management, is that: "Stakeholders are... natural resource users and managers".[2]

Future search conferences[3] use three criteria developed by a professor of management called Dale Zand:

- People with information;
- People with authority and resources to act;
- People affected by what happens.

'People who can stop things happening' is sometimes added to this list.

2.3 Why analyse stakeholders?

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[2] Röling, N.; Wagemakers, M. (ed.). Facilitating sustainable agriculture: participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. 1998 (p7)

[3] See p39 of 'Participation Works! 21 techniques of community participation for the 21st century'. This can be downloaded for free at
http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_PublicationDetail.aspx?PID=16

A case study of Schuylkill in Philadelphia[4] states that, ‘stakeholder analysis seeks to differentiate and study stakeholders on the basis of their attributes. These may include:

- The relative power and interest of each stakeholder
- The importance *and* influence they have
- The multiple "hats" they wear
- The networks and coalitions to which they belong.’

In this case, though, the reason for analysing stakeholders is to do with what you want from them and with what they might want from you.

Table 2.1 What you might want from stakeholders

What you might want	*Example*
Action	‘Are you interested in helping with…..’
Opinion	‘Which option should we go for?’
Ideas	‘How could we make this area more attractive to you?’
Information	‘Where do children play?’
Understanding	‘Before I ask you the next question, can I explain that....’

Understanding what stakeholders might want from you is important in getting people to cooperate, e.g. by stopping to answer your questions. This is particularly important for community members: other stakeholders may feel obliged to cooperate because it’s their job. Examples of what community members might want include:

- A sense that you have tried to understand their perspective and their needs, e.g. by not asking questions that:
  - they cannot answer, perhaps because they are too technical
  - take too long to answer
- Assurance that their views will be taken seriously and that they will receive feedback on the results
- Ways of taking part that are enjoyable. (See for example the Prove It! handbook pages 63 and 64.)
- The comfort of being interviewed by members of their community. (See the Prove It! handbook pages 55 and 56 on ‘Who surveys?’.)

[4] information from David A. Lange (David A Lange@nps.gov) , National Park Service, Rivers and Trails Program, 200 Chestnut Street, 3rd Floor Philadelphia, PA 19106, Tel. 215 597- 6477, Fax 215 597-0932 delivered to URBEM TEAM TUD, 2004 file located at: FTP Server Wallingford under WP 7 as case study_ philadelphia.doc

3. What to measure

3.1 Introduction

Prove It! covers both process and content. For instance, it covers both the design and use of a questionnaire and the questions that the questionnaire might include. As stated above, the content of Prove It! is mainly about social capital. But the content can be altered without affecting the process. It would be perfectly possible to use the Prove It! method to ask people if they thought the moon was made of cheese, although the results might not be very useful in relation to urban waterways. The purpose of this chapter is to help you decide what content you wish to cover.

3.2 The possibilities

We stated in chapter 1 that the content was about 'how citizens perceive the urban environment'. Work Package 10 gives three themes under the heading "social well-being", to include public appreciation and perception of the river and the river site, as shown in the table below. It in fact provides more detail than is shown here. One of the three categories under 'Public appreciation and utilization of river and River sites', for example, is the sub category 'Public appreciation of River and River sites'. This is in turn disaggregated into Quality elements:

- Perception of Public Health and Saefty
- Sensory Perceptions
- Perceptions of Place Identity
- Perception of Restorative Capacity

Table 3.1 themes and elements

Category	Sub-Category
Existing conditions and quality of River and river site settings	Public Accessibility
	Open Space extent and quality
	Quality and extent of recreational and cultural facilites
	Public health and seafty related incidents and installations
	Quality and density of land use
Public appreciation and utilization of river and river sites	Public Appreciation of River and river site
	Recreational uses and User groups
	Residential use and social structure of residents
Social relations and social organisation	Neighbourhood relations and neighbourhood cohesion
	Relations between Institutions and Residents/ stakeholders

The full version of this table, including suggested indicators, can be found in Work Package 10. The last of these three themes, which relates to social capital, is explored in more detail in the next section.

3.3 Social capital

3.3.1 Background

Quality of life is extremely difficult to measure. In an effort to understand the path from an activity or intervention to this ultimate goal of a regeneration initiative, it is necessary to examine the stages along the way. Some of these are easy to measure (e.g. number of facilities built, or the number of volunteers who have been involved etc.), and some of them lie so far in the future that it is extremely difficult to attribute any credit to one single project. In order to address this challenge the latest developments of Prove It! have focused on one particular aspect of this path; the role of social capital.

So what has social capital got to do with waterways? The hypothesis behind Prove It! is that improving the local environment encourages people to come together, thus creating opportunities for meetings and conversations which support development of networks of trust and mutual understanding from which individuals can work together to improve their own quality of life.

This process can begin long before the activity is completed if local people are involved in the planning. Moreover, the appraisal of such a project provides the framework in which those meetings and conversations can take place.

3.3.2 Social capital and policy

A definition of social capital appears in the UK government's Performance and Innovation Unit's (PIU) comprehensive literature review and discussion paper, which describes it as consisting of the "networks, norms, relationships, values and informal sanctions that shape the quantity and co-operative quality of a society's social interactions." (Aldridge et al, 2002)

It describes the three main types of social capital as: *bonding* social capital (e.g. among family members or ethnic groups); *bridging* social capital (e.g. across ethnic groups); and *linking* social capital (e.g. between different social classes). In itself social capital is not necessarily a positive or a negative thing - the Mafia has high bonding social capital.

The most widely accepted measure that is used to demonstrate the presence or absence of social capital is "trust in other people". Thanks to the extensive work of Robert Putnam[5] and others, it is already possible to make a convincing link between levels of social capital and corresponding improvements in people's quality of life.

Two comments from UK organisations that have trialled Prove It! show how aspects of social capital can help both project staff and the community to think about the effects of projects on people:

Since completion of the project there have been no incidences of vandalism or littering the site, this could suggest that the project has gone some way toward increasing pride in the local environment.

Prove It! got them [the community group] thinking and asking about social capital – they hadn't done that before.

Here are two contrasting views of how easy it is to work with the notion of social capital:

The community do understand the concept of social capital, and they can see the steps and the results in those terms.

When you are asking the questions on the questionnaire, people find it hard to make the link between trees and trust. Even people on the training found this difficult.

[5] Cited in Appendix 1 of Walker et al, *Prove It! Measuring the effects of neighbourhood renewal on local people*, **nef**, London, 2000

4. Choosing the appropriate tool

4.1 Introduction

The next three sections each describe a circumstance in which Prove It! works well. The final section describes when Prove It! is appropriate and when it is not, and where to look for alternatives.

4.2 Prove It! works best for summative evaluation

Although Prove It! may be used as an appraisal tool solely at the start of a project, it is likely that it will also be used to look back on and review the project. It is therefore important to understand for what type of evaluation it is suitable.

There are two reasons for measuring impact: improving and proving. Improving is about learning what is working and not working, so that improvements can be made. This is often done during the project. Improving is mainly internal to the team, project, activity or organisation. Proving on the other hand is about demonstrating what your project has achieved to others, outside your team, project, activity or organisation. It mainly happens at the end of the project, so that you can show all the impacts.

In the jargon of evaluation, improving is known as formative evaluation and proving is known as summative evaluation. The difference was well summarised thus: "When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative; when the guests taste the soup, that’s summative."

The participative, community-based approach that Prove It! takes makes it well fitted to formative evaluation. It is less well suited to summative evaluation. Drawing conclusions, often across a range of projects, in a way that allows generalisations to be made, requires more attention to sampling and to consistency in interviewing than most community-based projects can manage. In addition, the very ephemeral nature of social capital means that information from quantitative “summative” indicators collected by questionnaire are inadequate for understanding the whole story of how social capital is being created.

There is one sense, though, into which Prove It! does not fit the formative/summative divide. It is used for ‘judging the worth of a program at the end of the program activities’. But this means the organisation that ran the project and members of the community telling themselves the story of the project. This is primarily for their own learning and not for comparison with other projects.

Prove It! seems to fit with developments in evaluation generally. National renewal projects in the UK like New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management have emphasised the need for community based evaluations to *complement* the national - *summative* - efforts.

4.3 Prove It! works best for participative projects

Formative evaluation has learning at its heart, whether by the community alone or also by other stakeholders. How much is learned will depend on how rich is the picture. This in turn depends on how participative is both the project and its appraisal. Insiders will usually produce a far more detailed picture than outsiders.

It is sometimes objected that outsiders will bring an objectivity that can give an unbiased picture of a project. This may be true, but not necessarily so. 'Objectivity' and 'unbiassed' do not always go together. Take the example of a crime survey undertaken by local schoolchildren in Merthyr Tydfil in Wales in 1996. The police recognized it as more reliable than their own records, because people were more prepared to tell them the truth.

In addition, if local people are involved, the measurement becomes part of the project. Prove It! has developed the tools that enable it to be used to help plan the project at the outset. Involving people in monitoring a project may help in getting them involved in other aspects.

By 'participative', we mean that there is a group of people quite intensively involved in planning, carrying out and reviewing the project. Having a larger group involved in carrying out the project is valuable but not as important.

In sum, for the type of evaluation that Prove It! supports, participation is invaluable. The features of Prove It! that make this the case are that it is: participative; flexible; and emphasizes social capital.

4.4 Prove It! is for projects with few resources for appraisal

The estimated costs of public participation for the $6.3 million projects for the Schuylkill River I Philadelphia, USA, were $315,000[6]. Most projects are small. This means that, however great their will to do a good appraisal, their resources for doing so are also small. They need it ready-made and off the peg. Prove It! is such a method.

4.5 When is Prove It! appropriate and when not?

There are four possibilities:

1. Use Prove It! only with the project participants
2. Use the questionnaire element of Prove It! also with the wider community
3. Use Prove It! but adapt it:
   A. So that you can do a statistical analysis

[6] information from David A. Lange (David A Lange@nps.gov) , National Park Service, Rivers and Trails Program, 200 Chestnut Street, 3rd Floor Philadelphia, PA 19106, Tel. 215 597- 6477, Fax 215 597-0932 delivered to URBEM TEAM TUD, 2004 file located at: FTP Server Wallingford under WP 7 as case study _ philadelphia.doc

   B. To include a wider range of indicators. See Work Package 10 for some suggestions.
4. Use something other than Prove It!

The table below gives more detail on 1, 2 and 3. As the description of 3 shows, it is possible to use Prove It! to for summative evaluation. However, in order to make claims for a project's impact on the whole population of a community the questionnaire needs to be administered to a random sample of respondents. This is unlikely to be feasible with a project where the community is deeply involved in the evaluation. This is not the role for which Prove It! is best suited.

		1	2	3
What can be measured		A view of the impact of the project and learning from how it was delivered.	As for 1, plus a view of the impact of the project on a community's level of social capital.	As for 2, plus A. a statistical analysis of the impact the project has had on levels of social capital in the community, and/or B. a wider range of indicators if you want to cover more than in level 1 and 2.
Who	Project participants (People who have been directly involved in the project)	Y	Y	Y
	Wider community	If possible	Y (non-random sample)	Y (A - random sample)
Tools	Storyboard	Y	Y (1)	Y (1)
	Questionnaire	N	Y	Y (B – different questions)
	Poster	Y	Y (1)	Y (1)

Note (1) With project participants only

Prove It! is unlikely to work well for: large projects; programmes; and projects where there is little or no community involvement. As stated above, it may not work well where summative evaluation is needed. Chapter 8 summarises alternatives and provides guidance on how to select an appropriate method. See also Work Package 9.3.

5. Introduction to Prove It!

5.1 Origins and development

Prove It! was developed for regeneration in general, not waterways in particular. It grew out of the recognition that what gets measured, matters and that many positive outcomes of regeneration go unnoticed because only the things that are easy to count get counted. So when a playground is born from the ashes of a piece of derelict land, the real impact on local people's quality of life just isn't captured by counting how many trees have been planted there.

Prove It! began as a partnership between Groundwork, Barclays Bank plc and **nef** in 1999. Barclays provided the funding, **nef** provided the methodology and Groundwork provided and organised local Groundwork Trusts to test the methodology. The results of some initial pilots were written up as a handbook. This was the equivalent of the Acorn in the development of the home computer – it needed enthusiasm and specialist knowledge to make full use of.

Gradually, the Windows version has evolved. The Prove It! toolkit consists of a series of MS Word and Excel documents combining materials (Spreadsheets, Questionnaire, Poster) and instructions on how best to use them. It contains three main tools:

1. A project **Storyboard**, for understanding how a project's intended activities will lead to change
2. A **Survey Questionnaire** that can be completed at the start and end of a project, both by project participants and by members of the wider community.
3. A **Poster Evaluation Session**, for people involved in or affected by the project, so that they can reflect on the impacts a project has made and the lessons that have been learnt.

5.2 Testing Prove It!

The testing of Prove It! by Urbem partners is described in Deliverable 7.2. In addition, the toolkit has been tested by 56 pilot projects during 2003 – 2004. These projects came from five UK organisations: British Waterways; BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers); Countryside Agency; Groundwork; and the Wildlife Trusts. **nef** provided two training workshops and an on-line discussion forum. The experience of these pilots is described in detail in chapter 7 and summarised here.

We conducted a telephone survey to find out what the pilots thought of Prove It! We found that 84% of them had used it. Where they had not used it, this was because of delays in the project or changes in personnel and not because of failings in the toolkit.

The toolkit has four main elements, since the questionnaire can be used at the start and finish of the project. We found that on average each pilot had used two of them. What they liked about it was:

- It's flexibility
- It's ease of use
- It provides a framework and structure
- It helps with community participation
- It appears to capture the effect of a project on social capital

Here is one particularly enthusiastic quote from a pilot:
I think it's fantastic. It assists – it's not a burden. It isn't dry either – it helps you to be imaginative about the project.

We conclude from the experience of this phase that:

- Prove It! works best for smaller projects that have community involvement.
- Prove It! works best for formative rather than summative evaluation.
- Prove It! supports the direction that policy on regeneration and evaluation is taking
- All evaluation methods, including Prove It!, flourish better in the right circumstances. These are: a supporting culture in the organisation concerned; stability of personnel; a well-established community group; and a confident member of staff with experience of participative working. To the extent that these are not present, it is important to think out whether to go ahead with something like Prove It! and if so to provide as much support as possible.

The introduction to the toolkit summarises what Prove It! does, '***Prove It!*** is about keeping appraisal simple, manageable and possible within the limited resources that small–scale projects have available to them. An approach involving data collection methods that are fun and easy to use can encourage ownership of the project and make it more likely that evaluation becomes part of the culture of an organisation, rather than a burden.

The principle behind *Prove It!* is to make the collection of data part of the process of regeneration in itself. Many of the overriding aims of a project (for example, improving the social capital of a community) can be achieved by involving local people in its evaluation as well as its delivery. Our experience tells us that evaluation can add real value, build capacity of local groups and people, and can demonstrate impact on quality of life.'

Appendix 1 shows how a pilot concerning a waterways project reported on the effect of their project on social capital. It uses the graphs which are part of the toolkit.

6. The Prove It! toolkit

6.1 What it is

The Prove It! toolkit consists of a series of MS Word and Excel documents combining materials (Spreadsheets, Questionnaire, Poster) and instructions on how best to use them. Prove It! is now packaged as an easy to access C.D. that contains all the instructions, forms and spreadsheets needed to complete an evaluation. Data is collected using a combination of the following tools:

- A project **Storyboard** which serves as a template for understanding how a project's intended activities will lead to change (This should be used as close to the start of the project as possible, so that subsequent evaluation can be planned.) The first stage of developing any project is about understanding the hypothesis (the story) for how particular activities address an identified need and lead to a particular outcome. The first part of the *Prove It!* Toolkit involves a simple two-part exercise for project managers to use on their own or ideally with project workers and key people involved in the project. This sets out the hypothesis, and helps plan the timetable of activities, as well as the best times to carry out an evaluation of outcomes. It will be particularly useful in terms of learning when looking back over the project to see how things turned out.
- A **Survey Questionnaire** to be completed for all project participants in the life of the project and members of the wider community. In addition, this MS Excel file contains linked spreadsheets for entering data collected both before and after a project has been completed. These in turn automatically update a series of graphs so that the data can be viewed and compared easily for analysis. To simplify things, we have chosen a core list of the indicators that have emerged as most suitable for measuring a project's impact on social capital and quality of life. If a project manager chooses to add indicators to the core list, and wishes to use them in the questionnaire, we have provided a separate folder called "*3. Additional Question Design".* This contains blank question templates, corresponding data entry and graph sheets that can be used in conjunction with the main questionnaire.
- A **Poster Evaluation Session** of between 1.5 to 2.5 hours, for up to a dozen people involved or affected by the project. This is the last part of data collection for a *Prove it!* evaluation. It is designed so that those who have been involved in the project can look back over the work and reflect on the impacts it has made and the lessons that have been learnt. It is also the opportunity for someone who has not been directly involved with the project to play the part of "auditor" and check the findings as interpreted by the project managers. This will help explore whether the hypotheses on how the project creates impact stand up in reality, particularly in terms of

how delivery of the project has measured up to the original *Project Storyboard* (see Document 1).

The Poster provides a structure for a 1½ to 2½ hour meeting. Up to twelve people are selected randomly from the project managers, participants, and the wider community panel and are invited to attend. A facilitator (ideally the outsider playing the part of "auditor") uses a set of instructions to guide people through a series of stages that focus on different aspects of the project's outputs and outcomes. Traditional evaluation using indicators "before and after" a project is usually best for catching intended outcomes; this poster session is designed to acknowledge these as well as to understand some of the unintended and unexpected consequences of the project, particularly throughout the process of its delivery.

6.2 What the toolkit can do

a. The toolkit can now be used in the early stages of project planning. This reduces the burden of evaluation and encourages project managers to think about evaluation even before the project has started.
b. It allows stakeholders to construct a "story" of their project that they all share and promote. This story encourages stakeholders to think not only about the outcomes of the project but to be realistic about the resources, incentives and activities needed to accomplish them.
c. It allows project managers to create graphs that illustrate the impact and changes their projects have effected.
d. The evaluation poster has been expanded. It can be used not only as a tool for looking backward and thinking forward but also as a way to understand how and why certain outcomes were reached.

6.3 Where to find the toolkit

You can find the toolkit on the website of the UK Countryside Agency at: http://greenspace.net.countryside.gov.uk You will need to register for the Members Area and for the Prove It! sub-group, but once registered you will find a resource library of downloadable documents to help you create questionnaires, analyse the data and so on. If you have any difficulties, email Perry.Walker@neweconomics.org

7. The experience of the Prove It! pilots

7.1 Methodology

Our principal method was a survey of the pilots done by means of semi-structured telephone interviews. As we did the surveying over the summer holidays, we did not manage to speak to all the pilots. We have no reason to believe though that those we spoke to were unrepresentative of those we did not. We also made use of the views collected by questionnaire at the second training session.

7.2 The use of Prove It!

Number of pilots interviewed	32
Of which, the number that had used Prove It!	27
Of which, the number that had used:	
The storyboard	9
Questionnaire 1	21
Questionnaire 2	13
The poster	9
No. that hadn't used Prove It!	5
Reasons for not using Prove It!	
Project delay	3
Personnel changes	2
No. of pilots using Prove It! that had started their project before the first Prove It! training	7

84% of the pilots had used Prove It! Of those that had not, none of the stated reasons were connected with Prove It! itself.

Turning to the elements of the toolkit, it is striking that the questionnaires, which take more work, had been used more often than the storyboard and the poster. Part of this difference is due to questions of timing. 7/27 of the pilots that used Prove It! had started planning their projects before the first training session. This often meant that they had already done the equivalent of the storyboard and, to a lesser extent, the first questionnaire.

Here are a couple of comments illustrating what pilots felt about different parts of the toolkit:

- "We used the questionnaire only. Found that the most useful part of the toolkit. We did three door-to-door surveys, and for one we used the Prove It! toolkit. It was like a ballot presenting people with different possible view points. The problem with community groups and projects is that the loud voices take over and destroy the group, so because of that doing the PI questionnaire put those people into context. It allows other voices to come to the fore. For example there was an issue that arose about parents taking more responsibility for their children. This got the message across in a shared way, so it wasn't just coming from one individual."

- "The steering group found the poster session particularly useful and enjoyable. It gave them a chance to sit back and look at the progress of the project over the last year and really evaluate what worked and what did not. Many participants said that it is rare in a project that you would all make the time to get together to do just that and that they feel the poster session was extremely useful."

7.3 What the pilots thought of Prove It!

7.3.1 Overall views

I recommend it for any project (or part of a project) with community involvement.

It sells (Groundwork) well. It works with politicians, funders and communities. It provides a rationale for carrying on working with a community.

I think it's fantastic. It assists – it's not a burden. It isn't dry either – it helps you to be imaginative about the project.

With these types of Neighbourhood Renewal projects the skill base and motivation can be limited. The toolkit does as much as you can reasonably expect to do but it doesn't educate people to change their own views on doing this type of work.

Prove It! has increased my awareness of how the decisions I am making impact on the community. I've as a result of having PI tried harder to see it from the community's viewpoint.

I've offered bits of Prove It! in training to community groups

7.3.2 Ease of use

We asked participants at the second workshops what they liked best about Prove It! In Leeds, for 10 out of 12 people it was ease of use. Responses in Birmingham and London were more varied, but still concentrated on ease and flexibility.

One person said, '*It's practical – far easier to use than any other method*'. Another pilot said that he liked:

The fact that all the questionnaire and data entry was all in one place on the disc. This was helpful. It made good diagrams. We also had a member of staff who could use the Excel spreadsheets. Easy to use.

7.3.3 Flexibility

Prove It! has four main elements (the storyboard, the first and second questionnaires and the poster). The table below shows how many elements the pilots used:

No. of elements	No. of pilots using that many elements
4	2
3	3
2	13
1	9
Total:	27

The average was two elements per pilot. This would have been a bit higher but for the timing difficulties mentioned above. But the important point is the pilots picked and chose what was appropriate for them:

I liked the storyboard as it was useful to involve the partners. It was not suitable for the local community as at that stage it might have been seen as a step backwards.

The student who helped with second round found the questionnaires a good way to get the community to open up about other issues not directly related to the community garden and it has influenced other work around the promotion of the centre and its activities.

Poster session went well. For the rest: We didn't use Storyboard or the Questionnaire. We have been working with a small group, and these other methods would not have been suitable or useful.

When they started using the timeline we couldn't stop people chipping in. We were really encouraged by the response.

They also adapted the individual elements:

It was more effective to keep [the questionnaire] *simple, so we omitted, for example, the questions about "who to go to if you need help...". For many it was difficult for them to see the point of questions like these.*

Not that everything worked:

The community group did [use the poster], *for a tapestry project. They had limited success because it was hard to get participants back three months after the end of the project.*

7.3.4 Helped with community participation

The evaluation benefited from being done using PI. It helped me to work with residents which is one of the main things we were trying to do in the project.

Enabled us to constantly keep on track. It would have been easy to avoid the consultation otherwise. It was good for keeping people "on board".

7.4 Where does Prove It! work best?

Comments from pilots on where it works best included:

- '*Something where people can see a change, and there has to be a before and after, within a time-frame.'*
- *The poster means that people 'do not have to have been involved throughout the whole project.'*
- *'Works best with projects that have a clear aim, a clear start and a clear finish. Harder with bigger projects.'*
- *'Although the residents would have been involved in the project anyway the Questionnaire helped them feel that they were getting more out of it.'*
- *'Good for longer-term projects. Because we can track progress over time. E.g development of the community group itself over a number of different projects.'*

However,

- *The XYZ project was probably too small to be able to see the social capital impacts.*

Of the five pilots that didn't use Prove It!, in three cases this was due to delay in the project and in two cases it was because of changes in personnel.

Where Prove It! was used, the most important factor seemed to be the state of the community group involved in the project:

- [It works best] '*where you already have a good trusting relationship with the group. This project was physical changes and the group's development we were able to look at process as well as impact.'*
- '*There are some situations it would work - it depends on the community group - probably best where there is already a formal organisation. Some people react positively to the professional approach. On these occasions the storyboard will encourage ownership. You've got to know your audience.*'

The skills, confidence and experience of the staff member are also important:

We need to help people step out of the box and be flexible. You need to be brave to ask a group of adults to stand in a line according to how they feel.

Next time will be easier. However good the training, in the end you learn by doing it.

Some project participants were sceptical about the value of this type of evaluation and having now completed my first Prove It evaluation I feel that I would be more prepared to counteract these views and promote the value of the process.

You would expect the facilitation skills to be available in a [Groundwork] *trust, and so these* [the workshop elements] *are the bits that are easier for a Groundwork to deliver. They are less likely to have the inherent research (or Excel skills) in the trust for the questionnaire bit to be used to full advantage.*

8. Other tools

8.1 Active Partners

This is the most similar alternative of which we know. It started out as the excellent ‘Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Development in Northern Ireland’ (comprising a report and a handbook for practitioners)[7]. There were 10 ‘building blocks of community development’ each with an average of at least twenty suggested indicators. This work, carried out by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC)[8], evolved and is now known as ABCD - ‘Achieving Better Community Development’.

The ABCD framework is concerned with the long-term process of community development. Yorkshire Forward, a Regional Development Agency, then saw an opportunity to adapt it to community participation in regeneration. Their ‘Active Partners, Benchmarking for Community Participation in Regeneration[9] was developed by consultants called COGS (Communities and Organisations - Growth and Support[10]) They involved people active in a range of communities across the region to identify four key dimensions that need to be strategically addressed in order to enable effective community participation.

The four dimensions are: influence (of the community on regeneration); inclusivity; communication; and capacity. A total of twelve benchmarks, each with suggested indicators, has been developed in relation to these four dimensions.

For example, one of the benchmarks for ‘influence’ is ‘there is meaningful community representation at all decision making bodies from initiation’. One of the indicators for this benchmark is, ‘community representatives are elected by, and accountable to, the wider community’. People are free to add their own.

This family of approaches have in common a lengthy and comprehensive set of indicators covering inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. They all suggest a range of methods of data collection: consulting records (such as constitutions, policies and minutes); observation; and surveying. What is appropriate depends on the indicators chosen.

To summarise, these approaches are mainly about the quality of community participation in a regeneration project. This contrasts with Prove It!, which is more about the effect of a regeneration project on the community.

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[7] *Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Development in Northern Ireland*, Voluntary Activity Unit, for Department of Social Services, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3PP tel: +44 1232 520 504
[8] Contact Stuart Hashagan at SCDC on +44 141 248 1924
[9] Active Partners, Benchmarking for Community Participation in Regeneration, Yorkshire Forward, 2 Victoria Place, Leeds LS11 5AE, UK tel: +44 113 243 9222 fax: 0113 243 1088 web-site: www.yorkshire-forward.com
[10] Contact COGS on tel/fax: +44 114 255 4747 e-mail cogs@cogs.solis.co.uk

8.2 Alternatives

The tables below list both quantitative and qualitative methods. They are all evaluated according to four criteria:

1. Designed for ease of participation

All methods can be run in ways that makes it easier or harder for citizens to take part. Do you hold your meeting at midday or midnight, for example? This criterion, though, means something different. Some methods have specific features that make participation easy. Participatory appraisal, for example, comes from developing countries. It was designed to make it easy for farmers to describe their circumstances by using diagrams, often drawn in the earth, that both the farmers and the development professionals could understand.

2. Provides information to participants

Many methods simply ask participants what they think, know or feel. But when issues are complex or unfamiliar, people may need some information in order to be able to contribute. Some methods build in the provision of information: other methods do not.

3. For an invited sample, or open to all

Some projects will opt for a representative sample, in order to be able to make generalizations about the population as a whole. Others will use methods that are open to all, on the grounds that representativeness is less important than giving everyone a chance to take part. Projects may go for a method that is open to all either because it seems right in principle or because it seems the best way to generate energy for and commitment to the project.

4. Resources needed

Resources include: money; time; and skill (e.g. the need for experienced facilitatators). It is hard to generalise. For example, the cost of a street survey varies depending on whether you survey 10 people or 1000. So each method is simply given an indicative rating of high (H), medium (M) or low (L). A citizens jury for example is marked H because it can easily cost E30,000. A citizens panel is also marked H because such panels often have hundreds of members, so is costly in time and money to set up and maintain. Open Space, by contrast, is marked L because a small group can easily organise it themselves.

Decide where you stand on these criteria. Then decide whether you want qualitative or quantitative information. The tables will then guide you to examples of suitable methods.

1. Qualitative information

Question: Do you want to bring people together in a workshop or meeting, or go to where they are to be found (e.g. in the street or on the riverbank)? The table below gives the advantages and disadvantages of each. The second table suggests methods for both alternatives.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Workshops or meetings	People are exposed to a wide range of views and get to talk through the issues before they give their opinion.	1. Traditional public meetings are dull. 2. You are expecting people to come to you. The people you most want to come, because their views are hardest to obtain, are the least likely to.
2. Go to where people are	Reverses the usual power relationship, where people with more power expect those with less to come to them	1. People don't get to hear a variety of views. 2. May involve more work and resources for the organisers.

		Criteria				
Name	Summary	Designed for ease of participation	Provides information to participants	For an invited sample (S), or open to all (O)	Resources needed	Where to find out more (1)
1. Workshops or meetings						
Workshops	The PPG (1) summarises these as 'whatever you call meetings' (2)					PPG 5
Types of workshops or meetings						
Citizens Juries	A small panel of non-specialists, modelled to resemble a criminal jury, carefully examine an issue of public significance and deliver a "verdict".	N	Y	S	H	PPG9 and PW (3) p23
Open Space	A meeting framework allowing unlimited numbers of participants to form their own discussions around a central theme. Highly	Y – participants design the agenda	N	O	L	PW p55

	dynamic and good at generating enthusiasm, as well as commitment to action.					
Planning for Real	A model of a neighbourhood is usually made by local people themselves in order to create a sense of ownership. A number of events are run. The participants use their knowledge of living in the area to make suggestions by placing cards directly on the model.	Y – people can write their ideas on cards rather than having to articulate them	N	O	M	PW p75
2. Methods that 'go to where people are'						
Interviews	'A way of "tapping" the environment is to take 1-to-1 interviews with a number of the concerned parties.' Interviews can also be done with a group.					PPG 5+6
Types of interviews						
Appreciative Inquiry (AI)	Uses appreciative questions to understand and appreciate the past, as a basis for imagining the future	Y – based on storytelling	N	Could be either	M	PW p47 (4)
Participatory appraisal and evaluation	Enables a project evaluation to be performed by those most directly concerned. This uses a lot of visually based methods, making it especially useful for participants who find other methods of participation intimidating or complicated.	Y – uses visual tools like diagrams	N	Could be either	M	PPG 12 and PW p63

Notes

(1) PPG = Public participation guidance for the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This can be found at: http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework_directive/guidance_documents/participation_guidance&vm=detailed&sb=Title The numeral is the reference number for the method in annex 1 of the guidance.

(2) See for example the Schuylkill River Case study (case study_ philadelphia.doc), where the Appendix describes an "Example of the organization of a public participation session for an urban river enhancement project"

(3) PW = nef publication, 'Participation Works! 21 techniques of community participation for the 21st century', which can be freely downloaded at http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_PublicationDetail.aspx?PID=16

(4) It appears under the name of Imagine, a version of AI developed by the new economics foundation

2. Quantitative information

		Criteria				
Name	Summary	Designed for ease of participation	Provides information to participants	For an invited sample (S), or open to all (O)	Resources needed	Where to find out more (1)
Surveys	A process for gathering information, without detailed verification, on the activity being examined.				H - L	(3)
Types of surveys						
Citizens panel	A Citizens' Panel is large, demographically representative group of citizens' used to assess public preferences and opinions.	N	N	Could be either	H	(4)
On-line processes	Interactive processes that allow stakeholders to 'converse' online or participate in iterative processes that emulate	N	N	Could be either	L Once system set up	(5)

	conventional participative processes.					
Deliber-ative poll	A deliberative poll measures what the public would think about an issue if they had an adequate chance to reflect on the questions at hand. Deliberative polls are more statistically representative than many other approaches due to their large scale.	N	Y	S	H	(6)

(3) See www.surveysystem.com
(4) This Scottish Executive report gives some examples of the benefits and drawbacks of where panels have been used.
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/government/devolution/cpsp-09.asp#bm10
(5) A good starting point is www.publicus.net
(6) The Centre for Deliberative Polling: www.la.utexas.edu/research/delpol/

Appendix 1

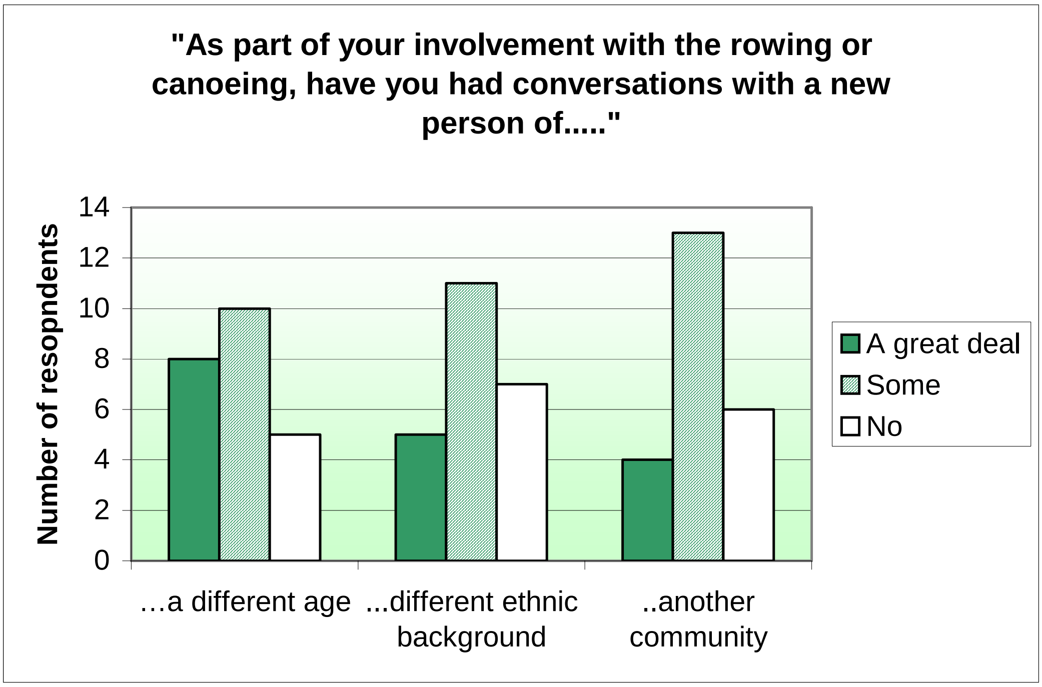
Extract from report of the Orthodox Jewish Boys Rowing and Canoeing Pilot Programme at Springhill, Hackney, London, compiled and written by Anita Wilkins (LWP East Zone Community Projects Manager and Lea Rivers Trust Waterway Citizens Officer).

3.6 Social capital benefits

As stated at the start of this report, although an increase in social capital and trust between the various communities at Springhill was not an explicit aim of the pilot programme, any progress towards this ideal brought about by the project is likely to assist the wider regeneration effort.

The charts on this page and the next show the responses to five questions that were based around Prove it! statements regarding levels of trust and interaction.

Firstly the chart below illustrates the number of conversations that respondents claim to have had with new people.



There has clearly been a great deal of interaction, especially between different age groups – most probably due to the new relationships between instructors and the boys participating in rowing and canoeing. However 7 of those who had conversations with people of a different age were parents, so the interaction effects seem to have gone beyond the immediacy of the rowing and canoeing instruction. As one instructor commented in response to question 9 (what do you value most?):

"*Opportunity for communities to meet & experience the local amenities – the river. I spoke to many parents who enjoyed being around the place & seeing their sons on the water.*"

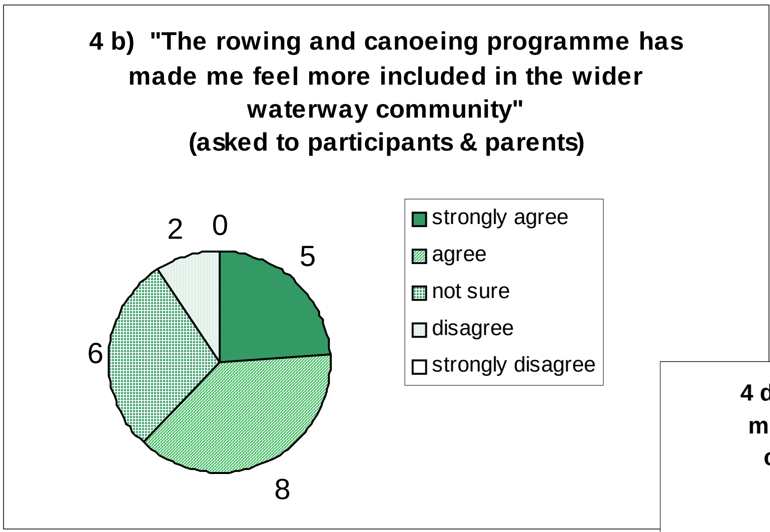
The benefits of such interactions were recognised and commented upon by one parent:

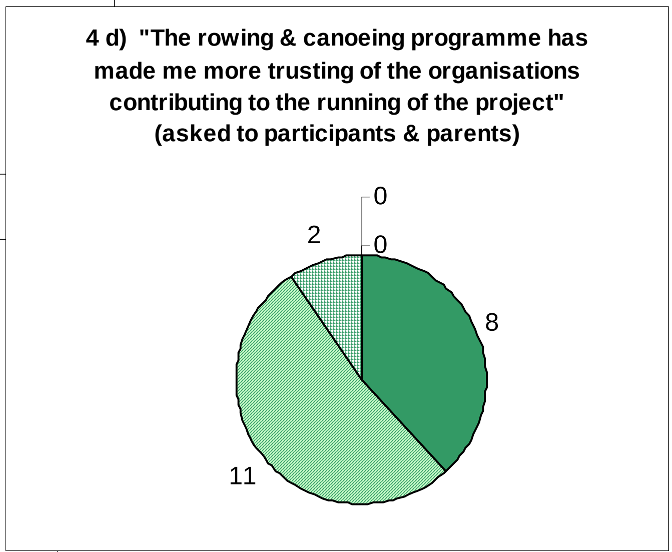
"The exposure to different people – outside of the community and new experiences all help to form well rounded children and adults of the future"

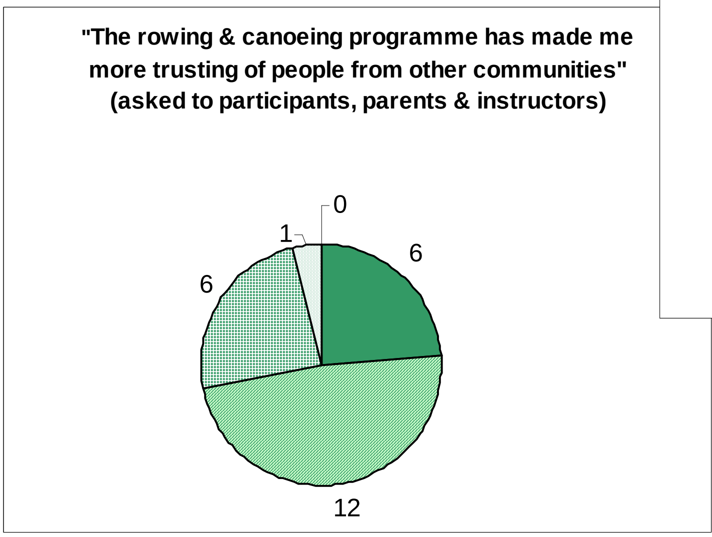
Following along this theme, the charts on the next page clearly suggest that the rowing and canoeing brought about a positive boost to perceptions of inclusion and trust within both participants' families and organisers of the programme. Especially dramatic is the response to 4 d); over 90% of the respondents to this statement agreed that the programme had made them more trusting of the organisations involved in the running of the rowing and canoeing.

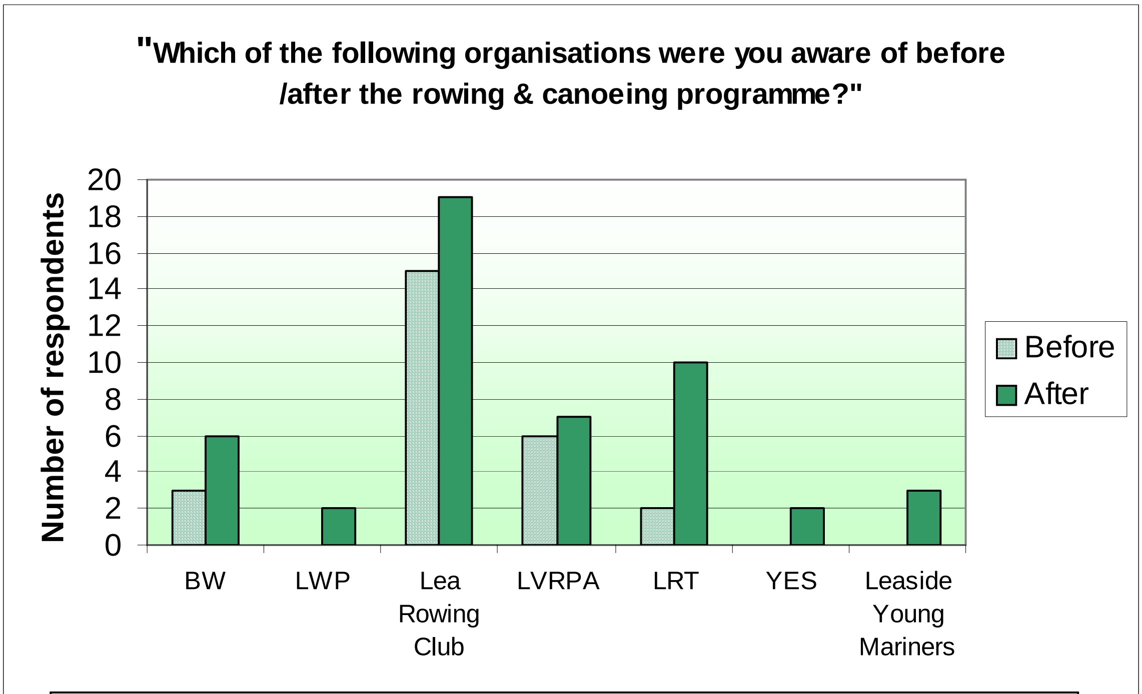
The bar chart at the bottom of the following page backs up these findings,with the suggestion that Jewish families have become more aware of most of these waterway agencies throughout the project. This chart also highlights the relative prominence that the Lea Rowing Club seems to hold within the Orthodox Jewish community, although the surprising lack of recognition of Leaside Young Mariners may be because this organisation is known more commonly as the Leaside Canoe Centre.

It can be concluded from these results that the sporting clubs and their activities are providing a key link between the Orthodox Jewish families and the wider waterway community – a link that could perhaps be utilised and built upon in the future. Moreover the boost to levels of trust within the wider community can only help to reduce the negative impact that fear of crime has on the Jewish community's enjoyment of their environment.









BW = British Waterways LWP = London's Waterway Partnership